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## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN THROUGH SELF-HELP GROUPS (SHG'S)**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

**Purpose:** This study is to evaluate how well skill development programs for members of rural women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) improve their ability to generate income and their financial literacy. Enhancing their business abilities and giving them the confidence to make wise financial decisions are the main goals.

**Approach:** The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methodologies. Members of SHGs were given surveys in order to collect data on their demographics, evaluate their skill levels, and assess the effectiveness of the activities. To learn more about their perspectives, difficulties, and experiences, in-depth interviews were carried out.

**Implication:** The study's conclusions have important implications for NGOs, development agencies, and legislators that support rural women's empowerment. The findings may be used to guide the creation and execution of focused skill-development initiatives that respond to the unique requirements of SHG members and support their financial independence.

**Key outcomes:** The study found that rural women SHG members' entrepreneurial abilities and financial literacy significantly improved as a result of participating in skill development programs. Participants reported better financial management techniques, greater decision-making abilities, and higher confidence in their capacity to launch and run small enterprises. Many SHG members' livelihoods were enhanced and revenue production increased as a result of these enhancements.

**Conclusion:** The study comes to the conclusion that in order to enable members of rural women SHGs to effectively generate revenue, skill development programs are crucial. These initiatives improve their quality of life, help them become economically independent, and advance the general development of rural areas by providing them with the information and skills they need.

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**Key words:** Self-Help Groups, rural women, economic empowerment, skill development, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, income generation.

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### **INTRODUCTION :**

A significant topic that has received more attention recently is the economic empowerment of women living in rural areas. It is extremely difficult for rural women, who are frequently excluded and impoverished, to become financially independent and enhance their quality of life. Voluntary associations of women called Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have arisen as a potentially effective way to address these issues and advance the economic empowerment of women in rural regions. SHGs give rural women an opportunity to connect, exchange stories, and encourage one another's business ventures. SHGs have access to training programs, savings accounts, and microcredit through collective action, which empowers women to launch small enterprises, enhance their standard of living, and take charge of their finances. SHGs also help women by creating a supportive communal atmosphere that boosts their self-esteem, ability to make decisions, and social standing. The purpose of this study is to look at how SHGs affect rural Indian women's economic empowerment. It investigates the ways in which Self-Help Groups (SHGs) support women's financial independence, agency, and general well-being. The study will look at the possibilities and problems experienced by SHG members as well as the variables that affect how successfully SHGs support women's economic empowerment. Understanding how SHGs affect rural women's economic empowerment will help policymakers and program developers create policies and initiatives that effectively promote SHG expansion and sustainability. In order to advance gender equality and the fight against poverty in rural regions, the findings may also be used to guide the development of programs that specifically target the needs and difficulties faced by rural women.

(NV Suresh, VAM Remy, 2024), "An Empirical Study on Empowering women through Self Help Groups". Analyses that Officially, women in rural areas have begun to play a significant role in mobilizing savings and strengthening the nation's capital resources through SHGs. Furthermore, women in society will make sure that social networks are created among the populace and that a strong nation is built on social, political, economic, and technical fronts.

(Seema Ghosh, Mousumi Singh Mahapatra, Deepak Tandon, 2024), “Achieving Sustainable development goal of women empowerment: A study among Self-help groups in India”. The study discovered and proposed that SHG interventions promote the economic and socio-cultural empowerment of rural women. The characteristics identified and analyzed in the study can assist stakeholders make policy decisions to enhance all of the aspects that contribute to the success and expansion of SHGs in general and micro-enterprises. (D Rafi, S Sangappa, 2024), “Determinants that contribute women to join in SHGs in rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh”. This study revealed that the most important variables motivating women to join SHGs were company development, increased family income, interpersonal dynamics, recognition, funding from the government and motivation. This study gives important insights into the influence of microfinance programmes on women’s empowerment. (O Abdul Azeez, AO Ihechere 2024), “SMEs as catalysts for economies development: Navigating challenges and seizing opportunities in emerging markets. They summarize, while SMEs in emerging nations confront significant success the prospects for development and influence are vast. SMEs may contribute significantly to economic growth by expanding access to finance, investing in infrastructure, and adopting digital tools. These businesses reach their full potential and promote long-term economic growth.

