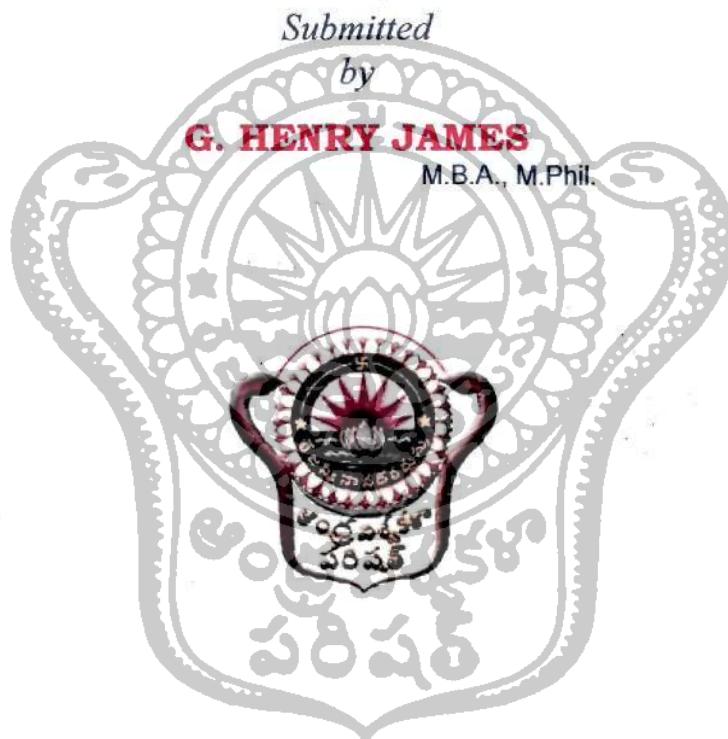


DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN MICRO-ENTERPRISES
A Study on Micro-Finance System and Operational
Performance of Self Help Groups in Visakhapatnam

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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CHAPTER - VII

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS,
SUGGESTIONS AND
CONCLUSION**



CHAPTER VII

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The chapter presents findings based on analyses of the study and gives recommendations to influence various stakeholders in improving the status of women in enterprise development. The major findings with specifications, contributions and policy approaches on women enterprises were comprehensively discussed. The study reports that traditional socio-cultural constraints that have long been deterring women's participation in the economy and their access to resources are now explored. Empowerment signifies not only increased participation in decision-making, but above all the process through which people feel themselves to be capable of making decisions and having the right to do so. Women empowerment can have significant growth and expansion of SHG Bank Linkage across the different districts of the country. Over the years, women empowerment growth has been improving for the last decade among all respondents.

7.1 OBSERVATIONS

The analysis of annual household income of sample respondents of rural and urban areas revealed that there was substantial increase in the annual income of the households in SHG stage. Further, when sources of income of SHGs are analysed, the researcher finds substantial increase in household income from self-employment in non-farm activities. It was found in the study that there was a shift in the composition of activities. The study revealed that training for marketing and technical skills were hindrance to make the socio-economic ventures undertaken by the sample respondents a more profitable one. Efforts were lacking from the group members to carry out group-activities successfully.

The empirical findings of the study suggests that SHG Bank Linkage and Micro-finance 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 Visakhapatnam District. The microfinance related loans and its



productive utilization was found to be causing significant differences in women empowerment levels, which was measured through Women Empowerment Index (WEI). Of the loan availed by the participants as compared to the non-loan availed by women SHGs, both factors determine the productivity and sustainability of the SHGs. The study confirmed that micro-finance as a tool towards poverty reduction, has its own limitations to reach the bottom of the poorest. However, it is found effective in graduating the poor, not the poorest, and lower middle class to a higher standard of living. Through different studies at selected places and time frame differed in drawing significant conclusions to acknowledge that despite of bottlenecks, microfinance is capable of uplifting the struggling poor from their shackles and facilitated to upscale them to a better living condition; thus, playing crucially positive role in enhancing women empowerment through micro-enterprise development..

