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A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF SELF HELP GROUPS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Indian women had always faced very critical situation within the ancient period. Like 'satipratha', 'Balvivah' and so on. People won't want that women to be in business or any other activities while stayed at home only which affected tons to the women empowerment. Even nowadays, also in elder generation of girls we will easily understand what proportion impact remains for women empowerment. Women refuse to buy the moveable or immovable property. They're considered, albeit they're playing an important role in building of status within the society. But because the truth which has been universal that 'Nothing remains unchanged' these arduous customs has been diminishing by and by. But our society which remains under the influence of male dominance, the women not having primary needs like education, job and assets and most the most essential that the 'honor'. Self-help group is a most important method of organizing the poor women and the marginalized to come together to solve their individual problem. The SHG method is operated by the government, NGOs and others worldwide concern for the empowerment of women from weaker section. This paper contains the Historical background, features, SHGs as Borrowing Units and Land holding pattern of SHGs.

Keywords: Historical background, features, SHGs as Borrowing Units and Occupation etc

Introduction:

An SHG comprises a little group of girls who close to form regular monetary contributions. Emerging as important micro-finance systems, SHGs work as platforms that promote solidarity among women, bringing them together on problems with health, nutrition, gender parity and gender justice. SHGs have already made a big contribution in developing entrepreneurship aptitudes among rural women by enhancing their skills and giving them an opportunity to interact in various

entrepreneurial activities. The SHGs has been gave women entrepreneurs with micro-loans to sustain their businesses, while also creating an environment for them to develop greater agency and decision-making skills.

But now-a-days it's become mandatory to every n every family to earn. Population, inflation and even competitions making people vigilant and as person possesses developed brain, they're trying hard enduring. Hence men are allowing their women to travel out for learning and earning purpose. Women are performing both the roles alright. We people cannot neglect their performance. Now the Government is additionally taking the initiative to the empowerment of girls by launching various schemes and taking women into consideration. The functioning of SHGs is that the poor collect their savings and save it in the banks. In return they will receive easy access to loans with a lower rate of interest to start their small size unit of enterprise. Number of the poor women and the marginalized population in India are building their lives, their families and their society through Self help groups. The 9th five year plan of the Government of India had provided the due recognition on the importance and the needs of the Self-help group method to implement developmental schemes at the grassroots level.

Research Methodology:

The study is mainly based on secondary data obtained from reports of Planning commission, Government of India to evaluate the success of SHGs in our country. The study has been captures the effects of liberalization after 1 decade accomplishment of reforms. Augmented growth rates were calculated to observe that which variables are having high growth during this study period. The collected data from the report has been presented with the help of various charts given in software.

Objectives of Study:

The following are the various objectives of the study of SHGs.

- To know the origin and history of SHGs.
- To study the features of SHGs
- To examine Caste-wise Distribution of SHGs Members
- To evaluate formal education of SHGs Members
- To criticize the occupation of SHGs Members.

❖ **Some exclusive schemes of state for the empowerment of women & the poverty alleviation also are given below:**

1. Development of women and child in rural area (DWCRA) - 1978
2. Scheme of training of rural youth for self employment (TRYSEM) - 1979
3. Integrated rural development program (IRDP) - 1980
4. Rural landless employment guarantee program (RLEGP) - 1983
5. Jawahar rojgar yojna (JRY) - 1989

6. Swarnjayanti gram swarojgar yojna (SGSY) – 1999

❖ Self- Help Groups:

A Self Help Group (SHG) is a small group like-minded people especially women, who come together to pool their small savings to a common fund and agree to meet their emergency need on mutual help basis. The group decides whom the loan should be given to, for which purposes, on what terms and what schedule of recovery. The members of SHGs has been use that amount for various purposes, but they have to follow the rule that they have to spend that all money only for the purpose of income. So they start a micro or small business and contribute to the family. The SHGs is a development group for the poor, needed and marginalized women entrepreneur. It is identified by the government of India and doesn't need any formal registration. The important goal of the SHGs is to develop the functional capacity of the poor and the marginalized in the field of employment and income generating activities. People are accountable for their own future by organizing themselves into the SHGs.

I. Historical background:

Bangladesh has been one of the first country who acknowledged as a pioneer in the field of micro-finance. Dr. Mehmud Yunus, Professor of Economics who worked at Chitgaon University of Bangladesh, was a founder of an action research project 'Grameen Bank'. The project has been started in the year 1976 and it was formally recognized as a bank by an ordinance, issued by the government in the year 1983. Even then it doesn't have a scheduled position from the Central bank of the nation as the Bangladesh Bank. The Grameen Bank has given the loans to the landless poor, especially women, to promote self-employment. At the end of year 2001, it had a membership of 23.78 lakh and accumulative micro-credit disbursements of Rs. 14.653 crore. India has been adopted the Bangladesh's model in a simplified and modified form. To diminish the poverty and empowerment of the women, the micro-finance has emerged as a powerful measure in the new economy.

