



EFFECT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION ON WOMEN "SELF-HELP GROUP"

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Abstract

Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women in India have been recognized as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas. The study is quasi-experimental in nature, as it attempts to examine the impact of psychosocial intervention on the women self-help group. The Self-Esteem Inventory and the Rathus Assertiveness Scale was given to the group and pre-intervention and the post-intervention scores were obtained. Intervention consisted of teaching skills for assertiveness and self-esteem. The data collected during the pre-test and post-test were analysed using paired 't' test. There was a significant difference in the self-esteem and assertiveness of the self-help group women after the psychosocial training.

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Introduction

The aim of the present study is to find the effect of psychosocial intervention on self-esteem and assertiveness of "self-help group" women. Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women in India have been recognized as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women in rural as well as urban areas, bringing women together from all spheres of life to fight for their rights or a cause. Since the overall empowerment of women is crucially dependent on economic empowerment, women through these SHGs work on a range of issues such as health, nutrition, agriculture, forestry, etc. besides income generation activities and seeking micro credit.

SHG is a group formed by the community women, which has specific number of members like 15 or 20. In such a group the poorest women could come together for emergency, disaster, social reasons, and to provide economic support to each other.

Self-help group is a scheme for empowering women both socially and economically to enable them to live with dignity and self-reliance.

According to Coppersmith (1967), self-esteem is "a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals holds towards himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to other by verbal reports and other overt experience behaviour".

Assertiveness has been defined in various ways, but definitions commonly used include components such as expressing feelings, honesty, standing up for oneself and recognizing personal rights and the rights of others (Adams, 1999).

People come together to form Self-Help groups when they co-operatively attempt to overcome common problems. The main focus has been on the weaker sections, particularly women, for their social empowerment. There are many changes that they have to undergo emotionally and socially. Hence during this time it is important for SHG women to establish an identity of their own, learning to assert and feel worthy about themselves, to be able to make choices responsibly and confidently. Assertiveness and Self-Esteem play an important role in the personality development and empowerment in women, which is the focus of the current study.

Aim

To measure the effect of psychosocial intervention on enhancing self-esteem and assertiveness of self-help group women.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the effect of psychosocial intervention on self-esteem of the self-help group women.
2. To find out the effect of psychosocial intervention on assertiveness of the self-help group women.

Hypotheses

1. There would be a significant difference in self-esteem of the self-help group women after the psychosocial training.
2. There would be a significant difference in assertiveness of the self-help group women after the psychosocial training.

Methodology

A quasi-experimental research design was used for this study. The independent variable employed in the study was a training program on self-esteem and assertiveness. The effect of the training program was assessed by measuring changes on the dependent variables of self-esteem and assertiveness of the women self-help group.

A purposive sampling (non-probability) was drawn from the population of self-help group women. Fifty women belonging to various self-help groups, Aminjikarai, Chennai, were included in the study with respect to availability of samples, ease of administration and collection of data.

Tools:

The tools employed in the study were:

The Self-Esteem Inventory - developed by S.Karunanidhi (1996), consisted of 83 items in the form of statements. It has both positive and negative items.

The Rathus Assertiveness Scale - developed by Rathus (1967), on high school students. The scale comprised of 32 statements, which have to be rated on a 4-point scale.

Procedure

The self-help groups were first selected and the purpose of the study was explained to the self-help group women.

Self-esteem and assertiveness of the women were first assessed (pre-test). Then the women were given training on assertiveness and enhancing self esteem. The same questionnaires were used to test the increase in self-esteem and assertiveness of the respondent women (post-test).

Intervention Training

Self esteem training helps to develop good self-concept and to feel worthy about one-self. Assertiveness training is an antidote for fear; shyness, passivity and even anger, so there is a wide range of situations in which this training is appropriate. The Self-esteem and Assertiveness training was used in the intervention program, which lasted for 2 days.

Statistical Analysis

Mean, standard deviation, standard error and paired 't' test was used in the statistical analysis of the data collected.

Results and Discussion

The data collected were statistically analyzed using 't' test for testing the increase in self-esteem and assertiveness among the women self-help group after the psychosocial training.

Table 1 shows the comparison between the pre-test and post-test on the self-esteem of the women self-help group.

Self-esteem	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value
Pre-test	50	230.10	18.10	13.06 **
Post-test	50	249.20	12.98	

Note: ** significant at .01 level.

The 't' value (13.06) shows that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test on the self-esteem among the women self-help group after providing the psychosocial training.

Hence, the result brings to focus that by providing psychosocial training the self-esteem of the women self-help group can be increased significantly in comparison with their existing self-esteem.

Therefore, the hypothesis (H1) "there would be a significant difference in the self-esteem of the women self-help group after the psychosocial training" has been accepted.

Table 2 shows the comparison between the pre-test and post-test on assertiveness of the women self help group.

Assertiveness	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value
Pre-test	50	79.00	9.86	14.64 **
Post-test	50	59.38	4.79	

Note: ** significant at .01 level.

The 't' value (14.644) shows that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test on the assertiveness among the women self-help group after providing the psychosocial training.

Hence, the result brings to focus that by providing psychosocial training the assertiveness of the women self-help group can be increased significantly in comparison with their existing assertiveness.

Therefore, the hypothesis (H2) "there would be a significant difference in the assertiveness of the women self-help group after the psychosocial training" has been accepted.

Conclusion:

1. There was a significant increase in the self-esteem of the self-help group women after the psychosocial training.

2. There was a significant increase in the assertiveness of the self-help group women after the psychosocial training.

The women in self-help group had moderate level of self-esteem and assertiveness (pre-test) which itself was the reason for them to join a self-help group.

The psychosocial intervention program was effective and was found to be useful in increasing their self-esteem and assertiveness.

Limitations

1. More number of sessions could be given to maintain the change over a period of time.
2. There was no control group to compare the effectiveness of the psychosocial intervention program.

Implications of the Study:

1. Intervention programs on self-esteem and assertiveness can help increase women's overall repertoire of coping resources.
2. Intervention programs aimed at increasing assertiveness and self-esteem can help women in handling their psychosocial problems.
3. Emphasis should be given to similar programs in women self-help groups to promote overall development of the women self-help group.
4. Such intervention programs can create awareness in them.

References:

- Adams, P. & Freeman, L. (1985). *Assertiveness Behaviour Inventory Tool*. Paper presented at the Measurement of Clinical and Educational Nursing Outcomes Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Coppersmith, S. (1967). *The Antecedents of Self-esteem*, San Francisco, C.A.