7.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Socio-economic Profile of Selected Households:

The demographic and sociological attributes of population sample indicate an important input in understanding the functioning Self-Help-Groups.

1. Majority of the total sample households 45.30 per cent are in the age group between 26-30 years. Under this age group in urban area, there is 48.00 per cent while 42.70 per cent in rural area.
2. Majority of the total members from rural and urban areas, 49.30 per cent can only sign. Interestingly, only 5.00 per cent reached secondary levels. This indicates that those who have not attained higher educational level are likely to involve themselves in SHGs.
3. Majority of the total households 45.30 per cent belong to the Other Forward Community (OC) and the least 10.30 per cent belongs to Schedule Tribes. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the caste-group and locality may not necessarily be an issue of concern to join Self-Help Groups among women both in rural and urban areas.
4. Majority of the households 91.00 per cent belong to Hindu religion while only 2.70 per cent belong to Christian. Significant distribution of households on the basis of religion in rural area is also similar that in urban area. Households both in urban and rural areas constitute Hindu religion.

5. The marital status in urban and rural areas. It is observed that majority of the women 69.00 per cent are married. It is noted that in urban area, about 65.40 per cent married women have joined SHGs and 72.60 per cent married women from rural area.
6. The family income of the households generally indicates the economic status of the households. Majority of households 39.30 per cent are in the annual income range between Rs.20,001-Rs.30,000, while only 3.30 per cent of the households earn an income below Rs.10,000 annually. It indicates that majority of the income in rural and urban area are from trade and petty business and very less income from other sources.
7. Family system is one the important socio-economic aspect in society. Generally two types of families exist namely nuclear and joint. Majority of the respondents 52.30 per cent belong to Joint family and 47.30 per cent belong to Nuclear family. The data showed that in urban and rural areas, joint family system is dominating the family system.
8. The family size of the households in locality revealed that in urban area 48.00 per cent of the households have family size of three members followed by households while only 12.00 per cent of the households in the urban area have a family size of five members and above.

7.3. PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN MICRO-ENTERPRISES

1. Distribution of Women joining Groups was very different from urban 9.40 percent of respondents and 12.60 per cent of respondents in rural region say that the implementation of women SHGs was excellent. It is noted that urban growth has decreased to 9.40 per cent from the rural growth, thereby affecting the livelihood opportunities among women enterprises.
2. The size of the group is one of the important factors for the formation of collective groups. It was found that a majority of the women households from rural area representing 50.00 per cent and urban area 33.00 per cent belong to groups which have approximately 15 members with a total of 125 members in the locality. It indicates that in the urban area there is a majority of the women



households whose memberships is 15 which manageable indication of active SHG.

3. The women entrepreneurs have drawn a thin line between “consumption and production” purposes. Women entrepreneurs deem it necessary to join SHGs to consider the remedies in the challenges they face in establishing their business portfolios. The formation of SHGs, women were given relief from extortion of loan sharks and exploitation from money lenders.
4. Majority of the respondents from urban 63.30 per cent and from rural 91.30 per cent did not have savings account in any bank before they joined in any SHGs. Whereas, in the urban area, 35.30 per cent of SHG members and from rural 10.00 per cent of women SHGs have only one account before joining the group; which means that through SHG, women become aware of the bank transactions and its importance in developing their business.
5. Majority 38.00 per cent of the respondents relied upon their relatives for loan in urban before joining SHGs, and from rural area, in order to meet the emergent needs of the family 24.70 per cent of the rural people relied on their relatives before joining in SHGs. The respondents from urban area 28.00 per cent and from rural area 16.60 per cent of SHG depended on SHG bank linkage after joining in SHGs
6. The regression analysis indicated that all the three independent variables significantly affect or influence total borrowings or loans of SHGs. However, it is interesting to know that consumption rank as the highest with co-efficient (0.8610) which significantly influences among the three variables.

