

**Unleashing Achievement Motivation through Self Help Groups (SHGs)**

**A Process of Empowering Women**

**By**

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## **Unleashing Achievement Motivation through SHG's - A process of Empowering Women**

### **Abstract**

This paper will attempt to share the process of intervention for women to deal with Identity search, Identity formation, Identity establishment & Identity crisis. It will explore how achievement motivation training can help women to deal not only with their economic empowerment, but also help them become socially and politically empowered.

The author has used **Achievement Motivation Training** for empowering women from various economic strata of society. The impact was visible in terms of heightened achievement motivation, clarity of life goals and planning for action with renewed passion.

*“We do not only want a piece of the pie,  
We also want to choose the flavor,  
and to know how to make it ourselves.”*

- Ela Bhatt, Founder, Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), (quoting a member named  
Rose 1992)

## **Prologue**

The basic purpose of growth and sustainability of SHGs for development of poor households has been well established, and is practiced by a large number of NGOs across the world. The experiences are positive and the development of SHGs has also emerged as a national agenda for development.

Some of the literature on SHG formation raises concerns of sustainability, as the resources generated by these groups need to be mobilized effectively and efficiently. As these SHGs move organically from the interactive phase to the growth and stabilization phase, the demand of these groups also undergoes a change. From an initial focus on ‘savings’, they move on to undertake other individual or group activities. Any activity undertaken by the group members towards income generation requires commercial viability. Thus, these groups have to be enterprising, and a change in their attitude and approach is required.

This change is perceived and addressed appropriately by development professionals in the field. The professional competencies required to undertake challenging tasks of a change agent need to be developed through meaningful mentoring.

## **What is Achievement Motivation and Why is it relevant?**

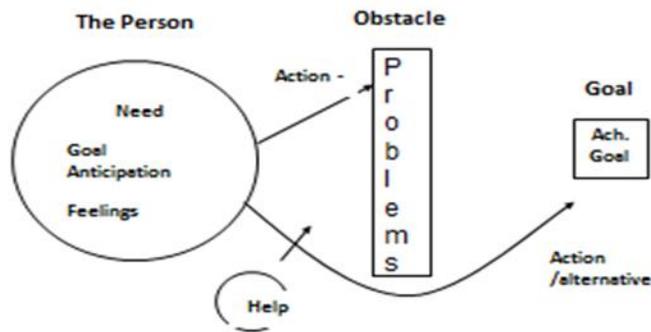
One of the many definitions of achievement need or motive is “one’s own constant desire for success with some standard of excellence in a performance related situation” (McClelland, 1961). It is a latent disposition to strive for a particular goal stage or aim.

In the 1950s, McClelland and his associates proposed the definition of motives as ‘effectively’ toned associative network arranged in a hierarchy of strength or importance within a given individual. Put simply, motives are the diverse psychological needs, in varying strengths, which are reflected in the continuous concerns the individual has, and his/her thoughts are ‘saturated’ with such dominant concerns. Pareek (1968) posited that social change can be accelerated if the level of achievement motivation and extension motivation is raised in a society and dependency motivation reduced. McClelland and Winter (1969) stated that ‘achievement motivation is not a substitute for knowledge, but added to knowledge and opportunity, it can make a real difference in economic achievement.’

Achievement Motivation can be intensified further with the presence of its associative network, which is termed as **Achievement Syndrome**. It is mainly a process through which an individual learns to think, talk, act and perceive like a person with a high achievement motive. Thus, Achievement syndrome is the associative network comprising of a few behavioral dimensions and stages such as:

- Clarity of goal
- Visualizing Need/Desire
- Taking action towards goal
- Anticipating success or failure
- Identifying problems - internal and external
- Perceiving and seeking help to overcome problems
- Positive and negative feelings to success and failure

# Achievement Syndrome Model



## Strategy Formulation for Developing Achievement Motive

In designing a strategy of developing motivation, several elements are taken into consideration. The choice of the elements and their sequencing are usually done according to a conceptual model. The following 5 elements are important in strategy formulation for developing motivation:

- Theoretical foundation
- Focus of the strategy
- Inputs for the program
- Training program
- Evaluation

In the AMT (Achievement Motivation Training) lab, an attempt is made to work on the “motive and emotive” determinants of individual behavior - achievement motivation and its associated network, self-effectiveness, goal setting, risk taking behavior, emotional commitment to self-set goals, interpersonal support, influencing behavior, coping strategy, etc.

The AMT labs are devised as continuous programs, spread over 6 days, to enable intensive process-oriented learning. The major input to the AMT is the development of achievement motive which makes the learners sensitive to several other dimensions of entrepreneurial personality.

