Correlates of Effectiveness of Self Help Group Dynamics of Horticulture Farmers

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ABSTRACT

Several forces are working and influencing the process of "Self - Help Group" (SHG) Dynamics. The important personal and Socio-psychological factors which are responsible to the effectiveness of SHG Dynamics need to be thoroughly undertaken and activised on sustainable basis. Hence, the study on correlates of effectiveness of SHG Dynamics of Horticulture farmer was understand at Ernakulam, Kottayam and Trivandrum of Karala State. By using simple random sampling precedure, 180 respondents from the among the members of SHGs were selected as the sample of the study.. Well structured and pretested interview schedule was employed to collect relevant data. Statistical tools like correlation multiple regression and multivariate path analysis was employed to draw suitable inference. It was found that among the selected personal and socio-psychological characteristics, the most important variables were socio-economic status, information source use pattern, extension orientation, attitude towards SHG and scientific orientation respectively. The research article also give the suitable strategy and implication for strengthening the SHGS dynamics for sustainable Horiculture development.

Group Dynamics (GD) is concerned with the interaction of forcses among group members in social situation (Lewin, 1936). It is the internal nature of the group as to how they are formed, what their structures and processes are, how they function and affect individual members, other groups and the organisation. (Lewin et al. 1960). The 'Self Help Group' exists prior to any intervention. The members are linked by a common bond like caste, sub-caste, blood, community, place of origin or activity in these 'natural groups' or 'affinity groups' (Fernandez, 1995). Several forces are working and influencing the process of "Self Help Group" (SHG) Dynamics. The important personal and socio-psychological factors which are responsible to the effectiveness of Self Help Group Dynamics need to be thoroughly understood and activised on sustainable basis. Therefore, it is imperative that SHG's are promoted in the way that facilitates the development of a participatory and empowering euthure.

Kerala Horticulture Development Programme (KHDP) makes earnest efforts to organise farmer's SHGs with these perspectives. KHDP is a joint venture of Commission of European Communities (CEC) and the Govt. of Kerala (GOK). It aims to improve the overall situation of Kerala horticulture

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farmers by increasing and stabilizing their income (KHDP 1997). All the programme activities are converging into voluntary neighbourhood groups of about 20 farmers organised in to Self Help Groups within the pilot project areas. Each of these SHGs has master farmers in Production, Marketing and Credit who are trained to take up lead role and act as facilitators. This strategy is providing sustainability to the developmental process and ensures greater farmer participation. The present investigation is planned to study the personal and socio-psychological factors influencing the Group Dynamics of SHGs in operation under KHDP and suggest appropriate strategy to strengthen these SHGs on permanent basis.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of the present study, based on the review of previous works and discussions with experts twelve sub-dimensions related to Group Dynamics Effectiveness were identified such as participation, influence & styles of influence, decision making procedures, task function, maintenance functions, group atmosphere, membership, feelings, norms, empathy, interpersonal, trust and achievements of SHG. The measurement of first nine sub-dimensions was done with the procedure used by Pfeiffer and Jones (1972) with modifications and last three by developed scales. The quantification of the dependent variable. "Group Dynamics Effectiveness" was done by

developing an index namely Group Dynamics Effectiveness Index (GDEI).

The Group Dynamics is a multivariate phenomenon explained by a wide spectrum of personal and socio-psychological factors. These factors are so intricately associated with each other that they should not be viewed as separate entities for the study. Hence, a holistic view of all these contributing factors, only would give a clear picture of the interactional implication of the process of Group Dynamics. The selected personal and socio-psychological factors included age, education, annual income, occupation, farm size, farming experience, socio-economic status, extension-orientation, scientific orientation, mass media participation, social participation, cosmopoliteness, knowledge, attitude towards SHG, attitude towards other farmers, and information source use pattern. All these variables were measured by the already developed scales by various researchers and developed schedules.

The past experiences and ample literature indicated that for a group, to be developed as a Self Help Group, it requires a minimum period of 24 to 36 months. Therefore, three districts namely Ernakulam, Kottayam and Trivandrum, where such groups which reached the Self helping stage, were selected. From each of these districts, four different sites (panchayats) were selected and from each site, one SHG was selected comprising in total 12 SHGs. Selection of districts and sites

was by purposive and random sampling methods respectively. From each of the selected SHGs, 15 members were identified as respondents, using simple random sampling procedures. Therefore in total, 180 respondents from among the members of SHGs were selected as the sample of the study. The data were collected through personal method by the researcher using the pre-tested structured interview schedule.

The categorisation of respondent based on GDEI into two strata was done by the mean value as mean and above mean and below mean. The effect of personal and socio-psychological characteristics in Group Dynamics

Effectiveness was assessed by appropriate statistical test such as simple correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis and multivariate path coefficient analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussions of analysis of correlates of the Self Help Group Dynamics Effectiveness are depicted as follows.

The variation in Group Dynamics between different groups is shown in Table 1 and distribution of respondents based on GD in Table 2.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance in Group Dynamics Effectiveness of SHGs

Soure of Variation	Degress of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	Variance ratio "F"
Between groups	11	14368.0635	1306.1876	18.1892**
Error	168	12064.2645	71.81110	
	179			

** Significant at 1% level of significance

The ANOVA table shows that considerable variation in Group Dynamics Effectiveness among different respondents and different group, because of the significant variance ratio (F=18.1892). Group Dynamics is a multivariate phenomenon influenced by a variety of interacting factors those interplay in varying strengths.

