

Need Assessment of Women Empowerment in Rural Areas of Lucknow District

Pooja Rani* & Dr. M.S.Khan**

* Research Scholar, Department of Rural Management, School for Management Studies, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University), Lucknow.

** Head/Coordinator, MBA& M.Phil Programme, School for Management Studies, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University), Lucknow.

ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is a process by which women challenge the existing norms & culture, to effectively promote their wellbeing. The growing social awareness across the world has found a lot of issues to discrimination against women like male-female differentiation or gender biased system. The present study addresses need of women empowerment in rural areas of Lucknow district and Self help groups (SHGs) role in women empowerment. The information needed for the study has been collected from the secondary resources. The study focused on social & economic status of women in terms of gender gap in education, sex selection, literacy, population, health status, family planning, ownership on property, women and work etc for finding the need of women empowerment in rural areas. The result of study revealed that social and economic condition of women is not well in rural areas due to poverty and lack of education so government should take initiatives for women empowerment to improve their living standard in rural areas.

Key words:

Women empowerment; Social status; Economic status; Poverty; Self help groups (SHGs)

INTRODUCTION

Introduction part of the study covers the concept of women empowerment and microfinance role in women empowerment. This article indicates that women empowerment truly takes place when women challenge the existing norms and culture, to effectively improve their condition while doing so, women in India. It is showed that only a fraction of these type of activities are really motivating for the participating women, however, drawing inference from the household data, preliminary results shows that SHGs could be leading to empowerment of women. The questions relating women's empowerment and the condition of women now have become very critical to the human rights based approaches to development. Women empowerment is a process to advance gender equality and empowerment of women, elimination of all kinds of violence

against women, and ensuring women's fertility as the cornerstones of population and development related programmes. Microfinance programmes like the Self-Help Bank Linkage Programme (SHG) in India have been increasingly hailed for their positive economic impact and the empowerment women. This is based on the view that women are more likely to be credit constrained, have restricted access to wage labour market and have limited decision-making and bargaining power within the household.

Women empowerment: Women empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. As per the United National Development Fund for women (UNIFEM), the term women empowerment means:

- To acquire knowledge and understanding of gender relations and find the ways by which these relations may be changed.
- To develop a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.
- To gain the ability to generate choices exercise bargaining power.
- To develop the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change and to create a more just social and economic orders, nationally and internationally.

Thus, empowerment is a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a

concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. There are two types of Women empowerment, which are given below:

Social empowerment: It means to understand the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude poor people and keep them in poverty. Poor people's empowerment, and their ability to hold others to account, is strongly influenced by their individual assets like land, housing, livestock, savings and their all type capabilities are like good health and education, social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations, self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future.

Economic empowerment: Economic empowerment means to allow poor people to think beyond their daily survival and to exercise greater control over both their resources and life choices. For example, it enables households to make their own decisions around making investments in health and education, and taking risks in order to increase their income. There is also some evidence that economic empowerment can strengthen vulnerable groups' participation in the decision-making.

For example, microfinance programs have been shown to bolster women's influence within the household and marketplace. The evidence also suggests that economic power is often easily 'converted' into increased social status or decision-making power. A large part of literature focuses on the economic empowerment of women - a key

strategy in addressing gender inequality. More generally, the discourse on economic empowerment centers around four broad areas: the promotion of the assets of poor people; transformative forms of social protection; microfinance; and skills training.

Research objective

- To define the concept of Women empowerment.
- To determine how micro finance can help to empower women in rural areas.
- To study the social and economic status of women in rural areas for defining the need of women empowerment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

During the period of the study, several authors was referred and it is Imperative that an outline of the literature review is put to note and the following references are mentioning . Lakshmi R and Vadivalagan.G have studied on “Impact of self help groups on empowerment of women: a study in dharmapuri district, tamilnadu” and concluded that the main reason for joining SHG is not be merely to get just credit, it in an empowerment process After joining the self help group the women are economically and socially empowered. This empowerment cannot be transformed or delivered it must be self generated such that it enables those who are empowered to take control over their lives.

