

MARUMEGH

Kisaan E- Patrika

Available online at www.marumegh.com

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ISSN: 2456-2904



SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH SHG

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Introduction:

Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights.

According to NABARD- Self Help Group (SHG) is a small, economically homogenous and affinity group of rural poor, voluntarily formed to save and mutually agree to contribute in a common fund to be lent to its members as per group decision for their socio-economic development. Self-Help Group is a village-based financial intermediary usually composed of 10–20 local women. Members make small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough capital in the group to begin lending. The SHG programme is intended to improve the socio economic status of rural women by encouraging them to undertake income generating activities. Most of the beneficiaries' undertaken agriculture related income generating activities, besides other activities. Self employed women association (SEWA) is a organization which is working in Gujarat and its main goals are to organize women workers for full employment and self-reliance. SEWA aims to mainstream marginalized and poor women in the informal sector and lift them out of their poverty.

Role of SHGs in India: A Self-Help Group (SHG) is a village-based financial intermediary usually composed of 10-20 local women. Most self-help groups are located in India, though SHGs can also be found in other countries, especially in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Members make small regular savings contributions over a few months until there is enough capital in the group to begin lending. Funds may then be lent back to the members or to others in the village for any purpose. In India, many SHGs are 'linked' to banks for the delivery of micro-credit. Micro-credit in common parlance refers to small loans that help the poor women to meet their immediate credit needs. A major rethinking on the existing strategies of rural development in general and women empowerment, in particular, led to the realization that a new approach is needed to 'help the women to help themselves'. Such an approach, particularly known as promotion of Self-Help Group (SHG) formation, was stated with the objective of meeting the micro credit need of women PCGI 2008.

NEED OF SHG:

1. Organize Women	2. Enhance Participation level
3. Inculcate saving habits	4. Based on Principles of cooperation
5. Suitable Platform for women	6. Enhance capacities of Women

Objectives of SHG:

1. To inculcate the savings and banking habits among members.	2. To secure them from financial, technical and moral strengths.
3. To enable availing of loan for productive purposes.	4. To gain economic prosperity through loan/credit
5. To gain collective wisdom in organizing and managing their own finance and distributing the benefits among themselves.	6. To sensitize women of target area for the need of SHG and its relevance in their empowerment.
7. To create we feeling among women.	8. To enhance the confidence and capabilities of women.
9. To develop collective decision making among women.	10. To motivate women taking up social responsibilities particularly related to women development.

SHGs Working in India:

PRADAN is one of the pioneers in the promotion of Self-Help Groups (SHG) in India, having formed its first SHG in Alwar, Rajasthan, in 1983. A savings and credit SHG is a simple yet effective way of reaching out and connecting with rural poor women. Stuart 1999. As a result of PRADAN’s intervention efforts, an increasing number of rural families – especially women – are engaging in independent livelihood activities. These activities serve as opportunities for diversifying and enhancing their incomes. PRADAN gives particular attention to women because even as they comprise half of the country’s population, they remain the most disadvantaged sector among the poor. Yet it is the women who prove to be most effective in fostering change in their families and communities. Stuart, 1999.

With PRADAN’s guidance and the members’ own experiences, SHGs can potentially play four key roles through the different stages of evolution: mutual help, financial intermediation, livelihood planning, and social empowerment. As on March 2015, PRADAN worked with 28,592 SHG's across 7 states, representing a total membership of 367,821 rural poor women. These SHG's have mobilized a total savings of 1,015 Million Rupees also significantly, the financial accounting and Management Information System (MIS) of PRADAN’s SHG programme has been streamlined by the innovative system of community-based accounting through the Computer Munshi System <http://www.readindia.in/shg.html> .

JAGORI

Women's Political, Social and Economic Empowerment

Project Title: Facilitating Women in Four Endemic Poverty. States of India to Access, Actualize and Sustain Provisions on Women Empowerment.

Project Partners: PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Developmental Action) and Jagori, women's resource centre.

Case study on Village Women Educate Themselves to Manage Money

There was a time in the not-so-distant past when books and numbers meant nothing to rural women in West Bengal's Purulia district. Not anymore, In the Burrabazar and Jhalda blocks, hundreds of women, organized in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), are now well-versed in reading and writing in Bangla and doing basic mathematics. Who or what is behind this remarkable

turnaround? Aided by Pradan, a non-profit working in the region, it's the women themselves who first powered an SHG revolution here. Once the money started coming in - Burrabazar's 184 SHGs have a total fund value of one crore ninety lakh rupees - the women insisted on acquiring basic literacy to safeguard their earnings. Following the computerization of their business model, they can now confidently deal with the "computer bandhus and munshis", who keep their accounts. But not for long. Their next step is to handle the computers themselves.

