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## *Role of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Rural Women Empowerment: A Case Study with Special Reference to Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh*

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**Abstract:** *Employment or unemployment is very important economic outcome for judging efficiency of Government as it can make or break Government in India. Women in India have played an important part in our social life. Although we have gone through various phases of transition, however majority of Indian Women are considered burden due to economic problems. According to ILO'S world employment social outlook report the employment rate in India has been in the 3.4% to 3.6% range over the UPA Govt. led 2009-14 and NDA Govt. 2014. As world Bank reported that in 2020 India's female unemployment rate jumped from 5 percent to 5.3 percent. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) unemployment rate of our country is 6.3%. Indian women hit hard more than men. The ratio of new male registrations to new women registrations in The Employee Provident Fund shot down to 3.9 In the lockdown months of April and May 2020, against 4.2 in the first year from September 2017 . The deterioration is very sharp among women of 21 years of age or lesser. So economic Independence is an important agent of development today's world. Though empowerments includes, economic social and political and so on, however, this study is restricted to the economic empowerment of women only.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Help Group, Women Empowerment, Micro finance, financial inclusion.*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

According to NABARD All India Financial Inclusion Survey report released on 16 August 2018 reveals 26% of household have women (including SHGs) with institutional saving account 55% of agricultural households reported any savings during the last year and of these 53% saved with institutions like banks, and SHGs..During the year 2015-16 a borrowing Agricultural households reportedly availed a loan of Rs 107,083 from various agencies,72% of which was availed from institutional sources including MFIs and SHGs , 81.1% of rural households and55% of agricultural households have bank account. Average saving per annum per household was Rs.17,488.Uttar Pradesh has the least with average monthly income Rs6,668 per month.

The Post Liberalisation era saw lending to rural areas as non profitable activity in interest of banks, especially in a competitive environment. So NABARD launched Self Help Group. Bank Linkage Program in 1992 as an alternative delivery mechanism for reaching the unreached. Although it was started with just 500 SHGs on a pilot basis, today, this program has taken the shape of perhaps the biggest Micro Credit program of the world with67,76,250 lakh SHGs operating in all the nooks and the corners of rural and semi – urban India. Besides achieving target of financial inclusion and enhancing financial inclusion and enhancing financial literacy this program enables SHGs women members to start their own non-farm and other productive farm activity. SHGs, thus pave the to make them economically self dependent, not only capable of being a bread earner for their families but also a productive member of the society.

**Women Empowerment**

‘Women empowerment is a term that has gained currency in the human development and government discourse amongst the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium economic development goals, women empowerment is one of the most crucial goals. The word “Women empowerment” is first announced in 2001 in India. She is empowered when she is valued as a normal being of society who has the space to participate in public discourse. The educated Indian women are empowered because she knows her rights.

According to census report 2011 women constitute 48% of the total population in India: Women perform almost two thirds of the works and produce 50% of our food commodities. Women earn 1/3 of the remuneration and own only 10% of the property of the country.

Social and political empowerment of women will be achieved only if women are economically empowered.

**Variable/ Factors of Economic empowerment of women**

1. The level of income of women
2. Education level of women.
3. Age of women and level of empowerment.
4. The power of decision making of women.

As Rural women play a significant role in the domestic and socio economic life of society and therefore, holistic national development is not possible without development of the segment of the society, If women empowerment is to be persuaded as a serious objective by SHG programmes under NRLM in particular and the larger microfinance community in General, the greatest emphasis needs to be placed on training, education, creating awareness in order to achieve larger and more lasting empowerment.

**II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

As Namita Rangnathan (2007) <sup>(1)</sup> states Stormiest has identified four clear dimensions of empowerment: cognitive, psychological, economic and political. Empowerment does not only mean rising the social consciousness of girls towards gender issues but also inclusion of the feeling that a girl can do what she wants and the building of psychological capacity to accomplish her goals this age. This is psychological empowerment- reversing the patriarchal scheme of things and taking discussion that would improve one’s position at the personal and social level.

Economic empowerment involves the ability to engage in income generating activities to get an independent income. This means acquiring knowledge and skills which access to job.

