

Full Length Research Paper

Effect of self help groups in economic empowerment of rural women in Andhra Pradesh

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Women represent 50 percent of world population and receive 10 per cent of the world income and own even less than one per cent of the world's property. They suffer many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rates, labour participation rates and earnings. The major strategies of women Empowerment include social empowerment, economic empowerment, political empowerment and gender justice along with demographical justice (rural and urban). For rural women economic empowerment the concept of self Help Groups (SHGs) based on group approach to rural development is indeed a boon to the rural poor women who undertake viable economic activities on their own. The SHGs are voluntary associations of people formed to attain some common goals. The present study highlights to evaluate the nature of business and its performance carried out by women through SHGs in Andhra Pradesh. A sample of 400 DWCRA members was randomly selected out of 133 Self-Help Groups from Srikakulam, East Godavari, Chittoor, Kurnool Warangal and Khammam Districts of Andhra Pradesh and a schedule was designed and administered among the respondents. Poverty is the compelling force for the women under study to join in the group and to take up the income generating activity. The study revealed that the main reason for becoming a group member is to get eligibility for availing government schemes and for availing bank loan facility. The study also proved that though majority of the members are illiterates their savings performance, group loan, and bank loan repayment performance are satisfactory. By running a business activity the women members have been earning certain income thereby supplementing their family income. The role of wife in taking majority of the business decisions is much evident in the study. However the role of joint decisions of both husband and wife in business cannot be ruled out. The present study highlights experiences of the members of SHGs and the contribution of these groups in income generation and thereby enhancing women empowerment. It also highlights that it is only through SHGs rural women economic empowerment can be possible.

INTRODUCTION

The present world population is 7.1 billion, which is growing at the rate of 97 million people per year will touch 8.5 billion by the year 2025. About 95 per cent of the population growth will be in the developing countries. The Asian population is 3.55 billion, which may reach 4.54 billions by 2025 and women constitute around half-of the total world population (Singh, 2007). The Bureau of Labour Statistics also shares that only 9% of female professionals were employed in the high-paying computer and engineering fields, compared with 45% of male professionals. As world economic profile of women

shows, women represent 50 per cent of the world population make up 30 per cent of the official labour force, perform 60 per cent of all working hours, receive 10 per cent of world income and own even less than one per cent of the world's property (Sudhir et al., 2007).

There is an emerging need to improve women status which should start with economic empowerment. Empowerment is a concept that is of equal importance to both men and women, it is the idea of sharing power, of truly giving it away. Empowerment is the process through which individuals gain efficiency, defined as the degree to

which an individual perceives that they control their environment. Karl (1995), opines that empowerment of women involves four interrelated and mutually reinforcing components: (1) collective awareness and capacity building and skills development, (2) participation and greater control, (3) decision making power and (4) action to bring about gender equality.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo stressed on women empowerment and opined that country's overall development and quality of people's life is more dependent on women empowerment (ICPD Report, 1994). In the words of former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam, "empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, a society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their thoughts and their value systems lead to development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation" (Sharma, 2006).

Asis Kumar Pain (2007) describes in his study that women comprise almost 50 per cent of the world population, live in abject poverty and utter distress. It is evident that in Pakistan and Maldives women are still found to be disempowered a lot. However, in case of Bhutan, empowerment of women has been found to be more or less equitable. Biswas (1999) developed eleven indicators of women's empowerment viz., 1. mobility, 2. decision making power, 3. autonomy, 4. economic security, 5. freedom from domination by the family, 6. political and legal awareness, 7. participation in public protests and political campaign, 8. contribution to family expenditure or income, 9. reproductive right, 10. exposure to information, and 11. participation in development programmes.

When a woman is empowered it does not mean another individual becomes powerless or is having less power. On the contrary, if a woman is empowered her competencies towards decision-making will surely influence her family's and neighbor's behaviour. The presence of these spillover effects will thus create a 'social multiplier', where aggregate power will be greater than individual power. This indicates that 'woman is a person and women are a power'. Based on this, Micro-Finance or Self-Help Groups are successful to develop the entrepreneurship among the women.

