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Effect of intervention on self-efficacy among rural women

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Abstract

The study aimed to explore the effect of intervention on self-efficacy among rural women. An experimental research design was employed in the study with purposive sampling technique to select 60 rural women (18 to 35 years) from four villages of two mandals of Bhiwani district in Haryana. A self-developed interview schedule was used to collect the data in two phases i.e. before intervention and after the intervention. The collected data were coded and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean, and paired t-test to study the effect of the intervention on self-efficacy. The pre-test results indicated that before the intervention, very few (3%) of the respondents had high level of self-efficacy, nearly two-fifths (45%) of them had moderate level whereas more than half (52%) of them had low level of self-efficacy. A need-based intervention was developed and given to the respondents for two weeks. Post-intervention changes were observed and it was found that the respondents falling under the high level had remarkably shifted from 3% to 30% i.e., nearly one-third of the rural women acquired high self-efficacy after the intervention. Slightly less than two-thirds (63%) acquired moderate level and only 7% of the respondents were found to have low level of self-efficacy after the intervention. Also, the calculated t-value was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted i.e. the intervention was effective in increasing self-efficacy among rural women.

Keywords: self-efficacy, rural women, self-awareness, intervention

Introduction

Self-efficacy is a personal judgment of one's capabilities to execute behavior necessary to accomplish achievements and the ability to cope with a given situation based on the skills they have and the situations they face (Bandura, 2010) [1]. It is the belief in one's capacity to complete a task, rather than the relevant skills possessed (Bandura, 1997) [2]. He also stated that a person's sense of capability influences his perception, motivation, and performance.

Rural women constitute 48.6% of the total rural population in India (Census India, 2011). They play a pivotal role in the family and community and are often seen nurturing others' needs while sacrificing theirs. High expectations and multiple demands often exert great pressure and affect their well-being. There are many studies to support that women experience more stress than men. It might be due to the overburdening of dual roles i.e. managing homes along with working in fields whereas men don't have the pressure of home-making. Self-efficacy reflects self-trust in applying control over one's reactions, motivation, behavior, and the social environment. The self-efficacy of rural women is important to identify their potential performance in stressful conditions and help them to adapt to stressful work environments (Adeyemo & Adeleye, 2008) [3] and be better empowered to manage their work and behavior (Lorente *et al.*, 2014) [4].

Rural women with low self-efficacy will experience recurring failures related to their work. It will create self-doubts and as a result, women may not even recognize their needs and suffers from psychological distress which further may hinder their personal development and self-esteem. Difficult tasks cause them to focus on the skills they lack rather than the ones they have. After failures, it is easy for anyone to lose faith in their abilities. Several studies have linked low self-efficacy to increased stress and depression.

While high self-efficacy promotes human achievements and well-being. Individuals who have high self-efficacy see challenges as things to be conquered rather than threats to be avoided. They approach potentially dangerous situations with the belief that they can exert control over them. These factors have been associated with lower stress levels and lower susceptibility to

depression (Bandura, 2010) [1]. High self-efficacy leads to the awareness of one’s flaws and abilities and helps to choose and utilize their qualities to the best of their ability. The individual sees challenges as simple tasks that must be completed and are not easily discouraged by setbacks.

Özek and Ferraris (2018) [5] studied the relevance of self-efficacy and self-awareness in career decision-making and emphasized that self-efficacy and self-awareness are essential tools to lead the individual to show his/her potential and help in capacity building with the increase in well-being.

The above considerations and the significance of self-efficacy in life incited the interest of the investigator to take up the present study. Thus, the present study aimed to assess the “effect of intervention on self-efficacy among rural women” was selected with the following objectives:

Objectives of the study

1. To study the existing level of self-efficacy among rural women
2. To develop an intervention program on self-efficacy for rural women
3. To offer the intervention program to enhance the self-efficacy among rural women
4. To study the effect of the intervention program on self-efficacy levels among rural women

Materials and Methods

Research Design: An experimental research design was employed to know the pre-existing level of self-efficacy among rural women. This design was taken up to determine the impact of the intervention program provided to rural women.

