

CHAPTER – VI

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS

In concluding chapter, major findings are highlighted in the study. This chapter includes two parts. Part -I deals with the major findings of the study and Part – II Suggestions.

The steady and evolutionary growth of microfinance development has given a great opportunity to the rural poor in India to attain reasonable economic, social and cultural empowerment, leading to better living standard and quality of life for participating households. Financial institutions in the country continued to play a leading role in the microfinance programme for nearly two decades now. They have joined hands proactively with informal delivery channels to give microfinance sector the necessary impetus.

Microcredit came to importance in the 1980s, although early experiments date back 30 years in Bangladesh, Brazil and a few other countries. The important difference of microcredit was that it avoided the pitfalls of an earlier generation of targeted development lending by insisting on repayment, by charging interest rates that could cover the costs of credit delivery, and by focusing on client groups whose alternative source of credit was the informal sector. Emphasis shifted from rapid disbursement of subsidized loans to prop up targeted sectors towards the building up of local, sustainable institutions to serve the poor. Microcredit has largely been a private sector initiative that avoided becoming overtly political and as a result, has outperformed virtually all other forms of growth lend.

Part –I

6.1 Major Findings of the Study

After a detailed analysis of the primary and secondary data on the study the following results are obtained. They are as follows:

- The study shows that out of 500 respondents 65 percent are married and 12 percent are widows and only one percent woman is divorced. This indicates that marriage is almost universal in all age groups. Majority of unmarried dalit women come under the age group of 21-30 years.
- It is clear from the study that dalit women aged between 30 - 50 have more than 4 children, while dalit women of younger age prefer to have one or two children. Out of 500 dalit women respondents 21 percent are having 2 children, 29.6 percent of dalit women have more than 4 children. From the data it is clear that dalit women prefer small families.
- The study indicates that a majority of respondents (54%) are illiterates 20 percent have passed primary education and 13.4 percent have attended middle school. Large number of illiterates is found in the age group of 31-40 and 41-50, Dalit women in the age group of 21-30 are able to get some education.
- The study shows illiterate dalit women have more number of children i.e. 43.8 percent have four or more than four children. Dalit women with some education have fewer children, only 10 percent of dalit women who studied high school and above have four and more than four-children. This indicates that higher the education of dalit women lesser the number of children they

have.

- Occupational classification of the respondent families shows that majority of them are cultivators (28%) and 26 percent of the respondents come from agricultural laborer's families. Other jobs include working in factory, sales agents, domestic help servants etc., and 4 percent of the families are not having any occupation at all.
- The study shows 58 percent of dalit women belong to families which have income of Rs.5,000-6,000. Only 8 percent of dalit women come from families which have more than Rs.8,000, thus showing that the economic condition of the majority respondents is poor.
- The study reveals that 81 percent of the scheduled caste dalit women belong to families which have annual income of Rs. 5,000-6,000. Compared to scheduled caste and backward caste annual income of forward caste families is more i.e., 13 percent of them have more than Rs. 8,000 and above as annual income.
- The study clearly reveals that dalit women still do not have access to resources. In majority of the families land, house, and other property are either in the name of husband or in the name of parents, or in-laws. Only 18 percent of the dalit women have assets in their name. This is due to the fact that parents of the respondents do not have sons. Naturally whatever parents owned were inherited by these dalit women 55 percent dalit women stated that in their families assets are in the names of husbands.
- SHGs were launched to increase the income of rural dalit women. The analysis shows that even after joining SHGs, 24 percent dalit women said that they did not get any additional

income from SHGs activity. This is because of the fact that whatever income they have earned from SHGs was used for repaying loan or for contributing to the revolving fund. So these dalit women felt that they were not getting additional income from SHGs. But 44.5 percent dalit women were able to earn an income of Rs.2000-3000 per year, 19 percent dalit women said that SHGs brought an annual income of Rs. 3001-4000. Before SHGs no dalit women was earning an income of Rs. 4000 and above. But after joining SHGs 12.5 percent dalit women were able to earn that amount.

- The perception of 43 percent of dalit women was that the SHGs had brought changes in their status. Only 5.4 percent of dalit women agree that it has brought no changes, while 51.6 percent dalit women said to some extent SHGs has been able to bring changes in their status. Majority of illiterate dalit women are of the opinion that SHGs has been able to bring change in their status. 62 percent of dalit women who studied upto high school education said their status had changed to some extent.
- As regards the empowerment and livelihood security of WSHGs are concurrence out of 500 respondents, almost 252 respondents constituting 50.4 percent were found to be good and 152 respondents constituting 30.4 percent were found to be satisfactory and remaining 96 respondents constitute 19.2 were found to be average. The results reinforce the fact the SHGs are playing a very useful role in promoting the dalit women empowerment.

Verification of Hypotheses

Hypothesis - 1: SHGs played a significant role in increase in savings.

SHGs were launched to increase the income of rural dalit women. Increase in income levels is considered as one of the variables to understand the economic impact. The analysis shows that even after joining SHGs 24 percent dalit women said that they did not get any additional income from SHGs activity. This is because of the fact that whatever income they have earned from SHGs was used for repaying loan or for contributing to the revolving fund. So these dalit women felt that they were not getting additional income from SHGs. But 44.5 percent dalit women were able to earn an income of Rs.2000-3000 per year, 19 percent dalit women said that SHGs brought an annual income of Rs.3001-4000. Before SHGs no dalit women was earning an income of Rs.4000 and above. But after joining SHGs 12.5 percent dalit women were able to earn that amount. The saving motivation of dalit women SHGs have been increasing day by day after joining the SHGs and hence they are able to build their own capacity in household sector and in the society. Hence the hypothesis that Self Help Groups helps in increasing the savings is proved.

