

Constraints Faced by Officials of Livestock based Self Help Group Promoting Institutes (SHGPIs) in Punjab, India

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Abstract

Even though livestock based women Self Help Groups (SHGs) act as a means to mobilize poor women and to make them self reliant, it has been observed that various constraints hinder the effective and efficient functioning of these groups. A study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab to know the constraints faced by concerned officials of livestock based Self Help Group Promoting Institutes (SHGPIs) viz., a dairy cooperative, Government and Non-Government Organization (NGO). Findings revealed that among dairy cooperative officials, inadequate staff at the field level, poor attitude of the members and lack of participation at member's level were the major constraints in order of severity. Inadequate staff for regular follow up of SHGs, lack of advertisement at the farmer level and utilization of budget for other activities rather than for livestock, were constraints faced by the officials from SHGs promoted by government organizations. Lack of required skill-based training to the members, lack of public participation, poor governance and networking and absence of cohesive and strategic planning were the major constraints faced by the NGO officials. For the proficient functioning of livestock based SHGs in a sustainable manner, there is a need to eliminate these constraints on a priority basis.

Keywords: Women Self-Help Groups, Livestock Officials, Constraints, Garret ranking

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Introduction

In Punjab, livestock activity is a more commercialized and market driven enterprise. The women's employment share in the livestock sector is around 90 per cent in Punjab and Haryana. Livestock is an easily accessible asset for resource-poor women who do not possess land. Women in the livestock sector constitute about 69 per cent of the workforce (Patel et al 2016). However, in the rural areas, livestock are still reared in a traditional way leading to low productivity and ultimately causes poverty among the rural poor.

To deal with the challenge of poverty, micro-finance, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) were initiated in India, and considered as the vehicle of change for the poor, especially for marginalized women. Millions of resource-poor women are building their lives through these groups. SHG approach has been recognized as an institutional innovation to organize the poor, promote savings, channelize credit, encourage income generating programmes and empowerment of the rural poor. Around 200 million people have found their way into SHGs by 2017 (Greaney et al, 2016). In India, out of 102.43 lakh SHGs saving linked with banks, around 88.32 lakh SHGs are exclusively for women. There are 1.02 crore groups under SHG-Bank Linkage Programme covering 12.4 crore households across the country. In Punjab, there are around 28934 SHGs and more than 85 per cent are exclusively women SHGs (Government of India NABARD, 2019-20).

Punjab being a productive state in agriculture and livestock farming, various government institutions, dairy cooperatives and NGOs are actively involved in SHG formation for socio-economic upgrading of the rural poor. The group approach provides a base for self-employment and income generation through group dynamics. However, Self Help Group Promoting Institutions (SHGPIs) are facing a number of challenges in consolidating, saturating and sustaining the SHG movement. There are various constraints faced by beneficiaries as well as SHG officials that act as a barrier in the

efficient functioning of these groups. Sharma et al (2015) observed a lack of marketing opportunity for the sale of value-added dairy products prepared by SHGs as a major constraint. Constraints like insufficient finance (85%), marketing problems (74.5%), production related problems (64%) and socio-cultural problems (25.2%) were the major constraints faced by the respondents (Sucharita and Bishnoi, 2019). Keeping this in mind the present study aimed to explore the constraints faced by concerned officials of livestock based Self Help Group Promoting Institutes (SHGPIs) viz., a dairy cooperative, government and Non-Government Organization (NGO) in Ludhiana district of Punjab.

Materials and Methods

The present study was carried out in Ludhiana district of Punjab. Ludhiana district was purposively selected based on the large number of livestock based functional women Self Help Groups (SHGs). In order to find out the constraints faced by officials of SHGs, a total of 30 concerned officials were selected randomly i.e. 10 from each SHGPI viz., a dairy cooperative, government and Non-Government Organization (NGO). To analyze various constraints faced by officials, a structured interview schedule was developed. The data were collected by face to face interview using a pre-tested structured schedule. Garrett's ranking technique was used to prioritize the different sets of constraints in terms of their mean score. According to Garrett's ranking technique, the respondents were asked to enumerate and assign ranks to different constraints, which were used for the prioritization of constraints. The orders of merit as given by the respondents were converted into ranks, by using the following formula:

$$\text{Per cent position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.50)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for i th problem by j th individual.

N_j = Number of problems ranked by the j th individual.

The per cent position of each rank was then converted into scores, by referring to the table, as given by Garrett. The scores of individual respondents for a particular problem were added and divided by the total number of respondents. The mean scores for all the constraints were arranged in descending order, and thus, ranks were assigned to prioritize the constraints.