Sampling Procedure: Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 60 rural women belonging to the age range of 18 to 35 years and who are ready to participate in the study. The sample was drawn from four villages of two mandals of Bhiwani district in Haryana.

Tools for the study: An interview schedule was developed to study self-efficacy among rural women and finalized after

consulting subject matter specialists. Each statement was arranged on a three-point rating scale i.e. Agree, Neutral, and Disagree with a weightage of 3, 2, 1 and 1, 2, 3 for positive and negative statements respectively. The scores of positive and negative statements were added up to get the total score. The total score was then divided into three categories i.e. high, moderate, and low self-efficacy.

Procedure: The data were collected in two phases i.e. pre-test before intervention and post-test after two weeks of the intervention. The collected data were coded and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and paired t-test to study the effect of the intervention on self-efficacy among rural women.

Intervention: The intervention was given to the respondents in four groups i.e. 15 respondents in each group for two weeks. The intervention package was developed based on the needs identified during the pre-test. It included several instructional methods like lectures, PowerPoint presentations, videos, posters, activities, role-plays, and success stories of rural women.

Results

Frequencies and percentages were calculated to study the existing level of self-efficacy before intervention (pre-test) among rural women as shown in Table 1. To examine the changes after the intervention, a comparison of frequencies and percentages from pre-test and post-test was done as shown in Table 2. Mean differences, S.D., and paired t-test were calculated to analyze the effect of the intervention on self-efficacy among rural women as displayed in Table 3.

Table 1: Distribution of rural women based on self-efficacy level before intervention

| Self-Efficacy Level | Pre-test | |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| High | 2 | 3% |
| Moderate | 27 | 45% |
| Low | 31 | 52% |

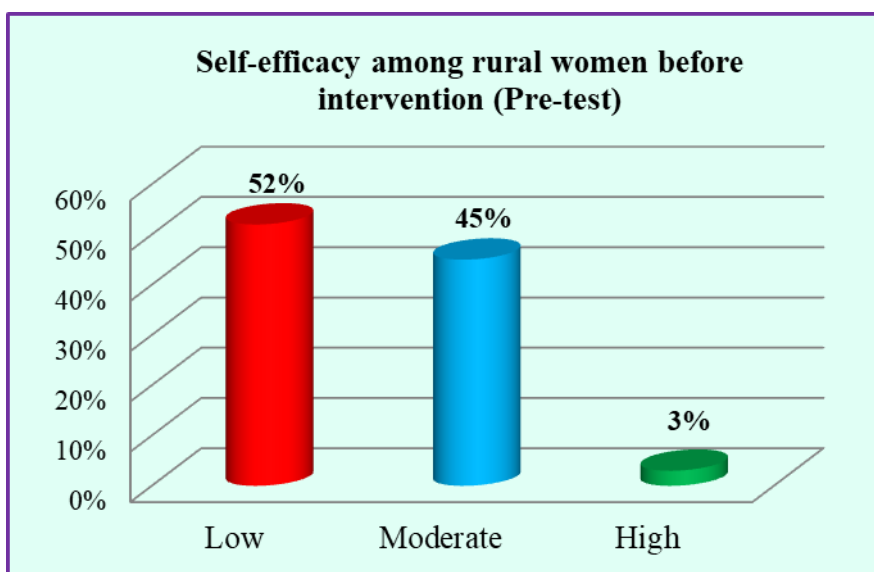


Fig 1: Levels of Self-efficacy among rural women before intervention

Table 1 reveals that more than half (52%) of the respondents had low level of self-efficacy, nearly two-fifths (45%) of them had moderate level and a scant percentage (3%) of respondents had high level of self-efficacy. It indicates that the overall self-efficacy level among rural women was low which might lead them to feel flustered.

It was observed that most of the respondents faced difficulty in finding different ways to get what they want. It was a strenuous task to stick to their aims and accomplish goals and reported issues while handling and coping with problems. They found it exhausting to think positively in critical situations and not being confident to make change even if they wanted to. Further, the respondents moderately expected that they would do well on most things they try and anticipated solutions to their problems frequently. They tended to see difficult tasks as threats they should escape, avoid setting goals and had low levels of commitment to the tasks. They were also dependent on others for help in

completing the tasks.

