

Self Help Groups as a Driver of Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to study the role of SHG in social, economic and psychological empowerment of women in Haryana. The study included primary data from 278 rural respondents of Haryana (156 from Kaithal District and 122 from Ambala District) selected through non-probability convenience sampling technique. Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to check the reliability and internal consistency of collected data. The results show that there exist no statistically significant difference in social, economic and psychological empowerment of women with respect to demographic variables. The findings of the study can help Government and NRLM to adopt appropriate policy and encourage women to participate in SHG activity.

Introduction

Women are indispensable part of the society. No society or country can flourish unless their women are in prosperity. Therefore, micro finance can only give desired results when they involve women in their operations. SHGs mainly involve women as they are considered more trust worthy when it comes to saving money. In this manner they have helped in attaining self-sufficiency for women and helped in their economic and social empowerment. Microfinance acts as a catalyst to organize the unorganized for social change. With the help of microfinance, unbanked women are able to mobilise their saving for credit to the noble group members for self-employment. As a result, millions of household women today have admittance to services to manage household finance more efficiently. Self Help Group is a group of 10-20 members having similar social and economical background from a connecting area who work on the assertion of self-help

and common interest. Thus, SHG were considered communal owned, self-managed, informal savings and credit delivery system at doorstep. NABARD after accomplishing its experiment with Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA) in 1987, launch a pilot project in 1992 with a pilot base of just 500 SHGs with policy backing from the Reserve Bank of India advising banks to open savings accounts in the name of SHG Groups.

The pioneering institution of microfinance was the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh launched in 1976 by Professor Muhammad Yunus, an Economics professor at Chittagong University, mainly for the purpose of providing loans to the landless poor, in a manner acceptable to them, both culturally and organizationally. Manimekalai and Rajeswari (2004) conducted a study on "Grass roots entrepreneurship through Self Help Groups (SHGs)" and analyzed the various enterprises, performance of Self Help Groups in terms of growth of invest-

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ment, turnover, capacity utilization, profit etc. It is understood from their analysis that, the Self Help Group entrepreneurs have improved a lot with respect to their enterprises and performances. Das Gupta (2005) opined that a greater shift is required from the finance sector reform to microfinance reform in the country. SHGs must be included in the priority sector and loans should be made mandatory to them. The Micro-credit facilities must be monitored vigorously and there should not be shortage of funds for SHGs. Aggarwal and Desai (2011) described positive effects of self-help groups (SHG). It is the best financial services provided to rural people but still it faces problems like illiteracy, delay in services, higher cost and technology. Due to growth of mobile and technology, presentation is done in a better way through voice 'sites'. It is used to reduce problems like higher cost, delay in services and frauds in a system.

Dhanalakshmi and Rajini (2013) focused on the historical background of Self- Help Groups in the Indian context. This paper reviews literature on the subject empowerment process, in relation to a Self- Help Group as well as the related literature. It has been noticed that most of the literature has focused on women empowerment as the outcome, and not as the process. Pahuja and Agarwal (2017) studied three blocks of Ghaziabad district and revealed that women have become more empowered not only socially, but also economically and politically. The study documented responses of 400 women respondents. There is no doubt that women have gained economically, but as far as the political empowerment is concerned, a lot needs to be done. A lot of work remains to be done for the political upliftment of rural women. Similarly, Joshi (2019) studied factors involved in SHG women members for their Social and Economic Empowerment. And revealed that women empowerment has increased manifolds after joining SHGs. Aggarwal, Kumar and Garg (2020) studied economic development, improvement in family matters, political empowerment and public resources and reported education has positive impact on SHG Women empowerment. With sufficient empirical evidences the present study focused to investigate the impact of microfinance on economic empowerment of the SHG member beneficiary in Haryana, to examine the impact of microfinance on social empowerment of SHG member beneficiary in Haryana and to study the role of microfinance in psychological empowerment of the member beneficiary in Haryana.

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis based on the study are framed below.

