

Measuring Learning Outcomes of Social Entrepreneurship Awareness Training among Women SHG Members: An Action Research Study

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Abstract: This study explores the impact and learning outcomes of a Social Entrepreneurship Awareness Training Programme organized for women Self-Help Group (SHG) members under the CMRG Project 2024–25 by the Department of Lifelong Learning, Bharathidasan University. The primary objective of the programme was to strengthen entrepreneurial awareness, enhance business-related knowledge, and encourage women towards self-employment and income-generating activities. The training programme focused on concepts of social entrepreneurship, business opportunities, financial literacy, marketing strategies, leadership skills, and sustainable livelihood practices.

The study adopted an action research approach to assess the effectiveness of the training intervention and participant learning outcomes. Data were collected from 29 women SHG members using structured questionnaires, participant feedback forms, group discussions, and direct observation methods. Pre-training and post-training responses were compared to evaluate changes in knowledge, attitude, motivation, and entrepreneurial readiness among the participants.

The findings indicate that the programme created a significant positive impact on participants' entrepreneurial understanding and confidence. More than 90 percent of the participants reported improved awareness regarding entrepreneurship concepts, business planning, and self-employment opportunities. All participants expressed strong motivation to initiate or expand small-scale entrepreneurial activities after attending the programme. The training also enhanced communication skills, teamwork, decision-making ability, and self-confidence among women SHG members. Participants further acknowledged that the programme helped them identify local resources and social business opportunities that could contribute to community development and family income enhancement.

The study emphasizes that well-structured Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) play a vital role in promoting women empowerment, social inclusion, economic independence, and sustainable livelihood development. It also highlights the importance of continuous training, mentoring, and institutional support in transforming women SHG members into successful social entrepreneurs. The research concludes that social entrepreneurship training can serve as an effective tool for strengthening grassroots entrepreneurship and improving the socio-economic status of rural women.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Women Empowerment, Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Skill Development, Self-Employment, Sustainable Livelihood, Action Research, Entrepreneurial Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and social transformation. In recent years, social entrepreneurship has emerged as an effective approach to address social challenges while generating sustainable livelihoods. It focuses not only on profit but also on social impact, particularly for marginalized communities.

In India, women play a crucial role in economic development, yet they face barriers such as limited access to education, finance, and business opportunities. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become an important platform for empowering women through collective savings, credit access, and income-generating activities.

Training and awareness programmes are essential to equip women with entrepreneurial skills and confidence. Under the CMRG Project 2024–25, the Department of Lifelong Learning organized an Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) to promote social entrepreneurship among women SHG members. This study evaluates the learning outcomes of the programme using an action research approach.

Objectives of the Study

- To create awareness about social entrepreneurship
- To motivate women towards self-employment
- To provide basic knowledge on enterprise development

- To introduce government support schemes
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme

Review of literature

Women are increasingly involved in entrepreneurship, which is a useful tool for economic growth (de Vita et al., 2014). Women entrepreneurs can emulate the successes of gender equality by starting and growing small and medium-sized businesses that contribute to the national economy (de Vita et al., 2014; Grint, 2020; Gumusay, 2015). A study found that women entrepreneurs in underdeveloped or poorer countries have higher levels of self-confidence than those in developed nations. The only way to find work and maintain a stable home is to start their own business (de Vita et al., 2014). Hisrich et al. (1997) studied the motivations behind and reasons behind why women started businesses. According to Carney, the key component of sustainable livelihood strategies is asset identification (2004). Early in the 1990s, the concept of “sustainable livelihood” was developed to help people understand the 1980s food shortages and hunger. Additionally, the Department of International Development (DFID) began an action project in 1997 that supports one sustainable livelihood and has as one of its goals the eradication of poverty (Bhuiyan et al., 2012). The Department of International Development has identified human capital, intellectual capital, social capital, financial capital, and physical capital as assets of sustainable livelihood (DFID, 1999).

