

Economic Empowerment of Rural Women Through Self Help Groups– A Case Study with reference to Kalki Self Help Group of Pulankulathupatti Village, Manikandam Block, Tiruchirappalli District

Dr. T. S. Agilla

Assistant Professor of Commerce, Tamil Nadu National Law University, Tiruchirappalli

Abstract

The economic empowerment of rural women shall mean equipping village women to be economically independent and personally self-reliant, with a positive self-esteem. The rural empowered women shall be able to participate in the process of decision making at home and in public activities. The economic empowerment of rural women ensures equal status, opportunity and freedom to develop them. This process of change leads to economic empowerment through increase in their earning and makes them independent. The present paper mainly attempts to study the Economic empowerment of rural women through Self Help Group. This study is based on primary data. The primary data were obtained from Kalki Self Help Group of Pulankulathupatti Village, Manikandam Block, Tiruchirappalli District through interview schedule. The convenient sampling technique were adopted for collecting data from respondents. Percentage analysis were used to complete the analysis of collected data. Hypothesis were framed and tested with statistical tool. The following are the important objectives of the study: 1. To analyze the effect of occupational shift in Economic Empowerment of rural women after joining the SHG. 2. To analyse the various types of entrepreneurial activities carried out by rural women. 3. To assess the role of Micro finance in carrying out entrepreneurial activities by rural SHG women. 4. To give suitable suggestions based on the outcome of the findings

Keywords: Economic Empowerment, Rural Women and Self-Help Group (SHG).

Introduction

SHG members after shifting their occupation are able to earn more from the changed occupation. The increase in income, influences the savings and expenditure pattern. It is true that the increase in income associated with rational expenses and savings leads to economic empowerment of women. This portion of the study contains a micro-analysis of data collected on income and expenditure of sample respondents to assess their economic advancement.

Due to occupational shift, the SHG influences the equilibrium of social forces on women members and treats them as equal partners in the society with recognition. When the concern is with the poor women, it should be two dimensional-both social and economic forces in their favour. Such a perception on the

role of poor women places their empowerment as the central thrust of the desired goal, which goes beyond the increase in income. The economic empowerment in this context entails gradually increasing control of women over the economic progress through self-employment.

According to Mohammed Yunus the self-employment assumes certain advantages over waged employment, with flexible hours of work, tailor made for any one, conversion of hobbies into gainful employment, absence of rigid hierarchy, cheapest mode of creating employment and inculcating self confidence. Further he confidently declares that self-employment is the only solution to help the fate of those whom economists refuse to hire.

In the promotion of self-employment, the SHGs play an important role towards rural women. The economic progress of rural women requires transfer of skills for management and control of the economic activities. It may be achieved in stages and with the support of SHGs over a period of time, enables the women to feel confident of decision-making and control.¹

With women slowly gaining control and being involved in the decision making of various aspects affecting them directly, the real empowerment will emerge and a change will be noticed in their income related activities. From the women's empowerment perspective, it is important that the economic activities of rural women should be viable and the capacities of the poor women should be directed towards organizing and managing the economic activity. The SHGs as the catalyst enable them to link the efforts of women with market forces.

Literature Review

Indhumathi and Palanivelu (2013) 'Women Empowerment through Self – Help Group' reveals that the formation of SHGs has led to a member of positive feature. The most important achieved aspect is that the earlier belief that the poor are unbankable and less credit worthy has been wrong. The success of any strategy of woman empowerment depends upon the following factors: level of education, hard work, social customs, family planning, environment and collective strategies beyond the microcredit to increase the endowments of the woman enhance their exchange outcomes vis-a-vis the socio culture and political spaces are required for the women empowerment. Parker (2013) in his article "Empowering Women Through Microfinance in India" depicted that across the globe, but especially in Asia, and particularly in areas where rural population density is relatively high, microfinance can be an extremely effective poverty reduction tool. Microfinance enterprises can also potentially be very profitable undertakings as excess urban capital is redirected to credit starved rural areas. Modern microcredit is a relatively new phenomenon and as such some growing pains should be expected.²

Dr. Bhatt and Rajdev (2012) in their study "An Analysis of Factors Empowering Women Through Microfinance" stated that the research study aimed at checking the impact of microfinance on women empowerment. From the study it can be concluded that microfinance institution helps in poverty alleviation and through that standard of living of women also improves. The SHG's have provided social opportunities to make them aware about these rights, entitlements and development programmes as well as starting income generation activities for substantial earnings and selfemployment.³

Dr.DhirajJain and MsBhagayashree Jain (2012) in their study "Does Microfinance Empower Rural Women?- A Empirical Study in Udaipur District, Rajasthan" revealed that Microfinance program like the SHGs in India have been promoted for their positive economic impact and the belief that they empower women. The study result strongly demonstrates that there is a significant increase in the women empowerment of the SHGs members. However, social backwardness, indebtedness and presence

of other microcredit programs in the same or nearby villages have a significant positive influence on women's participation in this program.⁴

