

**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MICROFINANCE - A STUDY IN COIMBATORE
DISTRICT**

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Abstract

Women are an essential part of every economy. All round advancement and harmonious growth of a nation can be achieved only when women are considered as equal partners in progress with men. Empowerment of women is a pre-requisite to harness women labour in the main stream of economic development. Empowerment of women is a holistic conception. It is multi-dimensional in its nature and covers economic, political, legal, social/cultural, personal and family aspects. Of all these aspects of women development, economic empowerment is of utmost importance to uphold development of a society. Microfinance is a vital means for attaining women empowerment. The study aims to analyze the different components of Empowerment of Women through Microfinance. Simple random sampling method has been adopted to determine the sample size. Coimbatore District is the study area. The sample size for the study is 85 respondents. The sample respondents are equal women SHG members taken from each taluk in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu. The studies make use of statistical techniques such as percentage analysis, chi-square test, ANOVA and Correlation in analyzing the data. The study recommended that the SHG members should be inculcated with the feeling of collective development, social harmony and active role in development process and governance. The members should be mentally prepared for starting income generating activities and their sustainability.

Keywords: - Women, Empowerment, Microfinance and development

INTRODUCTION

For a very long time women in India remained within the four walls of their family circle. A long struggle going back over a century has brought up women from the property rights, voting rights, equality in civil rights before the law in matters of marriage and employment. Empowerment is very optimistic concept with the capacity for self action and the conversion of self. It is inextricably linked to both the ability and prospect to make decisions and to act for one itself. Women have emerged as an important part of economic development, the empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of growth of countries. Thus, Empowerment of women has becoming a blazing issue all over the world. The position and status of women all over the world has risen extremely in the 20th century. Women empowerment and inclusive growth have gained great attention as the qualitative indicators of development, in recent years. These two concepts were observed as an essential feature of a smart economy. Empowering woman is a huge chore which includes many dimensions. It is a long process, not a phenomenon which automatically happens. So for providing equal economic opportunity to all without making discrimination on the grounds of sex, many policies and programmes were implemented in India.

The term “empower” literally refers to the power or authority given to a person to have independent control over his/her own life or the situation he/she lives in. Empowerment is a process that enables people to reach their destination and improve their status in society. Empowerment involves a process by which both men and women achieve self reliance to overcome any situations in life. Empowerment ensures self confidence, skill development, solving problems and ability in

making decisions. It is not only a social problem but also an individual one. Empowerment is not merely a process but an end result.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SHGs

The empowerment of women through Self- Help Groups would lead to benefits not only to the individual woman and women groups but also for the families and community as a whole through collective action for development. These groups have a common perception of need and impulse towards collective action. Empowering women is not just for meeting their economic needs but also through more holistic social development. The concept of SHG serves the principle “by the women, of the women and for the women”. The origin of SHG is form the brain child of Gramin Bank of Bangladesh, which was founded by the economist, Nobel laureate Prof. Mohammed Yunus of Chittagong University in the year 1975. This was exclusively established for the poor.

A Self – Help Group is a small economically homogeneous affinity group of the rural poor which is voluntarily ready to contribute to a common fund to be lent to its members as per group decision, which works for the group’s solidarity, Self –Help Groups, awareness, social and economic empowerment in the way of democratic functioning. The Self Help Group movement became a silent revolution within a short span in the rural credit delivery system in many parts of the world. It has been documented that nearly 53 developing countries including India, have taken this up on a large scale. In 1997, the World Micro Credit Summit at Washington converged developed and the developing countries to tackle the serious problem of poverty by using micro credit as a tool to empower the poorest sections. A global movement was launched to reach 100 million of the world’s poorest families by the year 2005.

MICROFINANCE AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Indian microfinance sector has several approaches found across the world. Majority of the development programmes started in the past were gender biased. However, the prominence of the microfinance programme is precise because in most of the developing countries women have a low socio-economic status. They are the most disadvantaged, poverty struck and vulnerable segment of the society characterised by the need of access to resources and education. As a consequence, women remained less participative in the development process of the country. Therefore, empowerment is the process of enabling or authorising an individual or group to think, behave, and take action in an independent way.

Empowerment can take place at a ranking of different levels like, household, individual, neighbourhood and societal encouraging factor like exposure to the new activities. It can build capacities and removing inhibiting factors like lack of resources and talents. In this context Microfinance with Self Help Groups play an effective role for promoting women empowerment. It is not only an efficient tool in reduction of poverty, but also as a means of promoting the empowerment of the most marginalised segments of the population, especially women.

