



A Study on Women Empowerment through Self-Help Groups (Sakhi Vedanta Group)

Rural women today have been suffering a lot due to the feeling of helplessness and lack of decision-making capabilities in financial matters. Self help groups (SHGs) are the most recent development for them which could enable them to come forward and make them self dependent and self employed. The main objective of this study is to the empowerment of women through SHGs in the rural areas. Self-help Groups have been playing considerable role in communication level of members, change in family violence, frequency of interaction with outsiders, change in the saving pattern of SHG members, achieving social harmony and sustainability-financial value.

Key Words : *Self Help Group, Self-Dependent, Self-Employed & empowerment.*

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Introduction :

Meaning of Empowerment :

Empowerment is a process by which women gains greater control over resources like income, knowledge, information, technology, skill and training, challenge the ideology of patriarchy and Participate in leadership, decision making process, enhance the self-image of women, to become active participants in the process of change and to develop the skills to assert themselves. Self- help groups (SHGs) play a major role in poverty alleviation in rural India. A growing number of poor people in various parts of India are members of SHGs and actively engage in savings and credit, as well as in other activities such as income generation, natural resources management, literacy, child care and nutrition, etc.

Women Empowerment :

According to UNESCO, women empowerment means the following :

- (1) Having decision-making power of their own.
- (2) Having access to information and resources for taking proper decision. women's sense of self-worth;
- (3) Their right to have and to determine choices;
- (4) Their right to have access to opportunities and resources;
- (5) Their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home.
- (6) Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making.
- (7) Having positive thinking on the ability to make change.
- (8) Ability to learn skills for improving one's personal or group power.
- (9) Ability to change others' perceptions by democratic means.
- (10) Involving in the growth process and changes that are never ending and self-initiated.

Review of Literature :

This paper reviews literature on the subject's empowerment process in relation to a Self-Help Group as well as related literature. It is important to note that most literature has been focusing on empowerment as the outcome not as the process. Access to credit can help women by enabling them to start and expand small businesses, often accompanied by market access. The women experienced feelings of freedom, strength, self identity and increases in levels of confidence and self-esteem. Besides, involvement in SHGs has enabled women to have a voice in the community affairs and they have been able to tackle problems and have gained power over decision making in the households. Though women hardly involve themselves in politics, their participation in SHGs has altered them,

Objectives of Study :

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- (a) To know the socio-economic profile of SHGs beneficiaries.
- (b) To find the economic status of SHGs of women in rural area.
- (c) to find out increase confidence with SHGs.

Scope of Study :

In rural India, the high rate of illiteracy & low economic status of women need for increasing their earning power by providing the income generating assets. The present study has been undertaken to promote the women empowerment through SHGs with innovative & moderate manner to bring valuable suggestions to improve the performance of SHGs.

Sampling Design / Size :

To know the status of SHGs, women empowerment

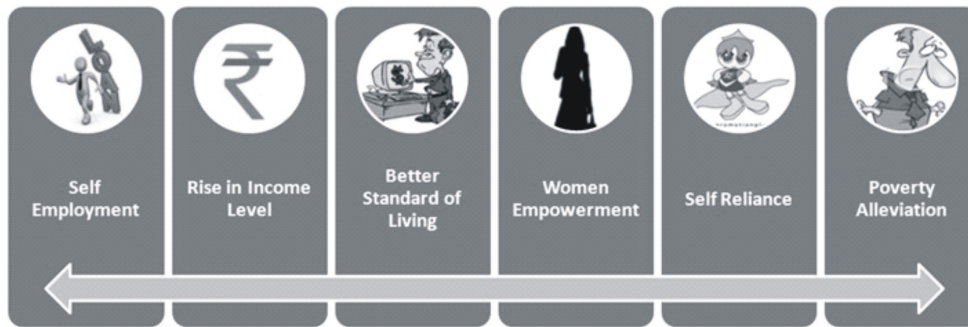
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through self-help groups and their socio economic impact by Vedanta 's SAKHI self helping group.

SHGs and Rural Development :

In order to change the face of socio-economic scenario, micro enterprises and SHGs are playing significant role in the self-employment by raising the level of income and standard of living rural people. In this framework, one of the most vital aspects of rural self employment is the formation of SHGs which is a valuable investment in human capital through training and capacity building measures. From dairy to mechanized farming, weaving, poultry, food processing units, mushroom cultivation; Rural India has been busy setting up micro-enterprises by forming SHGs.. These are informal groups in nature where members come together towards collective action for common cause. The common need is meeting their emergent economic needs without depending on external help. SHG movement is supposed to build economic self reliance of rural poor, overcome misuse and create confidence predominantly among women who are mostly unseen in the social structure.

SHGs - Effects & Outcome :



In India, self employment has been recognized as an essential force of development in rural areas. It has emerged as a strategy designed to improve the socio-economic life and mainly focuses on extending the benefits of development to the poorest in the rural areas improving their standard of living and self-realization. SHGs in India are integrating the low income segments with rest of the rural community by ensuring them a better participation in a more equitable share in the benefit of developments. These Groups are not only speeding up economic growth, but also providing jobs and improving the quality of rural life towards self-reliance. Self-employment needs a very wide ranging and comprehensive set of activities, relevant to all aspects of rural economy and covering rural people including skilled, unskilled and landless labours and artisans of Rural India. Even though the Rural Indians put their entrepreneurial skills in all the rural development activities their economic status has not improved to the expected level. Although they have much potential; they are ignorant of converting their skills into reality.

