
Women Empowerment through Self-help Groups in Sheikan Locality, North Kordofan State, Sudan

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ABSTRACT: This study was conducted in Sheikan Locality, North Kordofan State, in 2012, The objective of the study was to address the role of self-help groups project in to supported by Sheikan development company, and to investigate women problems in accessing resources and services before the enhancement made by the project. The study also aims at studying the women access to resources and services after the project and to explore the factors leading to sustainability of rural women welfare and economic empowerment through the Self-help groups' activities. The study used clustered random sampling technique however 60 households were randomly selected. The descriptive analysis indicated that education level of the participant is higher than the non-participant women which was 83.3 % and 76.7 %, respectively. The results also showed that the benefit of training for Jubraka cultivation, goats restocking and village lighting were 66.7%, 30% and 3.3% respectively. It was founded that men and women equally share all production activities (50% for each). However, in the non-participants the men production activities were lower than that of women, 40% and 60% respectively. The results showed that the community management for marriage occasions involved: catering, water collection, food preparation, catering food, milling and wood collection. results found that non-participant men performed such activities in the range of 20% to 80% where women performed the same activities within the same range. On the other hand, the participant men performance ranged from 30% to 40% where women performance ranged between 60 to 70% . The results also indicated that 83.3% of participants and 70% of non-participants distributed income on their daily consumption items which include food, watering, diseases treatment and schools fees. Women spent small part of income (16.7%) on other items such as gold, assets and utensil.

The results of the study revealed that the participating women own less numbers of livestock than the non-participant ones. Results of the study showed that 70% of non-participants suffer from malnutrition problems compared with 11.7% of participants. Also the participants suffer from difficult labour more than the non-participant. Also the results showed that 30% of non participants suffer from night blindness . The problems facing non-participant women include poverty, non-existence of health awareness and nutrition problems. The results showed that 65% of the participants thought that the financing amounts were not suitable and not enough for Jubraka cultivation. 60% of the participating communities determined that the financing amounts were suitable for goats restocking activity where it was shown that (75%) of the participants thought that the financing amounts were suitable for village lightening activity.

Keywords: Empowerment, Descriptive analysis, participants, poverty, malnutrition.

INTRODUCTION

North Kordofan state is situated in central-western Sudan at the northern edge of the Savanna belt. The region is semi-arid and characterized by recurrent episodes of drought and increasing desertification. It is located between longitudes 27.00 east and latitudes 12.20 and 16.40 north, (Daw El Bait, 1999). According to NKRDP 2004 empowerment usually aims of development ability of women depend on themselves organized their selves to destruction of all various followed, women social, economic, and political. The empowerment approach also recognizes that women’s experience is very varied, tempered by other factors such as class, race, age, and so on. The empowerment approach openly acknowledges the centrality of power – asserting that women have to get more of it in order to change their position, (Elfadil, 2004).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Secondary data were collected via Questionnaires as well as 60 households were randomly selected. The study used clustered sampling technique while SPSS software was run for descriptive measures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution due to Education level

The education level of the participant is higher than the non-participant which was 83.3 % and 76.7 %, respectively. This result entails that the level of general awareness among participants is better than non-participants. This result agreed with what had been said by Desai, 2010/14 education had been regarded as a key to women’s empowerment for its ability to raise awareness and open possibilities as well as link to economic growth and children health.

Table 1. Education Level of Participants and Non-participants

Education Level	Participants		Non Participants	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	5	16.7	7	23.3
Primary	15	50.0	16	53.3
Intermediate	5	16.7	5	16.7
Higher	5	16.7	2	6.7
Total	30	100	30	100

Source: researcher field work 2011

Evaluation of training programme

Results of the study indicated that the benefit of training for Jubraka cultivation, goats restocking and village lighting were 66.7%, 30%, 3.3% and 33.3%, 70% and 96.7% for not benefit, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2. Evaluation of Training done for SHGs to the participants, N= 30

Type of Activities	Participant Benefit		Not benefit	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Jubraka cultivation	20	66.7	10	33.3
Goats restocking	9	30	21	70.0
Villages lightening	1	3.3	29	96.7

Source: researcher field work 2011

distribution of Financing amount

the results showed that 65% of the participants thought that the financing amounts were not suitable and not enough for Jubraka cultivation. 40% of the participating communities determined that the financing amounts were suitable for goats restocking activity where it was shown that 75% of the participants thought that the financing amounts were suitable for village lightening activity. This is a good sign that Access to the bank was not an easy job for the project due to the bank guarantee obstacles, Table(3). In addition this result coincides with what had been said by Asian development Bank 2013 financial services in rural areas is most often weak or nonexistent.

Table 3. Financing Amount to participants, N = 30

Activity	Participant Suitable		Not suitable	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Jubraka cultivation	7	35.0	13	65.0
Village lighter	6	75.0	2	25.0
Goats restocking	8	40.0	12	60.0

Source: researcher field work 2011

Distribution of livestock ownership

The results of the study revealed that the participating women own less numbers of livestock than the non-participant ones. These results indicated that the project targeted the poor households women. These results reconcile with the results reported by Abakar (2002). The project had no effect on the numbers of livestock owned by participating communities, Table (4).