Political empowerment entails the ability to analyse situations politically and mobilize for change.

Cognitive empowerment is the ability to understand the sub-ordinate condition of women and its causes, to critically review one’s experiences and patterns of behaviours that leads to dependence and reinforces sub-ordination.

**Gyanendra Mani and T. Sudhir (2012)** pointed out about the composition of SHGs in following words “SHGs having a membership of 10-20 women are too small an informal group to deal with larger issues to realise the needs and aspirations of women members. Inter-group learning, ability to negotiate with higher level structures and to gain greater bargaining power, were the reasons as to why informal SHGs networking was initiated by NGOs. SHGs federation have been promoted by the NGOs and the Government for mid 1990's to address the issue of ensuring quality while up-scaling, ensure that cost of promotion are low and create sustainable institutions to facilitate withdrawal of the promoting organization, from some of its functions and roles.

The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) expected to replace SGSY has also proposed a great amount of dependence on SHG federations.

Nupur Tiwari (2017) Listed out three distinct linkage models of micro credit are being currently followed in India.

Under model-I, banks themselves take up the work of forming and nurturing the groups, opening their saving account and providing them bank loans.

Under model-II, SHGs are formed by NGOs and formal agencies but are directly financed by banks.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The present study will undertake with the following major objectives.
2. To investigate causal relationship between bank linkage programme and asset creation, employment and enhancement in the productivity of women, who join self help group.
3. To know various socio economic factors, create obstacle for women in order to join self help group.
4. To find out how the condition of women join self help group are different from other women of same locality who have not joined SHGs in positive ways.
5. To assess, the impact of SHG on increment in the collective bargaining power of its member women.
6. To find the effect on occupation or small ventures started by women through S.H.G on their economic empowerment.
7. To know the welfare of women in particular and society as a whole in general after joining SHGs under NRLM and getting rid off from usury moneylenders.

#### Detail of Hypothesis/Model/Theory/Experimental used

##### Hypothesis

- Ho1.- SHGs bank linkage programmer creates productive assets, generate gainful employment, increase per capita income of women and reduces financial dependency of women on their male counter parts..
  5. Ho2.- There is positive relationship between age and employment of women.
  6. Ho3.- There is positive relationship between training status of the respondent and empowerment.
  7. Ho4.- SHGs play an important role in women empowerment.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is purely descriptive and qualitative in nature. It is based on preliminary observation.

#### Area of the study:

The study is conducted at SHGs in Unnao and lucknow districts of Uttarpradesh. Data related to number of SHGs, women beneficiaries are collected for the period from April 2017 to February 2019. Research is confined with 3 randomly selected blocks named as Mohanalgaj, Mall, Sarojininagar of Lucknow district.

#### Tools and Techniques of Data analysis

The Data collected is represented with the help of tabulation method, using arithmetic means. Multiple regression analysis will be used to describe relationship between women empowerment as independent variables and various factors affecting women empowerment as independent variables.

Multiple regression equation assumes the form

$$Y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4$$

Y = Women Empowerment

Dependent

Variables

X1 = the level of income of women

X2 = the level of education of women

X3 = the power of decision making of women

X4 = the age of women

a, b1, b2, b3, b4, are the constant

### Current scenario of SHGs in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh

Name of state /Districts	No. of blocks	No of SHGs	SC.	ST.	Minority	Others	Sub total	PWD
Uttar Pradesh	822	4,19,715	1,47,961	5,118	25,175	2,34,933	4,13,187	23,450
<b>Lucknow</b>	08	5950	3347	10	255	2226	5838	426
Name of Block	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mohanlalganj	-	827	546	01	23	230	800	116
Mall block	-	1055	635	-	32	381	1048	02
Sarojininagar block	-	929	497	2	24	392	915	35

Source : Source: Annual development report ( December 2020) NRLM office Vikas Bhawan, Lucknow

**Demographic Profile of rural female population of Lucknow District:** District Lucknow rank 5<sup>th</sup> terms of population in UP. State, comprises 66.2% of urban population against 22.3% of the population in urban areas of state. Density of population of Lucknow district is 1816 person per sq. Km. Against average density of population 829 persons per sq. Km. It is blessed with favourable sex ratio 917 against state average (912) female per thousand male. There are 807 villages in district. Average size of household in district is 5.3 persons. Only 33.8% of population including 33.6% rural female population against 34% of rural male population shows a favourable share of women in total working population against 34% of rural male population shows a favourable share of women in total working population of rural Lucknow.

