

# Women Self-Help Groups And Women Empowerment-A Case Study Of Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal

*\*Dr. Murlidhar A. Lokhande*

## INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment has become a catchword today and has got a significant place in socio-economic development programmes of the government. And why not? Women constitute half of the world population and contribute substantially to the all round development of the world. However, majority of them are the poor, oppressed, underprivileged and discriminated. The World Bank in its report (2006) aptly observes that women are often denied property and inheritance rights. An inequality trap may prevent generations of women from getting educated; restrict their participation in labour market. Prof. Amartya Sen (1995) pointed out that gender tolerance of gender inequality is closely related to notions of legitimacy and correctness. In family behavior, inequalities between men and women are accepted as natural or appropriate. Sometimes, the decisions relating to inequalities are taken and executed by the women themselves. In the new world order, no country can march ahead without the inclusion of women in the development process. Naturally, it becomes imperative to enable women, particularly poor rural women, for accepting the challenges and actively participate in the development process.

Women empowerment is a continuous process of enabling them to fight the forces that oppress them, provide them equal access to the resources and opportunities and control over the resources. Women empowerment (Kabeer, 1999) refers to the process by which those women, who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices, to acquire such an ability. The World Bank Report (2001) defines women empowerment as the process of increasing the capacity of individual woman or groups of women to make choices and to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which build both individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizations and institutions which governs the use of these funds. Women Empowerment, in short, indicates a change from powerlessness to powerfulness, underprivileged to privileged and enabling women to have control over the resources i.e. social, economic, political, intellectual and cultural. A research study suggested eight criterions of women empowerment viz., occupational mobility, economic security, purchasing power, involvement in household decision making, freedom in the family etc.

The Indian government has made concerted efforts for the advancement of women in different spheres through five year plans and women welfare schemes. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001) aims at creating conducive environment for women development, equality in political, economic, social and cultural spheres, elimination of all types of discrimination against women. Women empowerment can be actuated through rural development programmes, economic interventions and confidence building and awareness creating campaigns. The term women empowerment refers to a range of socio-economic activities which focus on strengthening the economic position of poor women, creating confidence among them and extending full support for their all round development. In recent years, women self help groups have emerged as an effective means of entrepreneurship development among women. Entrepreneurship has a strong potential for socio-economic empowerment of women.

In the words of the former prime minister Shri Atal Behari Bajpai, "*Group Savings & Group action can remove the curse of money lenders. Since the whole system is organised transparently, the thrift and savings can become informal banks for the Poor and of the Poor.*"

## REVIEW OF EARLIER STUDIES

Micro finance programmes are known for their potential to generate income and employment and alleviate poverty.

---

*\*Professor*, Department Of Commerce, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.  
Email :murlidhar\_lokhande@yahoo.com

Since 1950s, the central and state governments have focused more on subsidy and grant based poverty eradication programmes. In line with these programmes, national level micro finance organization viz. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was set up in the year 1993 for providing micro finance services to women. The self-employed women's association (SEWA, 1971) had started SEWA bank particularly for assisting self-employed women for productive purposes. The working women's Forum (WWF) was started in Chennai in 1970 for assisting small women vendors and women living in slum areas. The WWF has been fighting against dowry, rape, divorce and casteism. A study conducted by MYRADA (2000) had observed that the financial position of old women groups had improved to better in comparison of new groups. The members were also benefitted with increased confidence level and awareness regarding health and child education. In order to assist poor women, The Activists for Social Alternatives had started a micro finance programme covering 2500 villages in Tamil Nadu. A study conducted by Moyale, Dollar and Biswas (2006) in two villages of Rajasthan observed that after joining SHGs, the women members had achieved social and economic empowerment in terms of collective efficiency, proactive attitudes, self esteem and self sufficiency. Another study conducted by EDA Rural System and APMAS (2006) found out that women members got politically empowered after joining the groups and in every five SHGs, there was a women member who was either a ward member or a *sarpanch*. Holvet (2005) observed that micro finance to poor women through women SHGs resulted into active participation of women in decision making. According to Hashemi (1996), women's access to credit helps significantly to make an economic contribution by women, it makes possible an increase in asset holding by women in their name, they can exercise their increased purchasing power and get benefitted with higher level of mobility, political participation and involvement in major decision making. In contrast to above observations, Mayox (2001) pointed out that micro finance has negative impact on poor women. Micro entrepreneurial activities increase the workload of women and loan repayment pressure. The rate of return on their investment is lower. When income of women is increased, it is used for household activities. There has been a wider gap between the demand and supply of credit to women, particularly rural women and naturally, they have to rely on money lenders for credit, which is easily available but at an exorbitant interest rate.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The principal objectives of the study were:-