With availability of micro-finance, the self-help groups (SHGs) as well as credit management groups has been also started in our country. And due to this, the movement of SHGs has spread out in India. In India, banks are the primary agency for providing of micro-credit. In 1970, Ilaben Bhat, who has been founder member of 'Self Employed Women's Association' (SEWA) in Ahmadabad, had flourish a term of 'women and micro-finance'. In Maharashtra 'Annapurna Mahila Mandal' and in Tamilnadu 'Working Women's Forum' and simultaneously 'National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development' (NABARD) sponsored groups who has been followed the path laid down by 'Self Employed Women's Association'. 'SEWA' is also a trade union which has been worked for poor, self-employed women workers. Since 1987 'Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency' (MYRADA) have been encourage Credit Management Groups (CMGs). The prime goal of the CMG

is to grant social empowerment to women. CMGs were also similar to self-help groups (SHGs). The basic features of this concept stimulated by MYRADA are given below:

- 1] Affinity,
- 2] Voluntarism,
- 3] Homogeneity and
- 4] Membership should be limited to 15-20 persons.

II. Features of SHGs:

There are different group-based approaches that based on social collateral and its many enabling and reduction in costs effects are important feature of Modern Microfinance (MF). It is feasible to distinguish the Modern Microfinance between:

- Groups that are primarily geared to provide the financial services given by microfinance institutions (MFIs) to any individual borrowers; and
- Groups that are managed and also lend their accumulated savings as well as externally leveraged funds to its members.

Some of the characteristic or features of SHGs are given below:

- It is as like as to “Microfinance institutions”
- SHGs has been consist of 10 to 20 members
- One family is treated as one member likewise.
- All the members having similar socio-economic background
- SHGs work to reduced the poverty and to empowerment of the women,

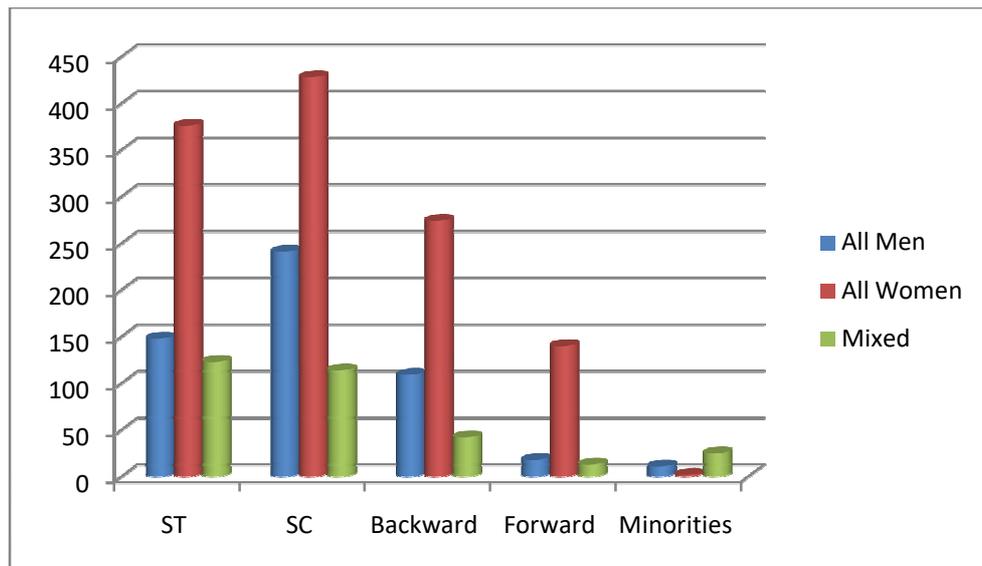
III. SHGs as Borrowing Units:

Self Help Groups is the form the basic constituent unit of micro –finance which is the result of movement in India based on the practical implementation done by Bangladesh in the same sector. It is a group of some individuals which consist of usually poor and often women and who pool their savings into a fund from which they can borrow loan as and when they needed.

Table no. 1: Caste-wise Distribution of SHG Members Caste - SGSY SHG Members

Caste	All Men	All Women	Mixed	Total
ST	148	376	123	647
SC	241	428	114	783
Backward	109	274	42	425
Forward	18	140	13	171
Minorities	11	2	25	38
Total	527	1220	317	2064

Out of total member, 69% members are belonged to SC, ST caste groups, while about 21 % to OBC caste group and out of rest only about 8% to the forward caste group. The data reveals that the minority community has been just registered for their presence by about 2% membership. The above dissimilarity appear to be the product of the SHGs policy accordingly SGSY programme. In case of the SHGs members/Swarozgaris which has been relate from the list of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and the slight percentage of SC, ST Swarozgaris should be 50%. The graphical presentation of the above data has been given in the following chart.