In advanced countries, there is a phenomenon of increase in the number of self-employed women after the World War II. In USA, women own 25 per cent of all business, even though their sales on an average are less than two-fifths of those of other small business. In Canada, one-third of small business is owned by women and in France, it is one-fifth (Kumar, 2004). Ninety per cent of the rural women are unskilled and 88 per cent are illiterate which makes them vulnerable to exploit and economically dependent on men. No serious efforts have been made to improve the condition of women. There is a need to promote as entrepreneurship through which

women of rural areas are empowered (Minakshi, 2006).

Entrepreneurship Development is a very crucial factor for the acceleration of economic growth of any country and women entrepreneurship development is an essential part of human resource development. Women entrepreneurs have started showing more interest because it provides them an opportunity to be one's own boss, the challenges they want to face and the chances of making more money, which outweigh their family duties. Moreover, technological development empowers women to acquire more relevant qualifications and values to meet the demands of entrepreneurship. Women empowerment can be possible though implementation of self-help groups, which provides self-employment as well as entrepreneurship among women.

India has made tremendous progress in various spheres of life during the last five and half decades. Its economy has expanded and diversified, the society has become cohesive and polity democratized. It has also been facing many problems, some of which have successfully been solved, but many others still remain unsolved. Poverty is one of such challenge India has been facing today.

To fill these gaps the Government of India announced a holistic programme called Swarna Jayanti, Gram Swarozgar Yojana, which is based on group approach. The rural poor were organized into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) provided micro-credit and look up viable economic activities on their own.

While most of the development programmes address themselves to alleviating the condition of poor who live below subsistence levels, women, who from the single largest disadvantaged section of gender oppression to the already existing caste and class oppression are seldom given priority in such programmes. Majority of these women come from the lowest strata of the caste/class hierarchy. Their caste affiliation restricts their mobility; their class membership limits their access to productive resource, while their gender role minimizes their economic participation. As such, they are marginalized as workers, are found in situations of immense exploitation and victimization and are therefore forced to a status of invisibility and powerlessness. Despite their invisibility in the labour force and their powerlessness in the family, it is their meager but substantial income that sustain and meets the needs of the family. This is particularly, the case, when unemployment among men is high and where the major item of expenditure is alcohol and gambling.

Empowerment of Women in India

Women constitute about 48 per cent of total population of the country regarding to the 2001 census; they suffer many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of

Table 1. District-wise selection of sample

District	No
Warangal	28
Khammam	22
Kurnool	07
Chittoor	10
East Godavari	40
Srikakulam	26
Total	133

literacy rates, labour participation rates and earnings. In order to address issues relating to social and economic advancement of women, the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development has been implementing various schemes. The National Policy of Employment of women was adopted in the country in 2001 with the ultimate objective of ensuring women their right.

The major strategies of women empowerment include – social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice i.e. to eliminate all types of discrimination against women and the girl child. Social empowerment of women is designed to create an enabling environment by adopting various affirmative policies and programmes for developing women, besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services to enable them to realize their full potential. Education being an important tool for social empowerment of women, specific schemes to provide incentives to promote education, especially amongst girl children and reduce the school dropout rates is being implemented. Two important schemes viz. 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' and 'Mahila Samakhya' being implemented by department of education is a special effort to stretch the reach of education especially to the girl child. In addition, the Department of Women Child Development implements the schemes of 'Condensed courses for educated and vocational training' and 'Distance Education Programme for Women supplementing the efforts of Department of Education.

Women Entrepreneurship in India

Women have a unique position in the society. Real Development cannot take place if it bypasses women, who not only represent one half of a country's population but also the kernels around which societal revolution take place. Entrepreneurship enhances financial dependence and self esteem of women. Around 50 per cent of India's population is women, yet business spheres such as trade, commerce and industry is still considered a male preserve. Entrepreneurial work has also been predominantly a man's world in India. Among the states,

Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka have more women entrepreneurs.