1. To study the socio- economic impact of women SHGs on group members.
2. To understand the problems of women self help groups.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is confined to the women self-help groups promoted by the the Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) in Aurangabad district under Maharashtra Rural Credit Programme. The MAVIM was founded in 1975 with the aim of encouraging women to become financially independent and self reliant. The MAVIM has been promoting, nurturing and strengthening women groups. The corporation had set up 4546 women self help groups covering more than 65,500 women under the Maharashtra Rural Credit Programme as on 31st March, 2002. The MRCP is a poverty alleviation programme. On 31st March, 2007, 36,549 women had started their own business. It is MAVIM's experience that self-help groups are an effective medium for bringing about the empowerment of women. As on 31st March, 2007, the cumulative number of women self help groups promoted by the MAVIM in Aurangabad district was 757. In order to study the impact of establishing women self-help groups, the groups completing two years period were selected for the purpose of the study. Out of 757 women groups, 75 (10%) groups were selected by Simple Random Method. As far as the selection of group members is concerned, two members were deliberately selected from each group, and the number of the selected members was 150.

For the purpose of data collection, a well-structured questionnaire was used to obtain the responses. The researcher has undertaken every possible effort to fill up the gaps of information by conducting individual interviews.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In order to understand the socio-economic status of the members, the data regarding age, education, marital status, occupation, economic activities, annual income etc. were collected and analyzed.

## AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SHGs

Age wise distribution of the SHGs under study indicates that 56% of the groups were in the age group of 2-3 years whereas 24% were in the age group of 3-5 years. Only 5 women SHGs had completed more than for five years after their formation.

**Table 1 : Age Wise Distribution Of SHGs**

Age Wise Classification	No. Of SHGs	Percentage To Total 75
Less than 2 years	10	13.33
2-3 years	42	56.00
3-5 years	18	24.00
More than 5 years	05	6.67
Total	75	100.00
Source: - Field Survey		

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF WOMEN RESPONDENTS

The data analysis shows that majority of the respondents belonged to upper caste but poor families (i.e.33.33%) and Other backward classes (31.33%). The respondents from SC, ST, VJNT and other castes constituted 35.34% of the

**Table 2 : Caste, Marital Status, Age Group And Literacy Level Of The Respondents**

1) Caste/ Community	Number Of Respondents	Percentage To Total 150
Open category	50	33.33
Muslim	11	7.33
OBC	47	31.33
SC	15	10.00
ST	09	6.00
VJ/VJNT	11	7.34
Others	07	4.67
<b>2) Marital Status</b>		
Married	122	81.33
Unmarried	13	8.67
Widow	10	6.67
Divorced	05	3.33
<b>3) Age Group</b>		
18-35	25	16.67
36-45	60	40.00
46-60	47	31.33
61 and above	18	12.00
<b>4) Literacy Level</b>		
Illiterate	69	46.00
Up to 4th std.	47	31.33
5th-10th std.	24	16.00
11th- 12th std.	07	4.67
Graduation	03	2.00
Source:- Field survey		

aggregate 150 respondents. It is noteworthy that women from all strata of the society, irrespective of caste, class or religion are coming together and forming self help groups. In real sense, women groups have initiated the process of social engineering. Out of 150 women respondents, more than 81% were married while 8.67% were unmarried. The divorced and widow women accounted for 3.33% and 6.67% of the total respondents. Majority of the group members expressed that self-help groups had been very much supportive to them. These groups not only encouraged them to undertake economic activities but also helped them to fight against atrocities. Of 150 women respondents, 46.67% the respondents were in the age group of 18-45 years and 31.33% respondents were in the age group of 46-60 years and the respondents in the age group of 61 years and above constituted 12% of the respondents.