SAKHI (Self Helping Group for Rural Women Empowerment):

It was a day (12.JAN 2015) of reckoning for 22 awardees

in three categories 8 individual rural women entrepreneurs, 7 Self Help Groups and 7 NGOs, who have been working tirelessly towards socio-economic empowerment of rural & tribal women. Vedanta Group Company Hindustan Zinc had launched women empowerment campaign 'SAKHI' with a focus to provide training and skills by organizing rural and tribal women and organized them into self-help-groups broadly known as Hindustan Zinc 'SAKHI' self-help-groups. As part of campaign "Sakhi", Hindustan Zinc also constituted "Hindustan Zinc 'SAKHI' Awards" to motivate and give recognition to such individual women, self-help groups and NGOs.

The award function was organized in Jaipur recently with a gathering of about 200 people including 125 rural and tribal 'Sakhi' women who had travelled from across Rajasthan. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Smt. Vasundhara Raje graced the occasion as a Chief Guest. Mr. Anil Agarwal Chairman, Vedanta Group as Guest of Honour.

Rajasthan Chief Minister also saw the exhibition of products made by 'Sakhi' women group which was followed by screening of 'Sakhi' film. During the felicitation, Rajasthan

Chief Minister interacted with each awardee asking about their struggles and contribution to the society. As part of the program, Hindustan Zinc 'Sakhi' Calendar 2015 was unveiled by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Rajasthan along with Chairman, Vedanta Group, CEO, Hindustan

Zinc.

Role of Vedanta Group in Women Empowerment :

"Vedanta Limited aims to make women self-reliant by implementing skill development, education, health and sanitation and various income generation activities. Women are imperative to build social capital of the nation and India's development is synonymous with their development," said Roma Balwani, president, Group Sustainability and CSR, Vedanta.

Vedanta practices and promotes equal employment opportunities. The company's Board has 13 percent representation of women and has set a target to reach over 20 percent by 2018.

On March 11, 2016, female employees from the unit will interact with the company's CEO for a leadership programme titled '2nd Dimension'. At Lanjigarh in Odisha, the company launched a federation under 'Sakhi', a marquee female-centric CSR programme. Outperformers from women Self Help Groups (SHGs) were felicitated for their contribution while awareness about women's health was promoted through two special stall.

At Tuticorin, Sterlite Copper organised cultural programmes and sports competitions for over 2400 women

SHG members. The performance of local NGOs and SHG members was commemorated on International Women's Day.

Vedanta has signed a MoU with the Ministry of Women and Child Development to construct 4000 Nandghars across India. The modern Angawadi has a state of the art infrastructure with digital learning facilities for children and young women. Skill development initiatives such as stitching, creating marketing linkages, creating micro enterprises and Self Help Groups (SHGs) will empower women with providing means of economic independence.

Vedanta has also empowered over 32,600 rural women through the creation of about 1,500 Self Help Groups in the communities, across the locations of its operations.

Cairn India, a Vedanta company conducts projects are aimed at enhancing the social status of rural women, in alignment with Government's 'Skill India' Initiative. Such programmes have resulted in emerging business units that are based on a self-employment business model.

The Cairn India Enterprise Centre (CEC) provides skill training, career counselling, and linkage to employment opportunities to over 12,000 youth including women. Cairn India has broken the barrier of gender roles by undertaking unique initiative like involving women masonry to build toilets as part of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The involvement of women in its dairy development programme plays vital role in generating additional income.

'Sakhi' Self-Help Groups (SHGs) since 2006 in Rajasthan, reaching over 7,000 rural and tribal women. Each group has about 12-15 rural women trained as rural women entrepreneurs, who now manage their own micro-enterprises.

BALCO encouraged 1440 women to form 120 Self Help Groups (SHG) in the surrounding villages. Local NGOs such as the 'Social Revival Group Of Urban Rural & Tribal' (SROUT) teamed up with BALCO to organize training workshops for the members of SHGs.

In Odisha, at Lanjigarh, where the company operates a smelter and power plant, 27 SHGs, with a total strength of over 291 women are entrepreneurs, generating their own source of income, benefitting their households and the broader society. At its Jharsuguda operations too, 224 self help groups benefit 2,695 women, generating a stable source of livelihood, thus empowering them

Conclusion :

We can conclude that many of ways of measuring women's entrepreneurship, both at the individual level and at the firm level. We find that women entrepreneurs have most important role in the economy, women ability to create jobs for themselves and to create jobs for others. For development in rural area SHG help them to guide and also generate micro finance and market for their products

Women are leading the way for brighter future. Women in urban and rural areas should be given good opportunities so that they can bring about positive social change and contribute for growth of the country. The report finds that women entrepreneurs play an important role in the

entrepreneurial economy. Self-employment represents one of the most important job opportunities for women. Women play a decisive role in initiating the advancement and growth of any society, in nations across the world the role of Women entrepreneur in economic development is also being identified and steps are being taken to. Further the progress of women entrepreneurship though there are several factors contributing to the process of coming into view of women as entrepreneurs. the a method for the women moving into entrepreneurial activity thus contributing to the social and economic development, that is help in gaining equality and equal importance for themselves.

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