Micro finance is the extension of small loans to the section of the society who are too poor to meet the criteria of traditional bank loans. It can also be described as a provision of small-scale financial services to customers who are economically poor in urban and rural areas. According to the accepted definition, micro finance is the provision of thrift, credit and other financial services and products of very small amounts generally to the poor in rural, semi-urban and urban areas for enabling them to increase their income level and improve living standards. Recently, microfinance has developed into a key word with Governments, NGOs and international institutions like the World Bank. It has proven to be an effective and most popular measure in the ongoing struggle against poverty as well as for womenempowerment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The most important issue which is still being debated is the type of strategy to be evolved for raising their status and participation in the process of development. The challenges facing women are dowry harassment, social humiliation (poverty), illiteracy and male prejudice. They are also

deprived of finance, nutritious food, education, healthcare and are sole dependents on their male counterparts. Even though they possess wealth, they are mainly controlled by their men. In many villages women are not encouraged to get education and do not have the knowledge of day-to-day affairs. On the whole, they are imprisoned and engaged by a male-prejudiced society.

Many schemes have been chalked out to empower women in our country and the concept of SHGs is one such. How Microfinance has empowered women in a country and whether it is economic, social, personal, family is the research problem. The following research questions are framed to study women empowerment through microfinance.

- Whether there is a change in the economic empowerment of women through microfinance?
- Does Microfinance lead to the social empowerment of women?
- Is there any possibility of personal empowerment of women through microfinance?
- Can women achieve family empowerment through microfinance?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the different components of Empowerment of Women through Microfinance.
- To evaluate and to measure the level of Personal Empowerment, Family Empowerment, Social Empowerment and Economic Empowerment of women through microfinance among all the taluks in Coimbatore District.
- To assess the overall Empowerment of women through microfinance with respect to Demographic factors among all the taluks in Coimbatore District.
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SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study would contribute significantly in understanding the importance of Women Empowerment through Microfinance in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu. The study is conducted selecting only Regional Rural Bank (RRB) Bank linkage SHGs only. The study is confined to only four components namely Economic, Social, Personal and family besides measuring the overall empowerment of Women. Therefore benefit of the study cannot be set-aside for framing the policies and procedures for better development of microfinance schemes for empowering women and overall rural development of Indian villages economically and socially.

Sources of Data

The data required for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from the sample respondents based on a questionnaire. This questionnaire contains four parts, namely, 1. Demographics 2. About the SHG 3. About Microfinance. 4. Empowerment indicators based on dimension wise. Before getting into the full fledged study, a pilot study was carried out. The secondary data was collected from various published reports, books, PhD theses and periodicals. A substantial amount of information was collected from various websites, business journals, magazines, newspapers etc.

Sample Size

A simple random sampling technique has been used for selecting the members of SHG as the sample respondents for the purpose of the study. The sample size for the study is 85 respondents. The sample respondents are equal women SHG members taken from each taluk in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu.

Analysis of data

The collected information were reviewed and considered and consolidated into a master table for the purpose of analysis. The data was further processed by doing statistical tools namely:

- Simple Percentage
- Chi-square Test
- ANOVA

- Correlation Analysis

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The scope of the study is limited to Coimbatore District.
- The analysis and interpretation is based on the responses given by the women respondents in the study area.
- The survey was done after women joined the SHGs. Their position before joining SHG were captured only by asking appropriate questions.
- The responses collected were from the SHGs who had Bank Linkages with RRB.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

C.B. Senthilkumar, A. Arumugam Dharmaraj, B.C. Indhumathi and C.V. Selvam, E. Kandeepan (2020), in their study entitled “A study on Women Empowerment through Self- Help Groups with special reference to Villupuram District in Tamil Nadu”, to analyse the attitude of the members of the SHGs towards social impact. The primary data were gathered from 300 SHGs women entrepreneurs visionaries through purposive testing technique. The data have been analyzed by using rate examination, Garret Rank, ANOVA test and Friedman test. It is discovered that greater part of the individuals doesn't take an interest in the gatherings conversations. This might be because of absence of education and numbness. Hence endeavours are made to become friendlier and urged to take an interest in the conversations.