With regards to the literacy level of the women members, more than 46% were illiterates. This indicates that education of girls is still not given a priority in rural areas. Majority of the rural parents permit girls' education up to 4<sup>th</sup> standard. The data analysis indicated that out of the 150 respondents, 31.33% had completed education upto 4<sup>th</sup> standard, 20.67% had completed their education upto 12<sup>th</sup> standard and only 2% of the respondents had completed their graduation.

Occupation wise data analysis indicated that majority of the women respondents (i.e.54%) were agriculture laborers while 22% were working in their family owned small fields hardly for a period of 4-5 months. Around 24% of the respondents were engaged in small economic activities like tailoring, goat rearing, pottery and dairy. It was also noticed that most of the respondents were used to work under rural employment schemes whenever there was no job opportunity in agriculture due to drought.

**Table 3: Occupation And Income Wise Distribution Of The Respondents**

A) Occupation	No. Of The Respondents	Percentage To Total 150
Agriculture	33	22.00
Agriculture labor	81	54.00
Tailoring	09	6.00
Goat rearing	03	2.00
Dairy	08	5.33
Small kirana shop	13	8.67
Pottery	03	2.00
<b>B) Income (Daily)</b>		
Up to Rs.30	69	46.00
Rs.31-50	34	22.67
Rs.51-65	17	11.33
Rs.66-75	16	10.67
Rs.76 and above	14	9.33
Source:- Field survey		

The responses regarding daily average income indicated that majority of the respondents (46%) had daily earning up to Rs.30 only, while 22.67% had daily income between Rs.31-50. A good number of respondent i.e.33 had daily income in the range of Rs.51-75. Only 9.33% of the women respondents had daily earning of Rs.66 and above. Considering the ever-increasing price level of necessities, the real income of the respondents is too meagre.

If we use the criterion of poverty line determined by the World Bank i.e. earning 2 dollars a day, all the respondents fall under poverty line. The socio-economic profile of women respondents under study indicated that they belonged to poor families having uncertain, irregular and meagre income. Majority of them were illiterate. Therefore, self-help groups can be an effective way of resource mobilization (i.e. micro credit) and for addressing their problems.

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SHGs**

Women self-help groups have been proving their significance in entrepreneurship development, marketing and active participation in social welfare campaigns, fighting against alcoholism, child marriages, dowry and superstitions. Saving is the principal activity of self-help groups. It was observed that after joining SHGs, the women members had

become habitual of saving and depositing a certain amount regularly with their respective groups. The saving amount ranged between Rs.25-151 per month.

**Table 4 : Monthly Savings, Loan Purpose And Credit Facility Availed By Respondents**

1) Monthly Saving (Rs.)	Number Of The Respondents	Percentage To Total 150
Up to 25	41	27.33
26-50	73	48.67
51-100	29	19.34
101-150	05	3.33
151 and above	02	1.33
<b>2) Loan Purpose</b>		
Business activity	37	24.67
Household needs	45	30.00
Festivals	13	8.66
Medical care	12	8.00
House construction and Repair	21	14.00
Education	16	10.67
Repayment of loan	03	2.00
Other purposes	03	2.00
<b>3) Loan Amount (Rs.)</b>		
Up to Rs.500	07	4.67
501-1,000	39	26.00
1,001-2,500	51	34.00
2,501-5,000	33	22.00
5,001-10,000	15	10.00
10,001 and above	05	3.33
<b>4) Loan Repayment</b>		
Regular	65	86.67
Irregular	10	13.33
Source:- Field survey.		

More than 48% respondents had savings in the range of Rs. 26-50 followed by 27.33% respondents having saving amount up to Rs. 25. Only 4.66% of the respondents had monthly saving between Rs. 101-151 and above. In case of a few women groups, a fine of Rs.5 p.m. was charged for irregular savers.

Credit activity is another significant activity of self-help groups. It was noticed that all the respondents had availed small loans ranging between Rs. 500-1,000 and above from their respective groups. Of the 150 women respondents, 34% had got loan amount between Rs. 1,001-2,500 whereas 26% had availed loan amount ranging from Rs. 501-1,000. Around 48 respondents had received loan amount between Rs. 2,501-10,000. Only 3.33% of the respondents had borrowed Rs. 10001 and above from their respective SHGs. It was observed that the older groups were found capable in lending more loan amount in comparison of the new groups. As far as repayment of loan was concerned, 86.67% women members were regular at repayment of loan whereas 13.33% respondents were irregular. The major reasons of irregular repayment were:- use of loan amount for unproductive purpose, uncertain and inadequate income of the respondents. In such cases, peer pressure did not work.

