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A Comparative Study of The Effect of Education on the Health Literacy of Women: SHG V. Non-SHG Groups

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Abstract

The first step towards empowerment of women has always been rooted in education. True to the belief it has improved the lives of women around the globe, however the disparity that exists in the educational attainment and the health literacy of women has often been sidelined. The perception that education acts as a comprehensive solution to all the vices that women face in the society seems superficial. The status of India in this regard is reflected in the Global Gender Gap Index (2023), where the country ranks last in the health indicator. In this backdrop, this research seeks to identify the relationship between education and health literacy, and identifying the role of Self-Help Groups in improving health literacy and livelihood approaches. The study was conducted in the rural areas of Nilgiris District of Tamilnadu. A concurrent mixed method, which included questionnaire survey and semi-structured Focus Group Discussions with purposive sampling was used to recruit respondents belonging to both SHG and Non-SHG groups. The results showed that the most important predictor which led to enhanced health literacy was the participation in SHGs than the educational qualification of the respondents. Though education did have an effect on the comprehension of health issues the improved lives of the rural women was primarily due to the SHG membership.

Keywords: adaptability; co-operation; knowledge; prevention; support