Dr. Kishore Kumar (2020), carried out their study on “Empowering Women through Microfinance: Evidence from Uttar Pradesh, India”, to identify the factors those contribute to empowerment of women through self-help groups. The data required for the study have been collected with help of questionnaire which is distributed by 151 respondents by adopting Convenience sampling techniques. Factor analysis and t-test have been used to analyse the data. The study found that most of the beneficiaries belong to middle age group and have basic school education. The Self-help group formation through microfinance initiatives has provided opportunities to women to become aware about their rights of equality in the society and participates in the different activities to generate earnings and providing self-employment.

Mihir Dash, Venkat Mahendra Prasad and C. J. Koshy (2016), in their article on “Women Empowerment through Microfinance Services”, the main objectives of the study is to analyse the impact of microfinance schemes on women empowerment. The data for the study was collected through structured questionnaire which was distributed among women beneficiaries who have taken microfinance services from leading MFI operating in Kerala. The sample size for the study was 220 microfinance beneficiaries, selected through multistage cluster sampling. The study clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents are engaged in various income generating activities because of the credit facilities provided by microfinance institutions.

Soumitro Chakravarty, Umesh Prasad, Anant Kumar and Amar Nath Jha (2014), carried out a study entitled “Women Empowerment through Self-Help Groups: the role of Information & Communication Technology – A case study of Jharkhand State in India”, to study the awareness levels of ICT among the members of the SHGs. The study has been carried out with 10 respondents being selected from each SHG by adopting Non probability sampling technique. Likert scale methods have been used to analyze the data. The study recommended to SHG meetings should be encouraged to spread ICT awareness and its importance for the women to bring about an enhanced reach and impact.

Dr. Ashwin G. Modi, Mr. Kiran J. Patel and Mr. Kundan M. Patel (2014), in their study entitled “Impact of Microfinance Services on Rural Women Empowerment: An Empirical Study”, to analyze the impact of microfinance services on rural women empowerment. A sample of 250 respondents have been collected by adopting Non-probability sampling technique. Data collected are analyzed by using Descriptive Statistics (Frequency and Percentage), Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha), Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis method. The study reveals that Microfinance institutions should try to extend more credit facilities to clients to expand their businesses since the

study results confirmed that microfinance had a positive impact in empowering rural women.

Dr. Shuchi Loomba (2008), in their study entitled “Role of Microfinance in Women Empowerment in India”, to analyse the empowerment which women members get in SHGs. Primary data have been collected through issue the questionnaire. The sample for the study includes 50 samples from 3 SHGs members by adopting random sampling technique. Simple correlation coefficient, paired t-test, cross tabulation and percentage analysis are used for the analysis of the data. The study clearly reveals that maximum number of respondents accepted that microfinance has brought economic development directly and indirectly and thus happiness and peace in the family.

I. Percentage Analysis

Table - 1 Demographic Profile

S.No	Determinants	Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
1	Age Between 20-30		
	years	47	55.3
	Between 30-40 years	22	25.9
	Between 40-50 years	12	14.1
2	Educational Qualification		
	Illiterate		
	Primary level	15	17.6
	Secondary level	53	62.4
	Higher	4	4.7
3	Community		
	Others	11	12.9
	SC	2	2.4
	ST	8	9.4
	OBC	33	38.8
4	Marital Status		
	Minority	31	36.5
	General	7	8.2
	Married	6	7.1
	Unmarried	12	14.1
5	Widow		
	Separated	48	56.5
	Married	12	14.1
	Unmarried	13	15.3
Total		85	100.0

It can be inferred that, out of the total 85 respondents, most 47 (55.3%) of the respondents age group between 20-30 years. Majority of 53 (62.4%) respondents are educated upto primary level. 33 (38.8%) of the respondents are belonging to Scheduled tribes community and the majority of 48 (56.5%) respondents are unmarried.