7.4. PERFORMANCE OF REPAYMENT LOANS

1. There is a significant 23.61 per cent of household who have repaid loan under microcredit, 19.10 per cent have paid their loan under SHG bank linkage and 63.70 per cent of household are having outstanding loan, while of the total

- loan received, 32.50 per cent loan have been repaid and 67.50 per cent of loans are outstanding.
2. It is observed that small farmer group of household borrowers topped in the repayment of loan 48.20 per cent; while the landless laborers group has least 28.60 per cent of household who have repaid loans. The same positions are held by these two groups in respect to outstanding loans.
 3. The overall performance or repayment of borrowed amount varied from different sources. The majority of repayment sources come from income for both urban and rural. It is determined that the repayment from income in urban has a total repayment of 98.70 per cent and rural 66.91 per cent.
 4. The data reflected that urban respondents paid SHG bank linkage 9.93 per cent, 8.40 per cent for informal credit, and 7.51 per cent for micro-credit. Whereas a majority of rural respondents repaid through informal credit 17.30 per cent informal credit, 14.22 per cent micro-credit and the least 10.88 per cent SHG Bank linkage Program.
 5. The data suggested that households availed loan from their pooled savings of the group. Each group decided to what would be the quantum of loan amount to be sanctioned and the amount of interest charged. Repayment of group credit is one of the important yard-stick to assess the functioning of the group. In urban area 77.00 per cent of the loan was repaid by women and only 23.00 per cent of the loan was outstanding. In the rural area 75.00 per cent of the loan was repaid and only 25.00 per cent of the loan was outstanding.
 6. Majority of total respondents in rural 49.30 per cent and urban 53.30 per cent areas were getting positive changes in their income when they join SHGs which could have been resulted from the productive opportunities to implement their small scale business which the loan was actually intended for; while a proportion of 8.00 per cent rural and 6.70 per cent urban remained no income earnings after joining SHGs.
 7. Majority of the respondents in rural 52.00 per cent declared that there are significant positive changes in their assets after joining SHGs, while interestingly only 40.00 per cent in urban experienced positive changes in assets.



8. Majority representing 83.30 per cent of the urban respondents secured loans below 5,000 Rupees each from SHGs. Most of the loans secured by the members were determined by the decisions of the SHGs and Banks to release a standard amount of loans for the SHG members. An in-depth analysis revealed that the average loan size has registered a convincing increase from Rs. 5000 to Rs 25,000 within the three years of SHG formation.
9. Majority 14.70 per cent of urban SHGs were concerned of their income that set aside to pay loan, but 18.00 per cent of SHGs in the rural area were highly concerned of loan payment, thus indicated that a significant portion of income among women SHGs was allotted for loan defrayment.
10. The proportion of household's saving helped women to get economic empowerment. Economic score was extracted on the basis of change in income and change in savings and change in assets after joining the SHG from the availed loans of members. Majority of the participants in urban area have better economic well being in terms of income, asset and savings changes as compared to respondents from rural areas.
11. The survey results revealed that the women SHG who availed micro-finance loan and utilized for productive purposes had higher degree of decision-making power compared to those 150 respondents who have not availed loans yet. These findings enlightened the fact that micro-finance loan and its productive utilization improves the decision-making ability of participants.
12. Majority 73.00 per cent of the households have revealed that their leaders call the meetings. Of the total, 14.00 per cent suggested that the secretary calls the meeting. Households constituting 12.70 per cent informed that the conduct of meeting even without their leader.
13. As many as 95.70 per cent of the household members reported that their groups are maintaining books and records in a proper way and also updating and the remaining 4.30 per cent of the household members informed that their groups are not maintaining records in a proper way, when compared from urban to rural SHGs.
14. The study recorded a significant 38.00 per cent of the households were saving an amount ranging between Rs.151-Rs.200 per month, followed by 27.00 per cent of households saving an amount between Rs.101-Rs.150. Households



constituting 15.00 per cent save an amount between Rs.51 to Rs.100; while 14.00 per cent of households save above Rs.201 and only 5.70 per cent of households were saving an amount less than Rs.50.

15. The purpose of savings of SHGs in Urban and Rural areas as part of the Asset Building capacity of 71.30 per cent, Emergencies 69.40 per cent, Social status 60.60 per cent, Education 58.00 per cent, Agriculture 90.60 per cent, Marriage 80.60 per cent, Festival 75.00 per cent; while other purpose of saving was aimed upon the perception of respondents' needs.