Hypothesis – 2: SHG programme approach contributes to increase in economic activity and reduction in the incidence of poverty of SHG members.

Out of 500 respondents, almost 200 respondents constituting 40 percent were found to be in an advantageous position because of savings. 150 respondents constituting 30% found to be contributing to household expenses, 55 respondents constituting 11 percent were found to be aware of financial management and 50 respondents constituting 10 percent were found to be self-dependant and 45 respondents constituting 9 percent were found to be generating income. Hence the research statement that

reduction in the incidence and severity of poverty among clients through improvements in household income is proved.

Hypothesis – 3: Self Help Groups contributes to empowerment of dalit women by providing them access to economic resources, participation in economic executive.

Out of 500 respondents, the perception of 43 percent of dalit women was that the SHGs had brought changes in their status. Only 5.4 percent of dalit women agree that it has brought no changes, while 51.6 percent dalit women said to some extent SHGs has been able bring changes in their status. Majority of illiterate dalit women are of the opinion that SHGs has been able to change their status. 62 percent of dalit women who studied upto high school education said their status had changed to some extent so SHGs scheme needs to be made more purposeful and result oriented to improve and change the status of these dalit women.

The study gives the details of the brazenness of the respondents in the study area due to SHGs. As the table indicates 20 percent of dalit women expressed that they acted according to their own will, but whenever there is pressure from the elders, they listen and accept their opinions. But the majority of dalit women (61.6%) said that they do not oppose the elders, either because they were not courageous enough to do so, or did not want to create conflicts in the family. Hence the hypothesis proves that members increase in decision making power and access to economic resources have greater than before.

Part - II

6.2 Suggestions

On the basis of findings of the study the following suggestions are made to further the improvement of the dalit women SHGs in order to empower the dalit women.

1. The Governments both at the Centre and the State can think of the possibilities of implementing some of the subsidy of margin oriented schemes through the SHGs so that recovery performance and end utilization can be ensured besides reducing the transaction costs. Need is felt to arrange entrepreneurship development programmes for the members of the SHGs who are graduating themselves beyond consumptive credit to the production and investment credit. It could be specific skill oriented preparation.
2. In order to cover more and weaker sections under this useful and effective rural development approach. It is required on the part of the Government to implement as many development programmes as possible through the SHGs, so that twin objectives like better utilization of the schemes and coverage of weaker sections can be achieved. Also, Government could earmark a part of the funds spent on providing subsidies under government-sponsored programmes for the formation of SHGs and providing useful incentives to SHG activity.
3. There is a need to introduce incentives for increasing the thrift activity among the poor. While some of the selected few groups among the Government promoted groups get incentives in the form of revolving fund assistance, a large number of groups promoted by NGOs and banks need to get incentives. In view of this, incentives to these groups also may be provided through the banks where the accounts of the

groups are maintained, in order to increase their savings propensity. This also increases the proportionate credit dispensation to the rural poor through these groups.

4. In order to increase production levels of the SHGs significantly, the relevant production techniques and know-how need to be preserved and shared among the production groups. In order to standardize the production as well as packaging process that is suitable for storage and marketing of agricultural products. In this regard, the rural technology mission can be formed by the government with the involvement of the scientists involved in rural technology research, rural economists, rural bankers and NGOs involved in such activities.
5. The problem of promoting livelihood among SHG member is becoming increasingly important because of the need to create livelihood and employment opportunities for higher incomes in the rural areas. We believe that the problem of rural migration, which is a cause of concern, could among others be addressed through this intervention.
6. It is important to note that most of the dalit women beneficiaries are illiterate. Hence, the beneficiaries need to be educated about the formalities to be fulfilled in obtaining the necessary finance. The bank staff should help the uneducated dalit women in getting their credit sanctioned from the banks. If the beneficiaries are educated they can get loans easily from the banks.
7. The NGO sector is increasingly pursuing the financial intermediation as one of the effective tools in meeting their social agenda. In this context, the governments, both at the

centre and the states have an equally important role to play in creating conducive policy environment for the growth of this NGO sector as future micro finance institutions. Here, what is required is suitable policy framework, innovative package of services with timely credit.

8. Given the low levels of community and political participation by members, this aspect must be strengthened, since SHG members usually are people who are voiceless in the the people.
9. A winning intervention for empowering dalit women necessitates several elements – an important one is imparting of new skills: the consequence of dalit women assuming new roles and also support through training for enabling them to perform these roles. Training modules have to make dalit women recognize clearly how society structures their perceptions. This would help in making dalit women aware that society's perception of dalit women's appropriate roles and behaviour should not shape their actions. The training programme must promote critical analysis in dalit women and encourage them to think independently and challenge unequal gender relations and exploitation.
10. There is a need to alter both dalit women's and the program implementers' view of the training they require. There has to be a break from traditional training, in the direction of organization of sessions where they can discuss, build up and filter their worldview. Teaching dalit women proficiencies they have been conventionally deprived of has great possibility for throwing open new role opportunities for dalit women, thus integrating in it empowering aspects. Training

dalit women in tailoring, papad making etc. are may enable dalit women to earn supplementary income. However, it is doubtful whether these skills are contributing to dalit women's empowerment or just accentuating dalit women's established jobs. The employment provided as a result of these skills does not interrupt dalit women's household tasks or take them away from home. Therefore when selecting skill development programmes for dalit women, it is important to impart skills which will deal with both dalit women's 'practical' interests (for example poor nutrition) and will at the same time rework the 'strategic' interests leading to a questioning of the power relations that avert dalit women from accessing these skills.