Table - 2 About the SHG

S.No	Determinants	No of Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
1	Area of membership of SHG		
	Rural	60	70.6
2	Functioning of SHGs		
	Acts like a		
	small banks	27	31.8
	Provides equipment to members	16	18.8
3	Development of savings habit		
	Inculcate Co-operative principles	13	15.3
4	Attended meeting Regularly		
	Yes	29	34.1
5	Create Awareness Programme		
	Yes	61	71.8
6	Awareness Programme		
	Poverty	24	28.2
	alleviation programme	46	54.1
	Personal	39	45.9
	development programme	33	38.8
7	Purchase		
	power parity	10	11.8
8	Awareness Programme		
	Poverty	4	4.7

Empowerment		12	14.1
	Growth at macro level		
6	Get good returns on savings Yes		
	No	70 15	82.4 17.6
7	Reason to be member in SHG To achieve growth	50	58.8
	To enjoy in the group Help and mutual help	14 6	16.5 7.1
	To be a part of a overall development	13	15.3
	All the above	2	2.4
8	Undergo training		
	Yes No	28 57	32.9 67.1
9	Method of Training Class room		
	lecture	27	31.8
	Brain storming Hands on training	32	37.6
	Conference	18 8	21.2 9.4
10	Get feedback of training		
	Yes No	37 48	43.5 56.5
11	Number exists in the SHG		
	Less than 9	7	8.2
	9-14	72 6	84.7 7.1
15-18			
12	Group Size of the SHG		
	Stable Increased Decreased	21 60 4	24.7 70.6 4.7
13	Number of Years in SHG Less than 1 year	20	23.5
	1-3 years	50	58.8
	3-5 years	15	17.6
14	Why SHG Members to Join SHG		
	Myself		
	Family members Friends / Relatives	12	14.1
	Other members of the group	40 17 16	47.1 20.0 18.8
	Total	85	100.0

Out of the total 85 respondents, rural area women are more influenced in joining and promoting SHGs resulting in empowerment. Majority of 29 (34.1%) respondents helps in co-operative principles or mutual benefits of members. Maximum number of respondents attend meeting regularly with interest and to avoid penalties. Almost all respondents have positive attitude towards attending the regular meeting except few and more than 50% are creating a SHG awareness programme among the other members of the SHG. The majority of 33 (38.8%) respondents said it acts as a poverty alleviation programme and then the majority of 70 (82.4%) SHG members agree that they were

getting good returns on SHG savings.

Majority of the respondents had said to achieve growth reason to be a member in Self help groups. Most 57 (67.1%) of the SHG members are not undergo with SHG formal training. Majority 32 (37.6%) members attended brain storming session. 48 (56.5%) of the respondents had said that our organizers get feedback of this training. The most 72 (84.7%) of the respondents belonging to group size of 9 to 14 members. Most 60 (70.6%) of the respondents are increase group size. 50 (58.8%) of the respondents are members in group between 1 to 3 years and then the most 40 (47.1%) of the respondents joined which are referred by family members.

Table - 3 About Microfinance

S.No	Determinants	Respondents (N=85)	Percentage (%)
1	Quantum of Loan Upto		
	Rs.5,000	20	23.5
	Upto Rs.10,000	49	57.6
	Upto Rs.30,000	16	18.8
2	Utility of Micro finance		
	Enterprise	10	11.8
	Health Consumption Marriage	61	71.8
	Education	4	4.7
		2	2.4
		8	9.4
3	Purpose of Microfinance		
	Empowerment of poorest Self employment	16	18.8
	For technical purposes	61	71.8
	All the above	6	7.1
		2	2.4
4	Microfinance helps members To get respect	29	34.1
		36	42.4
	To work in the definite area To increase esteem	4	4.7
	To develop self confidence	14	16.5
	All the above	2	2.4
Total		85	100.0

From the above table shows that, out of 85 respondents, most 49 (57.6%) of the respondents members of SHGs availed a loan upto Rs.10, 000. Most of 61 (71.8%) respondents have loan borrowed is utilized for health purpose. Majority of the self help group members self employment purpose to through microfinance and then the majority of 36 (42.4%) of the self help group members helps to work in the definite area.

II. Chi-Square test

Table – 4 Demographic Profile and Level of Women Empowerment

H₀ = There is no significant association between demographic profile of the respondents and their level of women empowerment attained through microfinance.

S.No	Variables	D.f	Calculated χ^2 Value	Table value	Result
1	Age	6	22.122	12.592	Significant
2	Educational Qualification	8	22.958	15.507	Significant
3	Community	8	27.146	15.507	Significant
4	Marital Status	6	29.135	12.592	Significant
5	Area of membership of SHG	2	18.693	5.991	Significant
6	Functioning of SHGs	6	29.491	12.592	Significant
7	Awareness Programme	8	20.882	15.507	Significant
8	Undergo training	2	8.268	5.991	Significant
9	Method of Training	6	22.769	12.592	Significant
10	Quantum of Loan	4	8.096	9.488	Not Significant
11	Purpose of Microfinance	6	32.574	12.592	Significant

However, as the calculated χ^2 value is greater than the table at five per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore it is concluded that there is a significant association between age, educational qualification, caste, marital status, area of membership of SHG, functioning of SHGs, awareness programme, undergo training, method of training, purpose of microfinance and level of women empowerment attained through microfinance.