Indian women are in no way inferior to men in all walks of life and they can be good entrepreneurs as men in the country. Therefore, it is essential to exploit the potential of Indian women. Women's participation in trade, industry and commerce, requiring entrepreneurship is still poor, mainly because of the problems associated with their gender roles. Therefore, promotion of entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women poses a challenge to the government, funding agencies and non-government organizations. It is important for these people to work on the limitations faced by the women and to plan supporting systems to enhance the women entrepreneurship in India.

Objectives of the Study

- i To study the profile and nature of enterprises owned by women.
- ii To evaluate the performance of business enterprises carried out by rural women entrepreneurs.
- iii To offer suggestions for promoting empowerment among rural women.

METHODOLOGY

Srikakulam, East Godavari, Chittoor, Kurnool Warangal and Khammam of Andhra Pradesh, India have been selected on the basis of number of Self-Help Groups. Groups lined to the banks as on 31.03.2007, in the first stage of sampling. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. The first stage is the selection of groups based on lining to the banks on 31.03.2007. The second stage involves the selection of mandals in each of the selected districts, while the third stage is the selection of the villages in each of the selected mandals. The final stage is the random selection of sample groups from the selected villages. The sample groups are selected in the final stage of sampling on a random basis from the villages selected. Based on the information furnished by the Official records, the mandals and subsequently villages were selected based on the number of group member's actively engaged in income generating activities. In selecting the groups, Cooperative societies were purposively selected due to their large membership. Accordingly the following 133 SHGs have been finalized from each selected village (Table. 1).

From each group three members were selected on random basis making the sample 400 members. Data was collected from the members of the group with the help of interview schedule. One of the primary objectives of Self Help Groups is that each member should

Table 2. Distribution of shg members by their habits

District	Nature of Habits					Total
	Reading News Papers	Watching TV	Seeing Cinemas	Visiting Bank Premises	Visiting Govt. Offices	
Warangal	03 (03.57)	38 (45.24)	83 (98.81)	80 (95.24)	56 (66.67)	84 (100.00)
Khammam	01 (01.52)	27 (40.91)	66 (100.00)	66 (100.00)	46 (69.70)	66 (100.00)
Kurnool	04 (19.05)	12 (57.14)	21 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	17 (80.95)	21 (100.00)
Chittoor	02 (06.67)	14 (46.67)	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	23 (76.67)	30 (100.00)
East Godavari	12 (10.00)	55 (45.83)	116 (96.70)	115 (95.83)	86 (17.67)	120 (100.00)
Srikakulam	02 (02.53)	30 (37.97)	79 (100.00)	75 (94.94)	50 (63.29)	79 (100.00)
Total	24 (06.00)	176 (44.00)	395 (98.75)	387 (96.75)	378 (94.50)	400 (100.00)

(Figure in brackets are percentage to their respective samples)

undertake an income generating activity. The groups which are availed of assistance for individual activities have chosen a wide spectrum of income generating activities, which are area-specific. The following are income generating activities selected by the respondents under study.

1. Dairy 2. Powders and Pickles 3. Garments 4. Kirana and Tea Stall 5. Vegetables 6. Adda leaf, Agarbatti and Candles 7. Construction Material 8. Coconut and Coir 9. Handicrafts 10. Sweets and Bakery 11. Dry Fish 12. Lace and Leather Bags.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Education is a boon to mankind, while lack of education to a person is a bane now-a-days. The confidence of illiterate women is generally low in comparison to literate women. The study revealed that out of 400 respondents in the sample, 62 members (15.50 per cent) are illiterates. Such illiterates are found more in Warangal (20.24 per cent) Kurnool (19.05 per cent) and East Godavari (17.50 per cent) districts.

The study further shows that 207 respondents (51.75 per cent) have studied between First and Fifth class while 98 respondents (24.50 per cent) studied between Sixth class and Ninth class. There are however a few respondents who have studied Secondary School Certificate (10th class) (6.50 per cent), Intermediate (1.25 per cent), Degree (0.50 per cent). Respondents with intermediate and Degree education were found in Warangal, Khamman, Kurnool and East Godavari Districts only. On the whole, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents have studied below Ninth class only.

