

CHAPTER-5

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

Women Empowerment being the buzzword of a developing country like India, has multiple dimensions like economic, social, family and personal aspects. The Self Help Groups in India are positively contributing towards empowerment of women. Based on the major findings of the study the following suggestions were made which may help the members of self-help group and other interested parties in empowering rural women. This study has analysed data from 420 women respondents from seven taluks with equal proportion as 60 respondents from each taluk. This shows the conclusion of the study might have greater contribution for people belonging to various SHGs in different parts of Karnataka.

1. Majority (38.60%) of the respondents fall under the age group of 30-40 years, 26.70% of the respondents are in the age group of 40-50 years. 18.3% and 16.40% of the respondents who fall under the age group between 20-30 years and above 50 years respectively. It indicates members who are in the group of 30-40 years, show interest in joining SHGs. This implies that, based on their age profile, the respondents are mature enough as they were also falling under the economic active group to comment on empowerment.
2. Most of the respondents (31.2%) are illiterate. 28.1% of the respondents have completed SSLC as their education. 27.6% of the respondents have done 7th standard and 13.1% of the respondents have education qualification of PUC and above. Generally, majority of the members who join SHGs are illiterate. This shows that the data is captured from women with various education qualifications without any bias.
3. Out of total respondents, majority of them (64.8%) belong to Other Backward Classes. 13.8% of the respondents belong to Scheduled Tribes. The respondents belong to both Scheduled Castes and others are 10.7%. Therefore, majority of the members who join SHGs, belong to other

backward classes. This implies women in OBC and ST category show active participation in self-help groups.

4. Majority of the respondents (88.8%) are married. 6.4% of the respondents are widow and remaining 4.8% of the respondents are unmarried. Therefore, it could be interpreted that members who are married are largely interested in microfinance, since the responsibility of married members is relatively high than that of unmarried members. It is quite common that the majority of married women join self-help groups, but surprisingly it was noted that widowed women responses towards women empowerment took a prominent position next only to married women in the marital status category. This shows the data collection instruments were promptly made by the researcher by including widows as one of the categories and thereby avoiding unbiased results based on marital status.
5. Majority of the respondents are from rural area (90.7%) and remaining 9.3% of the respondents are from urban area. It is noticed that rural women are more influenced in joining and promoting SHGs resulting in empowerment. But by looking at the status of seven taluks of Mysuru, one falls under Metro Corporation, three under town municipal panchayat and three under town panchayat. This distribution clarifies that the research was open for respondents from both rural and urban categories, but women from rural status are more interested towards SHGs, hence rural category scores more weightage in the study. One way this also helps us in predicting the opinion of respondents on women empowerment which our country is focusing on and the group which has to be empowered.
6. As a member of SHG, 99.5% attend meetings regularly. This seems to be positive that members are updated regarding the activities planned and implemented by SHGs and also they are in constant touch with the other members of their team. Such meeting may bridge the communication gap and keep members informed about initiatives in the group.
7. 71.7% of the total respondents opine that functioning of SHGs help in development of savings habits. 45.2% of the respondents stated that SHGs

helps in inculcating co-operative principles. 7.4% of the respondents think that SHGs act like small bank while only 4.5% of the respondents opinioned that their SHGs provide equipment to members. This indicates that the self-help groups focus on the objective of freeing women from poverty by mobilizing their own finance in the form of savings and also trying to create financial discipline among members. Inculcating co-operative principles may further increase teamwork and may also support social empowerment.

8. Majority of the respondents (55.2%) stated that their SHGs conduct awareness programmes regularly and remaining 44.8% of the respondents opinioned that SHGs do not conduct awareness programmes. Out of the respondents who stated that SHGs would conduct awareness programmes regularly, 69.8% of them opinioned that SHGs conduct awareness programme on growth at macro level and 30% of them opinioned that they would conduct awareness programme on empowerment. It clearly indicates that majority of SHGs concentrate on conducting awareness programme on growth at macro level.
9. All the respondents agreed that they would receive good returns on their SHG savings. It is inferred that members of SHGs having good savings habit and get good returns on them, which lead to economic empowerment among the members.
10. Majority of the respondents did not undergo regular training programme (51.9%) and remaining 48.1% of the respondents had undergone training conducted by various NGOs and government. Out of the respondents who had undergone training, majority (91.08%) of them had undergone hands on training, followed by class room lecture (8.4%) and brain storming (0.49%). It is inferred that less number of members undergo training which helps them to manage SHG affairs like conducting meeting, maintenance of accounts and income generating activities.
11. Majority of the respondents (40%) stated that their SHGs consist 15-18 members. 32.1% of the respondents said that their SHGs have 9-14 members, 25% of them mentioned their SHGs consist more than 18 members and

remaining 2.9% of the respondents stated that SHGs have less than 9 members. It is observed that majority of SHGs consist highest number of members in a group and it helps them to share the resources and ideas generated by fellow members of the group.

