

A Study on Informal Women Leaders of Uttarakhand

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Abstract

The women in Uttarakhand played an important role in addressing the development. The steps taken by them has got a national recognition. The women in Uttarakhand have crossed the reservation from 33% to 40 %. Despite the positive facts and figure the women has faced problems addressing the social issues in the region. The majority of the women as facilitator in various development sectors are without training, orientation and technical knowledge. They are manipulated by bureaucrats, politicians and dominant power brokers in the villages. Most of the informal women leaders faced the problems of non cooperation from the officials and their family. These problems have slowed the pace of developmental works acted as a barrier to fully participate in the development sector. There are various parameters which are positive like the family support and their willingness to allow the women to act as grassroots worker but there are few unhidden but important component which required major attention for making the informal women as true leaders in development.

Introduction

In a society with uneven distribution of resources the access and control of opportunity is in hands of the “haves” but not in the hands of “have-nots”. Same picture of deprivation and inequality is true between men and women. In a country like India where social orientation is based on class, caste and gender, the picture of deprivation and inequality is appalling. Till date the women are not considered as a social group in their own right, rather they are either clubbed with men or are totally ignored.

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The endeavor to improve the quality of women's life has produced a series of development strategies which have largely aimed at poverty alleviation measures, welfare and marginal approaches. Even in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are to be accomplished by 2015, out of the eight goals two goals target the development of women thus reflecting on the marginalized status all over the world.

Rational of the Study

Uttarakhand is a state with strong women movement and it cannot be denied that women along with their men have been active participants in the formation of the State. Their involvement in the State's Chipko movement and the anti-alcohol movement has been nationally accepted. A reflection on their profile shows that, out of the 50% female population of the State, 76% are rural women (Athreya, 1992). Most of the agriculture work is done by these women who look after the land almost completely along with actual cultivation as men migrate for employment. However they face low female literacy, lack of nutrition and health facilities. Further, the patriarchal nature of the society creates hurdles for them in their active participation in the addressal of social and development issues such as violence against women, income generation activities, infrastructural development, female infanticide and child marriage. This is because their efforts get manipulated by bureaucrats, politicians and dominant power brokers in the villages. Most of the women faced the problem of non-cooperation from the officials. These problems have slowed the pace of developmental work.

In such a scenario which is characterized by hardworking rural women who are single handedly managing their home, land, social and developmental issues despite various kinds of resistance, it becomes important to study the various aspects of women and development.

Objective

- To study the socio-economic profile of informal women leaders
- To study the different variables which affect their contributing for village development
- To study the level of awareness about the development program running in their respective villages

Research Methodology

A survey method with the help of pre tested questionnaire was conducted in four districts (Dehradun, Nainital, Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi) of Uttarakhand to understand the problem and hurdle faced by the grassroots woman leader in performing their role in developmental domain. Two blocks are randomly selected from Dehradun, Pithoragarh, Uttarkashi, however three blocks were surveyed in Nainital district.

The number of grass root women worker were surveyed in Dehradun, Nainital, Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi district were 57, 52, 55, and 40 respectively. Thus total 204 informal grassroots workers were surveyed. Collected data was analyzed with the help of statistical software SPSS (Statistical package for Social science). Qualitative data was representing in the forms of Frequency and percentage. Since family support is one of the key factor that help women to work as a developer, so that we consider family support as a response variable for measuring the hurdle in the life of grass root workers. Chi-square test was used to check the association between the family support and demographic variables. Those variable found statistically significant in uni-variate analysis was used to make a model with the help of multivariate logistic regression.

Result

Total 204 grass root women workers surveyed, 80.9 percent of them having age less than 45 years. Most of them the women respondents (65.2%) are in the age group between 25 to 45 years which indicate that productive age group participates in developmental programmes. Since hilly Uttarakhand is a Hindu dominated area, so, 201(98.5%) are belong to Hindu religion. Few 3(1.5%) were from Muslim and Christian. Caste is an important factor as it directly or indirectly related with Educational level, Income and social stigma. Representation of Brahmin 78 (38.7) and SC 81 (39.7%) was found higher than the ST 40 (19.6) and OBC 4(2%). 76% women having complete their education up to seventh class (44% of them only complete their prime education and 14% of them are illiterate. Only 22% women completed their higher secondary education. The above mention data indicate the education level among informal grass root women workers in hilly Uttarakhand was not good.