The possession of consumer durables such as Television, Radio, LPG, Mixi, Fan, Gold Ornaments, Moped, Refrigerator and Telephone reflects the standard of living as well as the life style of an individual. The larger the number of these consumer goods possessed by an individual, the higher the standard of living and vice versa. The ownership of these consumers is durable in the function of individual's discretionary income. The higher the discretionary income, the larger the number of consumer durables under the possession of an individual and vice versa.

The study revealed that a little over 95.75 per cent of the members possessed either Table Fan or Ceiling Fan, 88.00 per cent possessed LPG, 44.25 per cent possessed different gold ornaments, 44.00 per cent possessed Television and 40.75 per cent possessed Radio. Surprisingly there are a few members who possess Telephone as well as Refrigerator. The same phenomenon is found among all the members belonging to the six districts under study. Thus it can be inferred that the standard of living as well as life style of the SHG members under study is satisfactory.

An attempt is made in the study to find out the usual habits of the women under study and the information is presented in Table 2. It is clear from the table that out of 400 sample SHG members only 24 women (6.00 per cent) read daily news papers, 176 women (44 per cent) watch television, 395 members (98.75 percent) visits cinemas, 387 members (96.75 per cent) visit bank premises and 378 members (94.50 per cent) visit government offices. It is common phenomenon that though some of the group members do not possess television, they used to watch their neighbor's television. Thus it can be concluded that barring reading news paper habit, majority of the SHG women members have been in

Table 3. REASONS FOR STARTING THE BUSINESS

Class	Warangal	Khammam	Kurnool	Chittoor	East Godavari	Srikakulam	Total
To earn Money	38 (45.23)	26 (39.39)	09 (42.86)	12 (40.00)	62 (51.67)	31 (39.24)	178 (44.50)
Interest to do the Business	16 (19.05)	21 (31.82)	04 (19.05)	07 (23.33)	37 (30.83)	14 (17.72)	99 (24.75)
Frustration with previous job	30 (35.71)	21 (31.82)	03 (14.29)	05 (16.67)	42 (35.00)	25 (31.65)	126 (31.50)
To utilize Leisure time	22 (26.19)	25 (37.88)	06 (28.57)	10 (33.33)	31 (25.83)	16 (20.25)	110 (27.50)
To get financial liberty	26 (30.95)	18 (27.27)	07 (33.33)	09 (30.00)	40 (33.33)	21 (26.58)	121 (30.25)
Not willing to work elsewhere	15 (17.86)	10 (15.15)	01 (04.76)	02 (06.67)	22 (18.33)	11 (13.02)	61 (15.25)
Encouragement from husband and others	32 (38.10)	27 (40.91)	08 (38.10)	11 (36.67)	36 (30.00)	23 (29.11)	137 (34.25)
To develop ideas	09 (10.71)	12 (18.18)	04 (19.06)	05 (16.67)	18 (15.00)	07 (08.86)	55 (13.75)
Total	84	66	21	30	120	79	400

Figures in brackets are percentages to their respective samples

the habit of watching television, seeing cinemas, visiting bank premises and visiting government offices. The predominance of illiteracy and meager education is the primary reason for absence of news paper reading habit among the women under study.

The study revealed that as many as 363 members accounting for 90.75 per cent have joined the group in order to get eligibility for availing government schemes followed by 329 members (82.25 per cent) who joined the group to avail Bank loans at low interest rates. Also 163 members (40.75 per cent) have joined in the group to avail internal loans to meet the domestic needs while 260 members (65.00 per cent) have joined in the group to get self satisfaction and 230 members (57.50 per cent) joined to cultivate savings habit. On the whole it can be concluded that the two dominating reasons for joining a group are to avail government schemes and to avail Bank loan at lower interest rates.

One of the main objectives of SHG movement is that a member should undertake income generating activity by choosing a business venture of her own choice. Table 3 shows the reasons for starting the business by the women under study. The members have given more than one reason. It is clear from the table that 137 members (34.25 percent) started the business as a result of encouragement received from their husbands and others, 126 members (31.50 per cent) started business out of frustration with earlier jobs and 121 members (30.25 per cent) started business to get financial liberty. The same reason is found among the members belonging to the five districts under study. On the whole it can be concluded that the members have started the

business with a good intention to earn money to supplement the family income.

