

Socio- Economic Empowerment of Women through Self Help Groups: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

Women emancipation and Inclusive growth have grabbed the attention of developmental economists the world over and has been on a priority in order to alleviate poverty and reaching to the most disadvantaged section of the society through formal financial institutions. For this dual objective microfinance interventions have been suggested as a measure. As through microfinance the landless labourers, marginal farmers and women can be roped in the formal financial system which has been a neglected area by the commercial banks as they are reluctant to tap this area due to high transaction costs and unassessibility. This paper attempts to explore one such microfinance intervention in the name of Self Help groups in Mewat district of Haryana and the role of SHGs in the socio-economic upliftment of women in this area which is known for the intense backwardness and the lowest female literacy rate. SHGs have been successful mainly in giving them a voice in their family, Govt. Offices and in the society against evils and violence and in making them financially independent up to some extent still there is a lot needed to achieve women emancipation. The paper will come up with some recommendations for the effective and efficient implementation of this microfinance intervention.

Keywords: Microfinance, SHG, Women Emancipation

Introduction

Women empowerment and rural development has been the focus of almost all developmental policies of the Government. With the rural development nation's development is consequential as per National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development(NABARD), which is very true for a country like India whose 70% population resides in 6,38,345 villages. India has over a quarter of its population below poverty line. The World Bank reports that India is still home to some 260 to 290 million poor, numbers that rise to 390 million if poverty is measured by the international standard of those living on less than US\$1 a day. It is estimated that approximately 2.5 billion people around the world live in poverty and India is a home to 1/3 of world's poor. Families living in poverty struggle to afford adequate meals, clean water or basic education. Almost half of India's poor approximately 133 million are concentrated in 3 states namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Rural areas in India are home to 3/4 of India's poor which is strengthened by the increasing urban/rural

disparities. Though many central and state Government poverty alleviation programs are currently active in India with a strategy focus on Infrastructure, Social Development (especially education and health) and rural livelihoods. But the poor access to credit markets and formal banking system has been identified as a root cause of poverty amongst the rural poor and the most disadvantaged section of the society. The credit needs of the rural masses in general and rural poor in particular are met via rural financial markets consisting commission agents, Moneylenders and landlords etc. However formal financial institutions have a low penetration due to poor infrastructure, low profitability and higher degree of risk. At this juncture Microfinance has been proposed as a possible solution for the maximum outreach and alleviation of poverty in the rural poor especially the disadvantageous sections of the society namely women, small and marginal farmers, and landless farmers. Micro financing is regarded as a tool for Socio-Economic benefit in a developing country like India. Micro finance as a means of poverty alleviation can give loans to poor individuals without sacrificing financial viability. **Sivakumar Venkataramany, Balbir B. Bhasin** (2009) focused on the success of the linkage between commercial banks and SHGs. The SHGs comprising predominantly women groups help in the social cause of alleviation of poverty, increased sustainability, reduction of vulnerability, improvement of capacity building and helping the weaker sections in building assets. India is the world's 10th largest economy with Gross Domestic Product in 2012 of \$1.824 trillion as reported by World Bank. The country's growth is also strong, with real Gross Domestic Product growing in by 3.986% in 2012. Microfinance is one of the developmental approach that can contribute to achieve the National and International goal of improving the livelihoods of poor people. Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus is credited with laying the foundation of the modern Micro Finance Institutions with establishment of "Grameen Bank", Bangladesh in 1976. Today it has evolved into a big industry exhibiting a variety of business models. Achieving balanced and inclusive growth is a key challenge faced by policymakers the world over. It was observed by **Prasanthi, P Padma, A.** (2010) that today microfinance through SHGs has become an integral part of all development programmes. The benefits of economic growth are accessible to relatively advantaged sections of the society who find it easier to participate in the growth process and the disadvantaged section has to wait much longer to reap the benefits of economic growth. Engaging these sections of the society in the economic mainstream is essential to achieve balanced growth for which access to formal financial services is a must.