It might be due to low level of education, over-dependency on family, unpleasant past experiences, and failures encountered by respondents. The rural women mentioned several reasons responsible for low self-efficacy such as negative self-beliefs, low aspirations, lack of praise and encouragement from others, negative social comparisons, low motivation, being overcritical and harsh after committing mistakes, and constant intimidation by their families leading them to believe that they were not capable of doing the job and what they did was wrong.

Flammer (1990) [6] found that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs revealed strong feelings of well-being and high self-esteem. Hence, high self-efficacy can be viewed as a catalyst for increasing well-being, a foundation for motivation, personal accomplishment, and resilience to adversity and stress.

Table 2: Distribution of rural women based on self-efficacy level after the intervention

| Self-Efficacy Level | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| High | 2 | 3% | 18 | 30% |
| Moderate | 27 | 45% | 38 | 63% |
| Low | 31 | 52% | 4 | 7% |

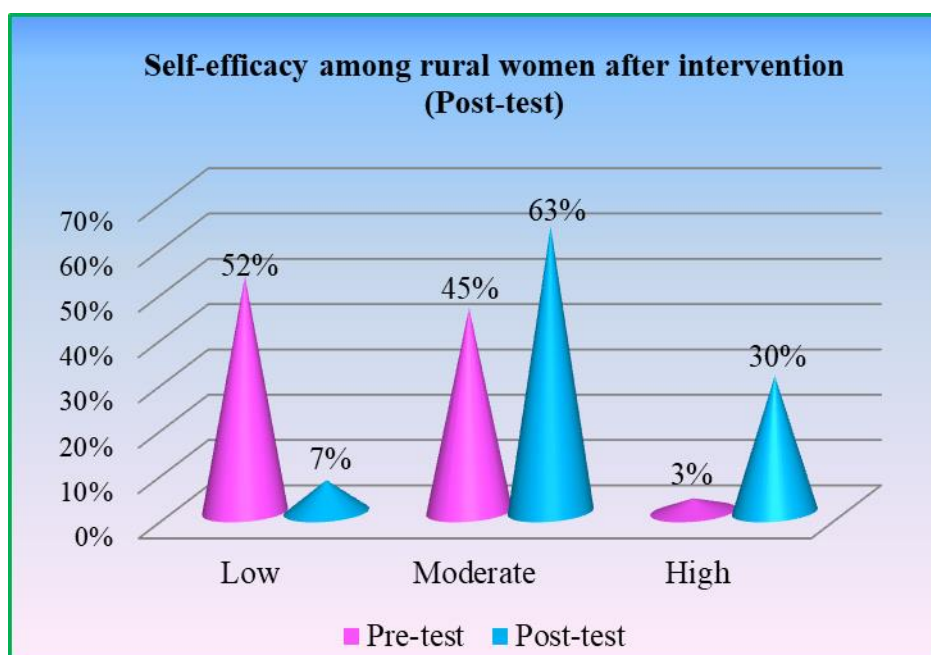


Fig 2: Levels of Self-efficacy among rural women before and after intervention

Table 2 exhibits the level of self-efficacy among rural women before and after the intervention. It can be concluded that the rural women falling under the low category before intervention had drastically reduced from 52% to 7% after the intervention and the percentage of rural women in moderate category before the intervention had considerably increased from 45% to 63% after the intervention. It is important to mention that the percentage of rural women in high category had radically increased from 3% to 30% i.e., nearly one-third of the rural women acquired high self-efficacy after the intervention program, which shows that the intervention was effective in increasing self-efficacy.

It can be noticed from the results that the level of self-efficacy among rural women enhanced after the intervention. It was

observed that the respondents were able to anticipate solutions to their problems more efficiently after the intervention. They believed that they could deal with unexpected events and solve problems effectively if they try hard enough. They became confident that they could change if they wanted to and developed a tendency to think positively in most situations. They felt that they could complete their work without assistance from others. The level of self-efficacy was increased but needed some improvement in handling and coping with problems. The gain in self-efficacy would help the respondent to trust themselves and perform daily activities better.