Table 4 shows distribution of category-wise respondents by type of economic activity. It is clear from the table that comparatively larger number of members is found in economic activities such as Powders and Pickles (14.25 per cent) followed by Garments (12.50 per cent) Dairy (11.50 per cent) Kirana and Tea stalls (11.25 percent) Handicrafts (9.25 per cent). The presence of forward caste members are found in economic activities such as Dairy, Powder and Pickles, Kirana and Tea Stalls and Sweets and Bakery, while the presence of members belonging to backward caste are found in activities such as Garments, Vegetables, Handicrafts, Coconut and Coir etc., It is surprising to note that members belonging to Scheduled Caste (ST) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities are also found in economic activities such as Dairy, Kirana and Tea Stalls, Adda Leaf, Agarbatti and Candles etc., None of the forward caste members, the members who are running Kirana and Tea Stalls are none other than Vysya community people. On the whole, it can be concluded that majority of the sample members have chosen Powders and Pickles, Garments, Dairy, Kirana and Tea Stalls and Handicraft activities.

Savings are the backbone of success of Self Help Groups, as cultivation of the savings habit among the members is ultimate objective of the SHG Scheme. Table 5 shows district-wise accumulated savings of the Self Help Group members as on date of enquiry. It is seen from the table that the accumulated savings of the members under study amount to Rs.24, 64,500. In other words, on the average, accumulated savings of each

Table 4. Distribution of shg members by business activity

Business Activity	Warangal	Khammam	Kurnool	Chittoor	East. Godavari	Srikakulam	Total
Dairy	12 (14.29)	09 (13.64)	04 (19.05)	03 (10.00)	08 (06.67)	09 (11.53)	46 (11.50)
Pickles and Powders	11 (13.09)	14 (21.21)	01 (04.76)	06 (20.00)	17 (14.17)	08 (10.25)	57 (14.25)
Garments	07 (08.33)	11 (16.67)	05 (23.81)	04 (13.33)	13 (10.83)	10 (12.82)	50 (12.50)
Kirana and Tea Stalls	14 (16.67)	08 (12.12)	02 (09.52)	–	10 (08.33)	11 (14.10)	45 (11.25)
Vegetables	08 (09.52)	04 (06.06)	02 (9.52)	03 (10.00)	06 (05.00)	13 (16.66)	36 (09.00)
AddaLeaf , Agarbathi and Candles	06 (07.17)	06 (09.09)	–	02 (06.67)	03 (02.50)	04 (05.12)	21 (05.25)
Construction Material	–	02 (03.03)	–	02 (06.67)	06 (05.00)	02 (02.56)	12 (03.00)
Coconut and Coir	05 (05.95)	–	–	05 (16.67)	14 (11.67)	09 (11.53)	33 (08.25)
Handicrafts	08 (09.52)	04 (06.06)	04 (19.01)	04 (13.33)	12 (10.00)	05 (06.41)	37 (09.25)
Sweets and Bakery	–	–	–	–	16 (13.33)	–	16 (04.00)
Dry Fish	04 (04.76)	–	–	–	07 (05.83)	07 (08.97)	18 (04.50)
Lace and Leather bags	09 (10.73)	08 (12.12)	03 (14.29)	01 (03.33)	08 (06.67)	–	29 (07.25)
Total	84 (100.00)	66 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	28 (100.00)	400 (100.00)

Figures in brackets are percentages to their respective samples

Table 5. District – wise accumulated savings by shg members as on date of enquiry

District	No. of Members	Total Accumulated Savings in Rs	Average Accumulated Savings in Rs
Warangal	84	4,72,500	5,625
Khammam	66	3,44,000	5,212
Kurnool	21	1,39,000	6,619
Chittoor	30	2,06,500	6,883
East.Godavari	120	8,62,000	7,183
Srikakulam	78	4,34,800	5,575
Total	400	24,64,500	6,161

member as on date of enquiry amount to Rs.6, 161. The accumulated savings comprises of 1) Penalties 2) Interest on Bank Savings 3) Interest on Internal Loans and 4) Resource persons fees. The table further shows that the average accumulated savings of the members belonging to East Godavari District is the highest (Rs.7, 183/-) while that of Khammam district is the least (Rs.5, 212/-) among the six districts under study. On the whole, it can be concluded that the savings performance of the

Self Help Group members under study relating to the six districts is appreciable.