(E Besnier, T Hlabana, V Kotzias, K Beck, 2024), “Exploring economic empowerment and gender issues in Lesotho’s child grants programme” a qualitative study”. This study attempts to documents how programs stakeholders comprehended and implemented the notion of economic empowerment (particularly for women’s) in Lesotho’s CGP. (ST Khan, MA Bhat, MUD Sangmi, 2023), “Impact of microfinance on economic, social, political, psychological empowerment. Evidence from women’s self-help groups in Kashmir valley, India.” They analyse that finding demonstrated a favourable but modest impact of microfinance on the economic, political, psychological component, with a lesser overall impact on social empowerment. (S Samineni, K Ramesh, 2023), “Measuring the impact of microfinance on economic enhancement of women: Analysis with special reference to India”. They summarise that, it is anticipated that microfinance in its true spirit might be a valuable instrument for generating vigorous growth by reducing SHG non-performing assets (NPAs) and challenging resources into micro-level planning and self-sustainability training. (S Kalogiannidis, CI Papadopoulou, E Loizou, 2023), They analyse that this study highlights how the building of a new, beautiful nation must include improvements to and assurance of the safety of formers rural living settings in order to mitigate the effects of risk and vulnerability while strengthening the nations resilience. (H Qian, ZJACs 2023), There study plan to answer four questions. To begin, how do entrepreneurial ecosystems vary from regional innovation systems and clusters, two similar concepts that had been widely popular among economic development policymakers prior to the birth of entrepreneurial ecosystems? Second, what are the major results from the entrepreneurial ecosystems study that can inform economic development policy? Third, how should economic development policy be adopted to the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach? Finally, what implication does the current argument over the geographical bound of entrepreneurial ecosystems have for economic development policy. (A Chollisini, S Synahrani, A Shandy, 2022), They summarises, the creative economy in Indonesia will continue to grow and expand in order to ensure the welfare of the Indonesia people following the COVID-19 epidemic. (N Kumar, K Raghunathan, A Arriet a, A Jilani, 2021), They suggests that SHG participation has a considerable beneficial influence on aggregate measures of women’s empowerment, as well as a reduction in the gender empowerment gap. (S Dahiya, M Kumar, 2020), They summarises that inclusive financial system is essential for a country’s long-term development and progress, since it ensure that all sectors of society at a reasonable cost. It allows of savings, the availability of loans for varied reason, risk diversification through investigation in other method, risk coverage through various insurance products. (S Sharma, KS Thakur, DV Singh, 2020), They focus that SHG have a favourable influence on women’s empowerment, but adversely contribute to local economic growth. Although SHG have increased indigenous women’s awareness, many still lack knowledge about government schemes and financial matters. (NAA AI-Kubati, DP Selvaratnam, 2023), They focus on how the program contributes to sustainable development by questioning how the self-help group bank linkage scheme empowers rural women, the problems encountered during implementation, and the actions made in india to continue the scheme. (OR Katoch, S Ahemad), They summarises that JKSRLM is an excellent instrument for concentrated efforts to improve people’s economic situations, and the importance of education cannot be emphasized, as it increasingly impacts the job and income generating decisions that women and girls face. This research will determine the best ways to improve the financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills of rural women SHG members. The results will guide the development and execution of focused interventions that will enhance their general quality of life and aid in their economic empowerment.

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## REVIEW LITERATURE :

(NV Suresh, VAM Remy, 2024), “An Empirical Study on Empowering women through Self Help Groups”. To have a thorough grasp of Tiruchirappalli women’s empowerment, especially as it relates to Self-Help Groups. This calls for a qualitative, all-encompassing method of researching empowerment. Analyzing development is a crucial aspect of empowerment, since it involves evaluating the financial advancements achieved by women who have joined Self-Help Groups. Examining income levels, employment prospects, and financial independence.

