THINK INDIA JOURNAL

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22- Issue-14-December-2019

Impact On Self help Group In Economic Empowerment Of Women In India

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Abstract
Women constitute around fifty percent of the total human resources in our economy. Yet women are the more poor and under privileged than men as they are subject to many socio-economic and cultural constraints. The situation is more severe in the rural and backward areas.They suffer many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rate, labour participation rates and earnings. The major strategies for women empowerment include social empowerment, political empowerment and gender justice along with demographical justice. SHGs are voluntary association of people formed to attain some common goals. This paper examines the women empowerment through SHGs and also explains the current position of women empowerment in India. Women development activities must be given importance to eradicate poverty, increase the economic growth and for better standard of living. This study addresses women empowerment through self help groups in India. The information required for the study has been collected from the secondary sources. Average and percentage analysis was carried out to draw meaningful interpretation of the results. In the present study, it has been found that SHGs have served the cause of women empowerment, social-solidarity and socio-economic betterment of poor women. Poor women are set on the path of self-reliance through micro saving and micro credit.
Keywords: Women Empowerment, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Bank Linkage

Introduction
Self help group (SHGs) program is very supportive for poverty alleviation, women empowerment, self employment promotion, income generation and financial inclusion. The major strength of a self help group is its ability to generate self employment. Poor people with the help of SHGs access to credit and saving that bring them out of poverty. Women development activities must be given importance to eradicate poverty, increase the economic growth and for better standard of living. Self Help Group (SHGs)-Bank Linkage Programme is emerging as a cost effective mechanism for providing financial services to the “Unreached Poor” which has been successful not only in meeting financial needs of the rural poor women but also strengthen collective self help capacities of the poor, leading to their empowerment. Rapid progress in SHG formation has now turned into an empowerment movement among women across the country (Tiyasbis was, 2007). Investing in women brings about a multiplier effect. Stories of women who not only are better off economically as a result of access to financial services, but who are empowered as well. Simply getting cash into the hands of women (by way of working capital) can lead to increased self-esteem, control and empowerment by helping them achieve greater economic independence and security, which in turn gives them the chance to contribute financially to their households and communities because women “tend to keep nothing back for themselves they contribute decisively to the well-being of their families”(Susy Cheston and Lisa Kuhn, 2002).SHG by mobilizing women around thrift and credit activities have resulted in economic self reliance there by changing

ISSN:0971-1260
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their social attitude and status in the family and society SHG has emerged as a key programming strategy for most of the women development activities.

SHGs through the network of commercial banks, co-operative banks, regional rural banks, NABARD and NGO's has been largely supply driven and a recent approach in the provision of financial services to the poor and further upgrading their status in the society. Keeping this in mind, the present study is to study the growth of SHGs and to analyse the current position of women empowerment.

Self-Help Groups

Women and SHGs in many parts of the country have achieved success in bringing the women to the main stream of decision making. The SHG in our country has become a source of inspiration for women's welfare formation of SHG is a viable alternative to achieve the objectives of rural development and to get community participation in all rural development programmes. SHG is also a viable organized set up to disburse micro credit to the rural women and encouraging them together into entrepreneurial activities. (Abdul, 2007). To alleviate the poverty and to empower the women, the micro-finance, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and credit management groups have also started in India.

Self Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association to form a group. It is informal and homogenous group of not more than twenty members. SHGs consist of maximum 20 members because any group having more than 20 members has to be registered under Indian legal system. That is why, it is recommended to be informal to keep them away from bureaucracy, corruption, unnecessary administrative expenditure and profit motive. In fact, it is a home grown model for poverty reduction which simultaneously works to empower and shape the lives of its members in a better way. Groups are expected to be homogenous so that the members do not have conflicting interest and all the members can participate freely without any fear. Self-help groups (SHGs)movement has triggered off a silent revolution in the rural credit delivery system in India. SHGs have proved as an effective medium for delivering credit to rural poor for their socio economic empowerment.

Functions of SHGs

The important functions of SHG are the following :-

i) Enabling members to become self-reliant and self-dependent.
ii) Providing a forum for members for discussing their social and economic problems.
iii) Enhancing the social status of members by virtue of their being members of the group.
iv) Providing a platform for members for exchange of idea.
v) Developing and encouraging the decision making capacity of members.
vi) Fostering a spirit of mutual help and cooperation among members.
vii) Instilling in members a sense of strength and confidence which they need for solving their problems.
ix) Providing literacy and increasing general awareness among members, and
x) Promoting numerically and equipping the poor with basic skills required for understanding monetary transactions.