The study revealed that as many as 166 members accounting for 41.50 per cent have availed group loans three times while 138 members accounting for 34.50 percent have availed two times. There is however 65 members representing 16.25 percent who have availed group loans four times. Among those members who availed internal loans four times, are members belonging

Table 6. Activity-wise investment of the shg members as on date of enquiry

Activity	No. of Members	Total Investment in Rs.	Average Investment
Dairy	46	8,55,200	18,591
Pickles and Powders	57	14,23,150	24,968
Garments	50	11,78,100	23,562
Kirana and Tea Stalls	45	7,08,450	15,743
Vegetables and Dolls	36	4,60,350	12,788
Adda Leaf,Agarbathi and Candles	21	29,6500	14,119
Construction Materials	12	33,7050	28,088
Coconut and Coir	33	72,5600	21,988
Handicrafts	37	87,0700	23,532
Sweets and Bakery	16	46,1850	28,866
Dry Fish	18	29,1800	16,211
Lace and Leather bags	29	83,6350	28,840
Total	400	84,4500	21,113

to Kurnool, Chittoor, Srikakulam and East Godavari districts, while among the members who availed group loan three times are those belonging to Warangal, Khammam, Srikakulam and East Godavari districts. Thus it can be concluded that majority of the members under study have availed group loans more than thrice ever since they became group members.

The investment made by the respondents in different business activities as on date of enquiry is shown in Table 6. It is clear from the table that the total investment made by all the respondents as on date of enquiry amounts to Rs.84.45 lakhs with an average investment of Rs.21,113. The average investment varied between Rs.12,788 and Rs. 28,866. As seen from the table average investment is the highest in the case of Sweets and Bakery business followed by Lace and Leather Bags (Rs.28,840), Construction material (Rs.28,088), Garments (Rs.23,562) and Handicrafts (Rs.23,532). The average investment is comparatively lesser in business activities such as Vegetables and Dolls (Rs.12, 788); Adda Leaf, Agarbatti and Candles (Rs.14, 119), Kirana and Tea Stalls (Rs.15,743) and Dry fish (Rs.16,211). On the whole the investment in each business activity carried by each SHG member is mediocre and is within the reach of each member as the banks are coming forward in providing loans to these members under bank linkage programme.

As a whole, it can be concluded that the repayment performance of members in the sample is not seen as a serious problem. From the business venture they have been generating sufficient income to enable them to repay the above loans. The few members who are irregular are found in business activities such as Adda Leaf, Agarbathi, Candles, Dry Fish, Vegetables, Dairy,

Kirana and Tea Stalls etc., while the few members who are irregular in repayment of bank loan are found in Vegetables, Kirana and Tea Stalls, Dairy, Powder and Pickles, Handicrafts and Dry Fish (Table 7)

The study revealed that as many as 75.00 percent of the members are selling their products in local markets followed by 29.00 percent who sell in DW CRA bazaars, 22.25 per cent who sell in Exhibitions, Melas and Pushkaras, 14.75 per cent who sell in Rytu Bazaar. Local Markets are the major sources of marketing for business activities such as Kirana and Tea Stalls, Dairy, Pickles and Powders. DW CRA bazaars are also major source of marketing for business in the case of business activities like Pickles and Powders and Handicrafts. There are group members carrying Pickles and Powders, Vegetables and Coconut and Coir who sell their products in Rytu Bazaars. On the whole, it can be concluded that local markets, DW CRA Bazaars and Exhibitions, Melas and Pushkaras are the major source of marketing for the SHG members under study.

The study also revealed that inadequate capital is the problem mostly found in Pickles and Powders, Dairy, Kirana and Tea Stalls and Handicrafts while lack of publicity is the main problem mostly in the case of Garments and Handicrafts. Marketing is a major problem mostly found in business activities such as Handicrafts, Pickles and Powders, Vegetables and Garments. On the whole, the major problems facing the members under study are inadequate capital, lack of publicity and low purchasing power of the rural people.

