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A Study On Micro Finance As A Tool Of Women Empowerment In India

Dr. K. L. Rathi
Govt. WW Patankar Girls PG College, Durg

Abstract
Rural India is conventionally a village oriented part wherein almost all the families are poor and has means to create their livelihood. In urban areas, where people can access to the bank and hope to reap the fruits of their efforts. The rural women are unaware of banking. Though they work hard they find it difficult to raise the capital. The latest concept of Micro Finance of the commercial banks is an ideal tool for the better development of rural growth. It uplifts the spirit of rural women and empowers them with credit facilities without collateral. It opens the vistas of utilizing the skill of the women who in turn invest the micro finance and their efforts in agricultural products. By empowering, the rural women actively participate in the development of the economy of the country.
Keyword: Rural India, urban areas, Micro Finance, agricultural products.

Introduction
Employment means economic power. It means earning by dint of hard work and one's own ability. Employment - whether in trade or business or a job in the organised sector - frees women from the constraints of economic dependence on men.
Empowerment in such a context calls for modalities other than mere economic betterment, because much of women's powerlessness stems from non-quantifiable rather than monetary impositions or handicaps. Conventional strategies for development address only poverty not powerlessness nor subordinate status, which are the crucial issues.
To achieve empowerment through education, several concepts must be introduced at appropriate levels. When referring to primary and secondary schooling, empowerment should enable girls to develop the knowledge and skills to nullify and counter, sexual stereotypes and conceptions of masculinity and feminity that limits the social potential of women. Empowering girls should mean offering them courses with content that not only attacks current sexual stereotypes but also provides students with alternative visions of a gender free society.
Women's Organizations have come to be recognized as the main source of power, position and strength for women in modern India. A woman cannot fight injustices, perpetrated by men single handed or alone. But, she can do the same collectively through organizations. Women SHGs in rural areas, under Stree Shakti Scheme, are doing yeomen service in organising women power. Women from different sections are being brought together and organised into an association to wage a war on liquor shops and gambling dens, mataka centres etc., and fight for abolishing age old practices like wife beating, polygamy, dowry-connected harassment, devadasi system, child marriages, etc. Besides, the SHGs are providing employment opportunities to large masses of illiterate, ignorant and suppressed women folk. A proper leadership among rural women will go a long way in empowering them.

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Review of literature

Osman (2000), in the study titled, " Microfinance Institutions:Effective Weapon in the war against Rural Poverty" determined thatmicro-finance schemes along cannot alleviate poverty. The battle fortotal abolition of poverty needs combining micro-finance schemeswith parallel, complementary programmes addressing the social andcultural dimensions of want, poverty, insolvency andscarcity.

Sadegh (2006), in the study titled, "Microfinance and Poverty Reduction: Some International Evidence" recommended that microfinance is not effecting straight on poverty reduction, because poverty is a difficult phenomenon and have many limitations that the poor in general have to cope with substitution effect and where extraworking capital acquired through loans allows family labour to be exchanged by hired labour, the net effect is an increase in child labour within households. The study determined that widespread poverty and universal child labor create significant barriers to education in India and these barriers will require a re-evaluation of credit policy, ensuring that mechanisms planned to reduce poverty are not undermining themselves through unintentionally discouraging child education and expanding access to credit has been a key element of developmentstrategies across the world and highlighted the capacity for loans to induce credit-inspired child labor, and discloses the need for institutions to devise new strategies for human capital development through financial services.

Research Methodology

"A research design is a logical and systematic planning and it helps directing a piece of research."

This study is exploratory in nature hence it will come under the category of exploratory research.

Objectives of Study

1. To find out the limitations of SHG in women empowerment.
2. To find out the importance of Micro Finance in women empowerment.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a suggestions or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence on a starting point for further investigation.

H1: Microfinance provides help in socially empowering women.

Data analysis

To study whether the microfinance supports in upliftment of social status of women, One Way ANOVA test is applied taking various variable prescribed above. Result of the same is given below:

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ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Microfinance helped in mingling with others	Between Groups	717.759	4	179.440	1347.031	.000
	Within Groups	54.617	410	.133		
	Total	772.376	414			
With microfinance there are access to other organizations	Between Groups	666.761	4	166.690	931.623	.000
	Within Groups	73.359	410	.179		
	Total	740.120	414			
You are socially involved in various activities due to microfinance	Between Groups	506.749	4	126.687	437.724	.000
	Within Groups	118.663	410	.289		
	Total	625.412	414			
Women's voice are heard due to microfinance	Between Groups	613.802	4	153.451	2037.249	.000
	Within Groups	30.882	410	.075		
	Total	644.684	414			
Collective bargaining power increases when microfinance is availed by the SHG	Between Groups	506.749	4	126.687	437.724	.000
	Within Groups	118.663	410	.289		
	Total	625.412	414			
Microfinance helped you to be the part of various training program, workshops	Between Groups	555.429	4	138.857	3258.442	.000
	Within Groups	17.472	410	.043		
	Total	572.901	414			
Mobility of women enhances with the help of microfinance	Between Groups	539.746	4	134.937	553.249	.000
	Within Groups	99.998	410	.244		
	Total	639.745	414			

Thus it is concluded that, Microfinance provides help in socially empowering women.

Findings

1. It was found during the research that almost 40% of the members of both NGO and Women SHG do not agree with the fact that There is easy availability of microfinance. Due to this, there is a need for development of strong promotional strategies for microfinance. This has been observed both by Members of NGO and Members of Women Self Help Group.
2. Majority of the respondents of SHG and NGO deny the fact that Microfinance makes women dependent on others. This is because makes the women self-reliable and self-dependable when it comes to financial viability.
3. Majority of the members of SHG agree to this fact which is supported by 44.9% of the members of NGO who also agree to the fact collective bargaining power increases when microfinance is availed by the SHG.
4. 25.1% of the respondents agree that Microfinance helps in rapidly improving business knowledge. Some of the members of NGO also agreed that Microfinance helps in rapidly improving business knowledge. It is visible that with the help of microfinance

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person can go for business and it enhances her knowledge. However rapid growth in knowledge is not there.

Conclusion

Empowering women is very important to the process of development of the economy. It plays a vital role in the alleviation of poverty in the nation and helps in the overall development of the nation. It is fact that microfinance is enhancing the quality of life the women are living now. Microfinance has helped in attaining the target of women empowerment. The empowerment is not just economical but it is social empowerment also. The moment women start earning, her social status also changes. People starts respecting more to her. She finds that her voice is heard in the family and society because she is earning. However, the results of this study clearly indicates that we are still living in male dominated society because as per current study only 50% opportunities are given to earning women to participate in major financial decision making.

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