III. ANOVA

Table - 5 Economic Empowerment

H0 = There is no significant difference between Demographic Variables and Economic Empowerment.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	7.019	2	3.510	4.844	0.010
	Within Groups	59.404	82	0.724		
	Total	66.424	84			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	3.615	2	1.808	1.701	0.189
	Within Groups	87.138	82	1.063		
	Total	90.753	84			
Community	Between Groups	4.167	2	2.084	2.103	0.129
	Within Groups	81.244	82	0.991		
	Total	85.412	84			
Marital Status	Between Groups	4.287	2	2.144	2.757	0.069
	Within Groups	63.760	82	0.778		
	Total	68.047	84			
Area of Membership of SHG	Between Groups	.776	2	0.388	1.886	0.158
	Within Groups	16.871	82	0.206		
	Total	17.647	84			
Functioning of SHGs	Between Groups	17.819	2	8.910	6.331	0.003
	Within Groups	115.404	82	1.407		
	Total	133.224	84			
Awareness Programme	Between Groups	34.318	2	17.159	11.036	0.000
	Within Groups	127.493	82	1.555		
	Total	161.812	84			
Undergo training	Between Groups	6.492	2	3.246	21.667	0.000
	Within Groups	12.284	82	0.150		
	Total	18.776	84			
Method of Training	Between Groups	3.015	2	1.507	1.797	0.454
	Within Groups	155.173	82	1.892		
	Total	158.188	84			
Group Size of the SHG	Between Groups	.089	2	0.044	0.169	0.844
	Within Groups	21.511	82	0.262		

	Total	21.600	84			
Number of Years in SHG	Between Groups	3.621	2	1.811	4.777	0.011
	Within Groups	31.084	82	0.379		
	Total	34.706	84			
Quantum of Loan	Between Groups	15.968	2	7.984	9.869	0.000
	Within Groups	66.338	82	0.809		
	Total	82.306	84			
Purpose of Microfinance	Between Groups	12.415	2	6.208	11.178	0.000
	Within Groups	45.538	82	0.555		
	Total	57.953	84			

The above table shows that the p value is less than 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. So, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the respondents based on economic empowerment with respect to age, functioning of SHGs, awareness Programme, undergo training, number of years in SHG, Quantum of Loan Availed by SHG Members and Purpose of Microfinance of the respondents. It is inferred that age, functioning of SHGs, awareness Programme, undergo training, number of years in SHG, Quantum of Loan Availed by SHG Members and Purpose of Microfinance of the respondents influence the economic empowerment.

Table - 6 Social

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	8.211	2	4.105	5.783	0.004
	Within Groups	58.213	82	0.710		
	Total	66.424	84			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	2.313	2	1.156	1.072	0.347
	Within Groups	88.440	82	1.079		
	Total	90.753	84			
Community	Between Groups	5.004	2	2.502	2.552	0.084
	Within Groups	80.408	82	.981		
	Total	85.412	84			
Marital Status	Between Groups	9.128	2	4.564	6.352	0.003
	Within Groups	58.919	82	0.719		
	Total	68.047	84			

Empowerment

H0 = There is no significant difference between Demographic Variables and Social Empowerment.

membership of SHG	Between Groups	3.989	2	1.994	11.973	0.000
	Within Groups	13.659	82	0.167		
	Total	17.647	84			
Functioning of SHGs	Between Groups	9.369	2	4.685	3.102	0.050
	Within Groups	123.854	82	1.510		
	Total	133.224	84			

Awareness Programme	Between Groups	2.261	2	1.131	.581	0.562
	Within Groups	159.551	82	1.946		
	Total	161.812	84			
Undergo training	Between Groups	2.624	2	1.312	6.661	0.002
	Within Groups	16.152	82	0.197		
	Total	18.776	84			
Method of Training	Between Groups	4.240	2	2.120	1.129	0.328
	Within Groups	153.948	82	1.877		
	Total	158.188	84			
Size of the SHG	Between Groups	1.349	2	0.675	2.731	0.071
	Within Groups	20.251	82	0.247		
	Total	21.600	84			
of Years in SHG	Between Groups	3.494	2	1.747	4.590	0.013
	Within Groups	31.211	82	.381		
	Total	34.706	84			
Quantum of Loan Availed	Between Groups	5.504	2	2.752	2.939	0.059
	Within Groups	76.801	82	0.937		
	Total	82.306	84			
Purpose of Microfinance	Between Groups	1.306	2	0.653	.945	0.393
	Within Groups	56.647	82	0.691		
	Total	57.953	84			