Insufficiency of internal loans is the major problem expressed by the majority of members carrying out all the twelve business activities. Some members have expressed more than one problem. While competition for

Table7. Distribution of activity – wise shg members by loans repayment performance

Activity	No. of Members	Group Loan		Bank Loan	
		Regular	Irregular	Regular	Irregular
Dairy	46 (11.50)	39 (09.75)	07 (01.75)	45 (11.25)	01 (0.25)
Pickles and Powders	57 (14.25)	51 (12.75)	06 (01.50)	56 (14.00)	01 (0.25)
Garments	50 (12.50)	44 (11.00)	06 (01.50)	50 (12.50)	0 (0.00)
Kirana and Tea Stalls	45 (11.25)	39 (09.75)	06 (01.50)	43 (10.75)	02 (0.50)
Vegetables and Dolls	36 (09.00)	30 (07.50)	06 (01.50)	34 (08.50)	02 (0.50)
AddaLeaf,Agarbathi and Candles	21 (05.25)	17 (04.25)	04 (01.00)	20 (05.00)	01 (0.25)
Construction Materials	12 (03.00)	11 (02.75)	01 (0.25)	12 (03.00)	0 (0.00)
Coconut and Coir	33 (08.25)	30 (07.50)	03 (0.75)	33 (08.25)	0 (0.00)
Handicrafts	37 (09.25)	31 (07.75)	06 (01.50)	36 (09.00)	01 (0.25)
Sweets and Bakery	16 (04.00)	14 (03.50)	02 (0.50)	16 (04.00)	0 (0.00)
Dry Fish	18 (04.50)	15 (03.75)	03 (0.75)	17 (04.25)	1 (0.25)
Lace and Leather bags	29 (07.25)	26 (06.50)	03 (0.75)	29 (07.23)	00 (0.00)
Total	400 (100.00)	347 (86.75)	53 (13.25)	391 (97.75)	9 (2.25)

Figures in Brackets are percentage to 450

internal lending is the major problem in the case of majority of the members involved in business activities such as Construction Material, Adda Leaf, Agarbathi and Candles, Dry Fish, Lace and Leather Bags and Vegetables. The problem of distribution of bank loans not according to the needs of the members is expressed by more number of members carrying Adda Leaf, Agarbathi and Candles (33.33 per cent), Sweets and Bakery (25.00 per cent) and Garments (22.00 per cent), while the problem of partiality of group leaders is expressed by more number of members carrying business activities such as Dry Fish (27.78 per cent); and Dairy (15.22 per cent). Getting benefits by a very few is the problem expressed by members carrying Dry Fish (22.22 per cent) and Vegetables (16.67 per cent) traders. The problem of inability to maintain records and accounts is the major problem expressed by more members carrying Dry Fish (44.44 per cent), Coconut and Coir Business (30.30 per cent), Vegetables (25.00 per cent) and Dairy (19.57 per cent). Thus it can be concluded that all the members in the sample have facing one problem or the other.

The efficiency of a business activity is measured in terms of its income generating capacity. Towards this end, an attempt is made in the study to find out the

amount of income derived by the members from each income generating activity. Table 8 shows the average monthly income of the members from each business activity. It is seen from the table that the income generated by each business activity varied between Rs.1,850 (Sweets and Bakery) and Rs.819 (Vegetables). Activities such as Sweets and Bakery, Construction Materials, Lace and Leather Bags, Powders and Pickles, Garments and Handicrafts are yielding more income to the members compared to other business activities. Thus a vast majority of the members with the financial assistance under bank linkage programme have improved their economic condition.