Null hypothesis H_{01} – There is no statistically significant difference between economic empowerment of women with respect to socio demographic variables.

Null hypothesis H_{02} – There is no statistically significant difference between social empowerment of women with respect to socio demographic variables.

Null hypothesis H_{03} – There is no statistically significant difference between psychological empowerment of women with respect to socio demographic variables.

Table 1: Socio Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic variables		N	%AGE
Age	18-25	24	8.6%
	25-35	138	49.6%
	35-45	92	33.1%
	above 45	24	8.6%
Marital Status	Married	256	92.1%
	Widow	22	7.9%
	Illiterate	18	6.5%
Education	Primary	88	31.7%
	Secondary	116	41.7%
	Graduation	41	14.7%
	Post-Graduation	15	5.4%
Family Size (members)	Below 4	87	31.3%
	4-6	171	61.5%
	Above 6	20	7.2%
Religion	Hindu	260	93.5%
	Muslim	8	2.9%
	Sikh	8	2.9%
	Other	2	0.7%
Caste	General	88	31.7%
	SC/ST	73	26.3%
	BC/OBC	106	38.1%
	Others	11	4.0%
Source of Income	Agriculture	80	28.8%
	Small Business	47	16.9%
	Labour	127	45.7%
	Transport	13	4.7%
Monthly Income	Other	11	4.0%
	Less than 10,000	214	77.0%
	10,000-20,000	53	19.1%
	20,000-30,000	6	2.2%
	Above 30,000	5	1.8%

Research Methodology

Present study is based on women empowerment through SHG-BLP. Research is quantitative in nature and based on primary data. Questionnaire method was used to collect data and is based on descriptive research design. Both open ended and close ended were used, in close ended multiple Choice questions were framed to collect data.. Questions were general to specific in nature. Five point Likert scale method was used starting from strongly agree, agree, neutral, Disagree and at the last strongly disagree. Secondary data was gathered from

books, magazines, research reports, journals, banks, NABARD, MFIs, NRLM, DRDA. Primary data was collected with the use of pretested structured questionnaire from the women member of SHG beneficiaries. Non-probability sampling technique is used to collect data and SPSS software is used to analyse and interpret the data.

The content validity of the test was determined by comparing the items in a test with the content and objective of the test. The face validity of the scale was established by having the

reaction of SHG Members for whom the test was meant. On the basis of the rule of thumb, calculated Cronbach's Alpha was 0.818, the questionnaire which was adopted by the Researcher was "good" to use for data collection. The study was carried out in rural areas of two districts Ambala and Kaithal of Haryana State. A representative sample of 278 SHG member beneficiaries; 156 from Kaithal and 122 from Ambala were categorized according to age groups, marital status, education, caste, religion, income and size of the family etc. The statistics involved

Table 2 Analysis of Economic Empowerment Social Empowerment & Psychological Empowerment in women with respect to Socio Demographic Variables

Demographic variables		N	t-Test/ f-Test	Sig. (p-value)	Accepted/ Rejected	t-Test/ f-Test	Sig. (p-value)	Accepted/ Rejected	t-Test/ f-Test	Sig. (p-value)	Accepted/ Rejected
			Economic Empowerment			Social Empowerment			Psychological Empowerment		
Age	18-25	24	1.131	0.337	Accepted	1.579	0.195	Accepted	5.057	0.002	Rejected
	25-35	138									
	35-45	92									
	above 45	24									
Marital Status	Married	256	0.52	0.600	Accepted	1.05	0.293	Accepted	1.24	0.216	Accepted
	Widow	22									
Education	Illiterate	18	2.005	0.094	Accepted	0.315	0.868	Accepted	1.196	0.313	Accepted
	Primary	88									
	Secondary	116									
	Graduation	41									
	Post-Graduation	15									
Family Size (members)	Below 4	87	1.084	0.34	Accepted	3.947	0.02	Rejected	1.918	0.149	Accepted
	4-6	171									
	Above 6	20									
Religion	Hindu	260	1.722	0.163	Accepted	1.585	0.193	Accepted	1.821	0.144	Accepted
	Muslim	8									
	Sikh	8									
	Other	2									
Caste	General	88	7.186	0	Rejected	4.702	0.003	Rejected	9.455	0	Rejected
	SC/ST	73									
	BC/OBC	106									
	Others	11									
Source of Income	Agriculture	80	0.222	0.926	Accepted	2.831	0.25	Accepted	7.255	0	Rejected
	Small Business	47									
	Labour	127									
	Transport	13									
	Other	11									
Monthly Income	Less than 10,000	214	1.037	0.377	Accepted	0.183	0.908	Accepted	1.155	0.328	Accepted
	10,000-20,000	53									
	20,000-30,000	6									
	Above 30,000	5									