Some of the propositions for AMT are formulated as:

***Proposition A***

The first set of propositions is related to recognition, acquisition, internalization and strengthening of achievement motive:

- The more an individual can link the newly developed associative network to related actions, the more the change in both thoughts and action is likely to occur
- The more an individual can link a newly conceptualized association action complex (or motive) events in the everyday life, the more likely it is to influence the person's thoughts and action in situations outside the training experience

***Proposition B***

This proposition relates to achievement syndrome with reference to the individual's life, main goals and values:

- The more an individual perceives that developing a motive is required by the demands of his/her career and life situation, the more the educational /training attempts designed to develop that motive are likely to succeed
- The more an individual can perceive and experience, the more newly conceptualized motives are consistent with ideal self-image and prevailing cultural values and norms, the more the motive is likely to influence future thoughts and action

***Proposition C***

This set of propositions is concerned with identifying goals and ways to go about measuring the progress towards these goals:

- The more reasons an individual has to believe that he/she can, will, or should develop a major motive, the more the educational attempt designed to develop that motive is likely to succeed
- The more an individual commits himself/herself to achieving concrete goals in life related to the newly formed motive, the more the motive is likely to influence his/her future thoughts and actions
- The more an individual keeps a record of his/her progress towards achieving goals to which he/she is committed, the more the newly formed motive is likely to influence his/her future thoughts and action

***Proposition D***

This proposition is related interpersonal support.

- Change in motives is more likely to occur when the setting dramatizes the importance of self-study and lifts it out of the routine of everyday life, thereby creating an ‘in-group’ feeling among the participants

To sum up the propositions, the strategy focused on increasing *nAch* (need for achievement) is the main input to develop achievement-oriented behavior that eventually contributes to economic development by individuals/groups or community. *nAch* is only one of the elements in defining Entrepreneurial behavior. In many cases, the ultimate focus is not only on economic development in a community alone, but also to support organizations (governmental or non-governmental) in building their capability to encourage entrepreneurship. Another significant focus is on community development organizations which are responsible for building an ecosystem that creates achieving communities.

## **Women and Achievement Motivation**

Industrialization, emphasis on individualism, on personal worth rather than birth, and on achievement, affects the way society perceives women (as it relates to the latent disposition they are thought to possess, and the goals towards which they are expected to aspire.)

In addition, the industrial society - a milieu that is friendly towards individualistic striving and tolerance of assertive independence, encourages women to pursue achievement without guilt and helps them fend off the hostile reactions of family, friends and employees who seek to confine women to their home. Women today find that the resistance to their pursuit of achievement has become fragile and rickety; the door to female advancement stands ajar and the guards blocking their way act half-heartedly, seemingly disarmed by ambivalences and doubt (Rosen, 1989).

A particular need in psychology is a female relevant model of achievement. This female relevant model would incorporate the relationship among some of the environmental, background, and psychological variables found by previous studies to influence women's achievement and career motivation. A dominant career motivation model represented by work done by Super defines the highly career motivated person in terms not unlike those of the achievement motivation model (i.e., persistence, independence, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, etc.)

Super emphasized the point that a comprehensive theory of career motivation must consider both situational and personal determinants, and the ways in which these interact at various stages of individual development. Achievement motivation theory and research has seldom attempted to integrate or articulate with career motivation theory and research (Farmer & Fyans 2013).

A woman sees her job as evolving step by step rather than as a whole, as a career with a finite and ultimate goal, whereas a man visualizes a career as a progression, a path leading upward to recognition and reward. Consequently, women often do not make the grade, although they are able enough. They are satisfied with the immediate achievement and do not see where it could lead.

Due to socio cultural influences, women have a hidden fear of success. Women go through a typical dichotomy where along with hope for success, they have the fear of the acquired independence. This fear results because women feel that they would be rejected in their social role if they succeed on the professional front.

As far as women entrepreneurs are concerned, they would prefer to combine their excellence with the emotional bond along with a desire to have an effect on others. Also, women seem to have a need to be approved and appreciated by other women. Constraints are imposed by society on women in terms of their upbringing, education, role expectations, identity etc. Whereas the need for economic independence and the desire to use their potentialities is quite predominant in women, there is also the need to strike a balance between work and home life. (Singh and Sengupta 84).

### **Achievement Motivation Training for Self-Help Groups**

#### **Process of Empowering and Capacity Building**

The introduction of achievement motivation training to SHGs starts with the personal experience of the women (experiential approach). Unlike the action-reflection approach, it is concerned with bringing about change in the individual, rather than the society at large.

Further, it gets blended with capacity building in reference to the values, attitudes, motivation and competencies. The building of competencies has been a general practice in terms of developing entrepreneurial activities through skill enhancement in various sectors. However, the competencies in the context of knowledge and attitudes are important and crucial as these would contribute to the effective use of skill in a productive manner for growth and diversification. In typical training resources, motivation which is the driving force, is enhanced with an assumption that it will influence the mindset ultimately inculcating entrepreneurial values.