The above table shows that the p value is less than 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. So, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the respondents based on social empowerment with respect to age, marital Status, area of membership of SHG, functioning of SHGs, undergo training, number of years in SHG and Quantum of Loan availed by SHG Members. It is inferred that age, marital Status, area of membership of SHG, functioning of SHGs, undergo training, number of years in SHG and Quantum of Loan availed by SHG Members influence the social empowerment.

Table - 7 Personal Empowerment

H₀ = There is no significant difference between Demographic Variables and Personal Empowerment.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	2.396	2	1.198	1.534	0.222
	Within Groups	64.028	82	0.781		
	Total	66.424	84			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	1.766	2	0.883	0.814	0.447
	Within Groups	88.986	82	1.085		
	Total	90.753	84			
Community	Between Groups	17.408	2	8.704	10.495	0.000
	Within Groups	68.004	82	0.829		
	Total	85.412	84			
Marital Status	Between Groups	2.121	2	1.060	1.319	0.273
	Within Groups	65.926	82	0.804		
	Total	68.047	84			
	Between Groups	1.648	2	0.824	4.223	0.01

Area of membership of SHG						8
	Within Groups	15.999	82	0.195		
	Total	17.647	84			
Functioning of SHGs	Between Groups	0.074	2	0.037	.023	0.978
	Within Groups	133.150	82	1.624		
	Total	133.224	84			
Awareness Programme	Between Groups	19.213	2	9.607	5.524	0.006
	Within Groups	142.599	82	1.739		
	Total	161.812	84			
Undergo training	Between Groups	.885	2	0.443	2.028	0.138
	Within Groups	17.891	82	0.218		
	Total	18.776	84			
Method of Training	Between Groups	11.304	2	5.652	3.155	0.048
	Within Groups	146.885	82	1.791		
	Total	158.188	84			
Group Size of the SHG	Between Groups	0.379	2	0.190	.733	0.484
	Within Groups	21.221	82	0.259		
	Total	21.600	84			
Number of Years in SHG	Between Groups	.972	2	0.486	1.181	0.312
	Within Groups	33.734	82	0.411		
	Total	34.706	84			
Quantum of Loan	Between Groups	0.486	2	0.243	.244	0.784
	Within Groups	81.820	82	0.998		
	Total	82.306	84			
Purpose of Microfinance	Between Groups	2.688	2	1.344	1.994	0.143
	Within Groups	55.265	82	0.674		
	Total	57.953	84			

The above table shows that the p value is less than 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. So, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the respondents based on personal empowerment with respect to caste, area of membership of SHG, awareness Programme and method of training of the members. It is inferred that caste, area of membership of SHG, awareness Programme and method of training of the members influence the personal empowerment.

Table - 8 Family Empowerment

H0 = There is no significant difference between Demographic Variables and Family Empowerment.

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	15.853	2	7.927	12.853	0.000
	Within Groups	50.570	82	0.617		
	Total	66.424	84			
	Between Groups	4.046	2	2.023	1.913	0.15

Educational Qualification						4
	Within Groups	86.707	82	1.057		
	Total	90.753	84			
Community	Between Groups	3.341	2	1.670	1.669	0.195
	Within Groups	82.071	82	1.001		
	Total	85.412	84			
Marital Status	Between Groups	1.446	2	0.723	.890	0.415
	Within Groups	66.601	82	0.812		
	Total	68.047	84			
membership of SHG	Between Groups	6.894	2	3.447	26.285	0.000
	Within Groups	10.753	82	0.131		
	Total	17.647	84			
Functioning of SHGs	Between Groups	20.546	2	10.273	7.476	0.001
	Within Groups	112.677	82	1.374		
	Total	133.224	84			
Awareness Programme	Between Groups	.976	2	0.488	.249	0.780
	Within Groups	160.836	82	1.961		
	Total	161.812	84			
Undergo training	Between Groups	1.218	2	0.609	2.843	0.064
	Within Groups	17.559	82	0.214		
	Total	18.776	84			
Method of Training	Between Groups	34.691	2	17.346	11.517	0.000
	Within Groups	123.497	82	1.506		
	Total	158.188	84			
Group Size of the SHG	Between Groups	.934	2	0.467	1.854	0.163
	Within Groups	20.666	82	0.252		
	Total	21.600	84			
of Years in SHG	Between Groups	5.089	2	2.545	7.045	0.002
	Within Groups	29.617	82	0.361		
	Total	34.706	84			
Quantum of Loan	Between Groups	15.295	2	7.648	9.358	0.000
	Within Groups	67.011	82	0.817		
	Total	82.306	84			
Purpose of Microfinance	Between Groups	.717	2	0.359	.514	0.600
	Within Groups	57.236	82	0.698		
	Total	57.953	84			

