
Women Empowerment in Nagaland with special reference to NSRLM- A Study in Dimapur District

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Abstract

The Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) has played an important role in women empowerment in Dimapur District Nagaland by offering them platforms for achieving economic self-sufficiency and helping them engage actively in their localities. The programs for women empowerment under NSRLM include SHGs (Self Help Groups), SVEP (start-up village entrepreneurship program), and Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojna (MKSP) to name a few. The first objective of the research article is to explain the programs for women empowerment and the second objective is to discuss the market linkages offered through NSRLM for women empowerment. The study uses a descriptive and analytical approach for collecting data. Books, research journals, articles, newspapers, and government documents were referred to collect secondary data. Under the NSRLM, women in Nagaland have successfully surpassed traditional gender roles, improved their social standing, and made huge contributions to the economic progress of their families and communities. NSRLM has also successfully implemented a framework for community engagement bringing up women's self-confidence in society. These significant efforts have improved women's financial well-being and their social and cultural involvement.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Skill Development, Market Linkages, Gender Equality, Community Engagement

Introduction

Women empowerment is an essential component of socioeconomic growth, particularly in countries where gender inequities have traditionally resulted in fewer possibilities for women. Steps and efforts for women empowerment have grown substantially in recent years in the Dimapur district of Nagaland. The Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) is a scheme launched to improve the rural livelihoods of women by empowering them and providing them with social support, market linkages, and skill development opportunities. These initiatives have not only enhanced the economic standing of women but have also made it easier for them to participate in socially and culturally significant activities. The Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Movement (NSRLM) has had on the empowerment of women in Nagaland. It also highlights the important role that livelihood missions have in promoting gender equality and sustainable development in the district. The purpose of this study is to shed light on how targeted interventions can lead to dramatic changes in the lives of women by empowering them in Dimapur, thereby contributing to greater societal progress. This will be accomplished through a comprehensive review of the programs that NSRLM has implemented and the results that they have produced. NSRLM has played a crucial role in fostering women empowerment in Dimapur. NSRLM has been implementing a range of initiatives and schemes to improve the socio-economic condition of women in rural parts of Nagaland. A primary objective of NSRLM is to offer skill development training to women, empowering them to achieve economic autonomy and make a financial contribution to their families. NSRLM has encouraged women to become entrepreneurs by facilitating the formation of self-help organizations and granting them access to financing facilities.

Women empowerment is a complex process that involves several aspects of society, economy, and politics. Its goal is to increase women's ability to make important decisions and have access to chances for personal growth. Within the framework of Nagaland, the discussion surrounding women empowerment is closely connected to the area's distinct cultural history, socioeconomic difficulties, and changing political environment. Throughout history, the Naga culture has predominantly adhered to a patriarchal structure, where women have traditionally been assigned subordinate positions according to customary practices and traditions. Women were predominantly restricted to domestic domains, with their involvement in agriculture and other essential occupations frequently disregarded and underestimated. Although Naga tribal society is known for its communal and egalitarian values, the decision-making processes within families and communities are primarily controlled by men. The Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) has played an important role in this innovative process and also has played a key role in promoting women empowerment by implementing a comprehensive strategy that encompasses skill enhancement, market connections, social support networks, and financial integration in the district. NSRLM strives to alleviate poverty and dependency by prioritizing the improvement of rural women's livelihoods, thereby empowering them and developing a sense of self-worth and independence. The empowerment of women in Dimapur district of Nagaland has been significantly advanced in recent decades due to the global movement for gender equality, as well as India's constitutional and legislative frameworks. The Indian Constitution also ensures gender equality by granting equal rights to both men and women. Additionally, several legislations have been implemented to protect women's rights, enhance their well-being, and eradicate discriminatory behaviors.

Skill Development:

Nagaland is home to a wide range of tribal communities, each having its own unique cultural history and social structures. Historically, the Naga community has always followed a patriarchal structure, where women have played vital but frequently unacknowledged roles in agriculture, family administration, and crafts. Women, although making considerable contributions have always been assigned roles in both family and decision-making in society. The Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) is a key component of this transition, with the primary objective of improving the livelihoods of rural communities. It adopts a comprehensive approach that encompasses skill development, financial inclusion, and social assistance it aims to empower women by prioritizing the enhancement of their skills and providing them with the necessary information, abilities, and resources to engage in the economy and society actively. By implementing focused training and capacity-building initiatives, women are given the tools and knowledge to establish their enterprises, enhance efficiency in current businesses, and obtain employment opportunities across different industries. The skill development training provided by NSRLM includes a variety of activities that are specifically intended to address the different requirements and ambitions of women in Dimapur. The training programs encompass both traditional crafts, like as weaving, pottery, and handloom, which are essential to the cultural identity of the Naga people, and contemporary skills, including computer literacy, entrepreneurship, and vocational trades. NSRLM boosts women's employability and promotes cultural continuity and creativity by preserving traditional skills and introducing new ones. Under NSRLM program, Chumukedima Block (Resource Block) and Medziphema Block (Intensive Block) has been selected under Dimapur district. 49 villages are covered under Chumukedima block and 26 villages under Medziphema block under the program. Under Chumukedima 445 SHGs have been identified out of which 179 SHGs were purely formed by NSRLM under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, major activities taken up under NSRLM in Dimapur district for skill development include Rubber plantations, Piggery, Surf making, Dish washing soap, Weaving etc..

