

Women Empowerment through Self-Help Groups
Smt. Ashwini Balasaheb Kumbhar Department of Home Science

Abstract

Self Help Groups always played an important role in the financial inclusion and economic empowerment of the economically deprived people especially women. The Self-Help Groups operating at local level proved eminent force of support for many lower middle class and economically weak section groups. Self-help groups have emerged as a vital tool for empowering rural women, enabling them to become financially, socially, and politically independent. This research paper examines the impact of self-help groups on women's empowerment, including the reasons for joining, functions, performance, and challenges faced by group members. Using secondary data from published literature, the study shows that self-help groups have a positive impact on the economic empowerment of women, by building their confidence, developing their skills, and enhancing their socioeconomic status. The primary reasons for joining self-help groups were to meet household expenses, gain access to loans, increase family income, and improve the standard of living and social status. To overcome the challenges faced by self-help groups, it is essential to undertake effective measures to make them self-reliant. This study highlights the crucial role of self-help groups in promoting women's economic development and social empowerment.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Self Help Group, Mahila bachat gat

Introduction:

Empowerment is about ability: women's ability to control individual health; the ability to control her life; and the ability to change the world. Different dimensions of this also include the abilities to control their homes, work, relationships, leisure time and values. One can argue that this point of view is not much different from a general human rights perspective since it does not highlight the gender aspect of women's empowerment. For example, views empowerment as the degree to which women are social actors, and thus, able to affect their own positions. Even though some scholars view women's empowerment as an outcome or as an outcome and a process, the definition that describes women's empowerment as a process has received more agreement.

A SHG is a little financially homogeneous proclivity gathering of the poor intentionally meeting up to spare little sum consistently, which are saved in a typical store to meet individuals crisis needs and to give guarantee free advances chose by the gathering. They have been perceived as valuable device to help poor people and as an option component to meet the pressing credit needs of poor through thrift. SHGs improve the equity of status of women as members, chiefs and recipients in the just, financial, social and social circles of life. The fundamental standards of the SHGs are gathering approach, shared trust, association of little and reasonable gatherings, amass cohesiveness, spirit of thrift, request based loaning, guarantee free, women benevolent advance, peer aggregate weight in reimbursement, aptitude preparing limit building and strengthening.

MAHILA BACHAT GAT which operates as Self-Help Group on local level helps in Economic Development of Rural, Semi Urban and Urban Women. It is group of Local Women's who come together for a common interest of Economic Welfare of them and their family. It usually operates on Local Level and it is connected to cooperative banks for their transactions. Women members of Mahila Bachat Gat get help in form of Loans at very lower interest rate, Savings and

Returns on Investment. No Enhancement of Standard of Living is possible without Financial Support and Mahila Bachat Gat provides that support to the women of Economically Weaker Section. The Self-Help Group like Mahila Bachat Gat is operating on the Local Level and also provides employment opportunities to the members of the Self-Help Group.

Objective:

1. To identify the empowerment of women through self- help groups.
2. To assess the effect of SHGs on women's empowerment.
3. To study the benefits of joining SHG.

Methodology:

In order to conduct thorough, evidence-based research on women's empowerment through self-help groups, this study used secondary sources to provide a descriptive analysis. Content analysis is based on observations from credible journal articles, reliable websites, renowned books, well-liked reports, official publications.

Result and Discussion:

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT :United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN) has defined women's empowerment based on five components, which are as follows:

- Women's sense of self-worth.
- Their right to have access to opportunities and resources.
- Their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home.
- Their right to have and to determine choices.
- Their ability to influence the direction of social changes to create a better social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SHGs (ROLE) :

In the recent times, the woman has contributed to a great extent towards the development of the economy but not many are aware of this that they have the potential. The recent development has been in the entrepreneurial activities undertaken by them SHGs fall under the category of village banking, which includes 10 to 20 (primarily female) members. In the initial months the group members save and lend amongst themselves and thus building group discipline. Once the group demonstrates stability and financial discipline for six months, it receives loans of up to four times the amount it has saved. The bank then disburses the loan and the group decides how to manage the loan. As savings increase through the group's life, the group accesses a greater amount of loans. The SHG program links with the poor through Self-Help Group Promoting Institutions (SHPIs), which primarily include NGOs, but also banks, and government officials. Thus, women's control over a single dimension – for instance, economic decision making – does not necessarily imply the ability to make reproductive or non-financial domestic decisions (Malhotra and Mather 1997). This is why alternative development initiatives, such as political quotas, awareness generation and property rights, and so on, are as essential for empowering women. It is also critical to note that due to the cultural and social constraints imposed on women in developing countries, women's autonomy or personal accumulation of resources may not necessarily result in empowering women on their own.

MICROFINANCE: One method for encouraging entrepreneurial and small businesses in developing countries has been through micro financing. Several studies have concluded that micro financing does help bring poor people out of poverty, although not all micro financing programs

are equally efficient Micro-financing, however, had a positive influence on women's social capital and normative influence in India, facilitating women's collective empowerment.

WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESSES : SELF-HELP GROUPS Self-help groups have been studied as a way to increase effectiveness of woman-owned businesses. They are thought to increase mutual trust, a spirit of thrift, group cohesiveness, among other attributes. Self-help groups have been empirically found to increase socio economic status in rural India found economic ties among members, the structure of the group network, and women's participation in group meetings contributed to collective action in promoting social capital and normative influence. Self-help groups were found to be especially important in developing communication skills for poor women in India.

OBSTACLES FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

There are myriads of barriers facing entrepreneurs in India, including traditional cultural values that may favour acceptance of one's destiny and status as opposed to trying to improve one's material situation; social structures cantering around the caste system; the history of British occupation, which has been critiqued as having forced out local businesses in favour of British business interests; and government practices since independence, which have tended toward state dominance of business, although this has been changing somewhat in recent years. Women entrepreneurs in India face all these barriers as well as additional obstacles directly and indirectly related to their gender. Women's traditional roles in India have strongly constrained their activities at home, in the workplace and in the economy. They have also been disadvantaged in their access to resources, including food, transportation, education and literacy, technology, and financial resources in general, including financing for entrepreneurial activities. It is increasingly evident that women's status in social, legal, educational and business / economic spheres are interconnected issues; that is, social, legal, or educational.

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

Microfinance Institution: Microfinance institute is al known as MFI. It is a financial institution which can be a non profit origination or a commercial bank that provides microfinance products and services to the lower income clients. These organizations provide hard-to-find financial services to local individuals and groups. MFIs aim to promote economic activity among low-income earners, for whom access to official banking services is impossible or nearly so.

NGO: A non-governmental organization (NGO) is the term commonly used for an organization that is neither a part of a government nor a conventional for-profit business. Usually set up by ordinary citizens, NGOs may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or private persons. These are voluntary organizations that help to provide microfinance services to the needy poor.

Self Help Groups : Self Help Group is a homogeneous group preferably from the same socio-economic background with affinity among themselves, voluntarily formed to save whatever amount they can conveniently save out of their earnings and mutually agree to contribute to a common fund of the group from which small loans are given to the members for meeting their productive and emergent credit needs at such rate of interest, period of loan and other terms as the group may decide.

Non-Banking Financial Corporation: A non-bank financial corporation (NBFC) is a financial institution that does not have a full banking license or is not supervised by a national or

international banking regulatory agency. The separate license may be due to lower capital requirements, to limitations on financial service offerings, or to supervision under a different state agency. In some countries this corresponds to a special category created for microfinance institutions.

Empowerment: Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group.

Conclusion:

This review has demonstrated that, the idea of SHG is a superior system for simple accessibility of microcredit to women and helps them to elevate their social and monetary status. Self Help Group like Mahila Bachat Gat plays very important role economically at local level. Mahila Bachat Gats not only empowers numbers of Women's economically and socially, but also provides direct and indirect help to many members and non-members through financial assistance. Mahila Bachat Gats are formal organisation providing informal loans to many members and non members on mutual benefits. The number of advantageous reasons like very low interest rates, easy and small amounts availability, easy repayments etc. The study implies on the concept that Self Help groups activities must be increased with increases in number of Self-Help Groups operating. Self Help group can change the Economic scenario to great extent especially in Rural areas and Semi Urban area. Self Help groups as per the research is successful in rural areas, especially among women.

References :

1. A Comparative Study on Women Empowerment through Self-Help Groups with Special Reference to Rural Districts of Karnataka” Final Report Submitted to: University Grants Commission South Western Regional Office P.K. Block, Palace Road, Gandhinagar Bangalore - 560009
2. Dr. Thresiamma Varghese (2011), Women Empowerment in Oman: A study based on Women Empowerment Index, Far East Journal of Psychology and Business, Vol. 2 No 2, 37 53.
3. P. Dhavamani(Feb 2010), Empowerment of Rural Women through Self Help Groups in SatturTaluk of Virudhunagar District, Journal for Bloomers of Research, Vol. 2, No. 2,191 195 .
4. Episteme: an online interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary & multi-cultural journal Bharat College of Arts and Commerce, Badlapur, MMR, India Volume 5, Issue 4 March 2017 BCAC-ISSN-2278-8794 16 STUDY ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH SELF-HELP GROUPS IN LESS DEVELOPED PART OF JOGESHWARI-EAST (MUMBAI SUBURB) By Hema Mehta.
5. "A Study on Role of Mahila Bachat Gat- Self Help Group for Financial support to the People of Mumbra during COVID-19 Crisis" Dr. Hiresh Luhar¹, Mrs Saima Shoeb Khan² ¹Director – VIVA Institute of Research & Management ²Research scholar at Shri JTT University Rajasthan.