Current Status of Micro Finance in India

Micro Finance originated in India in 1969 with the nationalization of banks to see that 1% of the profits of these

banks goes to the poor towards their micro enterprises. The then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi envisioned it to facilitate her 20 point programme to fight poverty among the poor and she called it "Garibi Hatao". The Micro Finance initiative in private sector in India can be traced to the initiative undertaken by Shri Mahila SEWA (self employed women's association) Sahakari Bank set up in 1974 by registering as an urban co-operative Bank at Ahmedabad city of Gujarat State. The main aim of the SEWA Bank was to provide banking services to the poor women employed in the unorganised sector. The initiatives of NABARD in 1992 in partnership with NGOs for promoting and extending financial services through SHGs has now blossomed into a "monolith" micro finance initiative. It has been recognised as a decentralized, cost effective and fastest growing micro finance intervention in the world enabling over 103 poor households access to a variety of sustainable financial services from the formal banking system by becoming members of nearly 8 million Self Help Groups. Steady progress of the project led to the mainstream of the SHG-Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP) in 1996 as a normal banking activity of the banks with widespread acceptance. As per a **United Nations (2006)** survey of bank managers in Madhya Pradesh revealed a perception that women borrowers were more trustworthy and less of a default risk. This can work as a benchmark for launching new schemes for women empowerment.

Microfinance activities are exercised through various models in India that can be categorised as:

- 1) SHG Model
- 2) Grameen Model
- 3) Co-operative Model
- 4) For-profit Model

SHG Model is the most popular Model in India amongst the four Models mentioned.

Performance of Microfinance through SHG

Out of the three models, SHG- Bank Linkage Programme (Model 1) emerged as most popular and successful over the years. About 73.41% of the credit linked SHGs (financed 81.12% of total loans) fell under Model-II followed by Model I (20%) as on 31 st March 2007. Only 5.67% of total SHGs fall under the Model III in which NGOs/ MFIs act as financial intermediaries. (RBI 2007- Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India) SHGs work on democracy principles as **Dr. Sushil Kumar Mehta et al (2011)** had studied that SHGs movement comes from the people's desire to meet their needs and determine their destinies through the principle 'By the People, For the People and Of the People'

To spread the outreach of Micro Credit, NABARD has taken up intensification of SHG- Bank Linkage Programme in 13 identified priority states which account for 70% of the rural poor population viz. U.P. Maharashtra, Orissa, West

Bengal, MP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, UK, Assam and Himachal Pradesh. The programme has now assumed the form of a Micro-Finance Movement in many parts of the country and has started making inroads in the resource poor regions of the country as well. As pointed out by **Rutherford** (1996) that provision of financial services to poor people need not only be for increasing income, empowering women, or starting business it may simply aim to help them “manage better what little money they already have”.

Research Design

The formal financial institutions in India have not been successful in outreaching to the disadvantaged sections of the society so far. Topography, structural rigidities, high overhead costs in disbursing small loans may be the reasons behind this. The lessons learnt from implementation of different poverty eradication and rural development plans has boosted the government to involve local people at the grass root level for the success of these plans or in other words in a country like India where physical infrastructure is weak and poor and social infrastructure means community based organizations can be used as a harbinger for successful implementation of the developmental plans and thereby attaining the Millennium Goals. Few corporates like HUL, Colgate, CEMEX has already tried community based organizations as members of their distribution channel in order to have deep penetration in the emerging Rural Markets the same model can be replicated for the promotion of social and economic welfare schemes launched by the government from time to time. Organisation of Self Help Groups is a move in this direction which motivates small farmers, artisans and entrepreneurs (Especially Women) to come together and pool their small savings to make it a large corpus for individual and group help. **P. K. Singh** (2001) observed a positive impact on assets value and annual income. In the Southern India SHG scheme has a

widespread and has been successful in uplifting the social and economic status of women by creating awareness among the members. It has enabled women to live a healthy, hygienic and respectful life and they have learnt to participate in family decision making matter concerning to education of children, marriage, family planning, and management of economic assets of the family.

The present study is undertaken to study the performance of SHGs in Mewat district of Haryana in India. The performance has been linked with the group profile variables like age of the group, literacy level of the leader, etc.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the extent of Self Help Groups in the sample area
- To evaluate the performance of SHGs
- To analyse the impact of SHGs on women emancipation.

