

An assessment of self-esteem effecting the empower status of farm women in Telangana state

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ABSTRACT

Women play an important role in the development of a family or a society. Because of low self-esteem levels the women need to be trained through self-esteem interventions. There are many standardized and wide range of interventions focused to promote self-esteem among farm women. A study was made in Telangana state to assess the self-esteem of farm women. A sample of 120 farm women was selected from rural areas of Telangana by using purposive sampling method. The results of the study revealed that overall self-esteem was 59.00 per cent at low score, 30.00 per cent at average score and 11.00 per cent at high score. The women needed self-esteem intervention programmes to enhance their empower status.

Keywords: Self-esteem; family; farm women; empowerment; society

INTRODUCTION

Women play an important role in the development of a family or a society. From the last few decades they have been actively participating in various economic and social activities but their efforts remain unrecognized. In this male-dominated society they are still subjected to discrimination in the social, economic and educational fields. Women are not only managing their families but are also playing an important role in the development of entire society. Making women aware of their rights and developing confidence in them is a central issue. Because of low self-esteem levels the women need to be trained through self-esteem interventions to enhance their self-esteem.

Self-esteem can appear in many different forms such as individual, group, self-administered or administered by professionals. Self-esteem is how we value ourselves; it is how we perceive our value to the world and how valuable we think we are to others.

Self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships and our work in nearly every part of our lives. Self-esteem has enormous influence on mental health of women. Self-esteem comprises self-worth and self-image which affect women's adjustment in various spheres of life. Self-esteem is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities and social relationships. Self-esteem is also defined as an assessment tool of self-evaluation involving cognitive appraisals about general self-worth and affective experiences of the self.

Adamson et al (2019) stated that cognitive behavioral therapy is the most researched treatment proven to be effective in helping build self-esteem. Cognitive behavioural therapy is the leading edge treatment of choice for most psychological problems especially in building self-esteem. It is designed to be brief, problem-focused and active to work on desired outcome. Montreuil et al (2016) stated that cognitive restructuring is a combination of recognizing unhelpful thinking patterns about self-esteem and replacing them

with more effective thinking patterns to improve self-esteem. Cognitive restructuring for low self-esteem often focuses on identifying negative thoughts about oneself and identifying distorted thinking such as labeling oneself as a failure due to skills deficit or negative event. Beh Pajoh et al (2010) assessed the effects of social skills trainings on self-esteem of women and found social skills training to increase their self-esteem. Parveen (2005) suggested that women's empowerment is influenced by personal, familial and socio-cultural factors which include age, age at marriage, family system, conjugal terms, education and job. Though external agents (society, culture, organizations and governments) are essential for goading empowerment, internal agents like self-esteem also rapidly influence empowerment. Moos and Moos (2009) noted that social skills training programmes are associated with reductions of anger, anxiety, depression and shyness and increase of low self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in rural areas of Telangana state by using an experimental research design. A total of 120 farm women were selected by purposive sampling technique. Data were collected by administering standardized self-esteem scale proposed by Kapadia and Verma (1989). Self-esteem scale had 16 positive items and the rest 23 were negative statements. The items were on a 3-point continuum as most often (3), sometimes (2) and rare (1). For the negative statements the scoring was reversed as 1, 2 and 3 for most often, sometimes and rare respectively. Thus the minimum score for the self-esteem scale was 41 and the maximum was 123.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The data given in Table 1 show that among positive items, majority of the respondents most often felt people liked them (65.00%), they could achieve the things they wanted (58.33%), they had been more of a success than failure (51.67%), their plans would meet with considerable success (50.00%), it was very easy to make new friends (49.17%). However sometimes respondents felt that they were very confident about making decisions (79.16%), got the things which they desired (57.50%) and were successful at handling social interactions (57.50%), people came to them for advice (55.00%). Equal number of respondents (54.17%) thought they could convince people of what they believed in and it was

simple enough for them to take decisions in everyday life. They liked themselves (52.50%), thought which was important to people who were close to them (51.67%) and could make worthwhile contribution in group conversations (50.00%). Further less than fifty per cent (48.33% each) of the respondents most often or rarely had felt strength to act according to what was right and they liked to venture into the unknown.