The essence of self-development therefore grows from a feeling of 'I cannot try' to 'I will and I am trying to change'. From the feeling of getting something "constructed" to a feeling of being "constructive", thus bringing change from the feeling of getting "stagnated" to a feeling of

“growth”. This would instill in the mind of women becoming responsible for newness, and to take ownership of it.

Self-discovery happens through the process of internalization of the **Achievement Syndrome**, where the network of Achievement goal gets heightened.

The Achievement goal is strengthened by the supportive network or the elements which in totality are called Achievement Syndrome. In other words, they get translated to behavioral symptoms as in an achievement-oriented person.

### **Achievement Motivation Training (AMT) for Women**

Generally, it is believed that participants in a training program can only learn through the facilitator or trainer in a training institution. On the contrary, modern training technology, and specifically lab methodology, strongly advocates the presence of rich resources among the participants. How to bring about the varied group resources for the benefit of individual participants is a crucial question.

An answer to this may be the creation of a strong learning group in which the participants feel warmly supported, develop concern for change and are respected for their capabilities to rise to the occasion. An attempt by the facilitator to establish a warm and honest relationship with the participants and amongst the participants themselves creates an atmosphere for a free and frank exchange of ideas, facts and feelings. It helps build a cohesive group, which, after some time, becomes non-evaluative, non-threatening and psychologically safe for the group as a whole. It may also build a strong team sentiment among members and generate concern for each other, which may be termed “in-group feeling”. In AMT, such a learning group increases the training effectiveness by several degrees.

**Stage 1: The getting to know stage:  
State of identity crisis**  
**Stage 2: The experimenting stage:  
Identity search**  
**Stage 3: The developing stage:  
Identity formation**  
**Stage 4: The expansion stage:**

During the AMT lab, a woman undergoes a struggle of forming her own identity through a process of experimentation, discovers her own identity, and learns from her own feedback and that of others. By the end of the lab, she is already at a developing stage and is ready to go out to establish herself.

The training tools in an AMT lab are used keeping in mind the relevance of the activities the SHG's are undertaking. Innovations have been made in commonly used tools - Ring/Coin Toss, Tower buildings, APO and have been tried out in the field very successfully. Husbands and other family members have participated in these activities to take joint decisions on goal, risk taking, resource mobilization and planning.

### **Impact**

Experiences with various groups of women reveal how these interventions on achievement motivation training impact individuals at self-level; The experience leads to an initial perception of empowerment which is intrinsic/intangible, impacting not only their actions, but also drives changes in "how they feel":

- Courage
- Confidence
- Freedom/sense of Independence
- Determination
- Knowing what they want from life
- Responsibility to oneself and to the family/peer group

Achievement motivation training enables women to discover themselves and locate the power within. It may begin with a state of confusion like: 'who am I, what am I, what I am capable of'. However, the process of discovery begins with thoughts, feelings and action. The experimentation and explorations help to identify the potential within and also understand from others, leading to the process of discovery. The journey of 'where I can be' and enhanced spirit gives an opportunity to develop self-belief and self-respect. From the group process the learning outcome gets transformed into implementable action with renewed faith and life practice.

**An experience with SHG in Polapathar (Hoshangabad District, M.P.) during training on “Achievement Planning Orientation” for Success**

As part of the practice training on the new learning done by the field professionals of PRADAN, a 1-day training module was organized for a group of women who were running their SHG successfully for the last 2 years. The group had accumulated a substantial amount of money and had some ideas to initiate an activity, which would generate some income. As the group had incurred losses in the past, it was identified for training.

A simulation method on “Achievement Planning through Objectivity (APO), which relates closely to entrepreneurial life, was introduced. It created a direct learning, which is relevant to the entrepreneur’s action and the outcome while he/she is planning for a challenging task. The objectives of this particular exercise were:

- ◆ To help the women internalize the thought process related to high need for Achievement for success.
- ◆ To analyze the thinking process in relation to achievement planning
- ◆ To help the women understand their own goal setting
- ◆ To enable them to understand their behavior under pressure with respect to time and results.
- ◆ To make them aware of environmental factors which influence the outcome
- ◆ To help them analyze their behavior in competitive situations

During the training, the trainers were able to innovate and introduce external factors which play a significant part in women’s lives through exercises:

- ◆ Going to the bank for loan
- ◆ Going to the wholesaler to purchase raw material
- ◆ Selling the finished product to intermediaries/market

The women worked on making leaf plates. They had to approach the bank for a loan and visit the wholesaler to procure the raw material. They decided on the quantity of the plates and the quality

basis requirements of the buyer. The technology to work on the product was also identified by the participants. The facilitators performed the role of the banker and wholesalers.