Understanding female entrepreneurship can also significantly influence economic growth and the fight against poverty (Kreide 2003). It has been determined that female entrepreneurship is a significant force for innovation and job creation (Orhan and Scott 2001). Benzing et al. (2009) found that income levels and employment opportunities are the driving factors for women’s entrepreneurship, and Bullough et al. (2015) contend that women entrepreneurs engage in entrepreneurship to effectively generate value, overcome poverty, and promote societal and economic advancement. The need for food on a daily basis, rather than for enjoyment at work or in free time, drives women entrepreneurs in developing nations. Because there are no jobs or other options for earning money, they typically engage in entrepreneurial activity as a survival strategy out of necessity rather than an opportunity. Women start businesses in developed countries because they see opportunities or want to be independent (Vossenber, 2013). When a livelihood maintains or improves the local and global resources on which it depends and has net positive effects on other livelihoods, it is considered to be environmentally sustainable. A person’s means of support for their basic needs and overall well-being is defined as their skills, possessions, and activities. Building a living is a reflection of and an attempt to meet both material and experiential needs. Livelihoods are not just a local phenomenon; they are also connected to larger national, regional, and international arenas through environmental, economic, political, and cultural processes (Castro, 2002).

Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) play a crucial role in promoting self-employment and enhancing entrepreneurial competencies, especially among women and marginalized communities. According to Joseph Schumpeter, entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic development through innovation and resource utilization.

Social entrepreneurship, in particular, focuses on addressing social issues while creating sustainable economic opportunities. Gregory Dees defines social entrepreneurship as a process that combines innovation, resourcefulness, and opportunity to create social value.

Studies have shown that EDPs significantly influence entrepreneurial intention and skill development. Albert Bandura emphasizes that self-efficacy plays a vital role in shaping individuals’ confidence to undertake entrepreneurial activities. Training programmes enhance this self-efficacy through knowledge transfer and practical exposure.

Research by David McClelland highlights that achievement motivation is a key factor influencing entrepreneurial success. EDPs are designed to develop such motivation through structured learning and experiential training.

In the Indian context, institutions like National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) have been actively promoting entrepreneurship through training, financial support, and capacity-building initiatives.

Previous studies indicate that women entrepreneurs benefit significantly from skill-based training programmes, which improve their economic independence and social status. However, challenges such as limited access to finance, lack of market exposure, and inadequate training opportunities continue to hinder their growth.

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Furthermore, research suggests that training programmes focusing on practical skills, market linkage, and continuous support systems are more effective in ensuring sustainable entrepreneurial development.

Thus, the literature clearly establishes that well-structured Entrepreneurship Development Programmes are essential for:

- Enhancing entrepreneurial skills
- Building confidence and motivation
- Promoting self-employment
- Supporting inclusive economic development

4. Research Questions

1. Does the training improve understanding of social entrepreneurship?
2. Does it influence entrepreneurial motivation?
3. Are participants willing to start or improve a business?
4. How do participants evaluate the training programme?

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts an **Action Research approach**, involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

5.2 Sample

- Total participants: 29
- Target group: Women SHG members

5.3 Data Collection

- Structured questionnaires
- Feedback forms
- Observation
- Open-ended responses

5.4 Tools for Analysis

- Percentage analysis
- Charts and tables
- Thematic analysis

5.5 Training Sessions

- **Session I:** Social entrepreneurship and women empowerment
- **Session II:** Business opportunities and government schemes

6. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Organization / Group / Training Class

Value	Count
Training Center	4
Training Class	19
Aari Work	1
SHG Group	1
Tailoring Class	1
Training	1
Aari Student	1
Aari Class	1
Total	29

Figure 1 shows that the majority of participants (58.6%) are engaged in Aari work, followed by tailoring (13.8%), indicating a concentration in traditional skill-based activities.

The findings indicate that the majority of participants were from Training Classes (65.5%), suggesting that women undergoing vocational skill development are more interested in entrepreneurship awareness programmes. Participants from Training Centers (13.8%) also showed active involvement, highlighting the role of institutional training in promoting entrepreneurial knowledge.

Although participants from Aari work, tailoring, SHG groups, and other categories were fewer in number, their participation reflects the programme's reach across diverse occupational backgrounds. Overall, the results suggest that integrating entrepreneurship awareness with vocational training can effectively encourage women to pursue self-employment and improve their economic empowerment.

Table 2: Overall Evaluation of the EDP Program

Value	Count
Good	13
Very Good	16
Total	29

Figure 2: illustrates that 89.7% of participants rated the programme as either “Very Useful” or “Useful,” indicating high effectiveness of the training.

Result and Discussion

The findings show that 55.2% of the participants rated the Entrepreneurship Development Programme as "Very Good," while 44.8% rated it as "Good." The absence of any negative ratings indicates a high level of participant satisfaction with the programme. The positive evaluation suggests that the programme effectively met the learning needs and expectations of the participants by enhancing their entrepreneurial knowledge and motivation. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Entrepreneurship Development Programme was well received and contributed positively to building participants' confidence towards entrepreneurship.