7.5. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MICRO-ENTERPRISES

Women empowerment through micro-enterprises has become relevant in the growing industry of India. Active participation of women in business is demonstrating an upsurge scale after the socio-economic and political interventions provided by various private and public sectors. The concept proved to produce several self-employment programmes to eradicate poverty and provide employed to rural poor especially among women. However, in some cases, it showed lagging results because of lack of entrepreneurial structures, talents and technologies to advance the enterprise movement.

1. The Composite Index for women entrepreneurship was 75, which was above 60, which indicates entrepreneurship development based on individual related skills was high. Based on this analysis, women who have proper training and equipped with entrepreneurial skills were likely to succeed in business.
2. The average entrepreneurship development indices among variables ranged between 76 and 17.5, with a Composite Index of 47.5. This information suggested that almost half of women may have the entrepreneurial capacity to perform better.
3. The Combined Composite Entrepreneurship Development Index of both individual and business related skills was 59.2. Within the framework of group enterprises, those who work as a collective group were likely to sustain and enhance their capacity towards business development.



4. As the total Combined Composite Entrepreneurship Development Index was 59.2 it was inferred that entrepreneurship development in the micro-credit based enterprises sector of Andhra Pradesh was established through SHGs and micro-finance institutions.
5. The improvements can be visualized through increase in savings, value of assets, amount of borrowing and amount of expenditure and provision of employment opportunities among women micro-entrepreneurs.
6. The respondents with regard to women micro-enterprises, the researcher has devised Questions on Five-point (Likert-type) Scale with the options - Strongly disagree, Disagree, None, Agree and Strongly agree, suitably awarding points for the respective answers.
7. The highest score is Agree (1039) among the respondents on perception of Economic Empowerment after joining in SHGs. It denotes that the access to finance is invariable; while majority of respondents Agree with has high score (131) and strongly disagree highest score (86) is increased in income of members.
8. The social impact based on the statement in learning banking operations and procedures rank the highest with a score of (187) while the perception on induced “social awareness” occupies the second rank with a scoring intensity value of (175). This only indicates that the SHG members fully developed their capacity to build their potentials to become leaders in their own right.
9. The statement that “inducing to participate in politics” occupies the first place with scores of 384 followed by the statement “creates political awareness about necessity of voting” a majority of score is on agree (157).
10. The data suggested that the political empowerment of SHGs respondents score reflected some variations in the Five-point Scale emphasis laid on components within the variables. Majority of women SHG members who are in local bodies strongly agree.
11. Majority of score (157) Agree while there is a negative score (75) Disagree, whereas Strongly Agree score (55), Strongly Disagree score (8), No score (5). The result showed that the position of power score was strongly disagreed due to influence of men, husband and family member. However, the other



variables not necessarily influence the members on freedom to introduce new style of leadership which proves that SHG improves leadership skills of women, inducing capacity to assume leadership and undermining to contest in election to gain better understanding of the political aspect.

7.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Self-help Groups and women micro-entrepreneurs needs to examine how government policies are best applied within its own local context. Broad policy guidelines must examine the overall institutional framework within which economic activity takes place in order to establish a maximum scope for entrepreneurship to flourish towards holistic development and thereby alleviate poverty among rural and urban poor women. The following are the contribution of this study to literature and knowledge:

1. Very little seems to have been studied on socio-economic and political empowerment in India.
2. Many studies have been conducted on women's empowerment in India but very few in particular from Andhra Pradesh. This study has increased the coverage in India with regard to women's empowerment research.
3. The study confirmed the usefulness socio-economic and political women empowerment programmes even for micro-entrepreneurs unlike what some scholars have postulated.
4. The study showed that there is a statistically significant association between empowerment and development. The study has confirmed the view of some development scholars that social dominants are rarely a simple matter or material wealth only

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Women entrepreneurs can offer access to contacts for sources of credit, access to training in international trade issues, access to mentoring, as well as access to the more basic skills of operations management and marketing. The importance of access to information technology cannot be underestimated. Information technology can help



identify markets, provide important industry information, spotlight trends, and highlight potential niches.