When comes to negative items, maximum percentage of the respondents found it very easy to start a conversation (77.50%), they wished that they were boys (65.00%), were much concerned whether people liked being with them (60.00%), life was full of pain and sorrow (59.17%), found hard to talk in front of a group (58.33%), wished that they were someone else (57.50%), felt frustrated when things did not go as planned (56.67%), continuously worried over possible problems (56.67%), were constantly under the fear of failing (56.67%), thought that most women were better off than them (55.83%), had a feeling that there were very few things they could do well (55.83%), they dreamt for themselves as being beautiful (55.00%), they wished that they were more intelligent (54.17%), no one seemed to understand them (52.50%), felt so discouraged with themselves that they wondered whether they were worthwhile persons (50.00%) and felt ignored (47.50%).

Fig 1 shows that overall self-esteem was 59.00 per cent at low score, 30.00 per cent at average score and 11.00 per cent at high score. The reason might be the lack of confidence due to ongoing stressful life events such as financial trouble, low level of education etc. They were not encouraged to participate in economic or social arenas as they were having limited resources. As a result they were having negative feelings and negative thoughts about themselves. They were always worried about their problems, had been avoiding new things and not taking up opportunities. They had been blaming others for their own mistakes, were not able to deal with normal levels of frustration, were in the habit of negative self-talk and comparing themselves with others, had fear of failure or embarrassment, had difficulty in making friends, had low level of motivation and interest, could not take compliments and showed mixed feelings of anxiety or stress.

More than half of the respondents fell under positive items viz most often felt people liked them, felt that they could achieve the things they wanted,

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to level of self-esteem

Statement	Number of respondents (n= 120)		
	Most often	Sometimes	Rarely
I find it very easy to start a conversation	3 (2.50)	24 (20.00)	93 (77.50)
I like to please everyone	1 (0.83)	64 (53.33)	55 (45.83)
*I have got the things I desired	45 (37.50)	69 (57.50)	6 (5.00)
I feel afraid of or anxious when I am entering into a room by myself where other people have already gathered and are talking	3 (2.50)	80 (66.67)	37 (31.38)
I do not need constant approval from others	8 (6.67)	79 (65.83)	33 (27.50)
I feel ignored	7 (5.83)	56 (46.67)	57 (47.50)
I find it hard to talk in front of a group	3 (2.50)	47 (39.17)	70 (58.33)
*I am very confident about making decisions	22 (18.33)	95 (79.16)	3 (2.50)
I wish I were a boy	3 (2.50)	39 (32.50)	78 (65.00)
*I think I have been more of a success than failure	62 (51.67)	53 (44.17)	5 (4.17)
I think most women are better off than me	2 (1.67)	51 (42.50)	67 (55.83)
*I feel people like me	78 (65.00)	40 (33.33)	2 (1.67)
I need the help of others to solve my problems	1 (0.83)	68 (56.67)	51 (42.50)
*I feel I can achieve the things I want	70 (58.33)	48 (40.00)	2 (1.67)
I feel I am good for nothing	3 (2.50)	71 (59.17)	46 (38.33)
*I think I can convince people of what I believe in	52 (43.33)	65 (54.17)	3 (2.50)
Most of my friends are attractive and better looking than me	1 (0.83)	62 (51.67)	57 (47.50)
*It is simple enough for me to take decisions in everyday life	51 (42.50)	65 (54.17)	4 (3.33)
I feel frustrated when things do not go as planned	1 (0.83)	51 (42.50)	68 (56.67)
*I have the strength to act according to what is right	58 (48.33)	58 (48.33)	4 (3.33)
It is of much concern to me whether people like being with me	-	48 (40.00)	72 (60.00)
Life is full of pain and sorrow	-	49 (40.83)	71 (59.17)
*I like myself	55 (45.83)	63 (52.50)	2 (1.67)
I am continuously worrying over possible problems	1 (0.83)	51 (42.50)	68 (56.67)
*I think I am important to people who are close to me	56 (46.67)	62 (51.67)	2 (1.67)
No one seems to understand me	2 (1.67)	55 (45.83)	63 (52.50)
*I think my plans will meet with considerable success	60 (50.00)	54 (45.00)	6 (5.00)
I feel helpless	-	64 (53.33)	56 (46.67)
*I like to venture into the unknown	58 (48.33)	58 (48.33)	4 (3.33)
I am afraid other people will dislike me	-	61 (50.83)	59 (49.17)
*I can make worthwhile contributions in group conversations	56 (46.67)	60 (50.00)	4 (3.33)
I wish I was someone else	1 (0.83)	50 (41.67)	69 (57.50)
I dream of myself as being beautiful	-	54 (45.00)	66 (55.00)
*I find it very easy to make new friends	59 (49.17)	54 (45.00)	7 (5.83)
I have a feeling there are very few things I can do well	1 (0.83)	52 (43.33)	67 (55.83)
*People come to me for advice	48 (40.00)	66 (55.00)	6 (5.00)
I feel so discouraged with myself that I wonder whether I am a worthwhile person	2 (1.67)	58 (48.33)	60 (50.00)
*I am successful at handling social interactions	45 (37.50)	69 (57.50)	6 (5.00)
I am constantly under the fear of failing	1 (0.83)	51 (42.50)	68 (56.67)
I wish I was more intelligent	2 (1.67)	53 (44.17)	65 (54.17)
I am confused	3 (2.50)	61 (50.83)	56 (46.67)