With regards to the loan purposes, a number of variations were noticed. The highest number of the respondents (30%) had used loan amount for meeting household needs, such as, purchasing food grains, clothes etc. whereas, 24.67% respondents had invested borrowed amount in business activities. Education and house construction/ repairing was the priority of 10.67% and 14% respondents respectively. In case of 8.66% of the respondents, festival expenditure was the main purpose of borrowing loans from their respective groups, whereas 8% had used loan amount for medical care.



Repayment of loan was the main purpose in case of 2% women respondents.

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF WSHGs**

In real sense, the significance of the programme depends on how it impacts the target groups. The responses given in Table-3 indicated that 44.67% of 150 respondents could expand their business activities due to credit supply by their respective groups. In case of 27.33% women respondents, they had got gainful employment. It was also noticed that 52.67% of the aggregate respondents were satisfied with their increased income level due to group economic activities. More than 64% respondents had been saving regularly and 30% became well acquainted with financial matters such as, record keeping, interest computation, depositing group savings with the bank etc. It was noteworthy that more than 86% respondents were repaying their loans regularly. In nutshell, the group members had learnt the importance of regular saving and repayment of loan in time.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT**

In fact, it is very difficult to quantify social impact of micro finance on the members. More than 60% of the respondents were experiencing the feeling of social security as their respective groups were raising voice against atrocities on women. The data analysis indicated that 37.33% of the respondents had fought successfully against alcoholism and enforced the shopkeepers to close down their wine shops. Around one third of the respondents expressed that they had become more aware about social changes and were involved in decision making at family and village level. Women self help groups were found engaged in social activities such as, village cleanliness, health awareness programmes, anti- superstitions campaigns etc.

In order to ensure equal access and increased participation of women in politics, *panchayati raj* institutions are expected to play an active role. As a result of political awareness created by the groups, more than 16.67% of the respondents had participated in Panchayat and primary credit co-operative societies elections. Out of 150 respondents, 5 members were PCCS members, 10 Panchayat members and 2 sarpanchs.

With regards to the personality development of the members, the impact observed was very positive. More than 60% indicated that they had enough confidence to deal with bank officers and others and discuss different issues in group meetings. Many of them had been chair-persons by rotation and conducted the meetings successfully. 35% of the respondents had opined that after joining the group, they had acquired good communication skills. They had become more informed and knowledgeable because of group discussions and interacting with NGO and bank officers. More than 89% of the respondents had been attending the meetings regularly.

It was observed that women participation in government sponsored programmes, which was almost negligible earlier, had increased because of group activities in Aurangabad district. The data given in table-3 disclosed that the participation of women members in Nirmal Gram was-44.66%, Mid Day Meal-46.67%, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-30%, Pulse Polio Campaign-42%, Jalswaraj-47.33% and Adult Education programme was 29.33%.

## **PROBLEMS FACED BY GROUP MEMBERS**

Women are amongst the poorest, the most vulnerable and underprivileged. As group members, they have to face a number of problems. The responses regarding the problems faced by the members have been given in Table-4.

According to 74.67% respondents, marketing of the products was the major problem whereas, lower and irregular income was the burning problem in case of 70% respondents. Around 60% respondents expressed that there was no facility of training and guidance for modern business activities. It was also found that more than 47% respondents had to borrow from local money lenders, relatives and neighbors because they were getting inadequate loans from groups. Another problem faced by 44% respondents was lack of numerical ability, which resulted in their exploitation. Around 40% respondents opined that unfair competition among groups was the main hindrance in the way. Political affiliation and interference had been posing a serious problem before self help groups according to 35% women respondents. Political affiliation had become one of the reasons of group conflicts.

In case of 32.67% respondents, differences between group members and the leaders had led to non- functioning of group activities. The respondents indicated that indifferent attitude of banks (27.33% respondents), lack of proper planning and management (36% respondents), indifferent attitude of self help groups promotion institutions (32% respondents) and migration for employment (28.67% respondents) were responsible for the slow progress of women

self help groups in Aurangabad district.