The above table shows that the p value is less than 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected. So, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the respondents based on family

empowerment with respect to age, area of membership of SHG, functioning of SHGs, undergo training, method of training, number of years in SHG and quantum of loan availed by SHG Members. It is inferred age, area of membership of SHG, functioning of SHGs, undergo training, method of training, number of years in SHG and quantum of loan availed by SHG Members influence the family empowerment.

IV. Correlation Analysis

Table – 9 *Correlation Relationship between degrees of empowerment attained through microfinance*

Correlations		Economic Empowerment	Social Empowerment	Personal Empowerment	Family Empowerment
Economic Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1	.184	.058	-.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.092	.598	.920
	N	85	85	85	85
Social Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.184	1	.298**	.451**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.092		.006	.000
	N	85	85	85	85
Personal Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.058	.298**	1	-.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.598	.006		.991
	N	85	85	85	85
Family Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	-.011	.451**	-.001	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.920	.000	.991	
	N	85	85	85	85

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table is Correlation relationship between degrees of empowerment attained through microfinance. These numbers measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the four variables. The correlation coefficient can range from -1 to +1, with -1 indicating a perfect negative correlation, +1 indicating a perfect positive correlation, and 0 indicating no correlation at all.

- The Coefficient of Correlation shows that there is a significant exists between Social and Personal empowerment.
- The Coefficient of Correlation shows that there is a significant exists between Social and family empowerment.
- The Coefficient of Correlation shows that there is a significant exists between Personal and Social empowerment.
- The Coefficient of Correlation shows that there is a significant exists between Family and Social empowerment.
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FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- Extensive awareness campaign should be conducted through frequent meetings by experts in the banking sector, in order to have knowledge about various government schemes and banking operations.
- If the members of SHGs are capable of saving more than expected by them, they can either expand their business operations or save their excess earning systematically by investing in recurring deposits, insurances, mutual funds etc.
- Availing loan and repaying loan should not be the only objective of members of SHGs; they should also focus on wealth creation.
- The Central Government and also the State Government should think of the possibilities of implementing some of the subsidy / margin oriented schemes through the SHGs so that recovery performance and end utilization can be ensured besides reducing the transaction costs.

- Government and NGO agencies play a major role in implementing microfinance programmes. There is a need for developing microfinance regulations about working of NGOs and the government bodies.

CONCLUSION

The present study is an attempt to identify the role of microfinance in Women Empowerment through Self-help groups in Coimbatore District. This research focuses on women empowerment in four levels namely economic, social, personal and family empowerment. It is found from the study that most middle aged people show keen interest in joining SHGs looking forward to social empowerment. It is interesting to see that almost all members of the group attend their group meeting regularly which can be utilized in a positive way by motivating them in bringing creative ideas for increasing returns. Most of the women are illiterate for which the NGO's can take steps in educating them.

From the above discussion it may be concluded that microfinance is a very effective tool for the uplift of the poor, in general and empowerment of women in particular. Advancing microfinance to the rural women through Self Help Groups on reasonable terms and conditions make it possible for the rural poor as well as rural women to attain economic independence, social status and organizational skills which results in helping the women and the poor function actively in the overall development of the society/nation. Microfinance supporting institutions have also emerged as an admirable tool for the generation of self-employment and hence preventing the society from indulging in evils like alcoholism and drug addiction. Therefore, microfinance has acquired greatest importance particularly in a developing economy like India. Overall SHGs are empowering women in economic, personal. social and family empowerment. Hence micro finance plays a vital role in women empowerment.

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