Need and Importance of Self Help Group

Self help groups are necessary to overcome exploitation, create confidence for the economic self-reliance of rural people, particularly among women who are mostly invisible in the social structure. These groups enable them to come together for common objective and gain strength from each other to deal with exploitation, which they are facing in several forms. A group become the basis for action and change. It also helps buildings of relationship for mutual trust between the promoting organization and the rural poor through constant contact

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and genuine efforts. Self help groups plays an important role in differentiating between consumer credit and production credit, analyzing the credit system for its implication and changes in economy, culture and social position of the target groups, providing easy access to credit and facilitating group/organization for effective control, ensuring repayments and continuity through group dynamics; setting visible norms for interest rates, repayment schedules, gestation period, extension, writing of bad debts; and assisting group members in getting access to the formal credit institutions. Thus, self help group disburses microcredit to the rural women for the purpose of making them enterprising women and encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurial activities. Credit needs of the rural and urban poor women are fulfilled totally through the SHGs. SHGs enhance equality of status of women as participation, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. However, in a group, they are empowered to overcome many of these weaknesses, hence there are needs for SHGs which is specific terms are as under:-

1. To mobilize the resources of the individual members for their collective economic development.
2. To uplift the living conditions of the poor.
3. To create a habit of savings, utilization of local resources.
4. To mobilize individual skills for groups interest.
5. To create awareness about right.
6. To assist the members financial at the rime of need.
7. Entrepreneurship development.
8. To identify problems, analyzing and finding solutions in the groups.
9. To develop linkage with institution of NGOs.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are**:**

1. To study the socio-economic profile of SHG women
2. To study the growth and performance of self help groups
3. To find the impact of SHGs in women

Sources of Data and Methodology

This study is based on secondary data obtained from Annual Reports of NABARAD and MOSPI for the period from 2010-11 to 2015-16. The other data were collected from websites further data supplemented with relevant information from various journals and books. In order to examine the various objectives of the study several statistical techniques such as percentages and growth rates have been used in this study .

Growth of SHGs in India

SHGs originated in the year 1975 at Bangladesh by Mohammed Yunus. In the eighties, it was a serious attempt by the Government of India to promote an apex bank to take care of the financial needs of the poor, informal sector and rural areas. And then, NABARD took steps during that period and initiated a search for alternative methods to fulfill the financial needs of the rural poor and informal sector. NABARD initiated in 1986-87, but the real effort was taken after 1991-92from the linkage of SHGs with the banks. In other words, the Self Help Group (SHG) in India has come a long way, since its inception in1992. The spread of SHGs in India has been phenomenal. It has made dramatic progress from500 groups in 1992 (Titus 2002) to some 16, 18,456 groups that have taken loans from banks. About 24.25 million poor households have gained access to formal banking system through SHG-bank linkage programme and 90% of these groups are only women groups(NABARD2005)**.** The NABARD (2006) homepage declares that more than 400 women join the SHG movement

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every hour and an NGO joins the Micro-Finance Programme every day. There are also agencies which provide bulk funds to the system through NGOs. Thus organizations engaged in micro finance activities in India may be categorized as Wholesalers, NGOs supporting, SHG Federations and NGOs directly retailing credit borrowers or groups of borrower. The growth of self help groups in All India is shown in the table1 given below.

Table 1: Number of SHGs in India(2006-07 to 2015-16)

Year	Number of SHGs	Growth Rate
2006-07	2924973	30.66
2007-08	5009794	71.28
2008-09	6121147	22.2
2009-10	6959250	13.6
2010-11	7462000	7.3
2011-12	7960000	6.7
2012-13	7317551	-8.1
2013-14	7429500	1.5
2014-15	7697469	3.6
2015-16	7903000	2.7

Source :NABARD Reports 2006 to 2016

It is shown that how the number of SHGs are increased in the period 2006-07 to2015-16. In 2006-07, 2924973 SHGs were linked with the banks. In 2015-2016 the number of SHGs has been increased by 2.7 growth rate i.e., 7903000. A higher rate of growth was found in 2007-08 i.e.,91.28 per cent. In the year 2012-2013 a negative growth rate was 8.1 per cent. A slow rate of growth was found in 2010-11 to 2015-16.

Table 2 shows that state-wise number of self help group (SHGs) and amount of savings under self help group bank linkage programme in India .The spread of the SHGs is highly concentrated in the southern part of the country with very few in the north and the east. Over half a million SHGs have been linked to banks over the years but a handful of States, mostly in South India, account for almost 66%**.** Tamil Nadu has over 12%, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, Karnataka, Maharastra have11%,9.80%, and 9.30 % respectively, and Kerala has about 7.6% of the total SHGs. Since the advent of SHG in India, its growth rate has been very low in the states of Chhatisgarh, Sikkim, Tripura and Nagaland and union territory of Andaman Nicobar Islands where the status of women is still very backward and pathetic. The formation of SHGs have benefited its members in numerous ways; not only have the assets, incomes and employment opportunities for the women but also enhance the equality of status of women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life (Ritu Jain 2003). The basic principles of the SHGs are group approach, mutual trust, organization of small and manageable groups, group cohesiveness, sprit of thrift, demand based lending, collateral free, women friendly loan, peer group pressure in repayment, skill training capacity building and empowerment (N.Lalitha & Nagaraj B.S.2002).

