
Empowering Tribal Women- Role of Microfinance
(A Study in Khammam district of Telangana)

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Abstract:

Women constitute nearly half of the aggregate population in India, but bulks of them are not empowered to participate in socio-cultural, economic and political life. Most of the women are unskilled and, as such, economically and socially dependent on men which rigorously restrict their prospect for socio-economic empowerment. The assumption is that investments of microfinance in microenterprises, small business, transmitted through women self-help groups, surges women's access to productive occupation and income, enable them to make a greater contribution to household income and thereby improve well-being for women. Based on the field studies conducted in the most backward tribal-dominated villages of Khammam district in Telangana and supplemented by secondary sources of data, this study seeks to investigate the impact of microfinance as a strategy in alleviating poverty and empowering tribal women.

Keywords: Tribal, Microfinance, Women, Empowering , Role

Introduction:

It is often said that India lives in its villages. According to our latest census about 70 per cent of the total population used to live in villages, and do their agricultural activities. Several years of relentless industrialization almost concentrated around the bigger cities, have not naturally changed the overall picture. The rural India is still a reality. India's overall development is not possible without the rural areas. Working Tribal women contribute to national income of the country and maintain a sustainable livelihood of the families and communities, throughout the world. The main aim of microfinance is to empower women. Microfinance is the provision of financial services to low-income clients, including consumers and the self-employed, who traditionally lack access to banking and related services. Microcredit, or microfinance, is banking the unbankables, bringing credit, savings and other essential financial services within the reach of millions of people who are too poor to be served by regular banks, in most cases because they are unable to offer sufficient collateral. Women make up a large proportion of microfinance beneficiaries. Traditionally, women (especially those in underdeveloped countries) have been unable to readily participate in economic activity. Microfinance provides women with the financial

backing they need to start business ventures and actively participate in the economy. It gives them confidence, improves their status and makes them more active in decision making, thus encouraging gender equality. According to CGAP, long-standing MFIs even report a decline in violence towards women since the inception of microfinance. The most of the microcredit institutions and agencies all over the world focuses on women in developing countries. Observations and experience shows that women are a small credit risk, repaying their loans and tend more often to benefit the whole family. In another aspect it's also viewed as a method giving the women more status in a socioeconomic way and changing the current conservative relationship between gender and class. They are rarely financially independent and often they are more vulnerable members of society. About 70% of world's poor are women. Yet they have no access to credit and other financial services. Therefore, microfinance often target women. Microfinance is a critical tool to empower women from poor household. So, particularly women can get benefit from microfinance institutions as many microfinance institutions target only women, to empower them. Here in this paper a small effort has been made on the empowerment of women through the tool Micro-finance.

Review of Literature:

Indira Devi, (1987) identified that the impact of employment of women is clearly seen in their dominance in tasks related to control of money and freedom in spending etc. while education of wives initiated the process of change in decision-making, the employment furthered it by altering the male dominance in decision making.

Malhotra (2002) constructed a list of the most commonly used dimensions of women's empowerment, drawing from the frameworks developed by various authors in different fields of social sciences. Allowing for overlap, these frameworks suggest that women's empowerment needs to occur along multiple dimensions including: Economic, socio-cultural, Familial/ interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological.

According to Krishna (2003) empowerment means increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make effective Development and life choices and to transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes. It is by nature a process and/or outcome

Ranjula Bali Swain (2007) "Can Microfinance Empower Women? Self-Help Groups in India" concluded many strides have been made in the right direction and women are in the process of empowering themselves and NGOs that provide support in financial services and specialized training, have a greater ability to make a positive impact on women empowerment.

PeopleIndia, Alwar, Rajasthan" (2012). The paper involves the effects of microfinance in empowering women through education and mass awareness. The aims were to the study of the social, political and economic impact of the awareness campaigns and mass education started by self-help groups. This paper explains the concept of women empowerment and the

relation between microfinance and women empowerment. The paper also analyze the role of self help groups in educating women and helping in their economical, social and political empowerment.

As explained by **Das Kanti Sanjay (2012)** the role of SHG as financial intermediary for enhancing women empowerment. The study shows the realistic experience and observation to beneficiaries of SHG of Nagoan district of Assam and Dhapukuri development block. The study shows that the SHG- bank linkage of micro finance programme has intense influence on the economic status, decision making power, knowledge & self-worthiness of women participants.

The paper focused on various determinants and indicators of women empowerment focusing on women who have availed the loan facility is written by **Khan Rana Ejaz and Noreen Sara (2012)**, micro financial institution written by He also indicates one important tool to success of micro finance i.e. the loan should be utilized by females only. Loan utilization by female has better effects of micro finance on empowerment as compared to the loan utilized by other member of family. Author express the five indicators to measure the women empowerment these are: - child health, education, selection of spouse of children, purchase of basic goods and decision of house hold savings In this article author suggested that women empowerment can be enhanced by increasing the amount of loan and the loan should be utilized by women.

Objective of the paper:

The objective of my paper is to highlight the impact of microfinance on rural women in Telangana

1. To study the role of micro finance in Tribal women empowerment
2. To analyze the dimensions of Socio-Economic status of Tribal women empowerment through SHGs.
3. To measure empowerment of Tribal women indecision making through SHGs.

