

UPLIFTMENT OF SHGS THROUGH ACTIVITY CLUSTER (PRODUCER COLLECTIVES) OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT UNDER WEST BENGAL

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Selection of quality raw materials, latest design and Marketing of the finished products are big problems for the SHG members who are engaged in “Kantha and Batik” activity. To avoid this uncertainty of marketing and to reduce the risk of selecting the quality raw materials & latest design at reasonable price they are previously used to work under the middle men on per piece wage/commission basis even after forming the SHG and taking training on this activity. These middle men used to exploit these SHG members as they do not have any other alternative to sell their products. They



were not in a position to bargain with these middle men for enhancing their wage or commission .Even if some of them deny to accept the offer others agree to continue the work as they do not have any other alternative to utilize their free time to earn some money for their family. To get rid of this situation and to earn some more money 64 SHGs under Bolpur –Sriniketan Block have decided to form one Activity Cluster on “Kantha and Batik” activity in the month of February ,2009 by opening a bank account in the name of “Swapnatari Activity Cluster”.

They have selected five leaders who are relatively qualified, well trained and able to give time for the improvement of this activity cluster by improving the quality of life and livelihood of these SHG members. Previously these SHG members have no permanent marketing outlet, which can give a steady and certain market throughout the year. So they have taken the charge of one showroom

Namely “Swayambhara” at Netaji Market, Bolpur For marketing the products of all the members of SHGs. They have also linked their member SHGs with the SHGs who are producing the raw materials of this activity and as a result both the types of SHGs



are benefited. They have identified the need of standardization, quality control, design development and packaging of their products and for this purpose they are categorizing their member SHGs. They usually hold a general meeting in the first Friday of each and every month where the SHG members exchange their opinion and share their views and by this process they can find out the strength and weaknesses of the weaker groups and give adequate support to the weaker SHGs so that all the SHGs can maintain similar product quality. They are also imparting skill development training to the weaker SHGs by taking fund from the DRD Cell where the expert SHG members are working as a master trainer. All the SHGs eagerly wait for the monthly meeting as in this meeting they used to get the sales proceeds of the previous month and get the order of their product for the next month from the activity cluster. This activity cluster prepares the roster of artisans (SHG members) who are interested and eligible for the participation at different SARAS fair. For the increasing urge for marketing their products they have applied for one stall at Dilli Haat, Pitampura . P&RD Department have granted their prayer gladly for the year 2012-13 & 13-14 in the name of their Activity cluster. For making their showroom more

attractive they are displaying and selling the best products of other districts in their showroom. For making publicity of their products they are giving advertisement of their activity in the local cable, displaying banners in the important places of the district and distributing hand bills through the news papers supplies in the semi urban and urban markets etc..



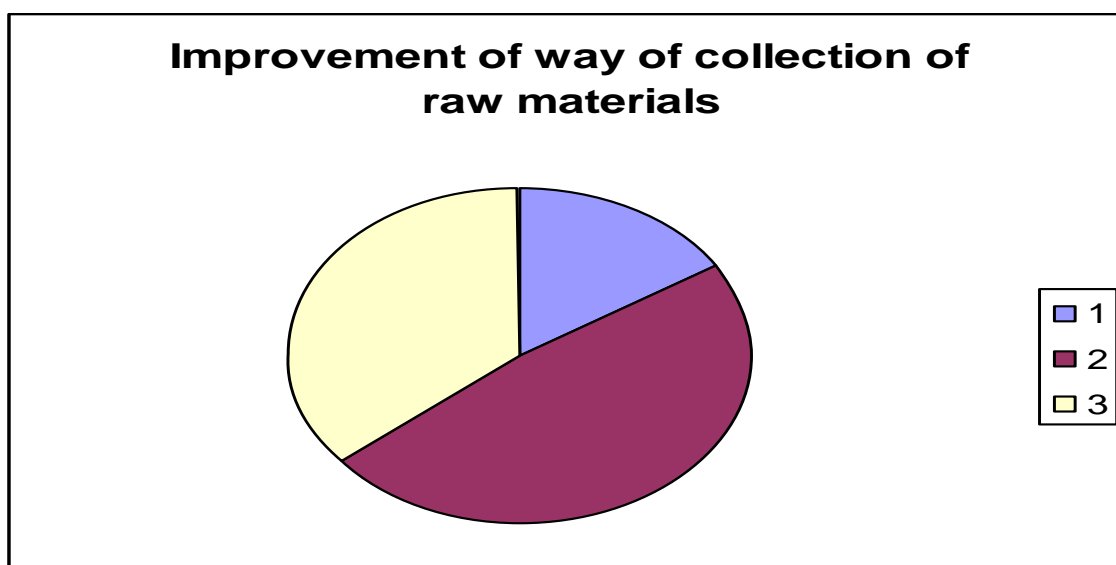
Observing these benefits more SHGs are joining in this activity cluster and at present their member SHGs are 167 out of which 152 SHGs have been able to enhance their income after joining in this activity Cluster. Majority of the SHG members has increased their family income from Rs.1,000 to Rs.2,500 per month. They are earning total Sales proceeds around Rs. 1,55,000/= per month through the permanent marketing outlets which is increasing rapidly after publicity of their products. Their smiling face is the true manifestation of their self-confidence and happiness.

