



Participation of Women in Delivering Health and Nutrition Outcomes: Evidence from a qualitative study in Andhra Pradesh, India.

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INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is recognized as a crucial factor in improving health and nutrition outcomes. However, in South Asia, persistent gender inequality and poverty pose significant challenges. Women-led self-help groups, often utilized to deliver development and government interventions, have been instrumental in empowering women. Therefore, this study aims to examine the potential impact of these groups on reducing childhood stunting in Andhra Pradesh.

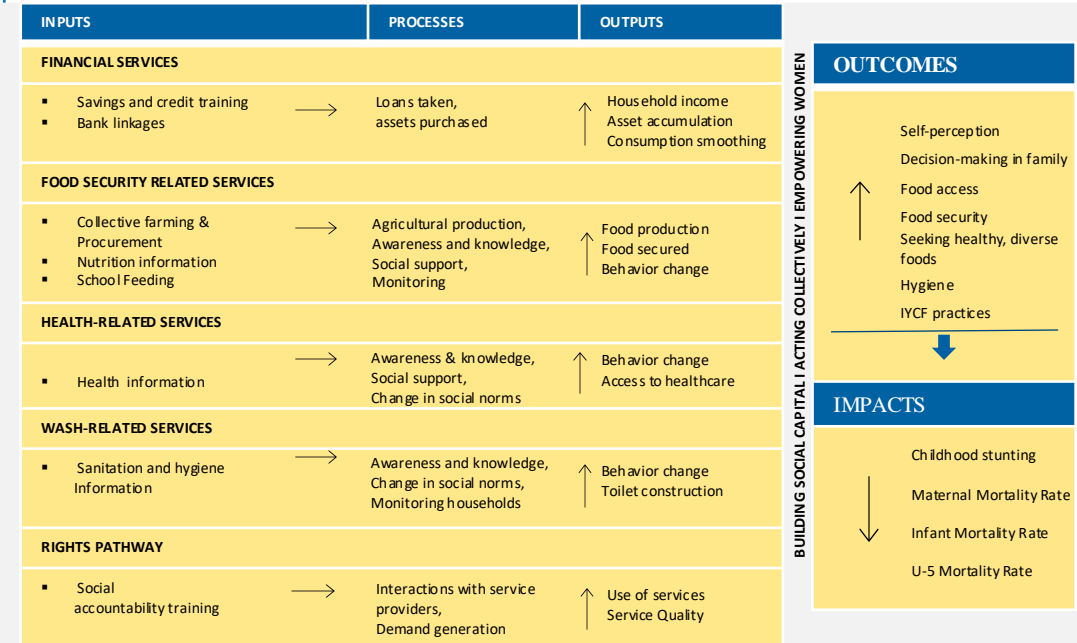
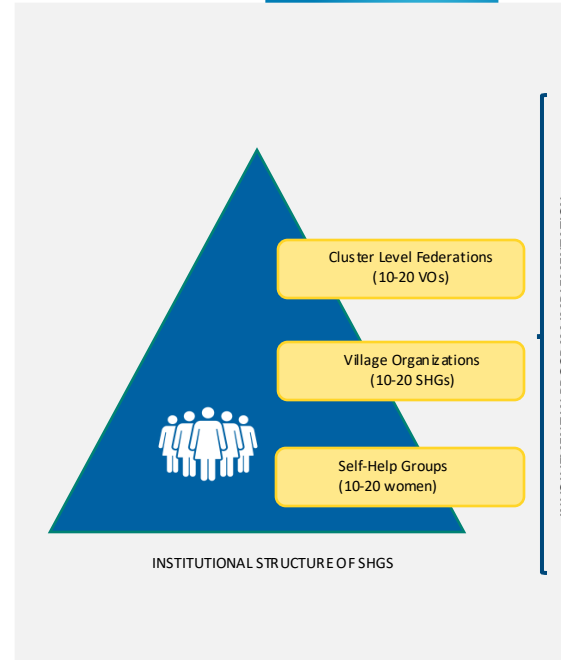
METHODOLOGY

Study Design: Qualitative case study

Data Sources: Literature review, policy document analysis and 127 stakeholder interviews (SHG members, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers). Data collection occurred between April and September 2022

Data Analysis: Findings integrated from various sources using Conceptual framework that links women's groups to maternal and child nutrition (from Kumar et al., 2018). Data organization and coding were conducted using NVivo 12.

Ethical Considerations: PGIMER Chandigarh's ethics review committee.



RESULTS

Women's economic empowerment, facilitated by poverty alleviation programs and involvement in implementation of development and governmental interventions, have influenced their self-perception, decision-making abilities, and knowledge of health nutrition and social issues. This empowerment has led to improved food security, maternal nutrition, and childcare practices, demonstrating a significant reduction in childhood stunting from 42.3% to 30% between 2005-06 and 2015-16. This progress has been accompanied by improvements in maternal health indicators such as maternal mortality rate, infant mortality rate, and under-five mortality rate. Additionally, there has been a decline in early marriage and an increase in women's BMI, suggesting positive changes in overall health and well-being.

CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment through SHGs has been instrumental in improving child nutrition in Andhra Pradesh. By enhancing women's agency and knowledge, these programs have contributed to reduced child stunting and improved maternal and child health outcomes. Although there are existing systemic barriers which can be further explored and discussed.

References:

Kumar, N., Scott, S., Menon, P., Kannan, S., Cunningham, K., Tyagi, P., ... Quisumbing, A. (2018). Pathways from women's group-based programs to nutrition change in South Asia: A conceptual framework and literature review. *Global Food Security*, 17, 172–185.