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Table .2: State-Wise Number of Self Help Group (SHGs) and Amount of Savings Under Self Help Group Bank Linkage Programme in India(2012-2013 to 2015-2016-Upto December 2015)

State-wise Number of Self Help Group (SHGs) and Amount of Savings under Self Help Group Bank Linkage Programme in India(2012-2013 to 2015-2016-upto December 2015) (Rs. in Lakh)								
States/UTs	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016	
	No. of SHGs	Savings-Amount	No. of SHGs	Savings-Amount	No. of SHGs	Savings-Amount	No. of SHGs	Savings-Amount
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	5217	145.74	4824	115.58	4998	125.27	88	8.80
Andhra Pradesh	1421393	254179.23	1418676	352316.16	884508	262949.95	296	0.42
Arunachal Pradesh	5033.	412.09	2588	153.01	3351	255.66	16756	250.99
Assam	271072	10750.76	285327	11289.51	292071	9943.07	151	38.53
Bihar	270890	16967.64	268721	16466.57	224469	29666.98	71321	0.00
Chandigarh	609	95.11	468	130.96	90	4.21	0.00	0.00
Chhattisgarh	98493	6135.96	111884	18888.32	148293	17954.14	6342	351.14
Goa	9889	660.74	8170	1313.37	7445	1199.15	328	39.36
Gujarat	208410	17555.05	196510	16872.00	215839	17543.01	12266	1018.24
Haryana	42580	4030.73	43029	4559.02	41653	3651.08	1406	0.00
Himachal Pradesh	53242	4277.92	37634	2732.43	37838	2648.99	1930	47.36
Jammu and Kashmir	5796	970.49	873	40.74	6214	378.44	2964	356.36
Jharkhand	85334	7689.92	86386	8932.95	82138	8492.52	4511	927.00
Karnataka	645695	115618.92	709171	108757.29	734304	130241.10	36259	0.00
Kerala	581325	51758.93	601325	56948.43	585471	64524.57	119	10.37
Lakshadweep	27	7.17	229	648.81	231	648.90	0.00	0.00
Madhya Pradesh	159457	12321.19	157481	13010.41	225615	23901.55	55127	3590.00
Maharashtra	687717	51370.41	692274	74805.53	717860	90380.82	41183	1140.55
Manipur	12656	235.24	9039	94.92	10702	196.92	0.00	0.00
Meghalaya	9573	515.66	7230	536.65	7910	862.70	1124	130.90
Mizoram	3117	612.21	208	5.61	7481	312.95	375	10.32
Nagaland	8478	185.85	2416	208.93	2880	273.01	0.00	0.00
New Delhi	3787	348.05	2901	1407.11	3290	694.83	195	0.00
Odisha	522837	41827.81	517391	45733.95	452068	49703.80	12607	249.08
Puducherry	20053	1731.58	24454	2406.41	16641	1558.52	0.00	0.00
Punjab	35060	3635.48	23041	2283.98	25870	2235.11	1409	140.02
Rajasthan	231763	15760.74	257262	17906.61	245903	14379.43	27329	3480.78
Sikkim	3529	79.48	343	35.49	1368	231.09	34	48.81
Tamil Nadu	873012	84966.77	942469	105145.21	987282	103456.83	15453	680.23
Telangana	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	511184	98761.00	2129	42.74
Tripura	10438	219.34	9148	558.00	8218	946.49	513	0.00

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Uttar Pradesh	403932	39200.82	379270	43515.34	392276	35475.66	32548	2577.05
Uttarakhand	40316	4763.57	37294	3903.04	51067	5038.41	1246	1925.96
West Bengal	586821	72694.87	591464	81406.51	760941	127347.93	86781	970.69
ALL India	**7317551**	**821725.47**	**7429500**	**993128.85**	**7697469***	**1105984.07**	**432790**	**18035.70**
Note : * : 76.97 Lakh SHGs Saving Linked, Out of Which 66.52 Lakh (86%) SHGs are Exclusive Women SHGs.								

Source :MOSPI

SHG as an Effective Approach to Women Empowerment

One has to believe that the progress of any nation is inevitably linked with social and economic plight of women in that particular country. Empowerment by way of participation in SHG can bring enviable changes and enhancement in the living conditions of women in poor and developing nations. The underlying principle of SHG is to provide to the poorest of the poor and to achieve empowerment.