Sr No.	Components	Lucknow Absolute number	Percentile %	Mohanlalganj Block Absolute number	Percentile %	Mall block Absolute number	Percentile %	Srojininagar Block Absolute number	Percentile %
1.	Sex ratio	917	-	894	-	909		903	
2.	SC. Female population	28300	20.47	51394	43.7	37421	46.2	39486	37.2
3.	ST. Female population	490	0.16	82	0.11	-	1	125	07
4.	Rural female literate	367201	58.3	58297	58.3	36957	53.3	6542	64.3
5.	SC. female literate	119702	50.2	20864	48.7	24777	49.7	18205	54.2
6.	ST. female literate	141	37.4	23	33.8	1	30	13	53.5

Source: District Census hand book Lucknow District 2011 part xii pp .177 census indiagov .in

- ❖ Literacy rate of Lucknow district according to census 2011 77.3%, While its rural female literacy rate is 58.3% against 67.8% rural literacy rate. Lowest literacy rate ( 53.3) is evident in Mall block, As per census 2011 gap between literacy rate of male and female is also high in Mall block possible low due to low level of urbanization as Mall

block is far away from capital city Lucknow in comparison to distance of Mohanlalganj and Sarojininagar block so more number of SHGs (1055) are found in comparison of numbers of SHGs formed in Mohanlalganj(827) and Sarojininagar (929) . Sarojininagar block has the highest literacy rate 64.3% as it is just away 8 km from Aalambagh town of Lucknow district and 70 lakh solar lamp distribution program ,mask and sanitizer making scheme launched by SHGs are implemented in an efficient way further provide lubricant for formation of SHGs, creating awareness about girl literacy rate,no gender discrimination.

#### **Occupational distribution of female workers of study area (3 blocks)**

Sr. No.	Categories of workers	Lucknow Absolute number	Percentile %	Mohanlalganj Block Absolute number	Percentile %	Mall block Absolute number	Percentile %	Srojininagar Block Absolute number	Percentile %
1	Non workers	621091	85.59	96515	82.6	70304	86.6	91147	85.8
2	Main Workers	281170	8.32	9758	8.1	1367	7.3	6749	6.4
3	Marginal workers	60816	6.09	11008	9.3	5147	6.3	8927	7.9
	<b>Total workers</b>	<b>115999</b>	<b>14.41</b>	<b>20766</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>11105</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>15153</b>	<b>14.3</b>
4	Cultivators	16848	10.82	1522	20.67	1056	30.54	1817	21.71
5	Agricultural labourers	2978	15.8	6689	50.54	2366	37.69	3032	30.19
6	Household Industry worker	4720	8.17	664	5.6	437	8.44	445	9.59
7	Other workers	16867	65.19	2518	23.23	23.34	1367	3152	38.51

Source: District Census hand book Unnao District 2011 part xii pp .31,32 census india gov .in

#### **Socio-Economic profile of SHGs members of study area:**

- ❖ Only 20.7% of the total female population belong to schedule caste and 0.16% of population belong to schedule tribe . Highest percentage of schedule caste female resides in Mall block ,While least (37.2%) in Sarojininagar . least percentage of ST. female population(0.11) resides in Mohanlalganj block.
- ❖ It is concluded having been data analyzing that even though agricultural sector is not considered as commercially viable but still plays a major role in providing employment to the working force of rural population. Percentage of agricultural female labourer is highest in Mohanlalganj (50.54) against least percentage of female agricultural female labourers 37.69 and 30.19 respectively in Mall block and Sarojininagar block. Household industries also can not made much progress in rural areas just because of providing employment only6.3% of total force.