Deepti umashankar (2006) has done a research on “Women’s empowerment: effect of participation in self help groups” & concluded that involvement in SHGs has

enabled women to have a voice in the community affairs and they have been able to tackle problems such as a lack of drinking water and electricity, access to health services and children’s education. Though women face handicaps to their involvement in politics, their participation in SHGs has altered them, and these women can be prospective leaders in the local political field.

Naila kabeer (2005) in a study apparently concludes that while access to financial services can and does make important contributions to the economic productivity and social well being of poor women and their households, it does not “automatically” empower women – any more than do education, political quotas, access to waged work or any of the other interventions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is undertaken to define the women empowerment through SHGs and the study covers the rural areas of Lucknow region. The study is descriptive in nature. The present study is based on secondary data and the major sources of data include official websites, books, magazines, research articles and Journals. Moreover, the academic wisdom and knowledge of both the author and co-author of this paper is being used to prepare this paper. The data used in this paper covered the time period of 2001 to 2011.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

According to the present study this paper highlights the social status and economic status of women to identify the reason of

women empowerment and to know the condition of women in rural areas in comparison to urban areas.

Social status of women: There are some parameters discussed under to find out the need of women empowerment in rural areas.

- **Sex Ratio:** According to the details of official Census 2011, Lucknow, a district of Uttar Pradesh has been released by Directorate of Census Operations in Uttar Pradesh. In 2011, Lucknow population was of 4,588,455 of which male and female were 2,407,897 and 2,180,558 respectively. There was change of 25.79 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001.

In the census detail 2001, Lucknow District recorded increase of 32.03 percent to its population compared to 1991. With regards to Sex Ratio in Lucknow, it stood at 906 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 888. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate.

- **Educational Status:** According to the study in rural areas of Lucknow, there is a big gender gap in education between male and female. Table no 2 highlights the gender gap in education in Lucknow in terms of various indicators like literacy rate, and enrolment Rates in primary education.

Table number 1- Educational status of women

Indicators of Gender gap in education		
Indicators	Value	Remarks
Literacy rate Total Male Female	69.63% 78.05% 60.20%	➤ Gap between male & female literacy: 18.05%. ➤ Gap between rural & urban female literacy: 20.30%
Gross enrollment rate (primary) Total Male Female	91.2% 93.0% 89.30%	Transition from primary to upper primary: 62.12%
Net enrollment rate Male Female	82.9% 81.9%	

The above given table shows that the total literacy rates in Lucknow according to 2011 census 69.63 %. The total male literacy rate is 78.05 %, and female literacy rate is 60.20 %. There is a gap of 18.05% in male and

female literates. The Gap between rural and urban female literacy: 20.30%. The total enrollment for Primary education is 91.02 %.

- **Health status:** A survey conducted in five panchayats of Chinhat block of Lucknow has found that unhygienic practices among menstruating women is the main reason behind reproductive tract infection which, apart from other health complications, may lead to infertility. Conducted among 1,140 stakeholders, including girls, women, male, frontline workers, teachers and doctors, the statistics show that 88% of the respondents knew unhygienic practices lead to health hazards.

"Adolescent girls of today will be mothers tomorrow and health of a mother directly affects the baby. Thus, improvement in hygiene is essential for safer future," Dr. Neelam Singh, women and child health expert said that under whose supervision the study was conducted by Vatsalya and Wateraid. Out of these, only 26% exactly knew that such practices are responsible for RTI and 4% knew it is a big reason for infertility. The study also revealed that only 6.9% of menstruating women use sanitary napkins due to poverty and lack of awareness. Many girls also said they don't prefer to go school during menstruation due to lack of proper sanitary facilities.

The study also highlighted that only 26.4% of female respondents have toilets at home. The Union health ministry had sanctioned Rs 150 crore schemes, Promotion of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls, to increase the availability and use of

napkins among adolescent girls in rural areas. It was to be implemented in 13 districts of UP but has not started as yet. However, things can be changed by spreading awareness through frontline

- **Family planning:** Percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years by unmet need for family planning Services according to selected background characteristics, Uttar Pradesh, 2007-8. Unmet need for spacing includes the proportion of currently married women who are neither in menopause or had hysterectomy nor are currently pregnant and who want more children after two years or later and are currently not using any family planning method. The women who are not sure about whether and when to have next child are also included in unmet need for spacing. Unmet need for limiting includes the proportion of currently married women who are neither in Menopause or had hysterectomy nor are currently pregnant and do not want any more Children but are currently not using any family planning method. Total unmet need refers to Unmet for limiting and spacing. Literates but did not attend school, are also included. Represents figures for currently married women aged 15-44 years.