Table 3: Clarity of Training Content

Value	Count
Very Clear	23
Clear	6
Total	29

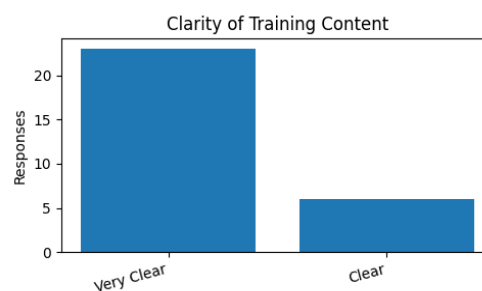


Figure 3 shows that a significant majority (79.3%) rated the training content as “Very Good,” reflecting high satisfaction with the quality and relevance of the material.

Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that the training content was well understood by the participants, with 23 respondents (79.3%) rating it as "Very Clear" and the remaining 6 respondents (20.7%) rating it as "Clear." The absence of negative responses indicates that the training materials, language, and delivery methods were appropriate for the participants' educational and vocational backgrounds. This suggests that the resource persons effectively communicated the concepts using simple explanations, practical examples, and interactive teaching approaches, enabling participants to grasp the key aspects of entrepreneurship. Overall, the results demonstrate that the clarity of the training content contributed significantly to participants' learning experience and enhanced the overall effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme.

Table 4: Trainer Explanation and Approach

Value	Count
Excellent	26
Good	3
Total	29

Figure 4 indicates that 89.7% of participants rated the resource person as “Excellent,” highlighting effective delivery and strong subject expertise.

Result and Discussion

The findings indicate that the trainer's explanation and approach were highly appreciated by the participants, with 26 respondents (89.7%) rating the performance as "Excellent" and the remaining 3 respondents (10.3%) rating it as "Good." The overwhelmingly positive feedback suggests that the resource person demonstrated strong subject knowledge, effective communication skills, and an engaging teaching style throughout the programme. The use of clear explanations, practical examples, and interactive discussions likely enhanced participants' understanding and maintained their interest

during the sessions. Overall, the results highlight that the trainer's effective delivery played a significant role in improving the learning experience and the overall success of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme.

Table 5: Opinion about Training Duration

Value	Count
Sufficient	24
Too Short	3
Too Long	2
Total	29

Figure 5 shows that the majority (82.8%) found the training duration satisfactory, indicating overall effectiveness with minor scope for adjustment.

Result and Discussion

The findings show that 24 respondents (82.8%) considered the duration of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme to be sufficient, indicating that the time allocated was appropriate for covering the training objectives. However, 3 participants (10.3%) felt that the programme was too short, while 2 participants (6.9%) considered it too long, reflecting varying expectations regarding the pace and depth of the sessions. The responses suggest that although the overall duration was satisfactory for most participants, some preferred additional time for practical activities, business planning, and interactive discussions. Overall, the results indicate that the programme duration was well balanced, with minor adjustments potentially enhancing participants' learning experience and entrepreneurial preparedness.

Table 6: Usefulness of Practical Examples

Value	Count
Very Useful	22
Useful	7
Total	29

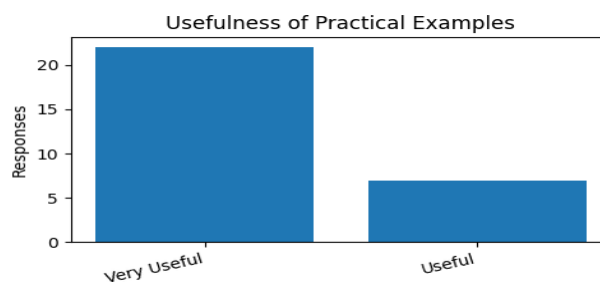


Figure 6: shows that the majority of participants (75.9%) rated the practical examples as "Very Useful," while 24.1% found them "Useful," indicating that real-life illustrations greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the training.

Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that 22 respondents (75.9%) rated the practical examples as "Very Useful," while 7 respondents (24.1%) considered them "Useful." The absence of negative responses indicates that the use of real-life examples and practical illustrations effectively enhanced participants' understanding of entrepreneurial concepts. These experiential learning methods helped participants relate theoretical knowledge to real business situations, thereby improving their confidence and problem-solving abilities. Overall, the results suggest that incorporating practical examples significantly increased the effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme and strengthened participants' readiness for entrepreneurial activities.

