

Empowerment of Women through Self Help Groups and Environmental Management: Experiences of NGOs in Karnataka State, India

Farzaneh Shaikh Khatibi¹ and M. Indira²

¹*Department of Studies in Environmental Science, University of Mysore, Manasagangothri, Mysore-5, Karnataka, India
E-mail:khatibi235@yahoo.com*

²*Department of Studies in Economics and Cooperation, University of Mysore, Manasagangothri, Mysore-5, Karnataka, India
Email:mahindira@yahoo.com*

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ABSTRACT The Millennium Development Goals adopted at the millennium summit at United Nations in New York in 2000 include goals to “promote gender equality and empower women and to ensure environmental sustainability”. The Tenth Five Year Plan of India (2002-07) has given importance to this. Tenth plan approach paper gave maximum importance to the implementation of National Policy for Empowerment of Women through translating the national policy for empowerment into action with a three-fold strategy economic empowerment, social empowerment and gender justice. In order to empower women in India Self Help Groups (SHGs) were introduced during the mid 1980s in Karnataka by Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA). These groups concentrate mainly on thrift related activities; they also address several issues through training programs and capacity building members of these groups gain knowledge about government programs, environmental issues, planning and credit management etc. In India some Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are working on empowerment of women through SHGs. They involve women’s SHGs in development projects through focus on watershed management which is one of the important issues related to environmental management. The present paper intendeds to study experiences of some NGOs in Mysore district of Karnataka State. This study shows that there is a relationship between women’s empowerment and environmental management and how women can become agents for the promotion of environmental sustainability.