**Table 5 : Socio- Economic Impact Of Women SHGs**

Impact Of SHGs	No.of The Respondents	Percentage To Total 150 Respondents
<b>A) Economic</b>		
Expansion Of Business Activities	67	44.67
Gainful Employment	41	27.33
Increased Income	79	52.67
Regularity In Savings	97	64.67
Awareness Regarding Financial Matters	45	30.00
<b>B) Social</b>		
Increased Social Relations	46	30.67
Feeling Of Social Security	87	58.00
Social Awareness	49	32.67
Active Participation In Social Activities	56	37.33
<b>C) Political</b>		
Increased Political Awareness	42	28.00
Active Participation In Local Politics	25	16.67
<b>D) Personality Development</b>		
Increased Self-confidence	91	60.67
Communication Skills	53	35.33
Leadership Qualities	16	10.67
Became Knowledgeable And Informative	57	38.00
Regular Attendance At Meetings	134	89.33
<b>E) Participation In Government Programmes</b>		
Nirmal Gram	67	44.66
Mid Day Meal	70	46.67
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan	45	30.00
Jalswaraj	71	47.33
Pulse Polio	63	42.00
Adult Education	44	29.33
Source:- Field Survey		

## OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The data analysis disclosed that SHGs had empowered women economically, socially and politically. The poor women, who were averse and kept themselves at a long distance of socio-political issues, were found actively participating in social-political matters. This is a positive change, which is needed to make women socially and politically empowered.

The disclosure of the study was that 46% women respondents were illiterates. It was also found that more than 76% of the aggregate respondents were related to agriculture- as working in own farm or as a laborer. Remaining 24% were engaged in traditional small business activities such as, tailoring, goat rearing etc (table-2). With regards to daily income, more than 68% of the respondents had income up to Rs.50 per day. In case of 9.33% women respondents, daily income was more than Rs.76 (table-3). It can be seen that the real income of the respondents under the study had been lower. If the poverty line i.e. daily income of \$ 2 is applied to these group members, they fall below the poverty line.

With regards to savings of the respondents after joining the SHGs, remarkable growth was observed in savings. It is noticeable that the highest number of the respondents i.e. 48% had monthly saving between Rs. 26-50 and the lowest

number of respondents i.e. 1.33% s had the highest monthly saving above Rs.151. It was also noticed that more than 64.66% respondents had been saving and regularly depositing money with their respective groups (Table-4). However, around 35% respondents had irregular saving due to irregular and uncertain sources. In this regard, it is suggested that the group members should be encouraged to start small and economically viable activities. It was observed that 24.67% respondents had used borrowed funds preferably for business activities and 30% had preferred to use borrowed funds for household needs. Other purposes of loan were- medical care, education and other needs. The study disclosed that the highest number of the respondents (34%) had availed of a loan between Rs. 1001-2500. The lowest number of respondents (3.33%) had availed loan of Rs.10, 001 and above from their respective SHGs (Table-4). As far as loan repayment was concerned, more than 86% respondents were found repaying their loans on time.

In order to encourage more and more women members to undertake business activities, they should be trained, guided and assisted with regular and adequate credit. The emphasis should be on proper utilization of borrowed funds for productive income and asset generating activities.

The responses regarding economic, social, political and personality development indicated positive changes, albeit slow, among the group members.

It was noticed that 44.67% of the respondents had expanded their business activities whereas 27.33% women respondents had got gainful employment after joining the SHGs (Table-5). It was also observed that 52.67% of the respondents had more earning than earlier and 30% had become well acquainted with financial matters such as, record keeping, interest computation, depositing group savings with the bank etc. However, majority of the women members had not shown interest in such matters. This led to dominance of some group members on group activities. To avoid this and enhance active participation of the members, there is need of numerical skill development programme.