12. Out of total respondents, 44% of them pointed that group size of SHGs is stable. 43.8% of the respondents stated that group size has decreased and remaining 12.1% of the respondents said that group size has increased. Therefore, it is inferred that group size is stable in majority of the SHGs.
13. Majority of the respondents are involved in SHGs for more than 5 years (40.0%). 32.4% of the respondents said that they are in SHGs from 3-5 years. 23.1% of the respondents who are in the SHGs from 1-3 years and remaining 4.5% of the respondents are in SHGs from less than one year. It indicates that majority of the members gain confidence in improving their economic and social status as they are involving in SHGs for more than 5 years.
14. Majority of respondents (68.3%) opine that their friends/relatives/NGOs suggested them to join SHGs. whereas some respondents joined SHG's themselves (22.6%) and few respondents (9%) joined SHGs through the reference of other members of the group. It is inferred that majority of the members are influenced by friends, relatives and NGOs to join SHGs.
15. Majority of the respondents (30%) have availed microfinance of more than Rs 30,000/- . 26% of the respondents have taken loan up to Rs.20,000, 19% of the respondents have taken loan up to Rs. 30,000. 14% and 10.5% of the respondents have availed loan up to Rs.10,000 and 5,000 respectively. It is observed that most of the members in SHGs avail the maximum amount of loan for their overall development.
16. Majority of the respondents (50%) have utilized microfinance for the purpose of enterprising, agriculture and for animal husbandry. 39.3% of the respondents have spent microfinance for their daily consumptions. 36.7% of the respondents have spent microfinance for their children education. 7.9% and 1.9% of the respondents have utilize their microfinance for their children marriages and health respectively. It is inferred that most of the members in

SHGs utilize microfinance for productive purposes as they invest it in agriculture, enterprise, animal husbandry and income generating activities.

17. With reference to economic empowerment, majority of the respondents have strongly agreed that microfinance helps in poverty reduction with a mean score and SD of 4.57 and 0.56 respectively. Most of the respondents have strongly agreed that there is an increase in savings and expenditure. Out of total respondents, majority of them agreed that they have made some assets, capable of handling income shocks and access to formal institutions of credit after joining SHGs. Majority of the respondents are neutral in their option towards taking significant monetary decisions. Hence, microfinance and its programmes have direct impact on economic empowerment of women in Mysore district. It is also observed that no difference exists in the response given by respondents irrespective of their age group, educational background, caste, group size, number of years in SHGs and influencers for joining in SHGs on economic empowerment.
18. With respect to social empowerment, majority of the respondents have agreed that micro finance influences on health and hygienic practices (mean=4.02, SD=0.27), helps to command respect among their community members, getting mutual help and support from other members, participation in cultural activities and festivals, gaining voice, improve in the social status, confidence on talking to public officials, attend public meetings, involvement in community development activities, mobility and social involvement. Most of the respondents are neutral in their opinion towards moving freely without consent requirement. Hence, microfinance has directly influenced on overall social empowerment of women in Mysore district. It was also confirmed that, no difference of opinion exists in the response given by women respondents relating to social empowerment based on SHGs linkage with banks, awareness programmes by SHGs on social empowerment, training given by SHGs, group size, years of association in a SHG and influencers for joining SHGs.
19. Pertaining to personal empowerment, majority of the respondents have strongly agreed that micro finance influences on improving self respect

(mean=4.62, SD=0.54), good exposure, discovering new possibilities and options. Most of the respondents have agreed that they are optimistic, feel satisfied, have good qualities, ability to do things as most of people, feel person of worth, economic freedom, freedom of action, involvement in decision making, self esteem, managerial skills, co-ordination in health, gender equality, improvement in skills and ability. Some of the respondents have agreed that they would incline to failure, not proud of themselves, feel useless at times and there is no improvement in education status. Despite of

20. With reference to family empowerment, most of the respondents have strongly agreed that there is an improvement in standard of living with a mean score of 4.52 and SD of 0.60. Majority of the respondents have agreed that there is an improvement in income, support from spouse, improvement in family relationship, help for dependents, education for children, medical care for family members, ability to provide nutritious food and improvement in basic facility and amenities. Hence, microfinance strongly has impact on family empowerment of women in Mysore district.
21. With reference to overall empowerment of women through microfinance, family empowerment has achieved a highest mean score of 4.08 with a SD of 0.19, followed by economic empowerment with a mean score of 4.06 and SD of 0.21, personal empowerment with a mean of 4.03 and SD of 0.19, social empowerment with a mean of 3.82 and SD of 0.24. Hence, microfinance strongly impacts on overall development of women in Mysore district.
22. It is noticeable that there is an inter-relationship between economic empowerment and other dimensions of women empowerment. It is further inferred that there is a high degree of positive correlation ($r=0.631^{**}$) between economic empowerment and overall empowerment. Low degree of positive correction between economic empowerment and social ($r=0.172^{**}$), personal ($r=0.323^{**}$) and family empowerment ($r=0.253^{**}$).
23. It is observed that there is an inter-relationship between social empowerment and other dimensions of women empowerment. It is further noticeable that there is a high degree of positive relation between social and overall