1. **Organization:** SHGs can advance women within the business community, identify their interests, and advocate for them. It is imperative to provide directors of women's business associations and women entrepreneurs are designed to deliver valuable practical information on how these groups can expand their capacity and better serve the needs of the women's business community.
2. **Advocacy:** SHGs can demonstrate how successfully targeted advocacy is critical if women are to overcome the institutional and informal constraints that continue to hamper them in various conditions. Advocacy can increase access to education, foster the growth and dynamism of women owned business spur reform of laws, raise the awareness of national and local development organizations, and alert business negotiations to consciously communicate ramifications of laws.
3. **Strategies:** Proper awareness and strategies through policy advocacy can change attitudes and definitely change lives. The business associations and policymakers approved of the burgeoning power of women in the national and local economy. Thus, encouraging women to realize and helping them reach higher goals for the new era of economic empowerment and sustainable development at the following strategic levels:
 1. At the grassroots level, women as individual entrepreneurs,
 2. operational level in cooperation with women's business associations, and
 3. policy and institutional level to systematize governmental efforts.

Further suggestions are based on best practices exemplified by women in micro-enterprises that have proven successful for their business associations. There are five broad categories.

1. **Research, Data Gathering, and Statistical Analysis:** The data bank may be limited to provide consistent information about women entrepreneurs which can concede barriers because women are commonly undercounted and they may not be taken into account when public policies are formulated. To remedy the gap, there is a



need to compile local and national directories on women entrepreneurs at all levels (micro, small, medium-sized, and large), in all sectors, and include international trade activity.

2. Technology, Education, Training: To provide management, marketing, business planning, technology, and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs. Every national and local country report compiled indicated that training was a top concern for women SHGs and micro-entrepreneurs. Most of the women are frequently handicapped by lack of management training; therefore, it is deemed that adult literacy and better facilities will drive women to higher education to sufficiently emphasizing micro-enterprises. With advance technology blurring an entrepreneur's market edge, technological skills and business ownership education must be made available and constantly updated. The best way to establish a baseline is to survey women entrepreneurs through existing associations to glean information in technology, education, and training needs. There is a strategy to generate the supporting training structures and/or partnerships to expand businesses and overcome structural barriers. There is a need to commission women to promote women's enterprise creation and strengthen existing enterprises through specialized training programs.

3. Access to Credit: A major impediment to start and expand a business is finance. Access to credit for women can be improved by linking women's business associations' awareness campaigns and public policy platforms to government and institutional policies. To transform this into effective measure, various stakeholders both in private and public sectors must identify, define, and explain the common problems women experience in obtaining credit. There is a need to conduct research credit schemes that have worked in many organizations and agencies that would be applicable to women's conditions; assess transferability and adaptability. Women entrepreneurs must organize, lobby, and campaign for funds so that they can disburse to members.

4. Legal Platform: Prescribing necessary policies and institutional reforms to improve the business environment for women entrepreneurs is tied into the



regulatory and legal framework governing competition, investment, commercial transactions, women-friendly trade laws, labour regulations, taxes, property rights, and procurement procedures. To provide a legal platform, women entrepreneurs must turn the obstacles, challenges, and problems into legitimate policy statement. There is a need to propagate by using public forums, media targeting, and direct lobby pressure upon legislators to change laws that are discriminatory toward women entrepreneurs.

5. Collective Association Leadership: Women's associations on micro-enterprises can disseminate information, explain change, and provide services to help members handle economic and political shifts effectively. In this course of action, women entrepreneurs must demonstrate the following programmes and activities:

1. Seminars in socio-economic and legal literacy
2. Public policy platform on women micro-enterprise
3. Technology transfer
4. Training and credit facilities
5. Trade fairs, mela, shows, and events
6. Workshops and conferences on gender
7. Research, Data Collection, and Statistical Repository
8. National and Local Trade Training

7.8 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the policy options to promote women entrepreneurship can be done effectively through these recommendations:

1. To examine the current regulations governing financial institutions and financial markets to inhibit or facilitate the availability and optimal allocation of finance for entrepreneurial activities.
2. To allow scope for flexible employment contracts to be negotiated, with remuneration arrangements and working conditions that are well adapted to the needs of dynamic enterprises. Relax employment protection measures that inhibit restructuring or discourage entrepreneurs from taking on new workers.
3. To determine the costs of complying with government-imposed administrative or regulatory requirements and where reductions could be made.