Area of the Study

At the time of its formation on 1st November, 1966, Haryana State had 7 districts. Thereafter 13 new districts were notified from time to time by changing the boundaries of the existing districts. The Mewat district was carved out from Gurgaon and Faridabad districts, which came into existence on 4th April 2005 as the 20th district of the State. The district headquarter is located at Nuh. The district comprises of five blocks namely Nuh, Taaru, Nagina, Firozpur Jhirka and Punhana. Sample respondents have been selected from three blocks of district Mewat namely Nuh, Firozpur Jhirka and Punhana. Mewat is known to be a backward district in Haryana with a low female literacy rate but a high sex ratio. A sample of 304 group leaders from these three blocks were selected by simple random sampling.



Demography of sample district

S.N.	Item	Sex	Total	Rural	Urban
1	Total area (Sq. Kilometers)		1507	1441.71	65.29
2	Total Households		160280	139975	20305
3	Population		1089263	965157	124106
		Male	571162	506086	65076
		Female	518101	459071	59030
4	Population (Age 0-6)		248128	225069	23059
		Male	130168	117967	12201
		Female	117960	107102	10858
5	SC Population		75251	57238	18013
		Male	39743	30312	9431
		Female	35508	26926	8582
6	Literate		454897	384749	70148
		Male	308435	266086	42349
		Female	146462	118663	27799
7	Total Workers		289964	258721	31243
		Male	224642	197097	27545
		Female	65322	61624	3698
8	Total Main Workers		204178	179382	24796
		Male	175670	153188	22482
		Female	28508	26194	2314
	Cultivators		81608	79292	2316
		Male	69305	67213	2092
		Female	12303	12079	224
	Agriculture Labourers		25426	24204	1222
		Male	20337	19215	1122
		Female	5089	4989	100
	Households Industry Workers		4034	3251	783
		Male	2938	2277	661
		Female	1096	974	122
	Other Workers		93110	72635	20475
		Male	83090	64483	18607
		Female	10020	8152	1868
9	Marginal Workers		85786	79339	6447
		Male	48972	43909	5063
		Female	36814	35430	1384
	Cultivators		22629	22144	485
		Male	7714	7472	242
		Female	14915	14672	243
	Agriculture Labourers		29852	28617	1235
		Male	15923	15005	918
		Female	13929	13612	317

	Household Industry Workers		1989	1763	226
		Male	903	764	139
		Female	1086	999	87
	Other Workers		31316	26815	4501
		Male	24432	20668	3764
		Female	6884	6147	737
10	Non Workers		799299	706436	92863
		Male	346520	308989	37531
		Female	452779	397447	55332
11	Sex Ratio (Female per 1000 males)		906	907	903
12	Literacy	56.10: (Male-73.00%, Female-37.60%)			
13	Blocks	Nuh, F.P. Jhirka, Taoru, Nagina and Punhana			
14	Tehsil	Nuh, F.P. Jhirka, Punhana and Taoru			
15	Sub Tehsil	Nagina			
16	Sub Division	Nuh and F.P. Jhirka			

source: haryanaguv.in

Methodology

The present study is an empirical one to analyse the performance and impact of SHGs on women emancipation. A structured questionnaire was developed for the primary data collection. Simple percentage and cumulative percentage method has been used to analyse the primary data collected out of 304 group leaders of Self Help Groups. However secondary data sources have also been used to have a deep understanding of the topic. Official websites of Haryana Government, Mewat development Agency and NABARD have been referred to for secondary data.

Limitations

The report has been prepared on the basis of information available from the sample members and the secondary data. One of the biggest limitation of secondary data was that it

was not updated, many of the Self Help Groups now have become non functional which are still shown on records. So locating the functional Self Help Groups was a problem during survey. Data of some particular months of some years were found missing which posed a problem in compiling secondary data tables. **V. Batra (2012)** covered 90 SHGs over the 3 sample districts in Haryana and identified the problems concerning management and governance of SHGs like irregularity in meetings, low level of skills and knowledge, absence of larger goals and lack of training. There are problems on part of banks for being unable to understand and accommodate the needs of SHGs in Haryana. To empower women and to reduce vulnerability literacy is very important.