Since education play a crucial role in decision making, learning and development, so that it is one of the reason that the less participants of women workers in developmental programme.

85.3% women were found to be married (including 2% widow) and 39.2% of them having 2 or more than two children. 49% women lived in joint family which shows that joint family system still in practice in Uttarakhand. 66.7% women married before or at the age of 18 and 81.9% women married before they attained the age of 20. so that we conclude that early marriages was in practices in Uttarakhand hilly areas. 65.7 % families having 6 or more than six family members. the most fashionable occupation was found to be farming and laboring (21.6% and 13.7%). 17.2% women's husband does not doing any income generating occupation, 44% women's husband engaged in seasonal works, which indicate limited recourses are available in hilly Uttarakhand area to generate income so, that most of the family engaged in primary sector, consecutively they spent their life in arrangement of necessary things. There are 75% person who does not participating any income generation occupation and reaming 25% persons having salary only upto Rs 5000.

Table:1

Demographic Variable		Frequency (%)
Religion	Hindu	201(98.5)
	Muslim	2(1.0)
	Christian	1 (0.5)
Caste	Brahmin	79(38.7)
	SC	81(39.7)
	ST	40(19.6)
	OBC	4 (2)
Education	Illiterate	29(14.2)
	Primary	62(30.4)
	Up to Seven	64(31.4)
	Secondary	45(22.1)
	Graduation	4(2)
Type of Family	Nuclear	100(49.4)
	Joint	104(51)
Income	No Income	152(74.5)
	Income upto 5000rs	52 (25.5)
Husband Profession	Agriculture	44(21.6)
	Labor	28(13.7)
	Seasonal work	90(44.1)
	Other (Teacher/Pradhan)	7 (3.5)
	No work	35(17.2)
Own property (land/Livestock)	No	176(86.3)
	Yes	28(13.7)
Receiving Training	No	40(19.6)
	Yes	164(80.4)
Age at Marriage Mean± sd (Max-Min)	18.80±2.55 (12-27)	

Family support is one of the major factors that play a crucial role in the life of an informal women who wanted work for development in her villages. Since women played a pivotal role in a family particularly in hills of Uttarakhand. Sometimes dual role responsibilities for both inside and outside home because difficult.

In this case family support is very important. The different variables which helped women to get family support in order to work for the development outside home have been identified.

The factors like Marital status, Family type, Income level, Education level, received training and having own property or not with the help of chi square have used to find the association between the variables and family support.

Table: 2 Association between Family Support and Selected Variable					
		Yes	No	Total	P - value
Marital status	Married	125(73.5)	45(26.5)	170	0.755
	Unmarried	27(79.4)	7(11.6)	34	
Total		152	52	204	
		Yes	No	Total	P - value
Family type	Nuclear	87(87)	13(13)	100	0.0001
	Joint	65(62.5)	39(37.5)	104	
Total		152	52	204	
		Yes	No	Total	P - value
Income	None	115(75.7)	37(24.3)	152	0.319
	Up to5000	37(71.2)	15(28.3)	52	
Total		152	52	204	
		Yes	No	Total	P - value
Own property	Yes	12(42.9)	16(57.1)	28	0.0001
	No	140(79.5)	36(20.5)	176	
Total		152	52	204	
		Yes	No	Total	P - value
Training received	yes	129(78.7)	35(21.3)	164	0.007
	no	23(57.5)	17(42.5)	40	
Total		152	52	204	

Table :3 Multivariate Analysis – Family support and Multiple factors (Type of Family, own property and Receiving training or not)

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Type of Family	1.219	.377	10.441	1	.001	3.382
Own property	1.577	.449	12.334	1	.000	4.842
Training	.891	.402	4.924	1	.026	2.438
Constant	-1.404	.527	7.090	1	.008	.246

There are 125 (73.5%) married women supported by their family and 27 (79.4%) unmarried women supported by their family. this difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.755$).