Decision-making in a family for the purpose of present analysis has been categorized as

1. Husband dominated decisions
2. Wife dominated decisions
3. Joint decisions

It is commonly observed that in a family some decisions are exclusively taken by the husband i.e. head of the family, some decisions are exclusively taken by the house wife, while some decisions are taken jointly by both husband and wife. There are some other decisions, which are exclusively taken by other members in the

Table 8. Average monthly net income of members from each business activity

Activity	No. of Members	Total income month Rs	Net per	Average income month Rs	Net per
Dairy	46	54800		1,200	
Pickles and Powders	57	91200		1,600	
Garments	50	75500		1,500	
Kirana and Tea Stalls	45	45400		1,008	
Vegetables and Dolls	36	29500		819	
Adda Leaf, Agarbathi and Candles	21	19000		905	
Construction Materials	12	21600		1,800	
Coconut and Coir	33	46500		1,409	
Handicrafts	37	55800		1,508	
Sweets and Bakery	16	29600		1,850	
Dry Fish	18	18700		1,038	
Lace and Leather bags	29	53600		1,848	
Total	400	541200		1,353	

Table 9. Involvement in domestic and business decisions by family memers

District	Domestic Decision					Business Decision				
	Self	Husband	Joint	Others	Total	Self	Husband	Joint	Others	Total
Warangal	33 (39.29)	21 (25.00)	25 (29.76)	05 (5.95)	84 (100)	29 (34.52)	08 (09.52)	47 (55.96)	-	84 (100)
Khammam	20 (30.30)	23 (34.85)	16 (24.24)	07 (10.61)	66 (100)	20 (30.30)	15 (22.73)	29 (43.94)	02 (03.03)	66 (100)
Kurnool	08 (38.10)	06 (28.57)	07 (33.33)	-	21 (100)	08 (38.10)	03 (14.28)	10 (47.62)	-	21 (100)
Chittoor	10 (33.33)	07 (23.33)	13 (43.34)	-	30 (100)	08 (26.67)	05 (16.67)	17 (56.66)	-	30 (100)
East. Godavari	29 (24.17)	54 (45.00)	24 (20.00)	13 (10.83)	120 (100)	32 (26.67)	22 (18.33)	55 (45.83)	11 (09.17)	120 (100)
Srikakulam	21 (26.58)	33 (41.77)	19 (24.06)	06 (07.59)	79 (100)	26 (32.91)	16 (20.25)	34 (43.04)	03 (03.80)	79 (100)
Total	121 (30.26)	144 (36.00)	104 (26.00)	31 (07.75)	400 (100)	123 (30.75)	69 (17.11)	192 (48.00)	16 (04.00)	400 (100)

family the children, and elders in the family. The more the number of family decisions taken by the wife, the more the freedom she enjoys in the family and vice versa. Against this background an attempt is made in the study to find out the extent the family members are taking buying decisions.

Table 9 shows involvement of the respondent, her husband and others in domestic and business decisions. As can be seen from the table for domestic decisions, the husband's role is apparent while in the case of business decisions the role of wife is evident. Joint decision making is found more among members in the case of business decisions. Wife's role in the purchase of domestic items as well as business items is paramount among respondents relating to Warangal, Kurnool and Chittoor districts while the role of husband for domestic items and

business item is paramount in other districts. Joint decision making in the purchase of business items is found among all the members belonging to all the districts under study. Thus it can be concluded that the involvement of husband is more common for all types of decisions among all the group members under study.

Conclusion

There is an emerging need to promote women empowerment among the rural women for eradication of rural poverty. Towards this end, delivery of micro finance to the micro enterprises plays a significant role. Rural women with low income and lack of knowledge of available banking facilities can do little for the growth of

banking habits on their own. Poverty alleviation is the ultimate goal of any nation. Studies have shown that the delivery of micro finance to the poor is productive, effective and less costly, if they are organized into SHGs. Self-employment, which is the best employment in the wake of paucity of employment opportunities is emerging to be a very important source of livelihood for women in Asia and South East Asia. The SHG movement in India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular has metamorphosis the rural economic scenario perceptibly. As a supplementary source of family income the SHGs proved to be a boom to the rural woman folk not only in enhancing their financial status but also promoting entrepreneurship among them. The SHG members have started the business with a good intention even though low educated members have availed group loans from bank and doing traditional business like., Powders and Pickles, Garments, Dairy, Kirana and Tea Stalls and Handicraft activities and to earn money to supplement the family income.

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