(Seema Ghosh, Mousumi Singh Mahapatra, Deepak Tandon, 2024), “Achieving Sustainable development goal of women empowerment: A study among Self-help groups in India”. This study assesses the influence of a self-help groups (SHGs) intervention and SHG members entrepreneurial attributes on rural women’s economic and socio-economic empowerment.

(D Rafi, S Sangappa, 2024), “Determinants that contribute women to join in SHGs in rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh”. This study uses an ex-post facto research approach to investigate the effectiveness of the SHG model in increasing women’s financial independence and empowerment.

(O Abdul Azeez, AO Ihechere, 2024), “SMEs as catalysts for economic development: Navigating challenges and seizing opportunities in emerging markets”. Small and medium sized firms (SMEs) are crucial to the economic growth of developing economies, serving as catalyst for innovation, job creation, and poverty reduction. To fully realize their potential SMEs must overcome major challenges.

(E Besnier, T Hlabana, V Kotzias, K Beck, 2024), “Exploring economic empowerment and gender issues in Lesotho’s child Grants Programme: a qualitative study”. Economic empowerment was generally seen as improving access to economic resources and opportunities, with little emphasis on agency and social and economic inclusion.

(ST Khan, MA Bhat, MUD Sangmi, 2023), “Impact of microfinance on economic, social, political and psychological empowerment. Evidence from women’s self-help groups in Kashmir valley, India”. This study seeks to investigate the influence of microfinance on certain dimensions of women’s empowerment, including economic, social, political and psychological.

(Samineni, K Ramesh, 2023), “Measuring the impact of microfinance on economic enhancement of women: Analysis with special reference to India”. Their goal is to establish resilient livelihood through SHGs that can graduate into small business through effective microfinance outreach. It is the desired goal that can be achieved through effective SHG-bank partnership.

(S Kalogiannidis, CI Papadopoulou, E Loizou, 2023), “Risk, Vulnerability and resilience in agriculture and their impact on sustainable rural economy development: a case study of Greece”. They using Greece a case study, this study evaluated agricultural risk, Vulnerability and resilience, as well as its influence on long-term rural economic growth.

(H Qian, ZJACS 2023), “Entrepreneurial ecosystems and economic development policy”. The authors address the economic development policy implications of the increasing entrepreneurial ecosystem.

(A Chollisni, S Synahrani, A Shandy, 2022), “The concept of creative economy development-strengthening post covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia”. They analysis that define the notion of creative economy development in Indonesia following the Covid-19 epidemic, taking into account management techniques, policies, and the participants of other economic players. This survey is based on ethnography.

(N Kumar, K Raghunathan, A Arriet a, A Jilani, 2021), “The power of the collective empowers women’s: Evidence from self-help groups in India”. They analyse that SHGs were originally created as savings and credit clubs, but their purpose has how grown to include raising health and nutrition awareness, enhancing governance, and tackling social concern like as gender and caste discrimination.

(S Dahiya, M Kumar, 2020), “Linkage between financial inclusion and economic growth: An empirical study of the emerging Indian economy”. They analyse that inclusive fiancé promotes wealth and economic progress by eliminating or reducing poverty, unequal income distribution, and the dominance of indigenous bankers.

(S Sharma, KS Thakur, DV Singh, 2020), “Role of Self-help groups on women Economic Empowerment”. They analyse that is to provide funds to the disadvantaged in society. Assists teams in microfinance play a key role in improving the socio-economic situations of the disadvantaged.

(NAA AI-Kubati, DP Selvaratnam, 2023), “Empowering women’s through the self-help group bank linkage programme as a tool for sustainable development: lessons from India”. To achieve the goal of this research is to examine India’s experience with the self-help groups bank linkage programme as a fundamental development strategy targeted at empowering women. Self-help groups are viewed as socially engaged organizations that can aid a governments effort to achieve the sustainable development goals.

(OR Katoch, S Ahemad, 2022), “Role of self-help groups (SHGs) in enhancing incomes of rural women in J&K, India”. To understand the success in the performance of the Jammu & Kashmir rural livelihood Mission (JKSRLM) in terms of increasing women’s income.