Rural Education and Action Development (READ):

In 1997, READ was the first organization in its area to introduce the concept of women self-help groups, and 5 women self-help groups were formed in Andimadam Block of Ariyalur District (in the villages of Periyakrishnapuram, Thanjavooranchavai, Vilandai, Vilandai Colony and Keelnaduvai) Robert *et al* 2005. Since then, the program has expanded a lot. With financial support from the MahalirThittam project of the Tamilnadu Corporation for the Development of Women Ltd., (TNCDW), The Council for Advancement of People`s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) and Sahaya International, READ has currently organized more than 1300 groups, each with 10-15 members. READ's SHG program currently covers three blocks in two districts (Ariyalur and Cuddalore district). To operate these programs, READ has established four branch offices (Andimadam, Sendurai, Variyangkaval and Srimushunam)

The READ staffs gave basic training to each of the Self-Help Groups on a variety of topics:

Rules and regulations of SHG	Leadership development Training
Animators training	Capacity building training
Accounts training	Entrepreneurs Training and Self employment Training

Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA)

Founded:1972	Office location: Ahmedabad
Members: 19, 16,676	Country: India
Founder: Ela Bhatt, President	Website: www.sewa.org

Goal and activities of SEWA

SEWA's main goals are to organize women workers for **full employment** and **self-reliance**. SEWA aims to mainstream **marginalized** and **poor** women in the informal sector and lift them out of their poverty.

The successful running of SEWA is the joint achievement of highly trained middle-class professionals and working class women working in a multi-tiered organizational structure. A good part of the challenge has been how to combine democratic processes with efficiency.

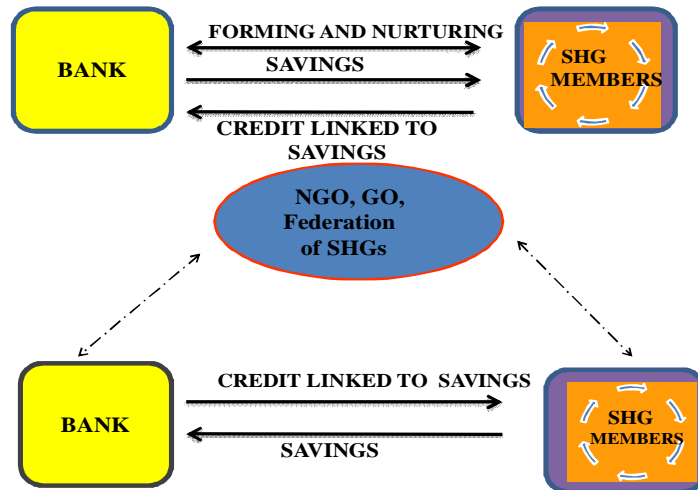
SHGS Bank Linkage Programme:

The self-help group movement in India began in the 1980s when several NGOs mobilized and organized for poor communities in rural areas to provide formal channels for social and financial support. The program gained momentum with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) linking a small number of groups with banks called the Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Program (SBLP), the revolutionary initiative connected group members many of whom had never had a bank account before to formal financial services in a sustainable and scalable manner Robert *et al* 2005.

As of 2014, over **4.19** million self-help groups had outstanding bank loans and **7.42** million had savings accounts with banks under the SBLP. Over the last two decades, the SBLP has proven to be a great medium for social and economic empowerment for rural women

Today, these self-help groups are seen as more than just a conduit for credit – they also act as a delivery mechanism for various other services ranging from entrepreneurial training, livelihood promotion activity and community development programmes.

SHG Bank Linkage Model



CONCLUSION:

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are successful in empowering rural women through income generating activities and developing their capacities and capabilities in political, social, educational and psychological aspects. SHGs playing role in economic empowerment, social empowerment, political empowerment and personal empowerment of women. SHGs also helpful in improving the decision making ability of women. So many organizations like READ, PRADAN etc. had played significant role in upliftment of women. SHGs found useful for increasing women's own income and thereby to develop saving habits. For successful functioning of SHG, good leadership, active participation and effective management is very essential.

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