



Impact of SHG on Economic Empowerment of Members

KEYWORDS

SHG, Empowerment

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ABSTRACT *Women constitute half of our population and play a vital role in the development of family, the community and the nation. It has been widely recognized that unless women's potential is properly developed, no transformation and economic development is possible. Therefore, to accelerate the growth and prosperity of the nation, it is very important to create opportunities for socio-economic development of women in rural India. The government of India has been emphasizing the need for designing a separate development programmes for women and to earmark a specific percentage for women beneficiaries in other rural and development programmes. The present paper focuses on the empowerment of women of Self help groups.*

Introduction:

Women constitute half of our population. They suffer many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy, labour participation and earnings. The major strategies of women empowerment include social empowerment, economic empowerment, political empowerment and gender justice along with demographical justice. In the early societies, generally the males were playing an active role while the females play only the passive part. The societies were generally male dominated and the females were considered only a thing of enjoyment for men. Manu said in Manusmriti "Where the women are respected the divine grace adores that place, but where that is not so, all other forms of worship is fruitless."

In Mahabartha, women were placed not only at the centre of domestic life but also they were playing vital roles in the social structure. This epic also placed women in high esteem and said that the place of women in the family and the society is set with honor and dignity. The orthodox Hindu society believed that the women are not independent and they have no right to personal liberty, "stree swatanrya naarhati".

There is an emerging need to improve women's status which should start with economic empowerment. Empowerment is a concept that is of equal importance to both men and women, it is the idea of sharing of power of truly giving it away. Empowerment is the process through which individual gain efficiency, defined as the degree to which an individual perceives that they controls their environment. In the words of former President of India Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam, "empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation. When women are empowered, society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation."

Need for Women empowerment:

Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and they are the poorest among the poor, there is need for women empowerment through poverty eradication programmes. It should be women oriented with special targets for women, e.g. SHGs. Most of the studies of women and gender equality are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all people and women empowerment is a critical part of sustainable development. Further, they add that women empowerment at the individual level help to build a base for social and political changes along with economic changes and economic empowerment of women enhances

women's status in their families and societies.

Nobel laureate Prof Amarty Sen emphasized that unless women are empowered issues like health, literacy and population will remain unsolved problems of the developing countries in part of sub continent.

Objectives:

The paper intends to achieve the following objectives:

- To understand the concept of empowerment
- To assess the economic empowerment of SHG members.

Methodology:

The paper is based on primary data. The study collected responses from 250 respondents in the undivided Dharwad district in Karnataka. The sample size collected on random basis from Gadag, Dharwad and Haveri districts. The study was conducted during 2011. The collected data properly was classified and tabulated. The researcher has used the statistical tools such as percentages and has paired t test to ascertain the economic empowerment of the members.

Concept of Empowerment:

The empowerment of women is not a self-propelled action, which can be attained by their personal efforts alone. It is a two way process in which the culturally defined nations of feminist and masculinity. The roles of males and females and the man-woman relationships have to be changed. It is therefore, a joint endeavor of both males and females in the society. It is an educational process by which both the males and females remove the hierarchical relationships that prevail and make co-ordinated efforts to make women feel good about them help build their confidence and self respect.

Women empowerment is a global issue and discussions of women political right are at for front of many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. Empowerment has become a widely used word. In spheres, as different as management and labor unions, health care and ecology, banking and education, empowerment is also taking such place.

Empowerment is liberation of women from all perspectives of life. Empowerment is the freedom of social, economic, political and legal to women folk. Late Pandit Nehru wrote, "To awaken the people, it is the women who should be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the nation moves." He further adds that the building India as a nation will also be judged by the position of the Indian women. The empowerment of rural women is crucial for the development

of rural India as comprehended by Ninth Five year plan. So, it gave special attention to the empowerment of women and thus it is stated in its objectives as "empowering women as an agent of social change and development.

The government formulated the number of schemes to empower the down trodden, untouchables and unemployed including women. The various income generation programmes results into the empowerment of beneficiaries. Poverty eradication programmes have hidden agenda of women empowerment. Women are accustomed to save money secretly and invest with either money lenders or chit funds or bisis. SHG approach resembles the same with a certain kind of definiteness. The micro credit programmes strive for financial inclusion by bringing to main streamline. The SHG member should attempt on increase in the total amount of internal lending, higher rate of recovery, reduce dependence on the informal credit channels, stick up to the purpose of loan, lending for income generation activities, credit bank linkage etc. These ensure indication of economic empowerment.

Measurement of Economic empowerment:

Table 1: Income position of members

Particulars	Before	After
Less than Rs 10000	168 (27)	107 (43)
Rs 10001 to Rs 25000	22 (9)	62 (25)
Rs 25001 to Rs 50000	25 (10)	22 (9)
Rs 50001 to Rs 100000	21 (8)	28 (11)
Above Rs 100000	14 (6)	31 (12)
Total	250(100)	250(100)
Mean	50	50
Variance	4367.5	1255.5
Df	08	
Two tail	1	
t-critical value	2.3060 Significant	

Source: Fieldwork

Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentage to the respective totals

Table 1 provides that there has been 36.30 per cent decrease in income who were earning less than Rs 10000. There has been cent percent improvement of earning whose income is above Rs 100000. The paired t-test value of one is less than t-critical value of 2.3060. It is inferred that there has been significant improvement of earning of the members after joining the SHG. The borrowing from SHG is used in income generation activities. The income position of members is reflected in the following figure 1

