

shows that, there was a significant relationship between awareness of respondents about their rights with their membership in organization in the domain of marriage at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that membership in organization such as SHGs give ample scope to the respondents to interact with other women which helped them to develop awareness regarding their rights on marriage.

**Table 3.2. Relationship between awareness of respondents about their rights with selected independent variables in the domain of Maintenance**

Independent variable	r-value	t-value
Age	0.13	1.34 <sup>NS</sup>
Education	0.09	0.87 <sup>NS</sup>
Member of organization.	0.72	10.37 <sup>**</sup>
Mass media exposure	0.03	0.32 <sup>NS</sup>

<sup>\*\*</sup> Significant at 1% level of significance

It is evident from the Table 3.2 that there was no significant relationship between awareness of respondents about their rights with age, education and mass media exposure in the domain of maintenance. However, a significant relationship was found between awareness of women about their rights with their membership in organization in the domain of maintenance at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence, it is concluded

that women should be encouraged to become member of some or other organization there by update their knowledge and awareness in different aspects of life through some constructive interaction among the members of the organization such as Self Help Groups.

## CONCLUSION

The investigator concludes from the present investigation that there was a significant relationship between awareness of the respondents about their rights with their membership in organization. Membership in organization give ample scope to an individual to interact with fellow women which helps her to develop awareness regarding different aspects. Membership in organization was found highly significant with the two areas of women's rights. Hence it is concluded that women should be encouraged to become member of some or other organization there by update their knowledge and awareness in different aspects of life through some constructive interaction among the members of the organization such as Self Help Groups. Rural women should also be helped to exercise their rights with proper care and support from different educational institutions and organizations working for rural development through adequate counselling and intervention programme planned meticulously.

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## Economic Empowerment of Women through Livestock Based Entrepreneurial Activities of Self Help Groups

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### ABSTRACT

*This study was carried out in purposively selected Ranchi district of Jharkhand to assess the economic empowerment of Women Self Help Group members engaged in livestock rearing. Data were collected from 140 members of twelve randomly selected groups through structured interview schedule. The study revealed that half of the groups had taken pig rearing, one-third had taken goat rearing and rest (16.67%) had taken cattle rearing as their Income Generating Activities (IGAs). Involvement in livestock based IGAs provided an additional employment to the members. There was a considerable increase in the home appliances like radio, black & white TV, CD player and mobile phones of member households after joining the groups. The study also revealed that 17.14 per cent member households had converted their kutcha houses to semi pucca or pucca houses while 19.29 per cent member households had constructed kutcha sheds for their animals after joining the groups. About 19.29 per cent member households purchased vehicles after becoming the group members. Further, the study revealed that the annual income from livestock rearing and total annual household income of the members increased significantly ( $P < 0.01$ ) from Rs. 2,896 to Rs. 6,752 and Rs. 20,338 to Rs. 26,173 respectively.*

**Key words:** Economic empowerment; Income generating activity; Livestock rearing; Women Self Help Group;

Women empowerment is the most important instrument for the socio-economic development of a nation. Bringing women into the mainstream is one of the major challenges for every government (Singh, 2013). In this context, the concept of Self Help Groups (SHGs) is proving to be a helpful instrument for the empowerment of women (Sharma and Varma, 2008). SHG is a media for development of savings habit among the women. It enhances the equality of women as participants, decision makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life (Dash, 2013).

The members of SHGs take various kinds of entrepreneurial activities for income generation like sericulture, fishery, horticulture, dairy, piggy and other

farm and non- farm activities. Income Generating Activities (IGAs) provide substantial employment and income to the members of SHGs which is very essential for their economic empowerment. Through economic empowerment, one can be empowered socially, physically, mentally and through all these they are sure to be empowered politically. Thus, to investigate the economic empowerment of women through participation in livestock based entrepreneurial activities of SHGs, the present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

- i. To evaluate the employment generation and asset creation through entrepreneurial activities of SHGs.
- ii. To assess the increase in annual household income of the members through IGAs of SHGs.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in purposively elected Angara, Kanke and Ormanjhi blocks of Ranchi district in Jharkhand owing to the presence of large number of WSHGs involved in livestock rearing. Two governments promoted and two NGO promoted WSHGs engaged in livestock rearing were randomly selected from each block. Thus, a total of twelve WSHGs (with 140 members) were selected for the study. Data were collected by personal interview techniques through a pre-designed interview schedule. The change in the economic empowerment status of the respondents was assessed by studying the variables such as employment generation, possession of assets, income from livestock and total annual household income of the members, before and after joining SHGs. Statistical tools like frequency, percentage and paired t-test (*Snedecor and Cochran, 1994*) were used to draw the inferences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Income Generating Activities of WSHGs:** The results in Table 1 revealed that half of the WSHGs had taken pig rearing, one-third had taken goat rearing and rest (16.67%) had taken cattle rearing as their IGAs. The possible reason for taking pig and goat rearing by majority of the groups could be due to the fact that small animal farming is more popular as compared to large animal farming in the study area and also for starting these, it requires small amount of investment.

**Table 1. Income Generating Activities of the WSHGs**

Income Generating Activity (IGA)	No.	%
Cattle rearing	2	16.7
Goat rearing	4	33.3
Pig rearing	6	50.0
Total	12	100.0

**Change in economic empowerment status of WSHG members:**

**Employment generation:** The analysis of data on time spent by the respondent families on animal husbandry activities (Table 2) showed that on an average a WSHG household was spending about 1.35 hours in a day before joining the group. This mean time spent on various activities of animal husbandry increased to 1.8 hours after joining the group. The activities included cleaning of animal sheds, feeding of animals, taking animals for

grazing etc. The positive mean difference (27 minutes per day) indicated that animal husbandry provided self employment to the members subsequent to their membership in SHGs. The findings of this study are in conformity with the findings of *Radhakrishana et al. (2008)*, *Vasanthakumari (2012)* and *Singh (2013)* who observed that SHGs provided more employment through IGAs in the rural areas.