Consolidated S.H.G. Financial information as on 31-03-2014

PARTICULAR	SMVS	SMVS	EMVS	NKMVS	NRMVS	JMVS	MDA
	F.P.Jhirka	Punhana	NUH	TAURU	NAGINA	HATHIN	
Total No. of Village	82	85	108	81	67	82	505
Village Covered	82	85	64	81	67	82	461
Total No of SHGs	372	354	340	383	417	347	2213
Total Members	4419	3930	4171	4603	5421	4121	26665
Total Saving	22840354	20029510	25629950	30590483	28137203	19865480	147092980
Amount of Loan issued	50114900	112831100	135408800	168801577	152720649	68526500	688403526

No. of Loans	3794	9159	8390	8385	11770	7841	49339
No. of SHGs issued Loans	267	325	247	338	418	289	1884
Amount Repaid	31044730	83918915	17905966	121128599	127703349	57425634	439127193
Interest collected	4362152	9341469	10220811	13627359	10353098	1443521	49348410
Credit from Bank	11954000	26270500	41890500	58561500	43195400	10245435	192117335
No. of Benefited SHGs	355	420	319	274	406	148	1922
MDA Matching Grant	2267265	2872850	1594384	1689581	1713088	2310829	12447997
No. of Benefited SHGs	204	422	204	215	224	305	1574
GDF	2168484	2727200	1279800	1630100	1759400	2100000	11664984
No. of Benefited SHGs	336	422	252	302	368	388	2068
NMDFC Loan Amounts	10485000	105300000	15255000	10935000	13903500	4360500	160239000
No of Benefited SHGs	55	66	91	63	69	23	367
No. of Loans to members	432	394	618	394	508	201	2547

Source: MDA, march 2014

It is evident from the above table that there is good spread of SHGs in the sample area. Total saving corpus is Rs. 147092980. Amount of loan issued is Rs.688403526 out of which Rs. 439127193 has been repaid i. e. repayment rate is 64%

CONSOLIDATED SHG INFORMATION AS ON 31-03-2014

Sr.No.	Particular	Unit	Achi.	Achievement	Achievement
			Withdrawal SHG	Running SHG	Cumulative MDA
1	Total No. of Village	No.		505	505
2	Covered Village	No.		461	461
3	Total No of SHGs	No.	1813	2213	4026
4	Total Members	Person	25195	26665	51860
5	Total Saving	Rs. In Crore	6.56	14.7	21.26
6	Amount of Loan issued	Rs. In Crore	24.44	68.84	93.28
7	No. of Loans to Members	No.	24027	49339	73366
8	No. of SHGs issue Loans	No.	1484	1884	3368
9	Amount Repaid	Rs. In Crore	21.53	43.91	65.44
10	Interest Collected	Rs. In Crore	3.67	4.93	8.6
11	Credit from Bank	Rs. In Crore	4.35	19.21	23.56
12	No. of Benefited SHGs	No.	1164	1922	3086
13	MDA Matching Grant	Rs. In Crore		1.24	1.24
14	No. of Benefited SHGs	No.		1574	1574
15	GDF	Rs.. In Crore		1.16	1.16
16	No. of Benefited SHGs	No.		2068	2068
17	NMDFC Loan Amount	Rs.In Crore		16.02	16.02
18	No. of Benefited SHGs	No.		367	367
19	No. of Loans to Members	No.		2547	2547

Source: MDA, March 2014

It is clear from the table that nearly 45% of the SHGs had withdrawn so the amount withdrawn is 30%. 62% of the total SHGs 62% received the benefits.