#### **V. FINDINGS AND RESULTS**

**Impact of SHGs on social empowerment of women:**It is found in research study that out of 90 respondent 75% SHGs of women are now sending to their children in primary school, while 37% of women are able to send their children at higher education.25% of women are still striving to send their children in school due to various family reasons as intoxication of husband, too large size of family .70% of SHGs members belong to schedule caste reveals that SHGs are a magnet of social mobilisation of SC women to make them as a part of main stream of society.

- ❖ On question regarding decision on adopting family planning measures only 35% women are free to take family planning yet all of them are highly aware about their health and benefitted by various Health programmes organised by SHGs in locality regarding vaccination.
- ❖ Every home is equipped with toilet due to proper implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission.

- ❖ There is a significant reduction in birth, death rate in member households as a result of participation in community health programmes.
- ❖ Self Help Groups women also ensured supply of essential commodities, spreading awareness for social distancing in their respective blocks during COVID-19.

**Impact of SHGs on economic empowerment of women:** Self Help Groups members earned rupees 2500-3000 in mask and sanitizer making as UPSRLM has tied up with Khadi and Village Industries Commission for perpetual supply of khadi cloths in order to manufacturing mask. In Lucknow total 161 SHGs including 427 women as SHGs members have manufactured 472600 mask from March to July 2020. Approximately 463800 masks have been sold. SHGs women engaged in manufacturing mask get rupees 5 per piece of mask thus help in a great deal to earn their livelihood in such lock down, employment crisis.

- ❖ **Manufacturing of sanitizer :** SHGs fulfill dual objective first to timely ensured contingency support to district authorities to ensure safety of doctors and paramedical staff ,second to nurture much needed income support to rural SHGs through manufacturing sanitizer of 200 liters in Lucknow district by 17 SHGS women of Mall Block of Lucknow.
- ❖ On the question regarding independence in decision making 80 percent of women respondent enjoy freedom to select occupation thus prefer to non- farm activities like stretching, making of paper plates ,assembling and distributing of solar lamps in their village as a smoke free renewable source of light for students fostering literacy rate in respective blocks. 20% of SHGs help their husbands as supportive hands to provide loan for purchasing agricultural inputs.
- ❖ 45 % of SHGs household have their pucca houses as most of SHGs women spend on education of their children first.
- ❖ All SHGs members are not availing loan from SHGs rather than moneylenders, friends, relatives etc.
- ❖ **Impacts of SHGs on Political Empowerment of women :** On asking question regarding attending Gram Sabha meeting, exercising of suffrage in Panchayati Raj Institutions, all women caste their vote in Grampanchayat elections and election of MLA. and MPs, but hardly attend gram sabha meeting Hence the present research study has reached to the conclusion that although SHGs has made women economically empowered but politically empowered at a lesser sense.

### Problems of SHGs

1. There is not proper maintenance of records in book keeping.
2. Absence of proper monitoring of utilization and disbursement of loan.
3. NRLM officers are always overburdened with so many responsibilities that they hardly join meetings held at village level organization.
4. Many SHGs members also did not attend its meetings regularly.
5. There is hardly any NRLM staff belong to local area. This poses difficulty in proper communication due to language problem with SHGs members.

### VI. SUGGESTIONS

1. A number of workshops and training camps must be organised.
2. Proper propagation of new schemes for SHGs members will be taken place for creating awareness among women.
3. Utilisation of loan for productive purpose rather than domestic uses.

4. NRLM. Should organise exhibition of self made product by SHGs women to hold true the Indian govt Programme “Vocal for Local”.
5. Office bears maintain proper record of presence of SHGs members in its weekly meetings, proper entries of disbursement of loan in book keeping etc.
6. Few SHGs women will be selected as NRLM personnel’s at permanent basis in order to avoid any communication gap between SHGs and programme implementing nodal agency NRLM.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In nut shell for economic empowerment of women there will be regular supply of financial services, including banking and credit at affordable cost to the vast sections of disadvantaged and low income group of rural women, who tend to be excluded since a long time. Financial inclusion emphasises on access to savings., loan, insurance, payments and remittance facilities offered by the formal financial system SHGs not only provided micro credit facilities to its members but also risk management or risk mitigation vis-a-vis economic shock may be an income shock due to health emergencies leading a high level of expenditure.

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