Table 7: Improvement in Entrepreneurship Understanding

Value	Count
Yes	28
To Some Extent	1
Total	29

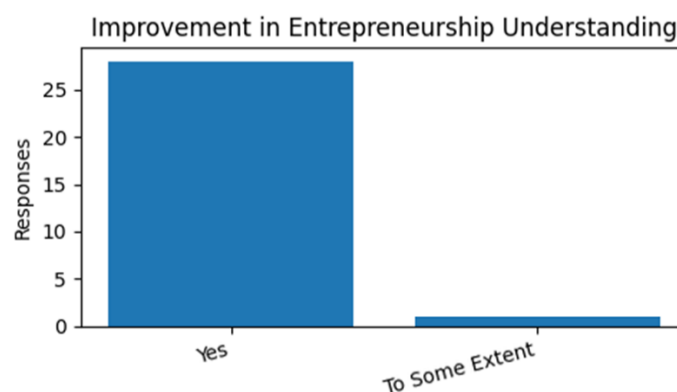


Figure 7 shows that 96.6% of participants reported an improvement in their understanding of entrepreneurship after the training, while 3.4% felt that their understanding improved to some extent, indicating the effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme.

Result and Discussion

The findings show that 28 respondents (96.6%) reported that their understanding of entrepreneurship improved, while 1 respondent (3.4%) indicated that it improved to some extent after attending the Entrepreneurship Development Programme. These results demonstrate that the training was highly effective in enhancing participants' knowledge of entrepreneurial concepts, business opportunities, and self-employment prospects. The improved understanding can be attributed to the well-structured training sessions, practical examples, and interactive discussions conducted during the programme. Overall, the findings confirm that the Entrepreneurship Development Programme successfully strengthened participants' entrepreneurial awareness and preparedness for future business ventures.

Table 8: Motivation to Start or Improve Business

Value	Count
Highly Motivated	17
Motivated	12

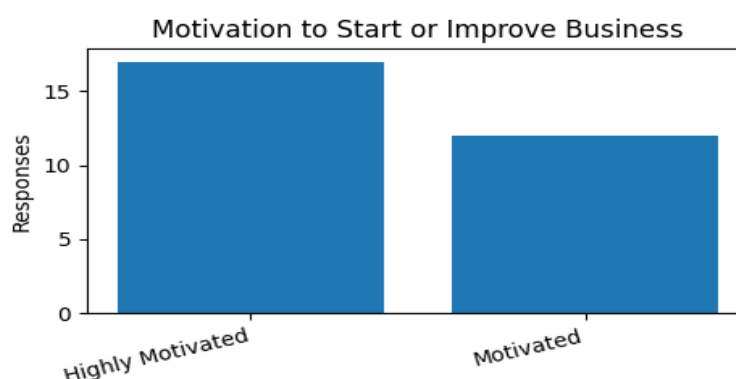


Figure 8- shows that all participants expressed positive motivation towards starting or improving their business, with 58.6% being Highly Motivated and 41.4% being Motivated, reflecting the strong impact of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme on entrepreneurial aspirations.

Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that **17 respondents (58.6%)** were **Highly Motivated**, while **12 respondents (41.4%)** were **Motivated** to start or improve their business after attending the Entrepreneurship Development Programme. The absence of neutral or negative responses indicates that the programme successfully inspired participants to consider entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option. The training sessions, practical examples, and guidance on business opportunities appear to have enhanced participants' confidence and willingness to pursue self-employment. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Entrepreneurship Development Programme had a significant positive impact on strengthening entrepreneurial motivation among the participants.

Table 9: Interest in Starting a Business

Value	Count
Yes	27
To Some Extent	2
Total	29

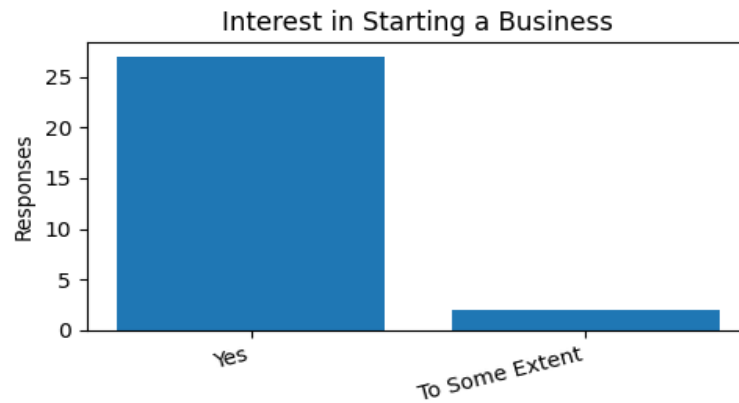


Figure 9 shows that 93.1% of participants expressed interest in starting a business after the training, while 6.9% reported interest to some extent, indicating the positive influence of the Entrepreneurship Development Programme on entrepreneurial aspirations.

