

**VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE
THAKURPUKUR
KOLKATA-700063
NAAC ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE**



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Name of the Teacher: Sonamoni Kunti

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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: **MICROCREDIT AND SELF HELP** **GROUP**

Microfinance in India where more than 500 million people are still unbendable, 75 million household require microfinance, 50 million in rural India and 15 million in urban households (khan, 2010). With this backdrop, many gigantic institutions in India took the responsibility upon their shoulders to reach the deprived class particularly the ones living in extreme conditions of poverty.

Major initiatives were taken in 1969 by nationalization of commercial banks, bank branches got extended in the rural area. India has over 35,000 rural branches of commercial banks and regional rural banks, and around 15,000 cooperative bank branches to bring the people under the purview of banking system. In 1978 **Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)** was introduced to alleviate India's rural poverty. A deep and serious contemplation for poverty alleviation in India is seen

by some major initiatives like the setting up of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh to re-finance microfinance activities of NGOs, Establishment of Small Industrial Development Bank (SIDBI) foundation for micro-credit (SFMC0) as a financier of microfinance institution (MFIs), Bank linkage program under the overall guidance and supervision of the **National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** , lending to **Self Help Group (SHGs)** as a part of priority sector, exemption of non- profit companies engaged in microfinance business from registering as non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), as a result of this, commercial banks (mainly in the public sector), regional rural banks (RRBs) and cooperative banks have emerged as important channels of microfinance provision and introduction of schemes like **Swaran Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)** and Swa Shakti targeting rural poor routed through SHGs have given a new direction for poverty alleviation in the country. At present IRDP has been replaced by **Swarnajayanti Grameen Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)**. The programs are carried under the SHG Bank –Linkage program governed and controlled by **NABARD**. Review of Literature Realizing the importance of micro-finance, lot of individual, institutions, NGOs and other agencies embarked

Impact on Economic Empowerment

Poverty alleviation on a large scale is possible through the promotion of sustainable livelihood by providing easy and

affordable access to credit and other complementary services required for promotion of livelihoods. Finance is considered the back bone of socio –economic developments and the lack of it thrusts the people in to deprivation and sufferings. “Poverty reduction takes place when the poor are able to generate income” .The increase in the level of income develops the living standards of individuals, education and on other poverty related dimensions. The increase in income for instance generates an opportunity to start a business activity, employment, access to health services, education, dwellings, and individual savings. The current study shows that Microfinance has a positive and significant impact on Income level of SHG beneficiaries. The increase in the income level of the respondent’s savings has also increased after providing financial assistance. The house hold income and house hold assets has also increased to a significant level.

Impact of Microfinance on Social and Political Empowerment

It is found in this study that microfinance had a positive and significant impact on the socio- political empowerment of the poor. They are now able to handle problems, their recognition in the society is visible, they participate in the public meetings, and bashfulness among the participants particularly in women has come down to a significant level. Impact on Multidimensional

poverty index (Living Standards, Education and Health and Hygiene)

SELF HELP GROUP

Development is a multi-dimensional process that affects society in multiple ways. It is well documented that women constitute about half of the world's population but their share in the economy and other development spheres remain neglected. In addition, this large section of population (including Indian women) have been suffering from various disadvantages - lack of accessibility to resources, non-recognition of their economic contribution within the family and society. In order to resolve these emerging challenges, Government of India (GOI) has implemented various programmes and policies since Independence. Among these programmes, Self Help Groups (SHGs) may be considered as a significant initiative of the government as well as the **Non-Governmental Organisations** (NGOs).

These are based on the principle of democratic process of development. The democratic institution provides a platform to the socially and economically deprived sections and encourages them for economic participation. Since the 1970s, SHGs have been working in many states of India and contributing to the development processes. The present paper is an attempt to

analyse the contribution of SHGs in women's development in the district of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The impact of these groups on women's development has been analyzed by **Gender Development Index (GDI)**, which focused on the male-female differences in terms of longevity of life, knowledge and economic betterment. Key words: Development, Self Help Groups, Women in Development, Varanasi, India.

Reference :

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294105140_Self_Help_Groups_SHGs_and_Women's_Development_A_Case_Study_of_the_Varanasi_District