In Nuclear family 87 (87%) women supported by their family members is much higher than those of women lived in joint families 65(62.5%). This proportion was found statistically significant at 5% level of significance ($p=0.0001$)

In hilly areas of Uttarakhand people are depending on primary sector so, income level is almost same. Very little difference in the amount is observed in the data table. Out of 152 surveyed women belongs to family having no income, 115(75.7%). In some cases women are supported by their family 37 (71.2%) having income less than Rs. 5000/- per month. This difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.319$).

Since people are economically segregated on the basis of their own property. Property (own land and livestock) are the key component of economic asset. The women belong to family having property of its own is not supportive. The analysis shows that 12(42.9%) women supported by their family in this group. However, those families having no property supported the women to work as a grassroots worker 140 (79.5%). This proportion was statistically significant for support ($p=0.0001$).

Those women received training were supported by their family 129(78.7) which is much higher than those who does not receive training and this was found statistically significant factor at the significant level of (0.007).

Those variable found significant in uni-variate analysis was used for multivariate analysis (table 3). It was observe that type of family, own property and receiving training are the factor for lacking of family support and women not contributing in development activities. Education is also a key factor but the level of education was almost similar in sample so it is difficult to assess the factor. But from this model we can conclude that we can increase women participation by increasing the level of education and by giving training.

In step two of the analyses, it was found, family support was positively associated with type of family likelihood by 3.382 (Table 3). This means that joint families are approximately three times less support in comparison to nuclear family to women for participating in developmental domain when other contributing variable remain constant. Similar likelihood estimated for own property (4.84) and receiving training (2.43), that indicate those families having own property giving approximately five times less support to women rather than those of having no property.

Out of 204 sample , 61 (29.90%) informal grass root women leaders does not participate at any level in the developing programme organize under Government scheme. In further analysis we found maximum number of women participates in programme at stage 1 (46.25 %) and at stage 5 (86.50%). at stage 2, 3 and four the percent of their participation was too low (between 12% to 20%). One more finding was observed and estimated that only those women included in stage 2, 3 and 4 have received training from govt. It is also important to know that in our samples 164 women receive the training but only 70 women include in stage 2 , 3 and 4 which shows that most of the women does not become the part of development after receiving the training. So policy maker should be thing about that so that we can utilize our trained resources. So we concluded to increase the participation we should provide training to informal leader so that they can be the part of development. In further analysis we found that the participation of women is high at 1 and 5 stage however their participation at stage 2, 3 and 4 is to low (between 12% to 20%).

Table:4 Women's Participation at Different Stage of Developmental Programme					
			Responses		Percent of Cases
			N	Percent	
Pre-implementation stage (Stage1)			66	25.4%	46.2%
Implementation stage (Stage 2)			18	6.9%	12.6%
Modification /Improvement of the programme (Stage 3)			27	10.4%	18.9%
Evaluation/follow up (Stage 4)			26	10.0%	18.2%
Networking with other organization within and outside villages (Stage 5)			123	47.3%	86.0%
Total			260	100.0%	181.8%
Level of participation					
			Received Training		Total
			No	Yes	
Level of participation ^a	ststus1	Count	9	57	66
	status2	Count	1	17	18
	status3	Count	0	27	27
	status4	Count	0	26	26
	status5	Count	14	109	123
Total		Count	16	127	143
Percentages and totals are based on respondents.					
a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.					

Conclusion and Social Work Interventions

From the data it is clear that the parameters which are the deterring factor for informal women leaders from becoming the true leaders. The result also reveals that women in nuclear family and families without property are encouraging women to work for the development. The study also explained that women are without training in true implementation work and execution of potentials to managed matters. Due to lack of need based selection of topic and appropriate aid the training go waste. Due to that women at the grassroots able are unable to contribute at all the phases of the programme, be it planning, managing and implementation. The role of the social worker is vital. The skill and experiences of social worker can help in designing of the training programme on need based approached.

The important task is all about the follow up after the training and requirement and suggestion for improvement the quality of the training. The design of the training could be discussed before its execution. Home visit could be followed. As it is revealed from the data that family especially which are nuclear they are supportive for the women to work for the development issues which could be a very well used by a social worker as strength.

Reference

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