Result and Discussion

The findings indicate that 27 respondents (93.1%) expressed interest in starting a business, while 2 respondents (6.9%) reported interest to some extent after participating in the Entrepreneurship Development Programme. The overwhelmingly positive responses suggest that the programme successfully enhanced participants' entrepreneurial confidence and encouraged them to consider self-employment as a viable career option. The knowledge gained through the training, combined with practical guidance and motivational sessions, likely strengthened their willingness to explore business opportunities. Overall, the results demonstrate that the Entrepreneurship Development Programme effectively stimulated entrepreneurial interest and fostered a positive attitude towards business creation among the participants.

Table 10: Interest in Advanced Training Programs

Value	Count
Yes	29
Total	29

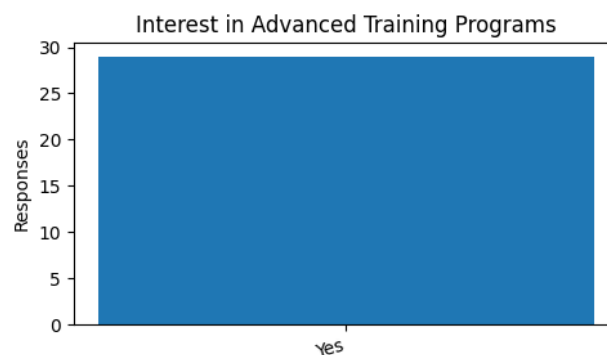


Figure 10 shows that **100% of the participants** expressed interest in attending advanced or follow-up training programmes, reflecting their enthusiasm for continuous learning and entrepreneurial skill development.

Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that all 29 participants (100%) expressed willingness to participate in advanced or follow-up training programmes. This unanimous response indicates that the Entrepreneurship Development Programme was highly relevant, informative, and beneficial to the participants. The strong interest in further training suggests that participants recognize the importance of acquiring additional knowledge and practical skills to establish and successfully manage their enterprises. Overall, the results demonstrate that the programme not only enhanced entrepreneurial awareness but also created a sustained interest in continuous learning and capacity building, which are essential for long-term entrepreneurial success.

Table 11: Recommendation of the Program

Value	Count
Yes	29
Total	29

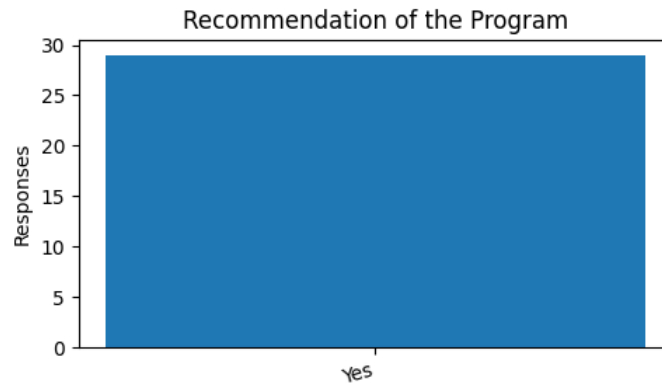


Figure 11: shows that **100% of the participants** are willing to recommend the Entrepreneurship Development Programme to others, indicating a high level of satisfaction and the perceived value of the training.

Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that all 29 participants (100%) expressed their willingness to recommend the Entrepreneurship Development Programme to others. This unanimous response reflects the participants' high level of satisfaction with the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the training. Their willingness to recommend the programme indicates that they found the sessions informative, practical, and beneficial for developing entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. Overall, the results demonstrate the success of the programme in meeting participants' expectations and highlight its potential to encourage wider participation in future entrepreneurship development initiatives.

Participants' Suggestions

Participants expressed a strong interest in tailoring training and tailoring classes to enhance their existing vocational skills. Several respondents suggested that the training duration should be extended to include more practical sessions and interactive learning activities.

Many participants requested business start-up guidance, including information on business registration, financial assistance, government schemes, and loan facilities.

Participants recommended organizing more entrepreneurship and skill development programmes exclusively for women SHG members.