**Table 6 : Responses Regarding Problems Faced By Group Members**

Problems	No. Of Respondents	Percentage To Total 150
Lack Of Numerical Skills	67	44.67
Lower Income	105	70.00
Indifferent Attitude Of SHPIs	48	32.00
Group Conflict	37	24.67
Migration For Employment	43	28.67
Lack Of Proper Planning And Management	54	36.00
High Incidence Of Defunct Groups	29	19.33
Political Interference	53	35.33
Unhealthy Competition Among The Groups	61	40.67
Indifferent Attitude Of Banks	41	27.33
Lack Of Smooth Relations Between Members And Group Leaders.	49	32.67
Multi Borrowing Due To Inadequacy Of Funds.	71	47.33
Lack Of Marketing Of Products	112	74.67
Lack Of Proper Entrepreneurial Training	84	56.00
Source:- Field Survey		

One of the significant observations of the study is that women self-help groups, as social groups, had created social security (60% of the respondents), whereas 37.33% of the respondents had fought successfully against alcoholism and enforced the shopkeepers to close down their wine shops. Of course, there were some instances of obstacles by interested persons viz. wine shop keepers and their customers. Around one third of the respondents expressed that they had active participation in group decisions. In the process of social reforms, the NGOs, VO's and government agencies should support women self help groups (Table-5).

As a result of political awareness created by the groups, more than 16.67% of the respondents had participated in Panchayat and primary credit co-operative societies elections and 5 members were working as PCCS members, 10 Panchayat members and 2 sarpanchs (Table-5). However, it was noticed that majority of them were being represented



either by their sons or husbands. In such a situation, how women can be empowered politically? In order to ensure equal access and increased participation of women in politics, panchayati raj institutions are expected to play an active role.

With regards to the personality development of the members, the impact observed was positive. More than 60% respondents had interaction with bank officers and others and had discussions on different issues in group meetings. Majority of the members (89%) of the respondents had been attending the meetings regularly. However, in spite of rotation system, a few members were leading the group activities and meetings.

It was observed that women participation in government sponsored programmes, which was almost negligible earlier, had increased because of group activities. The disclosure of the study is that participation of women members in Nirmal Gram was-44.66%, Mid Day Meal-46.67% , Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-30% , Pulse Polio Campaign-42%, Jalswaraj-47.33% and Adult Education programme was 29.33% (Table-5). There is need for encouraging active participation of more and more women in social welfare programmes.

With regards to the problems faced by WSHGs members, the majority of the respondents (i.e. 74.67%) expressed that marketing of the products, lower income (70% respondents), lack proper training and guidance (56% respondents) were the major problems (table-6). Besides these problems, many of the members categorically criticized the unwanted interference of political parties which is a matter of serious concern today. The SHPIs had shown less or no interest in group activities after getting promotional grant according to 32% respondents. Group conflicts (due to delay in loan disbursement, dominance by group leader etc.) were responsible for defunctness of the groups.

In order to increase the success rate of women self help groups, the NGOs, VOs and the banks are supposed to nourish the groups and encourage women members to undertake economic activities. There should not be space for political interference.

Majority of the respondents expressed the need of training and skill developing programmes for women, marketing assistance and adequate and regular credit supply to SHGs. In this regard, it may be suggested that the MITCON, the MCED and other training institutions should organize vocational training programmes for women. Co-operative marketing institutions, MSSIDC, KVIB should provide marketing services for women SHGs. All the branches of commercial banks, co-operative banks, and regional rural banks should extend their financial and promotional support to the programme. The study disclosed that micro financing through SHGs has brought a ray of hope for the development of underprivileged people.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the vast number of poor, discriminated and underprivileged women and the need of financial services, there is tremendous scope for micro financing through WSHGs in India. The SHPIs, NBFCs, Banks and voluntary organizations are supposed to play a crucial role in the micro-finance market. In order to achieve the objective of poverty eradication, every poor person should have easy access to credit for starting small economic activities based on local resources. WSHGs, as it is evident, have been instrumental in promoting women entrepreneurship. So, conducive environment is needed to be created in the country to give boost to women self-help groups. Majority of the women do not have their own property and even earning women have no right to spend their own earning. Formal financial system still is averse to provide financial services to women. In order to empower women economically, there is need of providing easy access to credit on one hand and promotion of women entrepreneurship on the other side. As it is evident from Grameen Bank project of Bangladesh, Women and poor, if provided with small amounts of loan (micro credit) for small economic activities (micro enterprises), can be effective for eradication of unemployment and poverty. Women self help groups can play a very positive role in socio-economic empowerment of poor women. The micro credit summit (1997) held at Washington had stressed on provision of credit to 100 million of the world's poorest families to overcome the problems of underemployment and poverty. MF can play a crucial role in achieving Millennium Development Goals and reducing the world's poverty by 50% by the end of 2015. India is the home to 22% of the world's poor (Tenth five year plan-2002-07). Poverty reduction is possible by providing easy access to credit for small entrepreneurial activities. Empowerment of women can be promoted through socio-economic activities at grass root level. Confidence built up by SHGs helps women members to fight against injustice and secure their rights.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Bhagyalaxmi, J, 2004, Women Empowerment: Miles to go, Yojana.
  - 2) Das Prodeepta, Self service-development magazine.htm
  - 3) Hasemi, SM, 1996, Rural Credit Programmes and Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh, World Bank.
  - 4) Hashemi S M, Riley, 1996, Rural Credit Programme and Women Empowerment in Bangladesh.
  - 5) Holvet, N, 2005, The impact of Micro finance on Decision making Agency: Evidence from South India, Development And Change.
  - 6) Kabeer, Naila, 1999, Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurements of Women Empowerment, Development and change.
  - 7) Madheswaran, 2001, Empowering Rural Women through SHGs: Lessons from MRCP, Indian Journal of Economics.
  - 8) Mayox, L, 2001, Taking the Down side: Social Capital, Women's Empowerment and Micro finance in Cameroon, Development And Change.
  - 9) National Policy For The Empowerment of Women, 2001.
  - 10) Rajput, T, 2005, Women Empowerment through SHGs, Lokrajya.
  - 11) Saving Grace, Coverage for Micro Finance News, A NABARD publication.
  - 12) Sen Amartya, (1995) Excerpts from address, Fourth World Conference on Women.
  - 13) The United Nations Summit Report, 2000.
  - 14) The World Bank Report, 2001, 2006.
  - 15) Website-The Activists for Social Alternatives.
- 