Methodology:

The paper is based both on primary and secondary data. Multi-stage random sample method is too used for the present study. The data is sourced from directorate of Economics and statistics publication to arrive at the trend in area.

Concept of Empowerment:

The capability of a person depends on a variety of factors, including personal characteristics and social arrangements. However, the full accounting of individual freedom goes beyond the capabilities of personal living. For example, if we do not have the courage to choose to live in a particular way, even though we could live that way if we so chose, can it be said that we do have the freedom to live that way, i.e. the corresponding capability? Another important point made by Sen (1990) is that for measurement purposes one should

focus on certain universally-valued functioning, which relate to the basic fundamentals of survival and well-being regardless of context. Taking the example of universally valued functioning like proper nourishment, good health and shelter, Sen asserts that if there are systematic gender differences in these very basic functioning achievements, they can be taken as evidence of inequalities in underlying capabilities rather than differences in preferences. Empowerment can range from personal empowerment that can exist within the existing social order. Thus, this kind of empowerment would correspond to the right to make one's own choices, to increased autonomy and to control over economic resources.

Empowerment signifies increased participation in decision-making and it is this process through which people feel themselves to be capable of making decisions and the right to do so (Kabeer, 2001). Malhotra et. Al (2002) constructed a list of the most commonly used dimensions of women's empowerment, drawing from the frameworks developed by various authors in different fields of social sciences. Allowing for overlap, these frameworks suggest that women's empowerment needs to occur along multiple dimensions including: economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Since these dimensions cover a broad range of factors, women may be empowered within one of these sub-domains. They give the example of "socio-cultural" dimension which covers a range of empowerment sub-domains, from marriage systems to norms regarding women's physical mobility, to no familial social support systems and networks available to women. The World Bank defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

In olden days women were restricted to take part in any social activities and not given opportunities in decision making in her family. The situation was even more worsening in rural and remote areas. Now the situation has been changed. She is given freedom to do what she wishes. In today's scenario more women are engaged in income generating activities. This is because of NGO and other financial institutions came forward to provide microfinance to poor women. They believe that a woman is the small credit risk and often benefits the whole family. The main aim of Microfinance is to empower women. This induced the researcher to focus more on the empowerment of rural tribal women who participates in the microfinance.

Microfinance and Tribal Women Empowerment

Micro-finance programmers not only give women and men access to savings and credit, but reach millions of people worldwide bringing them together regularly in organized groups. Although no 'magic bullet', they are potentially a very significant contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as pro-poor development and civil society strengthening. Through their contribution to women's ability to earn an income these programmers' have potential to initiate a series of 'virtuous spirals' of economic empowerment

Result and Discussion:**Table-1**

Dimensions	Category	Number	Percentage
Education Status	Illiterate	5	16.6
	Can read only	20	66.6
	Can read &Wright	4	13.3
Caste	Tribal women	30	100
Occupation	Agriculture as primary occupation	29	96.9
Family type	Nuclear family	22	73.3
	Joint family	8	26.6
	Others	12	60.1
House Type	Own	1	3.3
	Rented	27	90
	Others	1	33
Material Possession	Low	1	3.3
	Medium	29	96.6

Sources: Field survey

Table 1 deals with the results obtained among SHG members with respect on individual observation. It is obvious from table-1 that out of seven dimension studies for assessing the socio-economic status of SHGs members, majority of the respondents were illiterate (16.6) % belonged to Scheduled Tribe caste 100% had agriculture as primary occupation 96.9%. Most of them belonged to nuclear family which accounts for 73.3 percent and maintained family size of up to five members.

Conclusion:

Thus, it can be concluded from the above study that microfinance is playing a vital role in the social, psychological as well as economic empowerment of women in India. Microfinance loan availment and its productive utilization found to be having a profound role and impact on women empowerment. The empirical findings of the study suggests that microfinance has a profound influence on the economic status, decision making power, knowledge and self-worthiness of women participants of self-help group linkage program in Telangana. The rural area Self Help Groups are performing well. The study concludes that microfinance bro the rural area Self Help Groups are performing well. The study concludes that microfinance brought psychological and social empowerment than economic empowerment. Impact of micro finance is appreciable in bringing confidence, courage, skill development and empowerment. The SHG members feel free to move with their groups and leaders. It leads them to participate on various social welfare activities with good cooperation. While interacting with the respondents, it is noticed that some members are expecting the NGO to come up with more training sessions in income generating activities. All they need is a way to develop their skills and talents by participating in various training programs ugh psychological and social empowerment than economic empowerment.

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sssssFindings:

1. It is noticed that all the respondents agreed that micro finance brought improvement in their living standard.
2. Maximum number of respondents accepted that microfinance has brought economic development directly and indirectly happiness and peace in the family.
3. Majority of the respondents expressed that their awareness about environment improved after taking part in micro finance programs actively.
4. Respondent feels them socially and economically strong. As they can take their own decision freely and contribute their suggestions in major family issues.
5. It is found that microfinance made them aware about necessity of children education of tribal women
6. Women are economically and socially empowered after joining SHG and getting micro finance.
7. Women are given full freedom to express their opinions as they are now aware about the social and economical changes in society.
8. It was found that there is an appreciable positive change in coordination between groups and within group leaders and decision making among respondents. There is a significance improvement in the income of the respondents after joining SHG.

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