Some respondents emphasized the need for continuous follow-up training, mentoring, and business counselling to support enterprise development.

The suggestions indicate that women are highly motivated to acquire advanced skills and require institutional support for successful entrepreneurship.

6.1 Skill Distribution

Majority in Traditional Work: Most participants (58.6%) were engaged in Aari work, a traditional embroidery skill.

Tailoring as Second Common Skill: 13.8% of women were involved in tailoring, indicating a focus on textile-based activities.

Limited Variety of Skills: The participants were mostly concentrated in only two types of work, showing less exposure to other vocational areas.

Need for New Skill Training: The findings suggest that women need training in new and diverse skills to explore better income opportunities.

6.2 Usefulness of Training

Very Useful for Most: 55.2% of participants rated the training as "Very Useful."

Useful for Many Others: 34.5% found the programme "Useful," making it beneficial for over 90% of the group.

No Negative Feedback: None of the participants felt the training was useless or unhelpful.

Practical and Relevant Content: The high usefulness score shows that the topics covered were directly related to the participants' needs and interests.

6.3 Training Content

Very Good Content Quality: 79.3% of participants rated the training content as "Very Good."

Good for Remaining Participants: 17.2% rated it as "Good," with no poor ratings given.

Easy to Understand: The content was delivered in a simple and clear manner, making it easy for all participants to follow.

Appropriate for All Backgrounds: The material was suitable for women with different educational and vocational backgrounds.

6.4 Resource Person Evaluation

Excellent Trainer Performance: 89.7% of participants rated the trainer's explanation and approach as "Excellent."

Good Rating for Others: The remaining 10.3% rated the trainer as "Good."

Clear Communication: The trainer used simple language and practical examples to explain concepts effectively.

Engaging Teaching Style: Interactive discussions and real-life examples kept the participants interested and helped them learn better.

6.5 Impact on Learning and Motivation

Improved Understanding: 93% of participants reported that their understanding of entrepreneurship improved after the training.

High Motivation Levels: All 29 participants (100%) expressed motivation to start or improve their own business.

Strong Interest in Business: Over 90% showed interest in starting a business in the near future.

Increased Confidence: The training helped women feel more confident about taking up self-employment and managing small enterprises.

6.6 Participant Feedback

Need for More Practical Training: Participants requested more hands-on sessions and skill-based activities.

Interest in New Courses: Many women showed interest in learning tailoring, beautician work, and food-related courses.

Demand for Regular Training: Participants wanted continuous and follow-up training programmes to update their skills.

Support for Business Setup: They also asked for guidance on business registration, loans, and government schemes.

7. Overall Impact

Increased Entrepreneurial Awareness: The programme successfully helped women understand the basics of social entrepreneurship and business planning.

Boost in Motivation and Confidence: Participants felt more confident and motivated to start their own income-generating activities.

Strong Interest in Self-Employment: Most women expressed a clear desire to become self-employed rather than depend on traditional work alone.

Positive Response for Future Programmes: All participants showed willingness to attend follow-up training and recommend the programme to others, confirming its success.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended to introduce advanced training in digital marketing, financial management, and e-commerce to upgrade participants' skills. Skill diversification should be promoted by offering courses beyond traditional crafts, such as beautician services, food processing, and handicrafts. Regular follow-up sessions, mentoring, and business counselling should be provided to ensure continuous support. Financial linkages with banks and government subsidy schemes must be strengthened to help women access capital. Finally, training content should be customized based on participants' skill levels and local market opportunities to ensure practical relevance and easy implementation.

9. Conclusion

The Entrepreneurship Development Programme under the CMRG Project 2024–25 was highly effective in promoting social entrepreneurship awareness among women SHG members. The training significantly enhanced participants' understanding of business concepts, financial literacy, and marketing strategies. Over 90% of participants reported improved entrepreneurial awareness, and all expressed strong motivation to start or improve their businesses. The unanimous willingness to attend follow-up training and recommend the programme confirms its success. The study establishes that structured, practical training programmes play a vital role in empowering rural women, building confidence, and encouraging self-employment, ultimately contributing to sustainable livelihood development and socio-economic growth.

10. Final Statement

Structured Entrepreneurship Development Programmes are essential tools for empowering women, fostering self-employment, and promoting inclusive socio-economic development. When designed with practical content, participatory methods, and continuous support mechanisms, such programmes can effectively transform rural women into confident and successful social entrepreneurs, contributing to family welfare and community progress.

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