The individuals, who are below the poverty line, do need special attention, but simultaneously other rural poor can't be ignored in any poverty alleviation programme. On the other hand, motivation and willingness on the part of the rural poor to take part in a poverty alleviation programme, is such that an asset which cannot be disregard or even ignored to make a programme successful and also the national investment in it, productive. The prohibitive features of SGSY - SHGs deserve a different look so that they do not become ineffective. Women from poor background families are the poorest. So, there is a strong need of poverty alleviation programme which lay down greater emphasis on the empowerment of these poor families women. In the above chart, the gender ratio of the SHGs have worked out, in all-women SHGs were 59 % in the case of SGSY. But women belong to minorities are totally neglected for the participation in SHG.

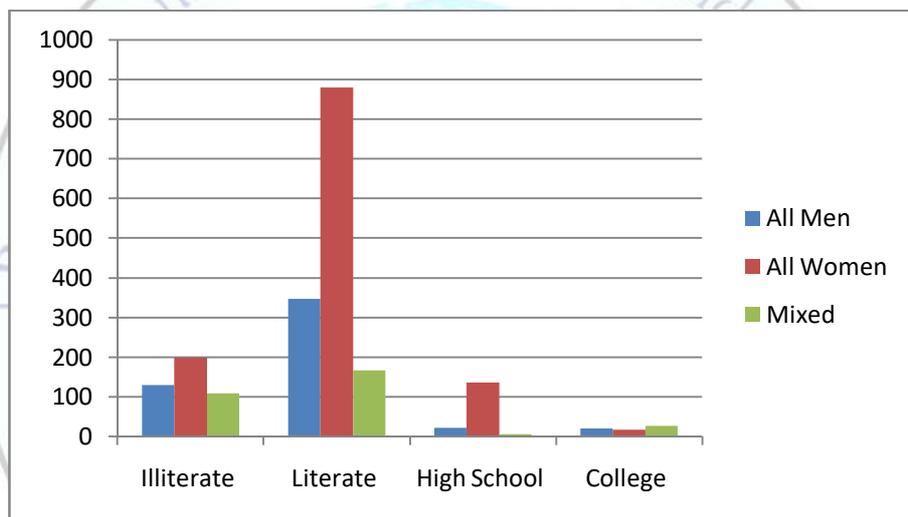
IV. Formal Education of SHG Members:

While taking into consideration of the level of education or formal schooling of SHG members, it is main characteristic for the functioning of these groups. The education will results to the records maintenance, starting of development schemes, linkage with banks, etc. Hence, formal schooling data of SHG members has been needed to collect, which have been depicted in the following table.

Table no. 2 : Formal Education of SHG Members Education Level SGSY SHG Members

Education	All Men	All Women	Mixed	Total
Illiterate	130	200	109	439
Literate	347	880	167	1394
High School	23	136	6	165
College	21	18	27	66
Total	521	1234	309	2064

According to the above table no. 2, Literate members are more as compared with others. The above table reveals that the column of 'all women', their total number is higher i.e. 1234 and remaining 200 are illiterate. While the levels of education of 'all men' have been relatively lower i.e. 521. It is disclosed that the participated women in SHG's are educated. For better understanding following chart shows the education level in details.



The level of education of women members are relatively more but the college education taken by the women members are lower as compared to other points. But the important thing is that the literacy rate of women members are very good.

V. Occupation of SHG Members:

The rural people are working in various occupations for earning their livelihood. Information about the occupation of the SHG members is needed to know the standard of living as well as level of earning. Way of earning is also the measure to know the functionality of the SHGs. To find out the level of occupation the various seven occupations are taken into consideration, which has been as observed in the Table no. 3, shown below:

Table 3: Occupation-wise Distribution of SHG Members Occupation

Occupation	SGSY SHG Members			
	All-Men	AW	Mixed	Total
Agriculture	41	346	99	486
Dairy	43	107	11	161
Business	65	67	86	218
Caste Occupation	0	0	7	7
Skilled Labourer	51	0	52	103
Unskilled Labourer	392	422	11	825
Housewife	0	254	10	264
Total	592	1196	276	2064

The above table deals with occupation of SHGs members, among them 'all women' are relatively very high. The most of women SHGs members are engaged as unskilled labourer. While there are nil women SHGs members who worked in caste occupation and skilled labourer. On the other hand, 254 women are housewife.

Conclusion:

SHGs assists to women entrepreneurs with micro-loans to sustain their businesses activities, while also creating an environment for them to develop greater agency and decision-making skills. Policy-makers in India would really like to market a picture of the country as being both fast developing and humane. The one major obstacle in their project is that the vast and protracted problem of poverty, especially rural poverty. After having tried many various projects for its alleviation, the Union government launched the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana; the SGSY wasn't just to offer some dole or some one-time grants or loans to the poor; it aimed to nurture their economic activities for as long as three years so on make sure that the poor do rise above the poverty level. Self help groups are motivating people many to avoid wasting" to save lots of lots of to the touch amount and start a replacement business. Now they're going to earn by their own. Government is additionally supporting to SHGs by launching various schemes, or by decreasing the speed of interest. Now they're forwarding towards an honest future by n by. Their standard of living is recuperating. They're selling good products and people demanding the more. It'll be definitely contribute in our GDP also. It's real poverty alleviation.

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