CONSOLIDATED INFORMATION ABOUT SHGs LOANS AS ON 31-03-2014

Particular	SMVS, Punhna		SMVS, F. P.Jhir		JMVS, Hathin		NRMVS, Nagina		KRMVS, Tauru		EMVS, Nuh		MDA, Cumulative	
	Loan	Amount	Loan	Amount	Loan	Amount	Loan	Amount	Loan	Amount	Loan	Amount	Loan	Amount
Buffalo	1978	25795850	921	14185500	3867	41805625	397	66688401	2267	52272455	1785	4721715	14792	247964983
Sheep/Goat	207	1206300	112	1904750	92	280421	528	3127058	98	726550	370	2425980	1407	9671059
House Repair	545	6635550	117	1330300	445	4025484	399	5351650	568	14154845	722	1176996	2796	43267789
Purchasing Land	113	2707800	81	2313500	25	202531	133	2493000	47	1026300	131	997320	530	9740451
Paying loans	365	3620200	115	766500	131	1365500	204	2217800	192	2414600	324	3833160	1331	14217760
Petty Shop/Busi	2292	36600350	964	16181700	512	5061764	2074	3110800	1306	37269200	1598	3536458	8746	161580194
Education	30	491500	91	1256250	238	1167926	59	638100	96	1833250	178	1390420	692	6777446
Medicine	185	1042600	122	796650	314	2195351	156	829900	212	4335600	324	3013720	1313	12213821
Fooder	83	445000	105	92590	461	1860900	285	2103800	270	2679447	525	3363520	1729	11378017
Marriage	663	10482550	204	2700000	261	2730450	464	6860500	567	14390800	572	8089880	2731	45254180
Consumptior.	1473	7050450	307	1471450	913	4118436	2486	13390570	2323	29529540	641	3852600	8143	59413046
Agriculture	436	4204550	398	2661950	481	3307570	642	9519960	205	3326350	421	8112480	2583	31132860
Mudha Making	42	414000	3	22500	0	0	3	25000	1	2500	84	250240	133	714240
Flour mill	26	246500	35	791000	0	0	12	229000	12	323440	109	471360	194	204300
Shoe Making	107	1034000	10	18500	4	7600	29	148200	34	276500	17	68000	201	1552800
Cycle/shaw	38	354000	17	45250	8	43200	55	633400	57	1431000	93	284240	268	2791090
Sewing Machine	85	606300	42	293250	0	0	17	264700	20	243900	87	316132	251	1724282
Camel Cart	81	824100	11	222000	18	22742	38	615300	9	140000	16	262000	173	2086142
Milk Purchasing	146	3016000	55	1295500	59	90250	49	725500	13	468000	105	1135600	427	6730850
Festival	1	2000	5	45500	0	0	0	0	34	256800	146	1043256	186	1347556
Diesel Engine	81	1908500	40	312750	4	137500	121	4872000	30	1165500	50	917240	326	9313490
FooderCutt.Mech	1	30000	4	22500	0	0	3	77000	5	37000	16	152320	29	318820
Pigery	4	47000	0	0	0	0	15	23710	0	0	14	214880	33	285590
Poultry Farm	35	735500	18	423000	8	103250	18	72500	6	208000	21	350200	106	2542450
Diesel Eng.Rep.	98	1612000	16	108750	0	0	6	61000	11	163000	3	99800	134	2044550
Fisheries	16	349500	1	20500	0	0	0	0	2	127000	38	412760	57	909760
Gov. Job	0	0											0	0
Sanilalion	6	77000											6	77000
Bakery	6	300000											6	300000
Comp. Job	1	10000											1	10000
Vechile Purchas	2	500000											2	500000
Tent	1	100000											1	100000
Hard Fan	11	282000											11	282000
Marval Machine	1	100000											1	100000
Total	9159	11283110	3794	50114900	7841	68526500	11770	15272064	8385	16880157	8390	1354088	49339	688403526

Source: MDA

Demographic profile of sample respondents:**Table -1: Religion wise distribution of sample members**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hindu	231	76.0	76.0
	Muslim	71	23.4	99.4
	Meo	2	0.6	100.0
	Total	304	100.0	

Source : Primary Data

It shows that majority of the sample members are hindus i.e. 76% and 23.4% are muslim and a mere .7% are meos. The results are quite surprising in a sense that despite of a Meos

dominant region they are not indulged in saving-lending activities.

Table 2: Caste wise distribution of sample members

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SC	39	12.8	12.8
	ST	27	8.9	21.7
	OBC	94	30.9	52.6
	BC	55	18.1	70.7
	GEN	61	20.1	90.8
	Meo	28	9.2	100
	Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

In the region almost all categories exist and woman belonging to any community can become a member.

However majority of them belong to OBC category i.e.30.9%.

Table 3: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of tenure of SHGs

		Tenure		
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<12 months	29	9.5	9.5
	12-24 months	53	17.4	27.0
	24-36 months	89	29.3	56.3
	> 36 months	133	43.8	100.0
	Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It was observed during survey that 43.8% groups are more than 3 years old and 29.3% are 2 to 3 years old. However new formation of groups is disappointing which indicates

that to keep the scheme alive Government should encourage women to open SHGs.

Table-4: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of educational qualification of Leader
Educational Qualification of the leader

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Illiterate	2	.7	.7
Primary	123	40.5	41.1
Middle	83	27.3	68.4
H.Sc and above	96	31.6	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Most of the group leaders were observed to be literate but poorly i.e. 40.5% of them are literate upto primary level 31.6% are Higher secondary passed. Qualification of the

group leader plays an important role in formation as well as in functioning of the group.