**Table 2. Mean time spent by WSHG members on various activities of animal husbandry**

Time spent	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
Hours per day	1.35	1.8	0.45

**Possession of assets:** Asset possession by the member household directly reflects the economic status of the family. Assets are the properties of every description belonging to the member household. Hence, it was measured in terms of change in land holdings, home appliances, type of houses, animal sheds and vehicles.

**Land holdings:** It is clear from Table 3 that there was no change in the land holdings of the respondent households before and after joining SHGs. The reason behind this could be the requirement of huge money at a single time for purchasing of land which was not possible for WSHG members.

**Table 3. Land holding of WSHG member households**

Category	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
Landless	38 (27.14)	38 (27.14)	0
Land owned	102 (72.86)	102 (72.86)	0

Figures given in brackets indicate percentages

**Home appliances:** It is obvious from Table 4 that the respondent families had purchased many household items after joining the group. There was maximum increase in the number of household items like radio, black & white TV and CD player. Few respondent families had also purchased colour TV and telephone/mobile after joining the group. However, there was no change in the number of households owning luxury items like cable connection, grinder, gas connection and refrigerator. The increase in number of household articles might be due to the increased income and accessibility of WSHG members to credit. The findings are in consonance with the observations of *Puhazhendi and Satyasai (2001)* and *Vasanthakumari (2012)* who found that there was positive influence over contribution of members of SHG towards consumer durables.

*Type of houses:* The type of houses owned is a good indicator to measure the economic status of the respondents. It was categorized as kutcha, semi-pucca and pucca based on the type of flooring, ceiling, side walls, door and windows. It is observed in Table 5 that 17.14 per cent member households had converted their kutcha houses to semi pucca or pucca houses after joining the group. However, majority of them were still living in kutcha houses. It was also observed during the study that most of the members had constructed their houses with the help of the government aid given through the welfare schemes for the BPL members by virtue of their becoming members of SHGs. The findings are in line with that of *Vasanthakumari (2012)* who reported a considerable improvement in the housing conditions of the members in the post SHG situation.

**Table 4. Possession of home appliances of WSHG member households**

Home appliances	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
Radio	48	80	32
Black & White TV	24	55	31
Colour TV	1	8	7
Cable connection	0	0	0
Grinder	0	0	0
Gas connection	0	0	0
Refrigerator	0	0	0
Telephone/Mobile	9	18	9
CD Player	19	36	17

**Table 5. Type of houses of WSHG member households**

Type of houses	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
Kutcha	112 (80.00)	88 (62.86)	-24
Semi pucca	26 (18.57)	0 (28.57)	14
Pucca	2 (1.43)	12 (8.57)	10

Figures given in brackets indicate percentages

**Table 6. Type of animal sheds of WSHG member households**

Type of sheds	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
No shed	113 (80.71)	86 (61.43)	-27
Kutcha shed	27 (19.29)	54 (38.57)	27
Pucca shed	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	00

Figures given in parentheses indicate percentages

*Type of animal sheds:* Table 6 indicated that 19.29 per cent member households had constructed kutcha sheds for their animals after joining the group. None of them had constructed pucca sheds for their animals. However, majority of them were still keeping their animals either

in the open air or in their houses.

*Possession of vehicles:* There was a considerable increase in the total number of vehicles of respondent households in Pre and Post-SHG stages (Table 7). About 19.29 per cent member households had purchased vehicles after joining SHGs. Maximum increase was recorded in the number of households owning bicycles. A shift from the small or less powered vehicles to more powered vehicles (from bicycle to moped and from moped to motor bike) was also noticed among many respondent households.

**Table 7. Possession of vehicles of WSHG member households**

Vehicle category	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
No vehicle	86	59	-27
Bicycle	49	73	24
Moped	4	10	6
Motor bike	0	4	4
Tractor	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Total	53	87	34

Multiple responses

**Table 8. Mean annual household income of WSHG member households (Rs.)**

Source	Pre-SHG	Post-SHG	Difference
Livestock rearing	2,896	6,752	3,856**
Other occupations	17,442	19,421	1,979 NS
Total	20,338	26,173	5,835**

\*\*Significant at ( $P < 0.01$ ) NS – Non-significant

*Annual household income:* It is clear from Table 8 that the mean difference in the annual household income from livestock rearing and the total annual household income between pre and post-SHG period was found to be statistically significant. However, mean difference in the annual household income from other sources was found to be non-significant. It can also be concluded from the above results that the increase in the total annual household income of WSHG members was mainly due to the increased income from livestock rearing. The results are in consonance with the observations of *Balachandran and Brintha (2012)*, *Geethanjali and Prabhakar (2013)*, *Reji (2013)* and *Singh (2013)* who reported that there was considerable increase in the annual household income of SHG members after joining the group.

## CONCLUSION

Today thousands of rural women are rewriting the definition of empowerment entirely on their own terms by tightly holding to the concept of SHGs. The study also revealed a leap of change in the economic empowerment of the members after joining SHGs. There was a considerable increase in employment and

asset holding of the members through livestock based entrepreneurial activities of SHGs. Also, the annual income from livestock rearing and total annual household income of the members increased significantly. Hence, it can be concluded that SHGs as a tool for economic development, if managed and implemented properly, can undoubtedly play significant roles in empowering women and in transforming their economic status.

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