Their future plan is to remove all the exploitation of middle men and to establish a brand for their products which will brighten the face of their District as well as State. For achieving this they have adopted their strategy and they want that their Activity Cluster will be a glaring examples for the SHG movement.

One survey has been conducted by me (Smt. Kakali Adhikary – Assistant Professor Suri Vidyasagar College, Suri, Birbhum West Bengal) by taking a small sample of 50 SHGs to observe the actual improvement of these SHGs after one year of joining with this Activity Cluster. These Data have been collected from the same SHGs before joining of activity cluster and after one year of joining through Simple Random Sampling (SRS) Process.

A) Improvement of way of Raw Materials Collection:-

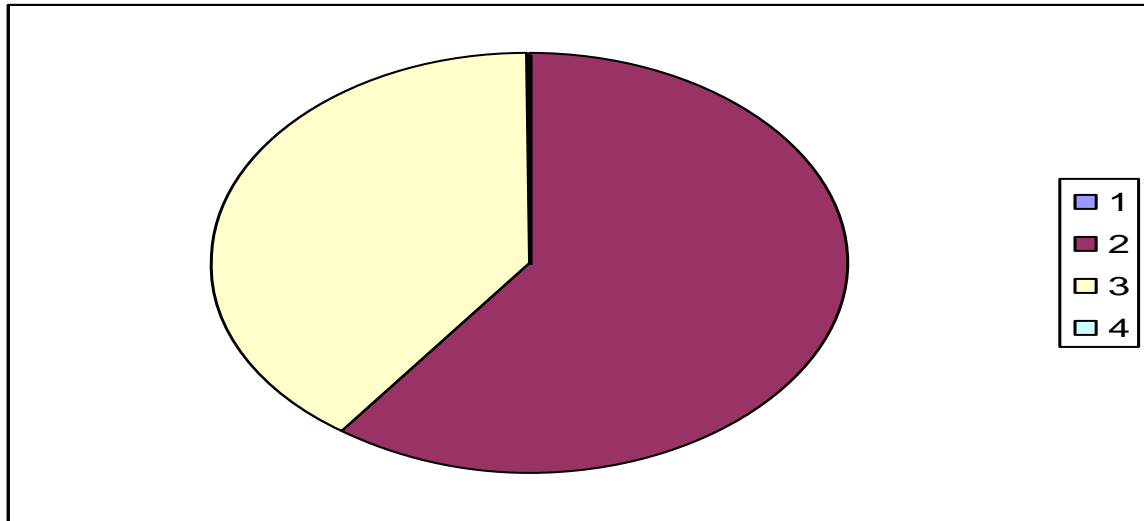
% of SHGs have not got any advantages of Raw materials collection	% of SHGs got advantages of Raw materials collection but not sufficient	% of SHGs got enough advantages of Raw materials collection
(1)	(2)	(3)
16	48	36



B) Status of improvement of Training:-

% of SHG members got design development training	% of SHG members got Kantha Training	% of SHG members got Batik Training	% of SHG members got advance Tailoring Training
Nil	24%	16%	Nil

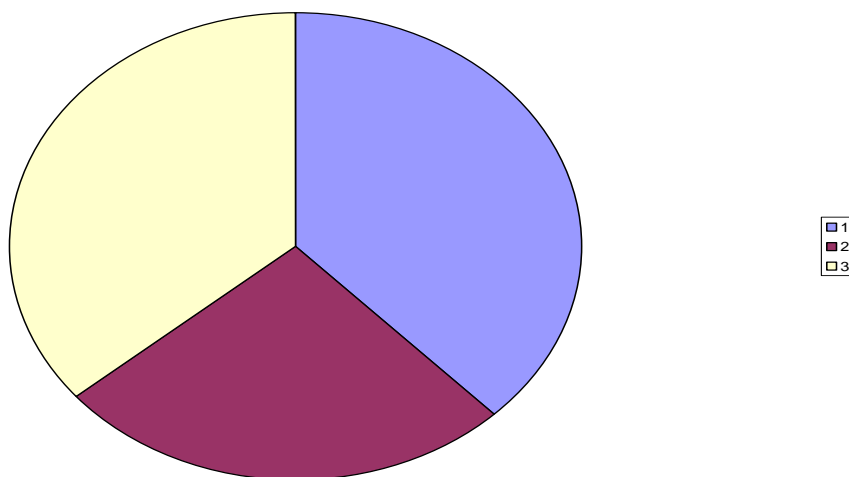
Diagrammatic representation of status of Training