## OBJECTIVE :

To enhance the skills of rural women SHG members for effective Income-generating activities.

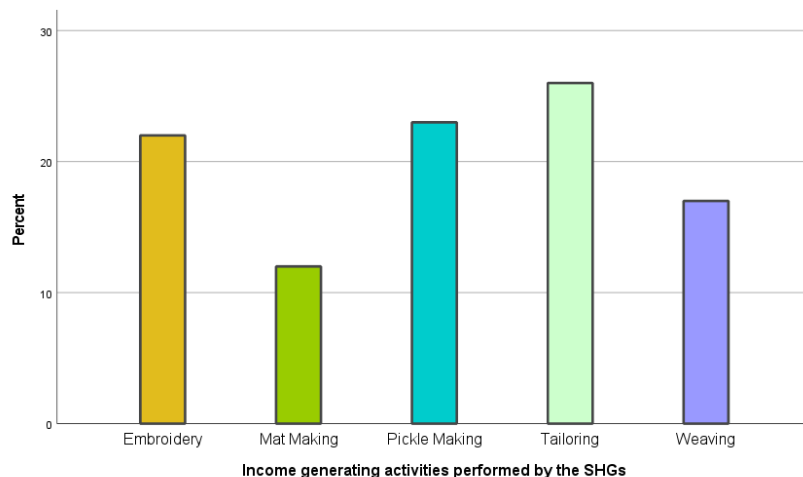
## HYPOTHESIS:

Ho: No significant difference in knowledge gained through SHGs training programs among SHG rural women.

## DATA ANALYSIS :

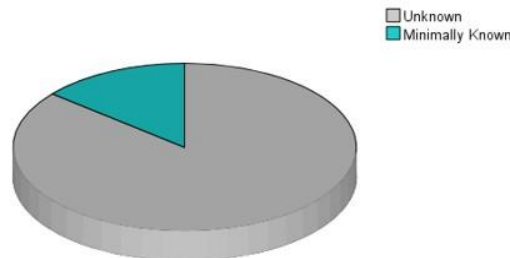
In this study, a sample of 100 rural women SHG members was taken and the data was collected through structured questionnaires and interviews from the rural women SHG members.

**Figure 1: Income generating activities performed by the SHGs**



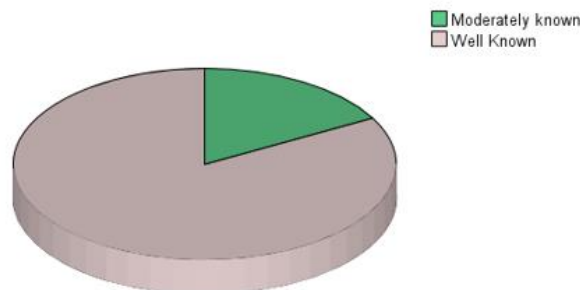
The bar diagram illustrates the percentage of self-help groups (SHGs) engaged in various income-generating activities. Among the five activities listed, Tailoring is the most popular, with around 28% of SHGs involved. Embroidery and pickle making are also significant, with approximately 22% and 23% participation, respectively. Mat making and Weaving have lower percentages around 12% and 17% respectively. Overall, the diagram suggests that a diverse range of income-generating activities are being undertaken by SHGs in the region.

**Figure 2: Knowledge gained before training programs conducted by SHGs related to income generating.**



The pie chart illustrates the level of knowledge possessed by SHG members before attending training programs related to income generation. The majority of members had limited or no knowledge in this area, as indicated by the unknown category. Only a small percentage had some prior knowledge, represented by the minimally known category. This suggests that the training programs were essential for equipping SHG members with the necessary skills and information to pursue income generating activities effectively.