(Contd. From Page 37)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- <sup>1</sup>Turban, E., King, D., Lee, J. and Viehland, D. (2006) "Electronic Commerce A Managerial Perspective", International Edition. Prentice Hall.
  - <sup>2</sup>Sullivan, L. 2004, 'E-commerce: Promise Fulfilled', Information week', Nov 8; vol. 1013, pp.70.
  - <sup>3</sup>Ogden, J.R. 2005, "Retail: Integrated Retail Management", Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
  - <sup>4</sup>Lovelock CH, "Services Marketing", 31st edition, 1966, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
  - <sup>5</sup>Zeithaml, VA and Bitner MJ, "Services Marketing", Chapter 1, International Edition: Tata McGraw Hill, 1996.
  - <sup>6</sup>Fernandes Michael, Chandrika Gadi, Amit Khanna, Palash Mitra, and Subbu Narayanswamy, "India's retailing comes of age", The McKinsey Quarterly, 2000, Number 4.
  - <sup>7</sup>Saran R "Growth Engine", India Today, 19 February 2001, pp 44-48.
- BOOKS**
- [1] Lovelock CH, "Services Marketing", 31st edition, 1966, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
  - [2] Turban, E., King, D., Lee, J. and Viehland, D. (2006) "Electronic Commerce A Managerial Perspective", International Edition, Prentice Hall.
  - [3] Ogden, J.R. (2005), "Retail: Integrated Retail Management", Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
  - [4] Zeithaml, VA (1996), and Bitner MJ, "Services Marketing", Chapter 1, International Edition: Tata McGraw Hill.
- Journals**
- [5] Fernandes Michael, Chandrika Gadi, Amit Khanna, Palash Mitra, and Subbu Narayanswamy, 2000, "India's retailing comes of age", The McKinsey Quarterly, Number 4.
  - [6] Saran R "Growth Engine", India Today, 19 February 2001, pp 44-48.
  - [7] Sullivan, L., 2004, 'E-commerce: Promise Fulfilled', Information week', Nov 8; Vol. 1013, pp.70.
- Websites**
- [8] <http://www.free-press-release.com/>
  - [9] <http://www.iamai.in/>
  - [10] <http://www.udel.edu/alex/online/>
  - [11] <http://www.indianmba.com/>
  - [12] <http://goliath.ecnext.com/>
  - [13] <http://www.cids.ie/>
  - [14] <http://www.ebs.in/>
  - [15] <http://www.sify.com/>
  - [16] <http://www.economywatch.com/>
  - [17] <http://www.toostep.com/>
  - [18] <http://www.india-now.org/>
  - [19] <http://en.allexperts.com/>
  - [20] [www.google.co.in](http://www.google.co.in)