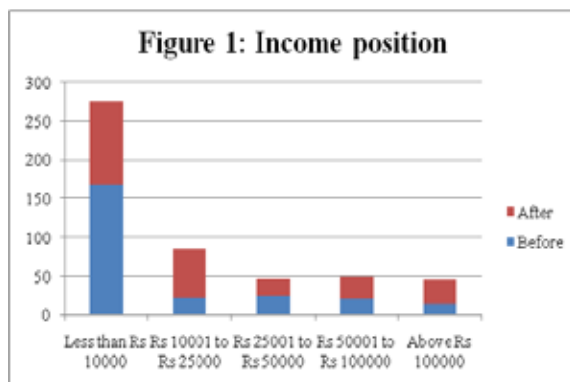


Table 2: Materials possession

Materials	Before	After
Radio	161 (19.75)	173 (17.58)
TV	214 (26.26)	210 (21.34)
Bicycle	188 (23.07)	156 (15.85)
Two wheeler	82 (10.06)	245 (24.90)
Others	170 (20.86)	200 (20.33)
Total	815	984
Mean	163	196.8
Variance	2460	1184.5
Df	08	
Two tail value	0.246	
t-critical value	2.306	
	Significant	

Source: Field Work

Figures in the parenthesis show the percentages to the total

It is known from table 2 that the possession of radio by the members has increased by 7.45 percent after joining the SHG. Members have shifted themselves from comforts to luxury goods. It is observed that members purchase the two wheelers after joining the SHG. This is recorded at 198.78 percent. This may be because of use of internal lending of funds for this purpose or as considered fruit of joining the SHG. The paired t-test two-tailed value is 0.246. As this value is less than critical value of 2.306, it is inferred that after joining the SHG there is greater improvement of possession of goods.

Table 3: Family property

Property	Before	After
Land less	76 (44.19)	43 (22.99)
Less than 5 acres	78 (45.35)	113 (60.43)
6 to 10 acres	16 (9.30)	29 (15.51)
11 and above	2 (1.16)	2 (1.07)
Total	172* (100)	187 *(100)
Mean	43	46.75
Variances	1574.667	2240.25
Df	06	
Two tail value	0.907	
t-critical value	2.447	
	Significant	

Source: Fieldwork

Figures in the parenthesis denote the percentages to the respective totals

***Multiple selections**

It is observed from table 3 that the members who were landless were 76 reduced to 43. The holders of less than 5 acres have considerably increased by 44.87% after joining the SHG. However, there is no change with respect to the member who has 11 acres of land. The paired t-test used to test the significant improvement in the family property. The paired t-test value is 0.907, which is less than t critical value of 2.447. It is concluded that the members have improved their family property significantly after joining the SHG.

Table 4: Family's other property

Other property	Before	After
Post Office Certificates	24 (11.37)	82 (19.62)
Bank deposits	66 (31.28)	133(31.82)
LIC Bonds	116 (52.98)	189 (45.21)
Others	5 (2.37)	14 (33.5)
Total	211* (100)	418* (100)

Mean	52.75	104.5
Variances	2427.583	5549.667
Df	03	
Two tail	0.038	
t-critical value	3.182	
	Significant	

Source: Fieldwork

Figures in the parenthesis show the percentage to the total

***Multiple selections**

It is known from table 4 that there has been noticeably increase in the investments of the members. The investment in post office was 11.37 percent before joining SHG rose to 19.62 percent after joining the group. There has no improvement with respect to investments in bank deposits. The paired t-test value is 0.038, which is less than t-critical value of 3.182. Hence, it is proved that other properties are significantly improved after joining the group. This is shown in below figure

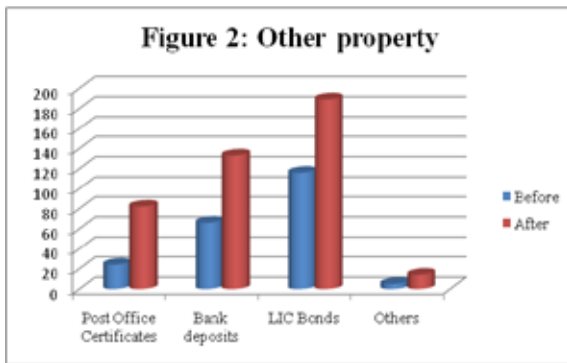


Table 5: Income earners in the family

Number of income earners	Before	After
One	203 (81.2)	22 (8.8)
Two	37 (14.8)	186 (74.4)
Three	9 (3.6)	21 (8.4)
Four & above	1 (0.4)	21 (8.4)
Total	250	250
Mean	50	50
Variance	4367.5	1255.5
Df	08	
Two tail	1	
t-critical value	2.3060	
	Significant	

Source: Field survey

Figures in parenthesis indicated the percentage to the total

It is revealed from Table t that the dependence on one member was 81 percent before joining SHG. The same has reduced to 8.8 percent after joining the SHG. Similarly, there were two income earners in the family to the extent of 14.8 percent, which was considerably increased to 74.4 percent. Since the paired t-test the two-tailed value 1 is less than t-critical value of 2.3060, it is guessed that the number of income earners has increased after joining the SHG.

Findings:

- There has significant improvement in the income position of the members after become member of the group.
- The members have possessed materials such as car, television, two-wheeler and many other comfort and luxury goods after joining the SHG.
- The number of earners in the family has also considerably increased.
- There has considerable shift in their investment from post office to insurance bonds, bank deposits and shares to certain extent.

Conclusion:

The formation of SHG made women to come out of four wall of house. She has realized her importance in the world. SHG is boon to women folk. Rabindranath Tagore said "Women is the builder and moulder of nation's destiny, though delicate and soft as lily; she as a heart, far stronger and bolder than of men. She is supreme inspiration of man's onward march." She has become part of policymaking bodies.

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