

Role of Training Programmes in Strengthening Self-Help Groups: A Case Study–Based Analysis of Palghar District

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Abstract:

Training programmes play a crucial role in strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by enhancing the skills, confidence, and economic capabilities of their members, particularly women. This study examines the importance of training programmes in empowering SHG members through a case study–based analysis. Using secondary data from reports, research articles, and selected case studies from Palghar district, the study highlights how skill-based, entrepreneurial, and digital training initiatives contribute to income generation, market access, and sustainable livelihoods. The findings indicate that well-structured training programmes significantly improve the social and economic empowerment of women and support the transformation of SHGs into viable microenterprise units. The study emphasizes the need for continuous and targeted training interventions by both government and private agencies to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of SHGs.

Keywords: Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Training Programmes, Women Empowerment & Skill Development

Introduction:

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have emerged as an important institutional mechanism for promoting financial inclusion, women empowerment, and rural development in India. These groups provide a platform for women to collectively save, access credit, and engage in income-generating activities. However, the effectiveness and sustainability of SHGs largely depend on the availability of appropriate training programmes that enhance members' skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial capabilities.

Training and development programmes play a vital role in strengthening SHGs by improving technical skills, managerial abilities, marketing knowledge, and digital literacy among members. Such programmes not only support income generation but also contribute to increased self-confidence, decision-making power, and social participation of women. In recent years, government initiatives and non-governmental organizations have increasingly focused on skill-based and entrepreneurship-oriented training to enable SHGs to graduate into microenterprise groups.

In this context, the present study aims to examine the role of training programmes in strengthening SHGs through a case study–based analysis. By reviewing existing literature and analyzing selected case studies, the study seeks to understand how training interventions contribute to the social and economic empowerment of SHG members and support sustainable livelihood development.

Review of Literature:

1] **Debadrita Dev & Annesha Saha (2024)** discussed that Training programmes offered to Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) have proven to be an effective mechanism for women's development and empowerment. Such programmes play a vital role in income generation by enhancing members' skills, building confidence, and creating avenues for employment. Participation in diverse training initiatives has led to noticeable improvements in the overall performance of WSHGs. The study highlights the positive impact of training on the functioning and performance of WSHGs in

Tripura, which is essential for their sustainable empowerment. Training programmes significantly contribute to the development of WSHGs by strengthening entrepreneurial capabilities and financial management skills. Moreover, the financial empowerment achieved through these programmes not only improves financial autonomy but also ensures better financial discipline and management among WSHG members.

2] **Megha Tiwari (2021)** MEDPs and LEDPs have played a commendable role in empowering women by providing skill training and income-generating opportunities, especially for those without prior abilities or financial resources. Although these programs generate relatively small incomes, they significantly enhance women's self-confidence, decision-making power, and status within the family. Skill development programs are identified as a key factor in women's entrepreneurial growth. Several studies highlight that lack of awareness, vision, managerial skills, and innovation limits the effectiveness of such groups. Research indicates that continuous and well-designed training improves productivity, income, creativity, and entrepreneurial capacity among women. Overall, training programs have a positive and significant impact on capacity building and entrepreneurial development among women micro-entrepreneurs.

3] **Dr.K.Angelalalmingsangi (2018)** The study reveals that skill development initiatives through SHGs have a positive influence on the social and economic empowerment of women members. However, there is a need to promote additional training programmes, with greater emphasis on income-generating skills. Such initiatives not only improve earning capacity but also strengthen women's self-confidence and decision-making abilities within their households and communities. Furthermore, sustained support is essential to help SHGs evolve into viable and self-reliant micro-enterprise groups.

4] **Porinita Banerjee & Dr Shivaji N.Borhade (2016)** Thus, the study highlights that the various training programmes offered by SHGs have a significant impact on their members by enhancing skills through innovative and productive initiatives. Training and development play a vital role in empowering women by increasing their social, economic, educational, political, and technical exposure. Therefore, both private and government SHGs should actively promote entrepreneurship, managerial, and marketing skill training to support the overall upliftment of women in India.

Objectives:

1. To understand the training programmes provided to Self-Help Groups.
2. To analyze selected case studies to understand the impact of training on SHGs.

Case Study Analysis:

Case Study 1: E-Market & Digital Sales Training for SHGs in Palghar District

In December 2025, a two-day E-Market and Digital Sales Training Programme was organised for women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Palghar District under the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM-UMED). The programme aimed to strengthen the marketing skills of SHG members and enable them to access wider markets through digital platforms.

The training was attended by over 100 women SHG members from various blocks of Palghar district. Most participants were engaged in food processing, handicrafts, tailoring, and agro-based activities. The programme focused on e-market awareness, digital selling methods, product packaging, branding, pricing, and basic use of smartphones for business purposes.