Economic Status: Economic empowerment holds the key to women's empowerment as it provides them with the means and opportunity to exercise their choices independently. Economic empowerment

means employment opportunity, earning levels, property rights and asset ownership. The situation related to these issues is discussed below.

- **Women and Work:** Employment opportunities seem to be much lower for women in rural areas of Lucknow, Which restricts their economic empowerment. As per 2011 Census, work participation rate (WPR) was very low for females at 16.5 percent as compared to 46.8 percent for males. Only 6.8 percent of rural women and 19.0 percent of urban women in Lucknow were found to be economically active.
- **Ownership of Property:** Access to productive resources is critical to enhancing women’s economic choice. Ownership of properties in the name of women is a strong evidence of women's economic strength and offers a platform for her to exercise her agency. An independent ownership is important in case of widowhood or divorce or separation.

A study on women's empowerment commissioned by the Planning

Table no 2: Numbers of Self help groups

Villages having SHGs	Numbers	%Percentage
Yes	17	56.67%
No	13	43.34%

According to the above given table it shows that only 17 villages having SHGs groups and 13 villages don't have SHGs groups, So according to the study large numbers of SHGs agencies are required for development of women in lucknow rural areas. Some NGOs like SEWA are working

Department, U.P. Government highlights that only 2.6% women, both rural and urban respondents, own property in their own name. The 21.1% and the 29.8% "No response" among the rural and urban respondents points to the ambiguity which may arise from women's location in the family where property is held and seen as a common resource for the family wellbeing.

The same study also reports that the percentage of women holding bank accounts in single Name is 7.1, while that of women holding accounts in joint name is 5.9. 58.1%, women have no account singly or jointly. 28.9% respondents did not give a response. This indicates women's low participation in decision making regarding utilization of the money she helps to generate and maintain by her household labour in the family.

Self help groups: The study reports that the quantity of self help group in villages of Lucknow is very low. This is given under.

on women empowerment especially on chicken industry and other handicrafts industry in rural areas.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESSTION

The study revealed that the social status & economic status of women is very low in

rural areas in terms of population, education status, low literacy rate, poor health condition, and unawareness of family planning, low work participation rate, no right on property ownership, very less account holder in bank. The main reasons behind these problems are poverty and poor education rate and lack of awareness in rural areas. The study also found that the quantity Self help groups (SHGs) is very less in rural areas. The study concluded that there are several critical issues which require attention of women lives in rural areas & some of them are described in this paper. It is suggested that education facilities and family protection must be provided in proper way. Microfinance institutions should strengthen and expand their support to resource poor women. Government must take initiatives for women empowerment to improve their social and economic conditions in rural areas by providing the micro financing scheme through SHGs because SHGs are a part of microfinance for providing the financial assistance for the poor women or men. That scheme of micro financing has transferred the real economic power in hands of women and has considerably reduces their dependence on men.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Gladis Mary John. (2008). Women Empowerment Through Self Help Groups” Southern Economist March 1 2008.
- [2.] Karl, M. (1995). Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making. Women and world Development Series. United Nations. New York, NY.
- [3.] Lucknow district report 2008 (through baseline survey)
- [4.] M. Anjugam and C. Ramasamy. (2007). Determinants of Women’s participation in Self - Help Group led micro finance programme in TamilNadu. Agricultural Economics Research Review, 2007, vol. 20, issue 2
- [5.] Naila kabeer. (2005). Is Micro Finance a “ Magic Bullet” For Women’s Empowerment? Analysis of Findings from South Asia “Economic and Political Weekly October 29, 2005.
- [6.] Progress of SHG- Bank linkage in India 2003- 2004, NABARAD
- [7.] Report of Census 2001
- [8.] Report of Census 2011
- [9.] Snow, John. (1990). Empowerment of Women Program. John Snow, Inc., Arlington, VA.
- [10.] Venkateshwaran, Sandhya. (1995). Environment development and the gender Gap. Sage Publications India, New Delhi.