It can be inferred from the results that the intervention was effective in improving self-efficacy among rural women. It

might be through various skills included in the intervention like verbal persuasions, analyzing emotions, observing self-talk, positive strategies for goal setting, and reframing obstacles. These might have helped the rural women to become self-confident, taking up difficult tasks, positive self-image, and affected their level of effort and persistence when learning difficult tasks. The techniques used in the intervention were in congruence with the study conducted by Bandura (1997) [2] who identified four principal sources of self-efficacy: past performance, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional cues to increase self-efficacy. The findings were supported by (Cabaroglu, 2014) [7] who stated that improved self-efficacy refines problem-solving skills, enhances autonomous learning, and increases self-awareness. High self-efficacy promotes accomplishment and well-being in many ways. Individuals having high self-efficacy set challenging goals and remain steadfast in their

pursuit of them. They attribute failure to insufficient effort and skills which can be learned. Such an efficacious outlook breeds personal accomplishments decreases stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Bandura, 1994) [8].

Testing of Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: The null hypothesis (H_0) assumes that there will not be any significant mean difference existing between pre and post-test in self-efficacy. Or the intervention will not affect self-efficacy among rural women.

Alternative Hypothesis: The alternative hypothesis (H_1) assumes that there will be a significant mean difference existing between pre and post-test in self-efficacy. Or the intervention will enhance the level of self-efficacy among rural women.

Table 3: Mean differences in Self-Efficacy among women before and after intervention

| Self-efficacy | Pre-test | | Post-test | | Mean Difference | t value | P value |
|---------------|----------|------|-----------|------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| Self-efficacy | 17.30 | 2.73 | 21.18 | 2.87 | 3.88 | 9.32** | 0.01 |

** $p \leq 0.01$ level of significance, * $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance

The above table displays the mean score differences in self-efficacy among rural women and it can be seen that before the intervention the mean score of self-efficacy among rural women was 17.30 with a standard deviation of 2.73 which was later increased to 21.18 and 2.87 after the intervention program. The mean difference was found to be 3.88 and it can be drawn from the results that there was a significant difference in mean scores of self-efficacy as the t value was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

It is noteworthy to mention that the mean score of self-efficacy was noticeably low during the pre-test. The reason behind the low level of self-efficacy might be due to unpleasant past experiences and failures with low level of education. Negative self-beliefs, low self-esteem, high reliance on family, lack of praise and encouragement from others, low aspirations, and constant criticism and intimidation by their family members. With the help of intervention, they were made aware of their capabilities and encouraged to develop a deeper interest in their activities, a stronger sense of commitment, and recover quickly from failures. Constant verbal persuasions, past performances, emotional cues, vicarious experiences provided by social models, observing self-talk, positive strategies for goal setting, and reframing obstacles proved to be effective in increasing the level of self-efficacy.

Hence, the intervention program played an integral role in enhancing the level of self-efficacy among rural women. This finding was aligned with the study (Mathisen & Bronnick, 2009) [9] that self-efficacy can be improved through training. Bandura (1986) [10] found that individuals with high self-efficacy will have more self-awareness of their capabilities with being more active in their daily learning activities, and increase their interaction with their surroundings. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant positive effect of the intervention on self-efficacy among rural women.

Conclusion

Self-efficacy is crucial for rural women to identify their

potential performance in over-burdening and demanding situations as in rural areas. Low self-efficacy will lead them to believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities. They will focus on personal failings which will increase stress and anxiety, and lose confidence in personal abilities affecting their self-awareness and self-worth. The present study revealed that the intervention was significantly effective in enhancing self-efficacy among rural women. Rural women with high self-efficacy will adapt to stressful field-home environments positively and be better motivated for self-improvement. This will increase their self-motivation and self-esteem along with self-awareness. In the light of the above discussion, it can be concluded that intervention plays a major role in increasing self-efficacy among rural women to help them to better adjust to stressful situations and improve their self-worth and well-being.

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