**Figure 2: Knowledge gained after training programs conducted by SHGs related to income generating.**



The pie chart illustrates the level of knowledge gained by SHG members after participating in training programs related to income generation. The majority of members have a moderately known understanding of the subject matter, indicating that the training programs were effectively in providing a solid foundation. However, a smaller percentage have achieved a well-known level of knowledge, suggesting that further training or experience may be necessary to deepen their understanding and expertise.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.718	5

**Table No 2: Item Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Number of hours of income generating training programmes	5.87	.338	100
Knowledge gained before training	1.89	.447	100
Knowledge gained after training	3.83	.378	100
Hours of training before SHG	1.00	.000	100
Hours of training after SHG	5.87	.338	100

**Table No 3: Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Number of hours of income generating training programmes	100	100.0%	0	0.0%	100	100.0%

Table 1: Reliability Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha is .718 suggests that the instrument used to measure the knowledge gained after training is reasonably reliable, indicating that the items are internally consistent. Table 2: Item Statistics, Mean and standard deviation values provides information about the distribution of responses for each variable. The mean of knowledge gained after training is 3.88, suggesting that participants generally scored above average. The standard deviation indicates the spread of scores around the mean. N is the number of participants (100) is consistent across all variables. Table 3: Case processing summary, this table shows the number and percentage of cases (participants) with complete and incomplete data for each variable. In this case, all 100 participants have complete data for all variables.

**Table No 4: Descriptives**

Number of hours of income generating training programmes			Statistic	Std. Error
	Mean		5.87	.034
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		5.80	
	Upper Bound		5.94	
5% Trimmed Mean			5.91	
Median			6.00	
Variance			.114	
Std. Deviation			.338	
Minimum			5	
Maximum			6	
Range			1	
Interquartile Range			0	
Skewness			-2.234	.241
Kurtosis			3.052	.478

The table provides descriptive statistics for the number of hours of income generating training programs. The mean number of hours is 5.87 with a standard deviation of 0.338. The data is skewed to the left and has a kurtosis of 3.052. The variance is 0.114.

**Table No 4: Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Knowledge gained before training		100	.447	.045
	Knowledge gained after training	3.83	100	.378	.038
Pair 2	Hours of training before SHG	1.00	100	.120	.010
	Hours of training after SHG	5.87	100	.338	.034

**Table No 5: Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Knowledge gained before training & Knowledge gained after training	100	.846	.000
Pair 2	Hours of training before SHG & Hours of training after SHG	100	.542	.001

**Table No 6: Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Knowledge gained before training and Knowledge gained after training	1.940	.239	.024	-1.987	-1.893	-81.279	99	.000

Pair 2	Hours of training before SHG - Hours of training after SHG related to income generating activities	4.870	.338	.034	-4.937	-4.803	-144.084	99	.000
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Pair 1: Compares the knowledge gained before and after training and pair 2: Compares the hours of training before and after related to income generating activities. The correlation coefficient between the paired variables, here pair 1: A strong positive correlation of 0.846 exists between knowledge gained before and after training, indicating strong relationship. Pair 2: A moderate positive correlation of 0.542 exists between hours of training before and after SHGs. The mean difference is 1.940, suggesting that knowledge gained after training is significantly higher than before. Pair 2: There is a significant difference in hours of training before and after SHG is -1.44.870, suggesting that hours of training after SHG are significantly higher than before.

### FINDINGS :

1. SHG members who have lower levels of knowledge before training tend to increase the knowledge after SHGs training related to income generating activities.
2. SHG members who participate in less hours of training before SHGs tend to also participate in more hours of training after SHGs.
3. Training programs are effective in increasing knowledge levels related to income generation among SHGs members.
4. SHGs are effective in encouraging individuals to participate in more training programs.

### SUGGESTIONS :

1. Conduct regular assessment to identify SHG members with lower knowledge levels.
2. Develop specialized training module that address the specific needs and gaps in knowledge of these members.
3. Foster a positive and supportive community within SHGs to encourage participation.
4. Schedule regular training sessions to ensure members stay update on relevant skills and knowledge.

### CONCLUSION :

This study demonstrates that SHGs are effective platform for promoting knowledge, skills and economic empowerment among their members. By providing targeted training, fostering a supportive environment, and encouraging active participation, SHGs can significantly contribute to the development and well being of their members. These results highlight the importance of SHGs as valuable tools for community development and poverty reduction. SHGs provide targeted training, support, and networking opportunities, leading to increased income and better living standards. This benefits not only members but also the entire community.

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