

# ROLE OF SELF HELP GROUPS IN EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN ECONOMICALLY: *A Case Study of Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar Districts, Telangana*

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## **Abstract:**

*Rural women still remain a destitute segment of Indian society. It has been recognised that economically empowered women play a dynamic role in the development of self as well as their family and the nation. Majority of women in India live in villages and usually suffer from poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, inability etc making them deprived in the family and society. The only way paved for the rural women to come out of these clutches is Empowerment. The government of India has considered SHGs as a change agents which are designed systematically to identify and improve the predominant factors and resources of women empowerment at the grass root level. The study focused on the role of Self Help Groups in empowering rural women economically. The study was conducted on a sample of 800 women members of Self Help Groups, in the rural areas of Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar Districts. Multistage convenience sampling method had been used. The data collection was done with the help of a standardized questionnaire to understand the level of economic empowerment among rural women through SHG's. Paired Sample Statistics, Paired sample test, One Sample test had used to analyze the data. The results of the study revealed that SHG's had played an important role in Empowering rural women economically.*

**Keywords:** Self Help Groups, Economic Empowerment, Women Empowerment.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Rural women in India live in practical isolation, deprived from the rights which they hold, experience socio cultural and customary impediments in their day to day life, unable to access even the most basic services such

as education, health, credit, proper shelter, quality food and so on. The only way to maximize the participation of rural women in different areas and levels for bringing improvement in their socio-economic condition is Women empowerment which can uplift the status of underprivileged women in the country. An empowered woman in a family act as an indicator for the socio-economic growth of the family which in turn help for the growth and development of the country. Rural Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that mainly include economic status, educational status and social status (caste and class). In the process of building powerful women, the government of India has identified SHGs as the key strategy that can be implemented for the empowerment of the rural women in all spheres of their lives from the ground level. Empowerment through SHGs is a multifaceted process, which encompasses many aspects such as enhancing awareness, increasing access to power resources by mobilization and organization of women into groups. The SHGs are groups of about 10 to 20 people who come forward with an aim of eradicating poverty and social development through their own contribution. It is a homogeneous class which uses the pooled resources to make small interest bearing loans to their members (NABARD, 2000). Formation of SHG can provide a strong weapon and a correct intervening agency to reequip the rural women in general. It is a most potent tool against human deprivation and mainly intends to build human capital. SHGs have become a ladder for the poor women to go up not only economically but also socially, politically, mentally and psychologically. With this mindset, women must be empowered through SHG as its motive is to mutual help which gives them vigour to address the socio-economic problems and thus imparts gender equality by eliminating all types of discriminations against women.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The scenario of women empowerment seems to be comparatively poor in the attainment of income, employment and education. Dr.Rajeshwari M. Shettar(2015), Leela (2000) argue that development of women is crucial for the economic transformation of a country in view of their complex and multidimensional roles. Women have been marginal players in the rapidly changing economic scenario. In rural areas woman is the nucleus of the family and plays an important role not only in running day to day household activities but in other areas too. Despite many efforts made by the governments, the inequalities still exists in the areas of education, health, sharing of property, control over the resources and more which requires utmost attention of one and all Anjali Pal, Sharma(2013). Researchers have found that women are more likely to put earned income to good use than their husbands, because they have the best perspective on the needs of the family. Indeed, the first step for poor women on the path out of poverty cycle is economic security Maurya, R (2011). According to Baud, Isa (1992) 'having an income' regardless of its ultimate use and destination does, undeniably, affect the

life situation and perceived situation of many wage-employed women. It is also felt that women working for wages manifest a greater bargaining power, which at times may even extend to the domestic front. Narang Uma(2012) remarked that SHGs have shown a way to women empowerment and poverty alleviation. Further he highlighted that the genuine empowerment is achievable only when a woman has augmented access to financial resources, more confidence, self inspiration, more potency, more identification in the family and society. Sahu Lopamudra and Singh Suresh K. (2012) are of opinion that Women empowerment is an essential precondition for elimination of poverty. Haile et al. (2012) says Participation in SHG increased income and improved asset base for women. SHG women experienced increased expenditure decision-making power and ownership of assets, and decreased domestic conflict.. Gurubasappa et al(2012) in their paper reported that participation of women in SHG enables them to become economically empowered which is first step towards overall empowerment of women. SHG is a tool to remove poverty and improve the women entrepreneurship and financial support in India and also view SHG as the more attractive scheme with less effort.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The objective of the study is to know about the level of change in Economic and empowerment amongst rural women through SHG's.

### **HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

H01: There is no increase in the level of economic empowerment amongst rural women with the SHG's.

H02: The rural women availing SHG's are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied towards the level of change in economic empowerment.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

For the present research work, identification of SHG beneficiaries from 2 districts was done in the first stage. In the second stage, 10 mandals from each district were selected

In the third stage, 10 villages from each mandal therefore  $20 \times 10 = 200$  villages were selected. In the final stage, 4 SHG members from each village therefore  $200 \times 4 = 800$  members were selected.

**SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:** Sampling Technique used for the research is Multi stage Convenience Sampling.

**SAMPLE SIZE:** A sample of 800 women was selected. (400 from Nalgonda district and 400 from Mahabubnagar district)

**DATA COLLECTION METHOD:**

The Research Instrument used was Interview Schedules to collect the data from the respondents

*Primary Data:* Primary data was collected through interview schedules, observation and through the in depth interviews of SHG women.

*Secondary Data:* Secondary data was gathered from various government sources like DRDA employees, DRDA office files, reports, SERP portal ,books and records of SHG members, Journals, Magazines, Thesis, websites etc.,

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Self Help Groups has a significant role in the Women Empowerment Process. This part provides the detailed analysis of the changes happened in the various factors contributing to the economic empowerment among the women after joining in SHGs in comparison with before availing SHGs.

**Table Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post SHG : Savings and Income	4.6798	800	.45951	.01625
	Pre SHG : Savings and Income	2.2635	800	.54049	.01911
Pair 2	Post SHG : Standard of Living	4.4194	800	.64308	.02274
	Pre SHG : Standard of Living	2.7147	800	1.06225	.03756
Pair 3	Post SHG : Contribution and Expenditure	3.8578	800	.76463	.02703
	Pre SHG : Contribution and Expenditure	2.5003	800	.69037	.02441
Pair 4	Post SHG : Financial Literacy	4.1894	800	.64660	.02286
	Pre SHG : Financial Literacy	3.0869	800	.78985	.02793
<b>Pair 5</b>	<b>Post SHG : Economic Empowerment</b>	<b>4.2866</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>.42146</b>	<b>.01490</b>
	<b>Pre SHG : Economic Empowerment</b>	<b>2.6413</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>.52396</b>	<b>.01852</b>

The table indicates the descriptive statistic of respondent's Pre and Post Economic empowerment in SHG's. It is observed that the mean of 'Post SHG: Economic Empowerment' (mean=4.2866), is maximum when compared with the pre SHG economic empowerment factors and standard deviation of the 'Post SHG: Economic Empowerment' (SD= 0.42146), is minimum when compared to the pre SHG factors. Further it indicates all the categories of pre and post economic empowerment in SHG's are consistently varying with almost similar averages.

The above table reveals that the rural women after availing SHGs has increased their Savings and Income, Improved their standard of Living, increased their Financial Literacy and also their contribution and expenditure to their families has grown which the factors are contributing to the economic empowerment.

**Table Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Post SHG : Savings and Income - Pre SHG : Savings and Income	2.41625	.74665	.02640	2.36443	2.46807	91.532	799	.000
Pair 2 Post SHG : Standard of Living - Pre SHG : Standard of Living	1.70469	1.20045	.04244	1.62138	1.78800	40.165	799	.000
Pair 3 Post SHG : Contribution and Expenditure - Pre SHG : Contribution and Expenditure	1.35750	.96205	.03401	1.29073	1.42427	39.911	799	.000
Pair 4 Post SHG : Financial Literacy - Pre SHG : Financial Literacy	1.10250	.61945	.02190	1.05951	1.14549	50.340	799	.000
<b>Pair 5 Post SHG : Economic Empowerment - Pre SHG : Economic Empowerment</b>	<b>1.64523</b>	<b>.55499</b>	<b>.01962</b>	<b>1.60672</b>	<b>1.68375</b>	<b>83.847</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>.000</b>

A repeated-measures t-test found this difference to be significant,  $t(799) = 83.847$ , significant value is 0.000, where  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and it can be conclude that there is an increase in the level of economic empowerment amongst rural women with the SHG's.

**Table One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
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**Table One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Are you satisfied with the level of change in your Economic Empowerment through SHG?	800	4.46	.499	.018

The above table indicates the descriptive statistic of satisfaction of rural women towards the level of change in economic empowerment through SHG's. It is observed that the mean of respondent's is 4.46, and standard deviation is 0.499.

**Table One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 3					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Are you satisfied with the level of change in your Economic Empowerment through SHG?	82.913	799	.000	1.463	1.43	1.50

From the above table the significance of rural women satisfaction towards the level of change in economic empowerment through SHG's is  $p < 0.05$ , we reject the null hypothesis that the sample mean is equal to the hypothesized population mean and conclude that there is a satisfaction amongst rural women availing SHG'S towards the level of change in economic empowerment.

**CONCLUSION:** SHGs are playing a vital role in empowering the rural women economically and the factor which has major contribution is Savings and Income and is making the women to get access to the other factors. The analysis also shows that the women availing SHGs are very much satisfied towards the level of change in their Economic Empowerment.

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