C) Status of improvement of Exposure at Local, State & Nation level Fairs:-

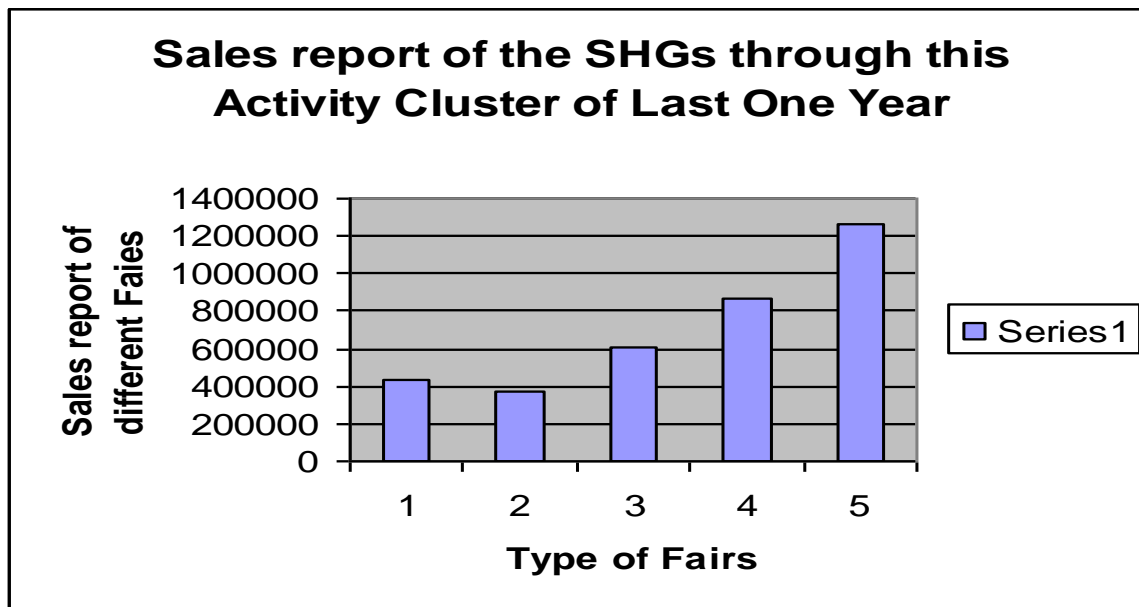
% of SHG members got exposure at Local Fairs	% of SHG members got exposure at State level Fairs	% of SHG members got exposure at National Fairs
56%	32%	44%

Status of improvement of Exposure at Fairs at different levels



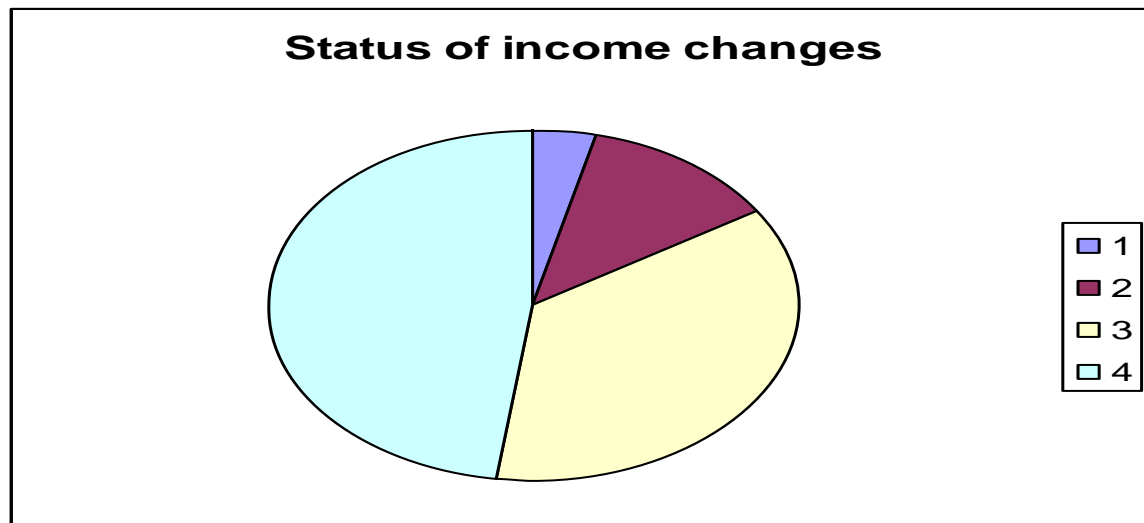
D) Sales figures of this activity cluster through different marketing Channel of last one year:-

Sales figure at district levels (Rs.) (1)	Sales at permanent marketing outlet, Bolpur (Rs.) (2)	Sales at Inter district level (State Level) (Rs.) (3)	Inter State Level (Nation Level) (Rs. In Lakh) (4)	At Parmanent Marketing outlet at Pitampura(Rs.) (5)
4,32,640	3,68,670	6,12,750	8,62,580	12,62,370



E)Status of Changes of income of these SHGs after joining with this Activity Cluster

No change of Income level	Per head Income Change < Rs.1,000/-	Per head Income Changes between 1,000/- to 2,000/=	Per head Income Change > Rs.2,000/-
4% SHGs	12 %SHGs	36 %SHGs	48 %SHGs



Referances:

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- 5) Sen Manab (2001): Study of Self Help Groups and Microfinance in West Bengal, Report of State Institute of Panchayats and Rural Development (SIPRD) Kalyani, West Bengal.