Table 5: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of size of the group

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid < 12 members	190	62.5	62.5
12-15 members	110	36.2	98.7
> 15 member	4	1.3	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Majority of the SHG s were having 10 to 11 members that means a moderate size is supposed to be the best practice in the sample area. Only 1.3% of the total sample were found to be having more than 15 members. The result are different as compared to the prescribed limit of membership is 10-20 member by NABARD.

It was also found that 16.8% of total groups have a sole purpose of SHG formation as to increase their income which is supposed to be the most justifiable purpose of this scheme.

Secondly 16.4% groups have been formed to start entrepreneurial activity in the form of shops and dairy mainly. Both purposes are complementing each other i.e. increasing income by setting up some enterprise. Formation of groups to promote savings took third place i.e. 11.3% and to uplift the social status of the members is also a purpose to form SHGs. The results are satisfactory in a sense that these have been designated as the primary objectives to initiate this scheme.

Table6: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of group meetings held

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Once in a week	122	40.1	40.1
once in a month	181	59.5	99.7
twice in a month	1	.3	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

As per the guidelines group leader has to organise group meetings to discuss various issues and collection of mandatory monthly savings and disbursement of credit at least once a month. 59.5% groups are following the norms of holding the meeting once a month and 40% groups are even holding meetings once in a week which is quite

interesting to know as more and more meetings give women a confidence to speak and share her problems with other members which they were unable to before becoming members of SHG i.e. SHG (women collectives) give them a voice. Increased self confidence and communication are strong indicators of social upliftment.

Table 7: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of regularity of meetings

Regularity of meetings in last 6 months		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	100% meeting held	202	66.4	66.4
	75-99% meetings held	102	33.6	100.0
	Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

SHGs were found to be regular in holding meeting at least once in a month. 66.4% groups held 100% meetings and 33.6% of the groups were also found to hold more than 75%

of the mandatory meetings. Regularity in meetings is a most desirable feature of a Self Help Group to have a congenial group working and cohesion.

Table 8: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of attendance at meetings

Attendance at meeting		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	>90 %	270	88.8	88.8
	75-89%	34	11.2	100.0
	Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

The results are encouraging. Majority of the groups record more than 90% attendance which shows that women want to get together to discuss problems of their own and of others and possibly came out with solutions. 88.8% of the sample

groups have recorded more than 90% attendance and minimum attendance recorded is also not disappointing it is still not less than 75%.

Table 9: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of member participation in decision making

Participation of members in decision making		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	>75% members participate	162	53.3	53.3
	55-75% member participate	142	46.7	100.0
	Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from the above table that SHGs have a positive social impact on women as most of them started participating in decision making which was earlier supposed to be male domain. SHGs have helped in women

emancipation. In 53.3% cases more than 75% of the group members participate in decision making when it comes to credit disbursements, getting together for a social cause, or solving some individual problem with the group efforts.

Table 10: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of training program conducted

Whether any training program conducted for SHG		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	5	1.6	1.3
	No	299	98.4	100.0
Total		304	100	

Source: Primary Data

The response is disheartening as Government has not spent much on training programmes in this area although it was found during survey that women are keenly interested in taking up some work but the two main issues what to make and where to market? 98.4% of the respondents said the no

training was ever given to them whereas a mere 1.6% said they attended 1-2 days training about formation of SHGs and account opening and keeping minutes of meetings which again was not to undertake any entrepreneurial activity.

Table 11: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of regularity of savings

Regularity in Savings

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	1	.3	.3
100%	303	99.7	100.0
Total	304	100	

Source: Primary Data

Members were found to be very regular about their savings with the group. 99.7% of the respondents were found regular in depositing their monthly savings on the meeting day. This has resulted in a big group corpus with the banks and some

groups even need not to take any loan from the bank. Most of the groups were found to be in no loan category in the sample area.

Table 12: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of set of rules and regulations

Do the group has a set of Rules and Regulations

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	42	13.8	13.8
Yes	262	86.2	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

86.2% of the respondents replied that they had group norms in the form of rules and regulations which comprise of attending group meetings at least once in a month,

repayment of the credit allocated to avoid heavy rate of interest and priority based lending out of group corpus.