Rajendran and Dr.R.P.Raja (2011) in their study "Does Micro Finance Empower Rural Women?- A study in Vellore District, Tamil Nadu" summarizes that there is an appreciable empowerment in the political space than economic empowerment and there was negligible social empowerment as a result of participating in microfinance through the SHG programme.⁵

Singh & Singh (2010) in their study ' Loan default by SHGs in Rajasthan' unraveled many interesting dimensions of Self Help Groups and reinforced the significance of focusing on the core principles of SHG formation and promotion as identified by some of the earlier enquiries into SHG quality and performance. The study findings revealed that the ad hoc formation of groups, lack of emphasis on group development, widespread laxity in writing and absence of basic books of record, lack of attention to member savings, low incidence of inter-loaning, appropriation of benefits by the leaders/ office bearers, credit to group without estimating credit needs of members, lack of effective grading by banks are the defining characteristics of the groups.⁶

Ranjula Bali Swainan and Fan Yang Wallentin (2009) in their study "Does microfinance empower women evidence from Self-Help Groups in India" strongly concluded in their study that SHG members were empowered by participating in microfinance program in the sense that they could have a greater propensity to resist existing gender norms and culture that restrict their ability to develop and make choices.⁷

Prof. Singh (2008) in his study "Micro Finance and Empowerment of Scheduled Caste Women: An Impact Study of SHGs in Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal" stated that there has been a paradigm shift in development and governance. Democratic decentralization, partnership with NGO's, empowering community-based organizations, participatory development, 223sustainable growth and equity etc. have proved to be instrumental in people participation in development and governance as well as their empowerment.⁸

Statement of the Problem

The empowerment in the real sense would be attained when rural women are actively involved in the gainful activities promoted and monitored by the SHGs. The economic empowerment is defined as economic change or material gain plus increased bargaining power and the structural change, which enables women to secure economic gains. Various strategies are followed by women members in association with SHGs to attain the gainful economic results. Women, especially from the rural areas, have found a new identity through SHGs and their involvement with these SHGs has made them discover their inner strength, gain self confidence, social and economic empowerment and capacity building.

Women always act as an active agent participating in and guiding their own development. Women are empowered economically after participating in the SHG. The participation in the SHGs enriched the empowerment of women in House Management, leadership, economic upliftment and health and Sanitation. Hence the researcher intends to conduct study on Economic empowerment of rural women through self-help groups.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the important objectives of the study:

- To analyze the occupational shift in Economic Empowerment of rural women after joining the SHG.
- To analyze the various types of entrepreneurial activities carried out by rural women
- To assess the role of Micro finance in carrying out entrepreneurial activities by rural SHG women
- To give suitable suggestions based on the outcome of the findings

Methodology of the Study

1. Research Design

Research design is the detailed plan of conducting a research study. Descriptive research design has been used in the study.

2. Data Collection

Primary sources of data collected through interview schedule & secondary source from magazines, journals and website.

3. Sample Area

The data has been collected from 11 SHG members of Kalki Self Help Group, Pulankulathupatti Village, Manikandam Block, Tiruchirappalli District. This group comes under Mahalir Thittam scheme of Government of Tamil Nadu.

4. Tools used for Analysis

Percentage Analysis and Paired t test were used for analysing the data

5. Hypothesis

The hypothesis framed were as follows

Ho = Sample respondent’s income does not significantly increase after joining the SHG programme.

H1 = Sample respondents income significantly increase after joining the SHG programme.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table – 1 Demographic Factors of Respondents

Demographic Factors	Factors	No.of. Respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 30 years	1	9.09
	30-40	4	36.36
	40-50	6	54.55
	Total	11	100
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	1	9.09
	UptoV th Std	3	27.27
	VI th Std – X th Std	3	27.27
	XII th Std	4	36.37
	Total	11	100

Source : Primary Data

The above table shows that among the 11 respondents 54.55 per cent of respondents were between the age group of 40 and 50 and 36.36 per cent of respondents were between the age group of 30 and 40. 9.09 per cent of respondents were below 30 years .It is obvious that most of the respondents were in the age group of between 40 and 50.Educational qualification of respondents shows that 36.37 per cent were

with higher secondary level of education, 27.27 per cent were with VIth– Xth Std level of education ,9.09 per cent of respondent were illiterate. Most of the respondents have XII std level of education.

Table – 2 Respondents Occupation Before Joining SHG

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture and Allied Activities	2	18.18
Animal Rearing	2	18.18
Daily wage earners	1	9.09
Engaged in House hold activities	4	36.36
Helping their husband in work	1	9.09
Total	11	100

Source : Primary Data

Occupational status of the respondents shows that 36.36 per cent of respondents were engaged in household activities, 18 per cent of respondents were engaged in agriculture and allied activities, another 18 per cent of respondents were doing animal rearing ,9.09 per cent of respondents were daily wage earners, another 9.09 per cent were helping their husband in work. The majority of the respondents were engaged in household activities and does not have any occupation before joining SHG.