Self Help Group (SHG) is a process by which a large group of women (10 – 20), with common objectives are facilitated to come together voluntarily to participate in the development activities such as saving, credit and income generation thereby ensuring economic independence. SHG phenomenon definitely brings group consciousness among women, sense of belongingness, adequate self-confidence. In fact, what she cannot achieve as an individual, can accomplish as a member of group with sufficient understanding about her own rights, roles, privileges and responsibilities as a dignified member of society in par with man. When she becomes a member of SHG, her sense of public participation, enlarged horizon of social activities, high self-esteem, self-respect and fulfillment in life expands and enhances the quality of status of women as participants, decision makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic social and cultural spheres of life. In other words, we can say that SHG is an effective instrument to empower women socially and economically which ultimately contributes in the overall development of the country like India wherein still large segment of women population are underprivileged, illiterate, exploited and deprived of basic rights of social and economic spectrum.

The experiences of SHGs in many countries have been proving great success as an effective strategy and approach in recent years. Group-oriented efforts in the form of Micro-credit groups in different countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia are examples of current self-help efforts. The grameen groups in Bangladesh, Local self-help development efforts - harambee in Kenya, Tontines or Hui with 10 to15 members involved in financial activities through cash or kind in Vietnam, self help efforts through credit unions, fishermen groups, village-based banks, irrigation groups etc in Indonesia, the self-help groups (SHGs) in countries like Thailand, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and India are successfully proving forms of micro-credit groups or SHGs. No doubt, The Fundamental Rights, The Directive principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties etc virtually assure equal status to women and provide special protection that leads to women development beyond the economic dimension and place emphasis on issues relating to equality, autonomy and self reliance at the individual level. Several factors and strategies have been provided by the SHGs that have made a positive contribution to the empowerment of women. These are full support and timely advice for balancing family and business responsibilities, leadership, experience in decision making and discussions on social issues. As a result, the numbers of SHGs have been increasing day by day.

With the small beginning as a pilot programme launched by NABARD by linking 255 SHGs with banks in 1992, the programme has reached to linking of 69.5 Lakh saving linked SHGs and48.5 Lakh credit linked SHGs are covered under the programme as on 2010. This has resulted about increase in the number of credit linked SHGs during the period 2010-11 to

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2015-16. The table 3 given below shows the progress of women SHGs during 2010-11 and 2015-16.

In the table 3overall progress under SHGs-bank linkage, loans disbursed and loans outstanding of women SHGs in India from 2011-12 to 2015.. The details of total number of women SHGs shown saving linked, credit linked and loans outstanding for the last six years are given in the table. It may be seen that the total number of saving linked SHGs, exclusive women SHGs with banks were 81.7 percent and 87.91 percent, respectively. Further the percentage of loans outstanding of exclusive women SHGs to loans outstanding of total SHGs which was 83.7 percent in 2010-11 has increased to 90.04 percent in 2015-16. The credit linked SHGs were 86.8 per cent in 2010-11 to 92.29 per cent in 2015-16.It shows that majority SHGs are women groups their participation in saving and credit is increasing out of total number of SHGs.

The table 3 reveals that the progress of women SHGs during the year from 2010-11 to 2015-16. It indicates that SHGs during the year 2015- 16 increased over the year 2010-11 but the progress is slowed down in the year 2012-13. Loan disbursed and loan outstanding amount of women SHGs as a percentage of amounts of total SHGs has been increased during that period. It was also found that employment generation with the help of SHGs is more in below poverty line families than APL (above poverty line) families as a member of SHGs. There is an increase in the expenditure of beneficiaries from 2010-11 to 2015-16. That means it shows a positive impact of SHGs on employment generation. The problems of unemployment as well as poverty in the economy can be solved in this way if SHGs continuously provide help to these people. Thus SHGs leads to the way through which the problem of unemployment can be solved and poverty can be removed in the Indian economy.

Conclusion

SHGs have been identified as a way to alleviate poverty and women empowerment. And women empowerment aims at realizing their identities, power and potentiality in all spheres of lives. But the real empowerment is possible only when a woman has increased access to economic resources, more confidence and self motivation, more strength, more recognition and say in the family matters and more involvement through participation. Although it is a gradual and consistent process, but women should build their mindset for taking additional effort willingly for their overall development. SHG is a powerful instrument for poverty eradication in the new economic era. As women are the most vulnerable section of the society the quick progress of SHG is an upward vehicle for women empowerment. SHGs have not only produced tangible assets and improved living condition of members but also helped in changing much of their outlook and attitude. In the present study, it has been found that SHGs have served the cause of women empowerment, social-solidarity and socio-economic betterment of poor women. Poor women are set on the path of self-reliance through micro saving and micro credit.SHG serves as a democratic tool for grassroots development for women. SHG promotes self reliance by generating its own funds. It breaks the vicious cycle of debts. It is an effective agent for change and serves as a solid platform for women empowerment.

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