The sessions were conducted using simple demonstrations and interactive discussions, making them suitable for participants with limited digital exposure. The training helped SHG members understand the importance of market-oriented production and quality presentation of products.

Overall, the programme enhanced digital awareness, confidence, and entrepreneurial skills among SHG women. This case study highlights the role of training programmes in strengthening SHGs by improving their market access and income-generation potential in rural and tribal regions like Palghar district.

Case Study 2: Oyster Mushroom & Azolla Cultivation Training for SHGs in Mokhada, Palghar

In November 2024, a two-day training programme on Oyster Mushroom and Azolla cultivation was conducted for women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Mokhada block of Palghar District. The programme was organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) with the objective of enhancing nutrition and livelihood opportunities among tribal SHG women.

The training covered practical methods of oyster mushroom cultivation, including preparation of growing material, maintenance, harvesting, and basic marketing. In addition, participants were trained in Azolla cultivation, a low-cost and nutrient-rich supplement used as livestock fodder to improve milk yield and reduce feed costs.

Women SHG members from nearby villages participated in the programme, many of whom belonged to tribal communities and were engaged in small-scale agricultural activities. The training sessions were conducted through hands-on demonstrations and interactive learning, making them easy to understand and implement.

The programme helped SHG members gain practical skills for income generation, improved awareness about nutritional benefits, and encouraged adoption of sustainable livelihood practices. This case study highlights how skill-based training programmes play a vital role in strengthening SHGs by promoting self-employment and economic resilience in rural areas.

Scope:

1. Examine training programmes for SHGs and their role in improving skills and performance.
2. Analyzes the impact of selected case studies using secondary sources like reports and research papers.

Limitations:

1. The study is based only on secondary data; no primary survey was conducted.
2. A small number of case studies are considered, which may not reflect all SHGs accurately.

Findings:

Based on the analysis of secondary data, review of literature, and selected case studies from Palghar District, the following key findings have emerged:

1. Training programmes play a decisive role in strengthening SHGs
The study clearly indicates that structured training programmes significantly enhance the functional efficiency of Self-Help Groups. Skill-based, entrepreneurial, and digital training initiatives help SHG members improve their productive capacity, confidence, and economic participation.
2. Skill development training improves income-generating capacity
Both case studies reveal that training in areas such as digital marketing, e-market access, mushroom cultivation, and Azolla farming enables SHG members to adopt low-cost, sustainable livelihood activities. These trainings contribute directly to supplementary income generation and reduced dependency on traditional wage labor.
3. Digital and market-oriented training enhances market access
The E-Market and Digital Sales Training Programme conducted under MSRLM-UMED improved awareness regarding branding, packaging, pricing, and online selling. This enabled SHG members to access wider markets beyond local boundaries, thereby increasing income potential and business sustainability.
4. Training programmes increase confidence and entrepreneurial orientation
The findings show that women SHG members exhibited increased self-confidence, decision-making ability, and willingness to adopt new business practices after participating in training programmes. This aligns with findings from earlier studies reviewed in the literature.

5. Training supports the transformation of SHGs into micro-enterprises
Continuous and targeted training interventions help SHGs move from savings and credit groups towards viable micro-enterprise units. Skill-based training, combined with basic managerial and marketing knowledge, supports long-term sustainability.
6. Training is particularly impactful in tribal and rural regions
In districts like Palghar, where literacy levels and access to formal employment are limited, practical and demonstration-based training programmes are highly effective. Such programmes are more easily adopted and implemented by SHG members.
7. Need for regular and continuous training support
The study finds that one-time training programmes are insufficient. Sustained, need-based, and follow-up training interventions are essential to ensure long-term impact, skill retention, and business growth among SHG members.

Conclusion:

The present study concludes that training programmes are a critical factor in strengthening Self-Help Groups, particularly in rural and tribal districts such as Palghar. Training initiatives significantly contribute to enhancing the skills, confidence, income-generating capacity, and entrepreneurial orientation of SHG members, especially women.

The case study-based analysis demonstrates that well-designed training programs, whether focused on digital marketing, e-commerce, or sustainable agricultural practices enable SHGs to improve market access, diversify livelihoods, and move towards financial self-reliance. These programmes also play an important role in social empowerment by increasing women's participation in economic decision-making.

Furthermore, the study highlights that continuous and targeted training support from government agencies, NGOs, and private institutions is essential for transforming SHGs into sustainable micro-enterprises. Training interventions must be practical, locally relevant, and aligned with market demand to ensure long-term impact. In conclusion, strengthening SHGs through systematic training programmes not only enhances their financial and economic performance but also supports inclusive growth, women empowerment, and sustainable rural development. The study reinforces the need for sustained investment in capacity-building initiatives to ensure long-term success and resilience of Self-Help Groups.

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