4. To explore the overall effects of the tax system on entrepreneurship.
5. Review and simplify the registration procedures required to create a business.
6. To integrate government policies to widen the target population for entrepreneurship programs, where possible, to attract the participation of women, the young and minorities.
7. To ensure that resources for programs to foster entrepreneurship are decentralized.
8. To provide regular opportunities to exchange information at a national level on the experiences of local authorities in designing and implementing entrepreneurship programs.
9. To promote public awareness of entrepreneurship and examine the role the education system could play in developing entrepreneurial skills and attitudes.
10. To increase opportunities for the unemployed to create their own jobs through self-employment schemes.
11. To facilitate networking among firms in order to foster a culture of mutual cooperation and risk-taking.
12. To propagate the entrepreneurial nonprofit sector by contracting-out where possible the delivery of public services that meet pressing demands in economic and social development.

7.9. SHG Organizational Recommendations

To improve the performance and mechanisms of women SHGs, there is a need to reconstruct the social, economic, political and demographic framework to flourish their micro-credit activities; the following suggested courses of actions can be realized:

1. To accept the invaluable contribution of women and address their needs not only for self-employment and achievement. The Programmes should be designed on the basis of the needs of women at the micro-level. An effective strategic planning for self-employment for women is required.
2. The various categories of financial institutions in rural market have exhibited different potentials in serving rural women entrepreneurs. There is need to synchronize their efforts so that their work become supplementary and complementary in serving others.



3. To streamline the procedure for applying, seeking and releasing of credit from the banks. The procedural difficulties are one of the major obstructions, which have denied women the financial benefits of the banks. Therefore, the procedure for credit access to women should be made more easy and simple.
4. To ensure proper utilization of the credit, there is an urgent need to introduce availability of consumption credit from the formal channel and to sensitize bank staff towards the needs constraints and inhibitions of women in making business transactions.
5. To evolve new products by the banks commensurate with the requirement of rural women micro-entrepreneurs. The customer-contact-programmes especially for women should be organized to disseminate the information of various schemes and financial needs of women. Marketing of new distribution leagues involve training or community development skills. There is need to enhance the training packages for entrepreneurship development to enable rural women as successful business managers and sustaining micro-enterprises.
6. To ensure broader socio-economic agenda. There is considerable scope for development of micro-finance in India since there is enormous unmet demand for financial services in this sector. Therefore, enacting fresh legislation or appropriate amendments in the existing legislation related to micro-financial institutions is needed.
7. To establish a strong marketing network that is called for effective and proper marketing of product and services of micro-enterprises linked SHG's. They need marketing support and institutional capacity to handle marketing activities independently.

7.10 OVERCOMING CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The major threats that women entrepreneurs face in the global marketplace are competition from foreign products arising from trade liberalization, technological advancements outpacing current technology now used within one's business, and insufficient skills to conduct business in the global marketplace. To combat these obstacles, the role of women's business associations in every region of the world should be to prepare aggressively and meticulously their members for future

participation in the global economy by providing access to intensive training on how to shape niche markets and develop agile and innovative interactive marketing skills.

Obstacles that women face in international business include limited international business experience, inadequate business education, and lack of access to international networks. Challenges common to all enterprises include securing funding, developing marketing and management skills, and devising suitable business strategies to thrive in globalized social and economic environments. Other impediments for women are societal, cultural, and religious attitudes. In revitalizing economies they may also face intractable infrastructure problems. Other researchers in developing and transitional economies point out the problems of gender discrimination under patriarchal traditions, double-shift syndrome, and corruption.