The skill development under NSRLM also prioritize the importance of financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. NSRLM empowers women by providing them with easier access to credit, and savings and also allowing them to make investments in their enterprises. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are crucial in facilitating this process since they offer a platform for women to gather resources, and assist one another in their economic startups in and around the district. These collaborative endeavors not only enhance individual businesses but also cultivate a feeling of community and unity among women. The influence of enhancing skills on women empowerment goes beyond the advantages in the realm of economics. Education and training elevate women's self-esteem, assurance, and societal standing, empowering them to question conventional gender conventions and engage more actively in public life. As women acquire expertise and financial resources, they become more capable of making well-informed choices regarding their health, education, and family planning, resulting in enhanced results for both themselves and their families. In addition, NSRLM acknowledges the necessity of establishing connections to the market to guarantee the long-term viability of women's economic endeavors. NSRLM also acts as a bridge between connecting women entrepreneurs and local, regional, and national marketplaces, enabling them to sell their products at equitable rates and broaden their clientele. Access to this market is essential for augmenting revenue and expanding firms, thereby fostering wider economic growth in the region.

Market Linkages:

Market linkages encompass the intricate systems and networks that establish connections between producers, particularly those operating on a small scale or in rural areas, and buyers and consumers in and around the district. These connections are crucial for ensuring that female entrepreneurs in Nagaland from the village level to the district level can efficiently promote their products and services, obtain equitable prices, and compete in both local and broader markets. NSRLM aspires to empower women economically, increase their incomes, and enhance their general quality of life by making it easier for them to access the market and also aims to establish market connections for women entrepreneurs, enabling them to access wider markets, thus enhancing their economic prospects and promoting sustainable development. NSRLM's market connection efforts is to narrow the divide between rural producers and urban customers. This entails identifying and cultivating markets for items generated by female entrepreneurs, including handicrafts, textiles, agricultural produce, and other goods that have been enhanced in value and also facilitates the connection between these producers and markets outside of their local communities, expanding their client base, boosting demand for their products, and ensuring more income stability. Through the facilitation of linkages to the market, several government agencies, non-profit organizations, self-help groups, and community-based initiatives are working together to advance the cause of women empowerment in Nagaland. These projects prioritize providing training programs that encompass topics such as entrepreneurship skills, financial management, marketing strategies, product development, quality control measures, and access to technology. These programs aim to confer economic and social empowerment upon women by equipping them with the fundamental information and tools necessary for success in the contemporary market.

Within the district of Dimapur, facilitating the integration of women into market networks has significant repercussions for individuals and the larger community within the district. Women can make a more significant contribution to the generation of household income, the education of children, the payment of healthcare costs, and the overall well-being of the family when they are given the ability to make their own financial decisions. NSRLM also serve as exemplary figures for future generations of females and drive beneficial alterations in ideas of gender roles and obligations. This is because they have been given power. The growth of market access for female entrepreneurs is facilitated by NSRLM through the utilization of digital platforms and e-commerce. Within the context of a society that is becoming increasingly digital, internet marketplaces present a tremendous potential for rural producers to communicate with consumers all over the world. Through the development of their digital abilities, the creation of online stores, and the utilization of social media for marketing purposes, NSRLM assists women. Not only does this digital inclusion improve market access, but it also gives women the ability to embrace contemporary business techniques and maintain their competitive edge in a market that is developing at a rapid pace.

Conclusion:

The efforts of the Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) have made a substantial contribution to women empowerment by offering opportunities for economic independence, the development of skills, and social inclusion. NSRLM is utilizing the capabilities of women and campaigning for gender equality, which is not only increasing the economic well-being of individuals but also bolstering the general prosperity and resilience of Naga society. This is beneficial to both the people and the community as a whole. The Nagaland State Rural Livelihood Mission (NSRLM) plays a crucial role in the state's overall endeavors to attain gender parity and promote sustainable development. NSRLM also offers a promising framework for leveraging the potential of women to propel economic and social change and also boosting individual lives and contributing to the overall prosperity and resilience of Naga society by encouraging financial inclusion, skill development, market linkages, and social support. As Nagaland progresses, women empowerment through NSRLM will continue to be a fundamental aspect and have a positive impact towards a more inclusive and fair future.

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