Women empowerment through micro financing under watershed programme in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract
Participation is a process in which people express themselves, share, contribute and act with mutual responsibility to promote a common set of interest. Natural and human resources are all interdependent and interactive in the watershed. An attempt has been made in this paper to understand the importance of micro financing among the Self Help Group (SHGs) members. The data on capacity building, SHGs formation, source of loan, utilization of credit, linkage with banks and repayment of loans were collected from SHGs members, MYRADA, Agricultural Engineering Department (AED) and Banks. The MYRADA, NGO had worked as community organizer in the watershed project selected for this study. The 203 SHGs with 2721 members (Male -30, Female -161 and Mixed -13 groups) were formed with a total member of 2721. NGO tried the concept of micro financing and thrift society and registered these SHGs under Society Act. The seed money Rs. 40.32 lakhs was disbursed among the SHGs under the project. The majority of SHG members were resource poor and women. More than 85 percent SHGs were linked to the bank and the repayment of revolving fund was reached to the extent of 59 percent. The loan amount of Rs. 498.83 lakhs was realized by the members and was utilized for Income generation activities (30%) viz., consumption purpose (25%), assets creation (32%) and other purposes (13%). The bank officials revealed that loan repayment was regular. Several trainings were imparted during the project period by the PIA for capacity building of the SHGs. This study clearly indicate that proper organization and monitoring of community institutions in rural areas lead to better performance of watershed project activities and women empowerment.