7.11 INTERVENTION TO CREDIT BARRIERS

The importance of access to credit is identified as a major barrier to entry into self-employment throughout the world. Women setting up micro-enterprises, SMEs, or formal large-scale businesses all encounter varying degrees of difficulty in obtaining capital, collateral, and fair lending terms. Lack of money among women entrepreneurs is the greatest obstacle in starting a business, and lack of capital as the greatest barrier to business growth.

Women in particular tend to seek small personal loans because, in general, they tend to start small firms. The banking world has thus far shown little interest in small loans or micro-credits, given the relatively high handling costs, with the result that institutionalized banking practices remain, for the most part, rigidly opposed to micro-credit concepts. Banks, not surprisingly, are inclined toward low-risk ventures. Women were more likely to observe that they were not given due respect by financial institutions; they did not think their account managers were easy to talk to; they reported that they were not made to feel comfortable by financial institutions; and they perceived that bank employees discriminated against women.

Bankers' pessimistic view of women's creditworthiness fosters a reluctance to grant credits. This constitutes another obstacle to female entrepreneurship. On the



positive side, however, the number of groups offering microenterprise credit had grown to an estimated 3,000 worldwide by 1998, reaching some 8 million people. The popularity of the micro-credit strategy propelled a global movement toward making micro-loans available to people all over the world. Micro-credit approach is bringing together leaders of governments and development organizations. In 1997, the Microcredit Summit launched a global campaign to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families in the year 2005. Increasingly, development agencies including USAID and the UN are making micro-enterprise programs. The focus these days should be on technology, education, and training. Training is the essential component for producing capable cadre of women micro-entrepreneurs who not only survive but thrive and contribute to the local, and ultimately, the global economy. Skill-based training, technical training, technology training, and delivery of management skills are necessary to strengthen not only entrepreneurs, but also associations. Technical assistance, in other words, is especially valuable in developing and transitional economies where business and managerial skills are often completely lacking.

It was found out that the development of women micro-enterprises financed under SHG Bank Linkage programs has a positive impact on increasing the incomes of the women. The foregoing analysis indicated that micro-finance activities and self-help groups active participation has greatly impacted on the income ,assets, occupation, savings, access to loans, bank connectivity, knowledge, self worthiness, and decision making level of the women SHG participants.

7.12 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AS ROLE MODELS

SHGs are an important agent in the process of economic empowerment of women. Women's grassroots organizations have played a valuable role throughout the world in improving the socio-economic status of their members and attempting to lessen gender-based discrimination against them. Now, women's business associations need to establish and implement their own agendas for increased economic protection. Women entrepreneurs as role models and mentors played a key role in carving out paths for them to follow. As revealed in interviews and discussions, some role models were historic figures or fictional characters who



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overcame adversity; more often they were admired and respected members of NGOs. Mentors included businesswomen, family members, women with a high public profile, and an occasional consultant. Women are changing the conventional role of mentoring at a time when the practice is enjoying a rebirth.

The conclusion highlights the women's micro-enterprises business entities which garnered national success, the expected purposes of women's business associations, marketing networks and the role of women in policy lobby in international trade. A vital link to economic decision-making processes has made women enterprise as an iconic vision and priorities as part of the national political and economic agenda. Since micro-entrepreneurships encourage solidarity and collective action between the groups, women SHGs help organize among the members who join in order to increase contact between associations and other institutions that can help create a commanding web of business alliances dedicated to the political and economic empowerment of women.

Partners in these new social pacts should build on the survival strategies devised by grassroots associations. Grassroots tactics have proved successful in many regions: in poor women's cooperatives, in businesswomen's organizations, and in associated movements. India as a developing country, rapid social, economic and political changes occur; thereby opting women entrepreneurs a degree of flexibility and creativity to meet the challenges and opportunities they encounter. By directly tracking, observing, surveying, and interviewing individual enterprise, women micro-entrepreneurs will better understand with assurance the current entrepreneurial agenda of women's economic development.