The study focussed attention on Group Dynamics Effectiveness as a

trait of Self Help Groups resulted by the joint influence of individual members of the group generated out of skill and orientations from the past life experiences. It definitely varies from person to person, place to place, time to time, situation to situation and in turn from group to group. This might be the probable reason for the differential degree of GDEI observed among respondents.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents Based on GDEI Score

(n=180)

No.	Category	Range	Frequency	Per cent
1	Low	<61.35	86	47.78
2	High	61.35	94	52.22

The results in Table 2 showed distinctly that 52.22 per cent of respondents were in high category for the dependent variable Group Dynamics Effectiveness.

Since the operation of cultivation aspects have to be accomplished with full co-operation and co-ordination of all the members of Self Help Group it brought about adequate group interaction among the members and thereby majority of respondent possessed good GDEI score. This is the possible explanation, for majority of farmers in higher category of GDEI.

Relationship of Group Dynamics Effectiveness with Personal and Socio-Psychological Characteristics of the Farmers

The relationship of personal and socio-pychological characteristics on GDEI was established in this study by simple correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis and path analysis.

It was found that out of the seventeen independent variables, education, income, farm size, socio-economic status, extension orientation, scientific orientation, mass media participation, social participation, cosmopoliteness, knowledge, attitude towards SHG, attitude towards KHDP, attitude towards other farmers and information source use pattern were positively and significantly related with GDEI at 1 percent level of significance. However it was further observed that three variables such as age, occupation and farming experience of the respondents did not have any relationship with GDEI. These three variables were excluded from further analysis.

The multiple linear regression analysis (Table 3) revealed that the F value (68.12) obtained was significant, indicating that all the fourteen variables contributed significantly in the variation of GDEI of members of SHG. The coefficient of determination R^2 indicated that 83.99 per cent of the variation in the GDEI was explained by these fourteen variables. Out of these fourteen variables only nine were found to be significant in multiple regression analysis and those were education, annual income, farm size, socio-economic status, extension orientation, mass media participation, cosmopoliteness, knowledge and information source use pattern.

Table 3

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Personal and Socio-Psychological Characteristics of Farmers with GDEI

(n=180)

Variable No.	Characteristics	Regression coefficint	Standard partial regression coefficient	't' value
2.	Education	0.082701	0.017922	4.614451**
4.	Annual income	-0.91161	0.261563	-3.48525**
5.	Farm size	-1.9527	0.510841	-3.82253**
7.	Socio-economic status	1.689929	0.306513	5.513408**
8.	Extension orientation	1.571358	0.424332	3.703134**
9.	Scientific orientation	-0.12013	0.493377	-0.24348
10.	Mass media participation	0.166958	0.069098	2.416269**
11.	Social participation	0.069312	0.183004	0.378743
12.	Cosmopoliteness	0.63486	0.362101	1.753269*
13.	Knowledge	-1.34869	0.598409	-2.2538**
14.	Attitude towards SHG	0.713782	0.829478	0.86052
15.	Attitude towards KHDP	0.762687	0.807141	0.944924
16.	Attitide towards other farmers	-1.00644	0.686689	-1.46565
17.	Information souce use pattern	1.57132	0.639556	2.456893**

Intercept   =   5.16578   ** Significant at 1% level of significance

R^2 =   0.8399   * Significant at 5% level of significance

F   =   68.12**

Table 4

Path Analysis of Selected Personal and Socio-Psychological Characteristics of Farmers with GDEI

Variable No.	Characteristics	Direct Effect		Total indirect Effect		Largest Indirect Effect	
		Effect	Rank	Effect	Rank	Effect	Through variable number
2	Education	-0.1389	11	0.4487	10	0.2574	7
4	Annual income	0.1841	4	0.3184	13	0.2292	7
5	Farm size	-0.1572	13	0.6653	6	0.3074	7
7	Socio-economic status	0.5110	1	0.3596	12	0.2577	8
8	Extension orientation	0.2477	2	0.5819	9	0.4342	7
9	Scientific orientation	-0.0181	10	0.8313	3	0.4338	7
10	Mass media participation	0.0851	7	0.3938	11	0.2192	7
11	Social participation	0.0211	9	0.6653	6	0.3576	7
12	Cosmopoliteness	0.0846	8	0.5933	8	0.3679	7
13	Knowledge	-0.1673	14	0.9340	1	0.4240	7
14	Attitude towards SHG	0.1096	6	0.7105	4	0.4477	7
15	Attitude towards KHDP	0.1108	5	0.6799	5	0.4319	7
16	Attitude towards other farmers	-0.1431	12	0.9250	2	0.4403	7
17	Information source use pattern	0.2204	3	0.6264	7	0.4599	7

Residual effect   =   0.1475

Similarly the results of path analysis in Table 4 show that socio-economic status had the highest direct effect on GDEI, followed by extension orientation. All variables had their largest indirect effect through socio-economic status where as socio-economic status had its indirect effect through extension orientation.

CONCLUSION

Among the selected personal and socio-psychological characteristics, the most important variables were socio-economic status, information source use pattern, extension orientation, attitude towards SHG and scientific orientation respectively. These variables provide enough morale strength to the members to explore into new areas and vistas of inter-personal relations with various kinds of people and sources of information. So these variables can be suitably utilized in mobilising Self Help Group. The variables such as age, occupation and farming experience did not have any correlation with Group Dynamics Effectiveness. The holistic view of all these personal and socio-psychological characteristics would give a clear picture of the interactional implication of effectiveness of Group Dynamics.

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