empowerment of women (0.706^{**}). There is a low degree positive relation between social empowerment and economic, personal and family empowerment with $r=0.172^{**}$, $r=0.368^{**}$ and $r=0.291^{**}$ respectively.

24. It is apparent that there is an inter-relationship between personal empowerment and other dimensions of women empowerment. It is further observed that there is a high degree of positive correlation between personal empowerment and overall empowerment ($r=0.729$). There exist low degree of positive correlation between personal empowerment and economic empowerment ($r=0.323^{**}$), social empowerment ($r=0.368^{**}$), family empowerment ($r=0.350^{**}$).
25. It is observed that there is a relationship between family empowerment and other dimensions of empowerment. It is further observed that there is a high degree of positive correlation between family empowerment and overall empowerment ($r=0.672^{**}$). There is a low degree of positive correlation between family empowerment and economic empowerment ($r=0.253$), social ($r=0.291^{**}$) and personal empowerment ($r=0.350^{**}$).
26. It is noticed that there is a relationship between overall empowerment and other dimensions of empowerment. There is a high degree of positive relation between overall empowerment and personal ($r=0.729$), social ($r=0.706$), family ($r=0.672$) and economic empowerment ($r=0.631$).
27. There is a significance difference in personal empowerment among all the Taluks in Mysore District as each taluk in Mysore district differs in terms of exposure, education status, freedom of action, changes in skills and ability of the individuals, opportunity to attend training, health facilities and awareness.
28. There is a significance difference in family empowerment among all the Taluks in Mysore District. The reason is due to difference in standard of living, basic facilities and amenities, provision for nutritious food, medical care for family members, education for children, support from spouse and relationship within the family.

29. There is no significance difference in social empowerment among all the Taluks in Mysore District. It is due to common culture in terms of celebrating festivals, mutual help and support, social involvement in community development activities, mobility, improved social status, raising voice against injustice and mingling with others
30. There is significance difference in economic empowerment among all the Taluks in Mysore District. Since there is a difference in income level, cost of living, ability to manage the funds, access to credit, opportunities in income generating activities, infrastructure, earning members in a family and number of dependents.
31. There is no relationship between demographic factors (such as age, education, marital status & caste) and overall empowerment of women. Therefore empowerment of women mainly depends on effective utilization of microfinance rather than demographic profile.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS:

1. There are fewer members in SHGs between the age group of 20-30 years. Hence measures must be taken to motivate prospective members within the age group of 20-30 years to join SHGs and they may be encouraged to take up business enterprises which will promote rural entrepreneurship.
2. The SHGs basically consists of women who are illiterate or with primary educational background. Hence regular need based training should be conducted and Literacy drive programmes should be implemented to increase the literacy level of the members of SHGs. Financial literacy programmes should also be conducted for all the members of SHGs so that proper utilization of loan provided to them is possible.
3. Microfinance has achieved success among the rural poor sections and hence it must be extended to section of the urban poor too. Awareness programmes must be conducted in urban areas, as they provide an opportunity to urban poor women to have access to microfinance

4. Extensive awareness campaign should be conducted through frequent meetings by experts in the banking sector, in order to have knowledge about various government schemes and banking operations.
5. If the members of SHGs are capable of saving more than expected by them, they can either expand their business operations or save their excess earning systematically by investing in recurring deposits, insurances, mutual funds etc.
6. Economic empowerment can be enhanced through providing more training on income generating activities is required. Training programmes should be conducted with respect to animal husbandry, poultry farming, sheep rearing, agricultural activities, handicrafts, tailoring, and handlooms. So that it provides an opportunity for SHG members from every possible way to take up micro entrepreneurship in their places. Marketing facilities need to be provided to the SHGs.
7. Some sections of the poorest of the poor find it difficult to become a member of SHGs; care should be taken to make them a part of the SHGs. The Government should encourage more number of women to join the Self Help Groups.
8. The number of instalments for loan repayment should be increased to facilitate easy repayment of loans by the poorer sections of the society. Interest subvention facility must be extended to the Self Help Groups (SHGs) for prompt repayment of bank loans. Government should provide sufficient subsidies to the women who are seeking microfinance for their income generating activity.
9. Availing loan and repaying loan should not be the only objective of members of SHGs; they should also focus on wealth creation.
10. Multiple memberships in SHGs must be avoided. Members should take a loan amount depending on the repayment capacity with the interest charged to them.