Values in parentheses are percentages, *Positive items

thought that they had been more of a success than failure and their plans met with considerable success and negative items. Among negative items they wished that they were boys, were much concerned whether

people liked being with me, life was full of pain and sorrow, found hard to talk in front of a group and they wished that they were someone else. Hence it can be concluded that overall self-esteem was 59 per cent at

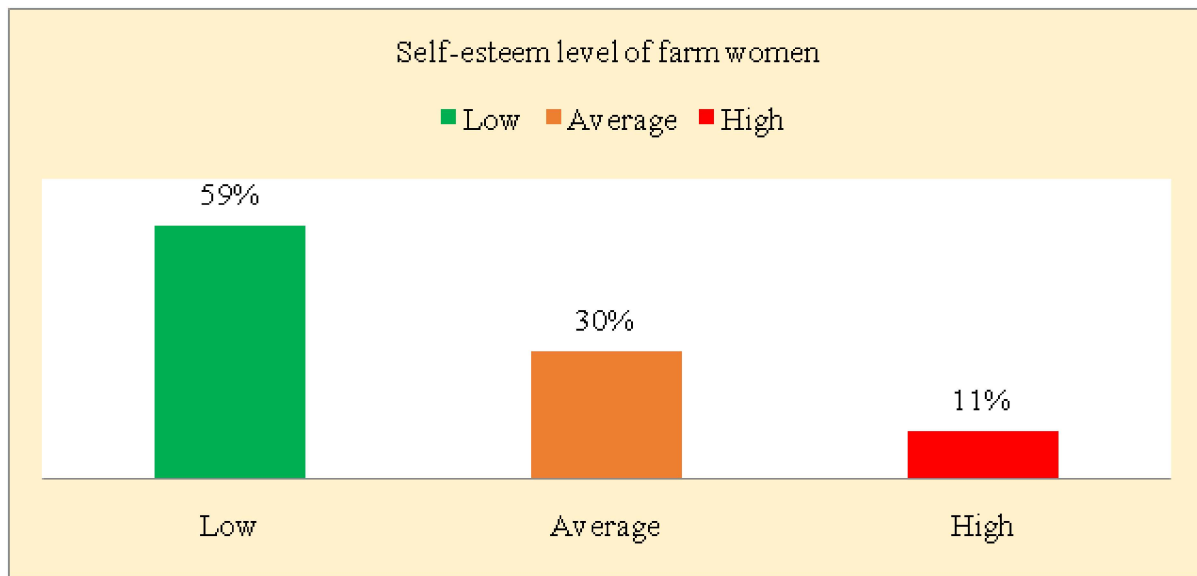


Fig 1. Distribution of farm women according to perceived level of self-esteem

low score, 30 per cent at average score and 11 per cent at high score.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that overall self-esteem of farm women was perceived under low category. The reason might be the lack of confidence, ongoing stressful life events such as financial trouble, low level of education, limited exposure, discrepancy in the family etc. They were not encouraged to participate in economic or social arenas because they were having limited resources, negative feelings and negative thoughts about themselves.

They were always worried about their problems, were avoiding new things and not taking up opportunities, were blaming others for their own mistakes, were not able to deal with normal levels of frustration, making negative self-talk and comparing themselves with others, had fear of failure or embarrassment, had difficulty in making friends, had low level of motivation and interest, could not take compliments and showed mixed feelings of anxiety or stress. The women needed self-esteem intervention programmes for effecting their empower status. This could enable to boost their self-esteem, self-reliance, confidence and make them aware of their rights. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent and personally self-reliant with positive self-esteem to face any difficult situation.

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