Results and Discussion

The SHG development personnel of the dairy co-operative, government and NGO were asked to rate the seriousness of constraints in the organization and functioning of Self Help Groups. Constraints were ranked as per their seriousness.

Constraints faced by Dairy Cooperative Officials

The constraints perceived by dairy co-operative officials of SHGs are presented in Table 1. It was found that "inadequate number of staff at field level and a large area of operation under a single supervisor" was ranked first (mean score: 61.70) by most of the officials of NGOs and they perceived it very serious. "Poor attitude of the members" (mean score: 59.20); and "lack of participation at members level" (mean score: 54.30); were ranked second and third most important constraints as faced by the dairy co-operative officials.

Table 1. Constraints faced by Dairy Cooperative Officials

S.No.	Constraints faced by dairy co-operative officials	Mean score	Rank
1.	Inadequate guidance and cooperation among the line departments	51.30	VI
2.	Poor attitude of the members	59.20	II
3.	Inadequate number of staff at field level and large area of operation under a single supervisor	61.70	I
4.	Lack of participation at members level	54.30	III

5.	Lack of incentives for officials	51.90	V
6.	Inadequate TA & DA facilities for the officials	46.30	VII
7.	The budget earmarked for a particular activity is diverted towards other activities	53.10	IV

The other constraints include, "budget earmarked for a particular activity is diverted towards other activities" (mean score: 53.10); "lack of incentives" (mean score: 51.90); "inadequate guidance and cooperation among the line departments" (mean score: 51.30); and "inadequate TA & DA facilities for the officials" (mean score: 46.30), which were ranked as 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th respectively, by the dairy co-operative officials on the basis of the mean score.

Constraints faced by Government Officials

Constraints faced by the Government officials are presented in Table 2 in the order of their seriousness. Inadequate staff for regular follow up of SHGs (mean score: 67.40) was rated as the most serious constraint and ranked first while lack of advertisement at the farmer level (mean score: 64.80) was ranked second by the government officials.

Table 2. Constraints faced by Government officials

S.No.	Constraints faced by Government officials	Mean score	Rank
1.	Non cooperation on the part of members cause problem	43.30	V
2.	The budget earmarked for a particular activity is diverted towards other activities	56.10	III
3.	Lack of transport facilities for officials to visit the various SHGs	54.70	IV
4.	Lack of advertisement at farmer level	64.80	II
5.	Inadequate staff for regular follow ups of SHGs	67.40	I

The other constraints such as "budget earmarked for a particular activity is diverted towards other activities" (mean score: 56.10); "lack of transport facilities for officials to visit the various SHGs" (mean score: 54.70); and "non cooperation on the part of members cause problem" (mean score: 43.30); were ranked as 3rd, 4th and 5th constraints by the government officials.

Constraints faced by NGO Officials

It can be observed from the Table 3 that "lack of required skill based training to the members" (mean score: 68.10) was the most serious constraint faced. The second most serious constraint was "lack of public participation" (mean score: 62.70), followed by "poor governance and networking" (mean score: 53.90) and "absence of cohesive and strategic planning" (mean score: 50.00); which were ranked third and fourth by the NGO officials.

Table 3. Constraints faced by NGO officials

S.No.	Constraints faced by NGO officials	Mean score	Rank
1.	Lack of funds	34.00	VIII
2.	Lack of dedicated leadership	42.00	VII
3	Absence of cohesive and strategic planning among the NGO personnel	50.00	IV
4.	Inadequate trained personnel	43.30	VI
5.	Lack of public participation	62.70	II
6.	Lack of required skill based training to the members	68.10	I
7.	Limited technical and organizational capacity	44.70	V
8.	Poor governance and networking	53.90	III

The remaining constraints include "limited technical and organizational capacity" (mean score: 44.70); "inadequate trained personnel" (mean score: 43.30); "lack of dedicated leadership" (mean score: 42.00); and "lack of funds" (mean score: 34.00); which were ranked as 5th, 6th 7th and 8th respectively by the NGO officials on the basis of their mean score.

Conclusion

SHGs are facing certain problems in performing their functions which are affecting their growth. It could be concluded from the findings of this study that inadequate staff at the field level and large area of operation under a single supervisor was the most serious constraint perceived by SHG officials so there is a dire need for more appointments of officials at the field level. There is a need to conduct training programmes in the study area, at regular intervals to enhance capacity building of officials. Lack of public participation was another major constraint among SHGPIs. People's participation must be promoted for the smooth functioning of SHGs. SHG officials must be encouraged by providing them with incentives and rewards for good work done by them.

The attention of policy makers is needed for more interaction among the beneficiaries and officials, promotion of aggressive extension activities for awareness and capacity building of livestock based SHGs.

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