11. Microfinance or small amount of credit facilitates poverty alleviation and women empowerment. The provision of microfinance has been made available to the poor since 1970s under various poverty alleviation and women empowerment programmes. The government should implement as many development programmes as possible through the SHGs so that the twin objectives like better utilization of the scheme and coverage of weaker sections can be achieved. Rural development is also possible in this approach.
12. There is a need to introduce incentives for increasing the practice of thrift among the poor. Only few groups promoted by the government get incentives in the form of revolving fund assistance while a large number of other groups promoted by NGOs and Banks are getting fewer incentives. Hence, incentives to these groups should be provided through the banks where the accounts of the groups are maintained in order to increase their savings propensity and also to increase the proportionate credit allowance to the rural poor through these groups.
13. The Central Government and also the State Government should think of the possibilities of implementing some of the subsidy / margin oriented schemes through the SHGs so that recovery performance and end utilization can be ensured besides reducing the transaction costs.
14. The SHG members should be inculcated with the feeling of collective development, social harmony and active role in development process and governance. The members should be mentally prepared for starting income generating activities and their sustainability.
15. Health and hygiene practice should be improved through conducting health checkup campaigns and special lecture on nutritious food habits.
16. SHG members should act as a facilitator in implementation of various social empowerment schemes introduced by central and state government.
17. SHGs should concentrate not only microfinance schemes but also should take an initiative in eradication of social evils like alcoholism, child abuse, women harassment, child marriage, child labour and dowry in their locality.

18. Guidance must be provided to all the members of SHGs regarding the objectives of their association and also their expected roles for all round development of the members.
19. There are certain cases where in some members of SHGs involve in further lending of their loans at higher interest rates. Any such instances should be viewed seriously and those members should be removed from SHGs immediately. Such members become defaulters when they fail to collect money from their borrowers.
20. Government and NGO agencies play a major role in implementing microfinance programmes. There is a need for developing microfinance regulations about working of NGOs and the government bodies.
21. The procedural difficulties are one of the major impediments which denied women in getting the financial benefits from the banks. Therefore, the procedure for credit access to women should be made easier and simple.
22. Micro Financing Institutions need proper regulation and operation of business transaction. Thus, RBI, SIDBI, NABARD and other organisations should evolve a proper mechanism for monitoring, supervision, direction, appraisal and evaluation of micro financing institutions as well as Self Help Promotion Institutions.
23. Instead of charging the usual rate of interest rate to the SHG members, a reduced percentage of interest rate may be charged for availing any loan by the SHG members. Differential interest rate must be charged based on the loan amount availed by the SHGs.
24. Digitization of SHGs should be implemented as it creates increased level of awareness by transparency in operation or transactions. A real time SMS alert boosts the confidence among SHGs members.

5.3 CONCLUSION:

The present study is an attempt to identify the role of microfinance in Women Empowerment through Self-help groups in Mysuru District. This research focuses on women empowerment in four levels namely economic, social, personal and family empowerment. It is found from the study that most middle aged people show keen interest in joining SHGs looking forward to social empowerment. It is interesting to see that almost all members of the group attend their group meeting regularly which can be utilized in a positive way by motivating them in bringing creative ideas for increasing returns. Most of the women are illiterate for which the NGO's can take steps in educating them.

It is also observed that many widowed women are part of SHGs next to married women which is appreciated and such category of people must be motivated. Many SHGs are conducting awareness programmes on women empowerment for which the organizers need to get feedback from the participants which is one of the major observations of the study. Rural women felt they are economically and personally empowered whereas urban women felt they are socially empowered.

It is highly appreciated that SHGs has brought economic empowerment to their members by decreasing poverty and increasing savings, social empowerment by health and hygiene practices, gaining respect among their community members and gaining voice in the society; personal empowerment as respect for oneself; gaining good exposure and discovering new possibilities and options, family empowerment as an improved standard of living, support from their spouse and improvement in basic facilities and amenities.

From the above discussion it may be concluded that microfinance is a very effective tool for the uplift of the poor, in general and empowerment of women in particular. Advancing microfinance to the rural women through Self Help Groups on reasonable terms and conditions make it possible for the rural poor as well as rural women to attain economic independence, social status and organizational skills which results in helping the women and the poor function actively in the overall development of the society/nation. Microfinance supporting institutions have also

emerged as an admirable tool for the generation of self-employment and hence preventing the society from indulging in evils like alcoholism and drug addiction. Therefore, microfinance has acquired greatest importance particularly in a developing economy like India. Overall SHGs are empowering women in economic, personal, social and family empowerment. Hence micro finance plays a vital role in women empowerment.