Individually, business ownership provides women with the independence they crave and with economic and social success they need. Nationally, business ownership has great importance for future economic prosperity. Globally, women are enhancing, directing, and changing the face of how business is done today. Ultimately, women business owners must be recognized for who they are, what they do, and how significantly they impact the world's global economy. For the woman entrepreneur, the process of starting and operating a new enterprise can be tremendously difficult in both the formal and informal sector because she often lacks



the skills, education, and societal support system to facilitate her efforts. Although women's efforts may be thwarted in many ways "entrepreneurship among women is a vibrant and growing trend.

7.13. CONCLUSION

In this study, the women micro-entrepreneurs claimed that their enterprises are successful. There are differences in their perception about the socio-economic and political empowerment with degree of success. The study found that the entrepreneurs who scored high on their self perception of their success have low scores on economic core motivation, which was very surprising. Its productive utilization found to be causing significant differences in women empowerment levels, measured through Women Economic empowerment Index, of the loan availed participants as compared to the urban and rural loan availed. Whereas it fails to include the poorest section and in improving assets position of the participants, as loans are 'micro' in their magnitudes and duration between dosages of loans are large. The empirical findings of the study suggests that micro-finance has a profound influence on the economic status, decision making power, knowledge and self worthiness of women participants of SHG Bank-linkage Program. Micro-finance loan procurement and its productive utilization have a profound role and impact on women empowerment. Through factor analysis and regression, the study empirically supports the positive relationship between micro-finance and women empowerment, the study identified that financial return was a very strong motive not only to start but also to carry on with the enterprise.

The study also explored to determine the extent of SHGs Pavala Vaddi programme had influenced on empowering women socially, economically and politically. Based on the assessment of the dimensions of empowerment and potential operationalisation in the household, community, and broader arenas, in order to create women empowerment, the government needs to create an environment conducive for growth and eventual formalization of favorable policies and has to increase the proportion of gender budgeting. Specifically, efforts towards enterprise development were encouraging women's micro-entrepreneurs to grow into small and medium enterprises will be challenging to achieve over a period of time.



Local government needs proper steps to take for providing marketing facilities, supply of raw materials, other necessary infrastructural facilities and a good quality of training there is a chance of increasing the incomes of the women and also by identifying the schemes with high potentialities for generating additional incomes which are suitable for women. Micro-finance is capable of graduating struggling poor from their shackles and helps to upscale them to better living conditions and play a significant role in advancing women empowerment.

As women entrepreneurs and members of active networks, effective women's business associations are responsible for producing the relevant literature, research, and statistics to gauge the latest trends and opportunities in women development and empowerment. Thence, essential element for assessing women's financial contributions to the local, national and global economy will do better for women.

7.14. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Entrepreneurship is a highly personal, subjective process. Becoming an entrepreneur is an evolution of encountering, assessing, and reacting to a series of experiences, situations, and events produced by political, economical, social, and cultural change. These diverse circumstances prompt individual entrepreneurs to modify their personal living conditions. Women who own and operate a business are not a homogeneous group. Cultural and social patterns prescribe whether a woman can become an entrepreneur within the society. Some constraints are obvious; others are disguised in patriarchal heritage within cultures that preclude female entrepreneurship.

India needs to adopt innovative strategies, policies for women micro-entrepreneurs development. Most of the literature on women entrepreneurs has focused on the small scale units. Little attention is paid to micro-enterprises in general and micro-enterprises run by women in particular. Most of the studies on women who are engaged in some petty or micro activities under anti-poverty programmes mainly paid attention towards the impact of these programmes on income, employment, poverty etc., by devoting less attention towards the organizational aspects of women micro-enterprises.



The available studies on the women workers in the unorganized sector analyses the socio economic conditions and the problems and constraints faced by them along with other categories workers of the unorganized sector. Due attention was not paid in the studies to analyze the working of micro-enterprises. Hence there is a need to conduct an in-depth study of the financial matters and their working needs, specific to women entrepreneurs. This enables them to formulate separate policies that could help women micro-entrepreneurs, to supplement their family income which is necessary for their survival. Identifying and responding to the gender equality dimensions of its four inter-related strategic areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery and environment and sustainable development.