Table – 3 Entrepreneurial Activity of Respondents after joining SHG

Entrepreneurial Activity	No. of Respondents
Small Tiffin stall	1
Groceries shop	2
Cycle shop	1
Snacks shop	1
Tailoring Unit	2
Readymade Garment	2
Sale of Milk	1
Fruit shop	1
Total	11

Source : Primary Data

The above table shows that respondents were engaged in different type of entrepreneurial activity. SHG members had started their business by getting micro credit from the banks. It is clear from the above table that there is a occupational shift among the respondents after joining the SHG .These entrepreneurs can be given training to market the products produced in the startups under the rural transformation programme.

Table – 4 Loan availed by the respondents from the Banks for Entrepreneurial Activity

Loan Amount	No. of Respondents	Percentage
BelowRs.50,000	3	27.27
Rs.50,000- Rs.150,000	8	72.73

Total	11	100
--------------	----	-----

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 72.73 per cent of respondents have availed loan between Rs.50000 – Rs.150000 and 27.27 per cent of respondents have availed loan below Rs.50000 for carrying out entrepreneurial activity jointly and individually.

Table – 5 Annual Income of Respondents after becoming Entrepreneurs

Income	No.of Respondents	Percentage
Rs.25,000 – Rs.50000	3	27.27
Rs.50000 – Rs.750000	2	18.18
Rs.75000 – Rs.100000	2	18.18
Above Rs.100000	4	36.36
Total	11	100

Source: Primary Data

Annual income of the respondents shows that 36.36percent of respondents were in the income range of above Rs.100000. 27.27 per cent of respondents were in the income range of betweenRs.25000 and Rs.50000 ,18.18 per cent of respondents were in the income range of betweenRs.50000 and Rs.75000, another 18.18 per cent of respondent’s income were in the income range of below Rs.75000 and Rs. 100000. Most of the respondents were in the income range of Rs.100000 – Rs.150000. It is obvious from the above table that this SHG members annual income have increased drastically after involving in entrepreneurial activity. Increase in income influence the savings and expenditure pattern which leads to economic empowerment of women. Economic empowerment raises the socio-economic status of the SHG members.

Hypothesis Testing

The data was further subjected to Paired t – test for the validation of hypothesis.

A Null hypothesis is framed and tested in the study.

Ho = Sample respondent’s income does not significantly increase after joining the SHG programme.

H1 = Sample respondent’s income significantly increase after joining the SHG programme.

Table – 6 Results of Paired t Test

Test used	D. f	Sig	Cal. value of t	Table value of t	Result
Paired t Test	10	5 Percent	9.036	1.81	Rejected

Above table reveals that calculated value of t is more than the table value. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis. Hence it can be concluded that Sample respondent’s income significantly increase after joining the SHG programme.

Suggestions

- If this SHG members were given training and assistance in carrying out the entrepreneurial activities they will perform better.
- Skill oriented training can be given to improve their skill in the entrepreneurial activities.

- Some financial assistance can be provided to this group through Mahalir Thittam which functions under Women Development Corporation.
- Few entrepreneurial activities carried out by the SHG members does not generate more income and for them Government can give some suggestions to carry out other entrepreneurial activity for earning more income.
- Government can organise workshops for the SHG members to improve the technology in startups and to market the produced products.

Conclusion

SHGs have laid the path for economic empowerment of women. SHGs is a alternative way for rural women development. If training programmes on entrepreneurial activities were given, it will bring out the skill and potential of women in carrying out the entrepreneurial activities which paves way to their economic empowerment.

References

1. Mohammad Yunus and Alan Jolis, *Banker to the poor*, The University Press Ltd., Dhaka, Bangladesh, pp. 222 to 236.
2. Indhumathi C. and Dr. Palanivelu P. (2013), 'Women Empowerment through Self – Help Group' Volume : 2 Issue : 6, June 2013, ISSN No 2277 – 8160, Global Research Finance.
3. Dr. Kaushal A. Bhatt and Mr. Amit A. Rajdev "An Analysis of Factors Empowering Women Through Microfinance" Paripex - Indian Journal Of Research, Volume I, Issue 11, November 2012 , pp-50-52
4. Jain Dhiraj and Jain Bhagayashree Jain (2012), 'Does Microfinance Empower Rural Women?- A Empirical Study in Udaipur District, Rajasthan' ,Research world , Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce, Volume III, Issue 2(1), April 2012, pp:76-89.
5. Singh Jaipal and Singh Anil Kumar (2010), 'Loan default by SHGs in Rajasthan'., center for macro finance,
6. Swaina Bali Ranjula and Wallenin Fan Yang (2009) "Does microfinance empower women evidence from Self-Help Groups in India" International Review of Applied Economics, Volume 23, No.5, pp:541556.
7. Singh S.K. (2008), 'Micro Finance and Empowerment of Scheduled Caste Women: An Impact Study of SHGs in Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal' World Bank .org [9] <http://vedantasakhi.blogspot.in/>