



MICRO FINANCE AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO BENGALURU URBAN DISTRICT

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Introduction

Poverty has degraded human lives for centuries and its existence is a danger to prosperity everywhere. Alleviation of poverty and unemployment eradication is the major challenge before central and state governments. The census 2011 data reveals a significant reduction in poverty over the last 2 decades. But increasing absolute poverty is still a big problem and subject of anxiety in India. Physical stress like deforestation, soil erosion and economic stress like unemployment, low per capita income, forced migration etc., generate social stresses like hunger forced migration, low life expectation. Suitable strategies have to be designed in order to address all the above ailments. Urban poor are completely ignored so far. The fate of the people who are living in slums and outskirts of Bengaluru is absolutely bad and immediate attention should be paid to look into structural problems of urban poor women.

Distribution of economic gain among the vulnerable in the society is assuming significance now-a-days. In order to for inclusive growth, promotion of economic activities the policy frames and developmental economists stress on the distribution of economic gains among poor and deserved empower the masses at grass root level (Dadich 2001) (Sultan 2005).

Urban poor requires financial services such as savings, credit insurances, remittances at affordable cost (Srinivas 2010). Access to financial service on a regular basis in a sustainable manner would ensure employment and economic growth leading to poverty eradication. In fact the existence of a wide network of banking institutions in the urban centers but they are unable to meet financial needs of the poor directly and SHG model promises an alternative financial service to the urban poor and vulnerable and deserved in the urban centers.

Objectives of the study

The following are the major objectives of the study

1. To study the significance of microfinance.
2. To analyse the problems overcome after joining SHGs.
3. To study income level of members before and after joining SHGs.
4. To study women empowerment in the study area.

Hypotheses

1. Microfinance is the significant area and there exists significance to microfinance.
2. Many problems are overcome by joining SHGs.
3. No difference in the income level before and after joining.
4. There is no women empowerment in the study area.

Research Methodology

The present study is exploration one and considers 200 sample for the present study. Convenient sampling technique has been applied to collect necessary data. The sample is fixed depending upon the strength of members. 75 each members from Anekal and Bengaluru South was chosen from 1379 and 1341 SHG groups. 40 respondent members from Bengaluru South out of 12678 total members and 10 members from Bengaluru East out of 4606 members were chosen for the present study. A well drafted and pretested questionnaire was administered as schedule to avoid waste of time and nonresponse. The collected data was presented by means of tables and different quantitative metrics were used to test the data scientifically.

Review of Literature

Kumar (2005) studied the economic and noneconomic impact of microfinance in Haryana. He has stated that there is enhancement of knowledge and skills of women. They fight against social evils like dowry female infanticide and alcoholism and they cooperated with NGOs in the area of protection of environment and human rights and male domination. He concluded that feudal mindset and shrink culture are working as stumbling blocks to the success of microfinance in the Haryana state.

Survey Findings

Table-1 reveals demographic profile of respondents in the study area. 62 respondents or 31% belongs to age group of 40-45 years and 38 belongs to 35-40 years. Age data supports that 120 respondents are in the age group of 30-45 years are capable of working hard for the success of the group. 80 respondents or 40% out of the 200 respondents studied upto degree 70 completed PUC. Educationwise data supports better management and capable good working women are associated in the SHGs. 80 respondents are doing business, petty business, provision supply, involvement in income generating activities. 65 respondents working either in government or private service. There are 40 respondents whose annual income is Rs. 2-3 lakh 35 respondents annual income as 3-4 lakhs. Further, the same table also provides membership details talukwise along with number of SHGs formed. Majority of the members are belonging to BPL group.



Table-2 highlights data about significance of microfinance. 120 respondents out of 200 strongly agreed over the drivers influencing significance of microfinance 50 respondents agreed, 10 stood as neutral and 20 either disagree or strongly disagree. ANOVA fails to accept the null hypotheses and accepts the alternative.

Table-3 indicates data about problems and overcoming of problems after joining SHGs. 190 respondents who have joined SHGs expressed that now family supports them and given rank No. 1 and more exposure than previous, rank 2, and SHGs are now preferring educating their children than early. Further problems like more work male domination and lack of awareness is also solved by the SHGs.

Table-4 provides valuable data about monthly income before and after joining SHGs. Wilcoxon Matched pair test analysis fails to accept the null hypotheses and accepts the alternative. Very interestingly members who have joined SHG enhanced their monthly income on account of more exposure to take up income generating activities. These income generating activities in the study area are pappad making, goat / sheep rearing, provision supply, petty business, vegetable selling, flowers selling in the morning and badam powder making and distributing.

Table-5 shows information of attainment of women empowerment. Researchers clearly explained that developing of women through empowerment leads to equal development of women respondents and thereby they can resist male domination which is hindering the women development. 110 respondents or 55% have clearly strongly agreed over the drivers of empowerment of women. Out of 110 respondents 25 said they have empowerment to spend the income generated, 22 protest against dowry and other social maladies, 18 participated in the meetings. Further, 68 respondents agreed over the variables stated in the table influencing women empowerment. Kendall's coefficient of concordance fails to accept the null hypotheses and only accepts the alternative.

Conclusion

This paper made an attempt to understand the effectiveness of microfinance programmes in Bengaluru urban district. It is said that by 2050 that 60% of Karnataka's population will be settled in some important urban centers. Urban poor is growing in along with urban Bengaluru district. The study highlights that urban poor are aware of microfinance programme and its significance in poverty alleviation improving income, engaging in income generating activities and development of women enterprises and women empowerment. The study finds positive impact on the society but still there exists some hindrances in the success of existing model of microfinance like credit time, product options, loan utilisation. Also it was felt at the time of data collection some members expressing dissatisfaction of various service activities followed by banks such as requirement of collaterals, inconvenient procedural formalities, loan utilisation checks.

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8. Sagir Ahmed Ansari. (2013). SHG Bank Linkage programme in India: An overview, International Referred Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce, 1(1), P. 15. null hypotheses and accept alternative.