Table 13: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of existence of rules

Rules are in existence only			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	2	.7	.7
No	302	99.3	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Majority of the respondents said that rules are not just existent but are followed as well. Each and every member follows the group rules and regulations not by force but by

their choice. They know it is an effort of the members, for the members and by the members.

Table 14: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of implementation of rules

Rules have been implemented as well				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	304	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Primary Data

It is evident from the above table that rules are not just framed they are implemented as well for the smooth

functioning of the group. The results are 100%.

Table 15: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of election of office beares

Do you conduct periodic elections for the office			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Election conducted once a year	151	49.7	49.7
Once in two years	9	3.0	52.6
Beyond two year	88	28.9	81.6
Never held	56	18.4	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

49.7% of the groups hold election once in a year to elect office beares namely the group leader and treasurer. 28.9% groups do not change their leaders every year and 18.4% of

the groups never held elections rather their office bearers are unanimously chosen.

Table 16: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of books of accounts maintained

Are the books of accounts and documents maintained			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cash book	1	.3	.3
Cash book and Ledger	128	42.1	42.4
cash Book and Member Passbook	175	57.6	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

57.6% of the groups maintain journal and bank pass book for recording savings, disbursements and interest. 42.1% maintains journal and cash book. Overall each and every

group maintains at least two books of records which is a healthy practice.

Table 17: Distribution of SHGs on the basis of status of recording in these books

Mention the status of recording in these book			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Up to date and correct recording	277	91.1	91.1
Up to date but incorrect recording	27	8.9	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

It was found that 91.1% groups have up to date and correct recording in the books maintained by the group. This correlates the fact that at least some of the group members are literate enough to enter the transactions correctly and preparing the minutes of the meetings. It was also explored that even if no member is capable of recording then any educated child of any member of the group can be asked for doing this work which shows the group is specific about recording and updating the transactions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research on Microfinance and women empowerment depicts that SHG based micro finance has contributed as a catalyst of the social change and empowerment of poor is proved to be a boon for the rural women in some states of India. Moreover it has created opportunities for promotion of income generating activities and have enabled them to come above poverty line. There is a geographic/Regional concentration of the SHG concept which needs to be scattered across the nation as poverty has a global concern. Poor people's access to formal banking system would act as a key to economic growth and sustainable development. It is evident that SHGs have touched the lives of rural women in all respects whether it is social, economic or personal thereby contributing effectively in women emancipation. SHGs are seen to confer many social and economic benefits which can be community platforms for women to become active in village affairs, stand for local election or take action to address social and community issues like – abuse of women, alcohol, the dowry system, the schools and water supply (Umakanata; Padhi, Pragnya Laxmi (2011) of late the women have started recognising their immense potential and have learnt that self dependence is the best form dependence. Joining a Self Help Group has given them enough confidence to speak, to come forward to be a part in family decision making which is supposedly a male domain, assessing the banks for loans and discussing with the managers without taking their husbands along (in the sample

district women were seen discussing gold loan provisions with the Bank manager and that too without their husbands accompanying them) which is indeed an indicator of upgradation of self confidence which can be attributed to Self Help Groups. Aloysius P. Fernandez (2007) (MYRADA) observed that SHGs are not only an instrument for the empowerment of poor and marginalized sectors but they have proved to be an effective instrument for changing oppressive relationships in the home and in the society. As far as the performance of SHGs is concerned the results are very much encouraging in almost all respects except the training part which needs government's attention as out of total expenditure from the allocated fund nothing has been spent on marketing and very less on imparting training. In Haryana out of 8308 swarozgaris 6150 i.e. 74.02% are engaged in primary sector and only 25.98% are engaged in secondary sector like village industry, handicrafts, Handloom etc. There is a need to make SHG movement more entrepreneurial. SHG members can be roped in as a member of distribution channel by the corporate in order to have deep penetration in the rural market in a cost effective manner without inventory piling up. This would be a two way strategy of empowering rural women and having a better outreach. Some of the insurance companies are also now targeting Self Help Groups to sell their insurance products in rural markets. So in near future association with the Self Help Groups will help rural women to have avenues for larger incomes apart from the saving lending mechanism which will benefit their families and society as a whole in terms of better and respectable living.

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