A few women made profit, but most ended up just breaking even. Some of the orders were rejected by the buyer as they were not completed on time, or the technology adopted did not meet the quality standards. The women were not pleased with their performance but wanted to understand and learn from this game.

Some of the learnings at the end of the program were, “quality versus quantity”, planning and meeting deadlines for delivery, and dealing with external stake holders. The learnings were valuable for them apart from the experience of time management and dealing with external stakeholders.

During the reflection process, the women were able to identify the reasons for their earlier failure and decided to participate in identifying the feasibility of any product/services that they were going to initiate in the future.

#### Some Feedback from women after AMT

*“All along, we had been living within the confines of four walls without any knowledge of the outside world. Now that we have made up our minds to come out of those four walls, we want to gain all the knowledge available, take advantage of all possible opportunities and stand on our own feet.”*

*“One very important thing for us was learning about self-esteem. Earlier we never felt as if we had any worth”*

*“The biggest learning for us is that we can independently go to the market to buy raw material, produce products independently and sell them by ourselves”*

*“Initially I was not able to speak to any officer. Now I have enough courage to negotiate with the traders”*

*“Just like Hanuman grew bigger than the Sanjivani mountain, picked it up and flew with it to save Laxman’s life, we can also make our problems trivial and solve them”*

*“If men can solve their problems and carry out their business successfully, we can do it too. We are no less than them”*

*“We appreciate the guidance from various officials. No one has ever talked to us so well and for so long.”*

## **Epilogue**

Originally, David McClelland and his associates were concerned about showing that a direct increase in achievement motivation in individuals has a significant economic impact on the community. Therefore, the main strategy was to increase achievement motivation in entrepreneurs. (McClelland 1969)

However, over the years, it has been realized that achievement motivation is not synonymous with entrepreneurial motivation. In fact, scholars and researchers have highlighted that the entrepreneur is predisposed to a set of motives which are not mutually exclusive, but complementary and supplementary to each other.

Udai Pareek pointed out that social change can be accelerated if the level of achievement motivation and extension motivation is raised in society and dependency motivation is reduced. (Pareek 1968)

In one of the studies McClelland has shifted the emphasis from achievement to power. He concludes that high power motivation combined with high self-control (personal power) made for greater organizational development particularly, if affiliation is also low. While emphasizing the need for social achievement motivation, Rao and Mehta argue that the old concept of an entrepreneur seeking certain advantage for himself/herself is no longer tenable in the context of the universal image for social change and economic development. Further, they studied that the changing social condition calls for socially conscious entrepreneurs who are not threatened by the progress of others, but on the contrary, who act in full awareness of several implications of others. (Pareek & Rao 1982)

Nadkarni and Pandhari Pande have proposed that motivation training intervention for entrepreneurial development shows emphasis in nAch. and nPower (need for Power) (Pareek, Nadkarni and Rosen, 1973) As stated by McClelland and Winter, it is interesting to note that achievement motivation is not a substitute for knowledge and opportunity, but it can make a real difference in economic achievement.

Entrepreneurial motivation training interventions are multi-pronged, with scope for dealing with other motives (rather than stipulating a focus only on achievement motive). Entrepreneurial motivation thus can be described in terms of motivational profile. Chattopadhyaya, while deliberating on this issue in detail suggested, “It is quite likely that the profile of entrepreneurial motivation consists of high achievement, high extension, moderate power, low affiliation and low dependency motive. There is no single accepted and standardized profile of an entrepreneur in the Indian situation.” (Chattopadhyaya 1980). However, there seems to be enough evidence to consider achievement, power and affiliation building entrepreneurial motivation.

Prof. David McClelland, after his research on Achievement Motivation in the district of Kakinada, propounded his theory and wrote an article on “Changing Values for Progress”. The culture of creating an achieving society will need to be institutionalized, and so should the culture of creating an enabling environment. The process of enterprise creation also enables an individual to become empowered in various aspects of life. **Thus, he opines that achievement becomes a tool to empower women not only economically but also socially and politically.**

Capacity building for women requires holistic development in the context of gender equity and gender justice through intersectional concurrence. The 21<sup>st</sup> century will witness empowering of women with increased participation in every sphere. Empowerment would suggest that the word “power has to be understood in its true context”. The focus of development of women requires the understanding of ‘power’ and resisting ‘power over’ creatively. The exploration of the concept of ‘power to’, ‘power with’ and ‘power within’ as a practice needs to be incorporated for any kind of intervention.

*“There is always a way to get things done. You must find the will. It’s good not to constantly agonize over what you don’t have!” This is the advice of the path-breaking, Pioneering, Developing, and Enterprising grassroots entrepreneurs to their fellow women. (Dinney Mathew - Progressive Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs: Who are they?)*

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