quantitative data. In the first phase Descriptive Analysis was used with frequency, percentage for categorical data. Mean, Standard Deviation for rating scales. The second phase of analysis, was carried out by relationship between variables. To establish the significant difference between or among the independent variables on dependent variables, independent t test and one way ANOVA is used to interpret the data. The hypothesis based on the study were framed as **null hypothesis (H_{01})** – There is no statistically significant difference between economic empowerment of women with respect to socio demographic variables. (**H_{02}**) – There is no statistically significant difference between social empowerment of women with respect to socio demographic variables and (**H_{03}**) – There is no statistically significant difference between psychological empowerment of women with respect to socio demographic variables.

Results And Discussion

Table 1 shows the socio demographic profile of the respondents. Findings of the table are that 49.6% respondents in Haryana are in the age group of 25-35 years, 92.1% SHG members are married, 41.7% respondents are educated up to secondary level, 61.5% respondents family size is 4-6 members, 93.5% are Hindu, 38.1% respondents are BC/OBC, 45.7% respondents has their source of income as labour, 62.9% respondents does not have their farming land and 77% respondents have less than Rs.10, 000 as their monthly income.

Table 2 depicts the analysis of economic empowerment in women with respect to socio demographic variables in Haryana. The results have shown that there existed a statistically significant difference in the economic empowerment of women with respect to demographic variable caste therefore, rejected. Whereas no statistically significant difference was found with respect to demographic variables i.e. age, marital status, education, family size (members), religion, source of income and monthly income therefore, accepted.

Table further depicts the analysis of social empowerment in women with respect to socio demographic variables in Haryana. The results have shown that there existed a statistically significant difference in the social empowerment of women with respect to demographic variable family size and caste so, they are rejected whereas no statistically significant difference was found with respect to demographic variables i.e. age, marital status, education, religion, source of income and monthly income so they are accepted.

The analysis of psychological empowerment in women with respect to socio demographic variables in Haryana shows that there existed a statistically significant difference in the psychological empowerment of women with respect to demographic variable age, caste and source of income hence accepted. Whereas no statistically significant difference was found with respect to demographic variables i.e. marital status, education, family size (members), religion and monthly income hence rejected. The

major contribution of the study is to edify the Government in policy making in women empowerment. Through this study, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) Policy makers of SHG-BLP can take effective training programmes and can draft policies to promote women empowerment.

Conclusion

SHGs are playing an important role to empower women not only within the family circle but also society at large. However, the process is slow and would take some time to bring visible results. There is enhanced awareness, improved standard of living, increase in self-confidence, communication skill, qualification, mobilization and they are making use of the various public amenities such as using hospitals, access to market, banking facility is a sign of betterment of rural women. Taking loan from banks has now become simpler. Further, there is a change in the current status of women regarding literacy, health and nutrition, labour force participation, contraceptive use and mobility. Domestic violence has reduced and they can take the independent decision to some extent depicting the empowerment of SHG women socially, economically and psychologically. Further, it can be suggested that to move to the state of complete empowerment of the rural woman, there is a need for the government and NGOs to take steps to educate woman and help them in providing skill training education to develop an atmosphere for sustainability.

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