Table 4. Average Number of Live Stocks

Type of live Stock	Participant			Non Participant		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Sheep	-	-	-	1	25	12
Goat	1	3	2	1	9	3
Cattle	0	0	0	3	6	4
Camel	0	0	0	0	2	1
Poultry	2	9	4	1	10	4
Donkey	-	-	-	1	5	2
Total	3	12	6	6	57	26

Source: researcher field work 2011

Distribution of income gained

The results of the study observed that participant women productivity of different type of crops (millet, sorghum, groundnut, sesame, okra, roselle (karkadih) and beans) were higher than non-participants. This means that more income from participants was devoted and distributed to family needs (Tables 5).

Distribution of health problem

Results of the study showed that 70% of participants suffer from malnutrition problems compared with 11.7% of non-participants. This results goes with what had been said by Claros and Zahidi 2005 women particular vulnerable to violence is perhaps the most obvious aspect of reduce physical security and integrity of person. Also the non-participants suffer from difficult labour more than the participant which showed that 30% of non participants suffer from night blindness . The problems of women in SHGs include poverty, non-existence of health awareness and nutrition problems. These results imply that the participants benefit from the training received and improved their health status (Table 6).

Table 5. Income of the Participants and Non-participants

Crops	Participants productivity per mokhamas(0.74 ha)	Price/ Kontar(100 lbs)	Income per mokhamas	Non Participants productivity per mokhamas	Price /kontar	Income average in SDG per mokhamas
Millet	0.31	252	78.12	0.074	252	18.648
Sorghum	0.40	177	70.8	0.194	177	34.338
Groundnut	0.53	93.1	49.343	0.57	93.1	53.067
Sesame	0.76	152.4	115.824	0.131	152.4	19.9644
Karkadih	12	122.2	1466.4	1.02	122.2	124.644
Beans	0	201	0	0.23	201	46.23

Source: researcher field work 2011

Table 6. The Health Problems that Faced Participants and Non-participant Women

Health Problem	Participant		Non Participant	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Malnutrition	3	11.7	21	70
Difficult Labour	27	88.3	-	00
Night Blindness	-	00	9	30
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0

Source: researcher field work 2011

Distribution of production activities

The results of the study found that productive roles included production activities (Jubraka cultivation, Goats restocking and village lighter) were showed that men and women equally share all production activities (50% for each) and that mean the participants women benefits more than non-participants women because they share all activities with the men. However, in the non-participants the men production activities were lower than that of women, 40% and 60% respectively (Table 6).

Table: 7 Distribution of production activities

Productive role	Participant Frequency		Percent		Nonparticipant Frequency		Percent	
	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
Production Activities	-	5	50.0	50.0	5	5	50.0	50.0
Jubraka cultivation			-	-	4	6	40.0	60.0
Jubraka cultivation		5			2	8	20.0	80.0
Goats restocking and village lighter			50.0	50.0				

Distribution of community management

The results showed that the community management for marriage occasions involved: catering, water collection, food preparation, catering food, milling and wood collection. The result found that non-participant men performed such activities in the range of 20% to 80% where women performed the same activities within the same range. On the other hand, the participant men performance ranged from 30% to 40% where women performance ranged between 60 to 70% (Table 7).

Table 8. Distribution of community management

Role	village	Participant Frequency		Percent		Nonparticipant Frequency		Percent	
		men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
Catering	sunut					8	2	80.0	20.0
	Jubraka	4	6	40.0	60.0				
Water	Sunut					7	3	70.0	30.0
	Jubraka								
Food	Sunut					2	8	20.0	80.0
	Jubraka	3	7	30.0	70.0				
Catering food	Sunut					3	7	30.0	70.0
	Jebal kordofan	6	4	60.0	40.0				
Milling	Sunut					9	1	90.0	10.0
	Jebal kordofan	4	6	40.0	60.0				
Wood	Sunut					9	1	90.0	10.0
	Jebal Kordofan	4	6	40.0	60.0				

Source: researcher field work 2011

CONCLUSION

The result showed that the education level of women participants in self- help groups was better than Non Participant. The community management roles are both women and men engagements. Women participants in the self-help groups benefited from the training they received and their health status was improved. The financing amount received was not suitable in comparison to activities needed to be performed. Women participants in self-help groups have less number of livestock than non-participants due to poverty as initial situation of women self-help groups. Most of all women participants and non-participants in self-help groups distributed their income on daily consumption bases. Women groups distributed income on other items purchasing such as gold, assets, and utensil which affected positively the economic situations of women. participants suffer from malnutrition problems compared with of non participants. It is found that productive roles included production activities (Jubraka cultivation, Goats restocking and village lighter) showed that, men and women equally share all production activities. In community management activities, non participant men and women perform better than the participant men within the same range. Finally the study recommended that, generalization of the idea of self-help groups in all sheikan localities is vital and the involvement of women in decision making is needed.

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