

# **A Study on Empowerment of Women Through SHG's**

**(An Empirical study conducted in Haldwani rural area SHG's)**

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## **Abstract**

**The status of women indicates the character of the country – Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**

In recent years, women empowerment and gender equality have gained significant attention. Women empowerment refers to the process by which women challenge societal norms and cultural constraints to enhance their well-being. One of the notable avenues for empowerment has been women's involvement in Self Help Groups (SHGs). These groups have had a profound impact on the lives of impoverished women, empowering them at multiple levels by providing economic independence, social support, and a platform for their voices. The women come together in the SHGs for the purpose of solving their common problems through mutual help. The purpose of the study was to analyse the impact of SHG in economic and social empowerment of women in rural area of Haldwani block. The present study was conducted in Haldwani block of Nainital district of Uttarakhand, 100 samples was collected using convenient sampling technique. The data required for the study has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. For Collection of Primary data a well drafted questionnaire was used to collect the data. Secondary data was collected from research journals, articles, and websites. Percentages, tables was used out to draw meaningful interpretation of the results. Five point Likert scale was used to measure economic and social empowerment of women. The results of the study revealed that participation of women in SHGs have greater impact on both economic and social empowerment aspects of the women.

**Keywords:** Self Help Group, Women Empowerment, Economic Empowerment and Social Empowerment.

## **Introduction**

**“Millions of women in our hamlets know what unemployment means. Give them access to economic activities and they will have access to power and self-confidence to which they hitherto have been strangers” – Mahatma Gandhi**

Women comprise of half of the world's population, yet they have limited control of income. Many women are limited to a narrow range of low-income activities, which contributes to gender discrimination. Poverty and unemployment are major obstacles to women's development. It is the problem of many under developed countries, to which India is no exception. Women were earlier treated as almost non-existent, as if all the rights belonged to men, even something basic as voting. As the time evolved, women realise their power, thus began the revolution for women empowerment. Women Empowerment refers to making women powerful, to make them capable enough to decide for themselves. Women Empowerment comprises of women's education, knowledge to reinforce her understanding, her capacity to take charge of her own life, freedom by not depending upon others income, her capability decision making process, her capability to make autonomous decisions and, ultimately, her freedom of movement.

The Self-Help Group (SHG) model was introduced as a key strategy for women's empowerment in the Government of India's Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002). It has since become one of the largest and fastest-growing programs in the developing world (Planning Commission, 2002). An SHG typically consists of 10 to 20 local women in a village, acting as a community-based financial intermediary. These groups are non-professional organizations formed by individuals to pool resources, share information, and provide mutual support and services. SHGs aim to integrate economic and social goals through systems of savings, group collection, and shared efforts. The members of these groups typically face common issues, and the collective goal is to support each other in overcoming these challenges. Savings, social engagement, and credit are used as tools for empowerment. Self-Help Groups are also known by terms such as mutual help, mutual aid, and support groups, where members work together to uplift one another. They operate on the principle of "for the people, by the people, and of the people."

SHGs play a crucial role in the economic empowerment of women by improving their social lives, providing mutual space, and offering support. They serve as a tool for eradicating poverty, fostering women entrepreneurship, and providing financial assistance in India. By enabling women to have access to cash through these groups, SHGs boost their self-esteem, control, and empowerment, helping them achieve economic independence and security. This, in turn, allows them to financially contribute to their households, leading to increased independence and enhanced self-confidence.

## Review of Literature

(ArunKumar & Mahalakshmi, 2022), the study was conducted in Coimbatore. In the survey conducted six SHGs were interviewed. Multi-stage purposive and stratified random sampling was used during selection of the respondents. The study identified the impact of SHG in the growth of women entrepreneur, to measure the accessibility to women entrepreneurs. It was found out that SHGs play an important role in giving credits to the poor, helps in poverty alleviation.

(Anand, 2022), in his paper entitled to women empowered through SHG: with reference to Chickballapur Taluk Karnataka- A study, the researcher assess the performance of self-help groups and examined the impact of SHGs on the economic condition of the women. The study

revealed that the SHG program has effectively addressed the needs of rural women while simultaneously enhancing the collective self-help abilities of the poor at the local level, ultimately contributing to their empowerment. SHGs have made a substantial impact on the empowerment of their members, particularly in the economic, social, and political spheres.

**(Al-Kubati & Selvaratnam, 2021)**, the study aimed to examine India's experience with the Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme as a central development strategy for empowering women. Currently, this programme stands as the largest microfinance initiative in the world, with over 10 million self-help groups involved. The article uses descriptive analysis to offer an overview of India's experience with the programme. The study highlights that the Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme plays a key role in empowering women, promoting entrepreneurial activities, boosting confidence, providing essential skills, and offering access to markets.

**(Agarwal, 2020)**, a study was conducted in Ujjain city of Madhya Pradesh to measure the performance of SHG. The study uses descriptive analytical approach, the study was conducted at five slums areas and seventy samples were drawn from the selected area. The survey was conducted using seventy samples selected through convenient sampling. The study found that SHGs play a significant role in fulfilling both social and financial needs. Additionally, the research highlighted that SHGs have a considerable impact on the economic and social well-being of the beneficiaries.

**(Shireesha.E, 2019)**, the study was carried out in Chandragiri Mandal, Chittoor district, focusing on the empowerment of women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The research aimed to examine the income, expenditure, and savings patterns of SHG members, as well as to assess their level of satisfaction with the groups. To achieve this, the study surveyed 400 SHG members from various groups in Chandragiri Mandal. A structured interview schedule was used to collect data from the respondents. The findings revealed that, after joining the SHGs, the members experienced an increase in their income, which contributed to higher savings and helped them achieve economic independence.

**(Alemu, Kempen, & Ruben, 2018)**, this paper assesses the impact of women's participation in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) on various empowerment outcomes, particularly those related to intra-household dynamics. The study specifically evaluates the role of SHGs in apple production and their effect on empowering women in the Chenchu district of Southern Ethiopia. The impact was measured through a cross-sectional survey conducted among SHG members and non-members, employing propensity score matching for analysis. The results highlighted significant and positive impacts of SHG participation on community-level empowerment, indicating that SHGs provide an effective platform for women to raise awareness about their rights and exchange valuable information.

**(Palani & Balamurgan, 2016)**, the study was conducted in Madhuri district, Tamil Nadu, where data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. A sample of 300 Self-Help Group (SHG) members was selected using a multistage proportionate random sampling technique. Averages and percentage analysis were employed to draw meaningful conclusions. The findings revealed that women's participation in SHGs had a significant impact on their empowerment, both socially and economically. The researcher suggests that SHGs are a powerful tool for enhancing savings activities and alleviating poverty. In this regard, the government should focus on supporting and promoting group-oriented development initiatives to uplift rural women.

(Pandey & Roberts, 2014), the study aims to explore the impact of women's participation in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) on their empowerment. It was conducted in the Chamarajnagar district, located in the southern state of Karnataka. The research focused on a single village with three SHGs and utilized a qualitative research approach. The study employed the personal narrative method to capture women's perspectives. Various dimensions of women's empowerment were examined, revealing that women experienced a sense of freedom, strength, self-identity, and enhanced self-esteem. The findings showed that women's influence in household decision-making increased, and their participation in SHGs led to greater awareness and knowledge.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the socio-demographic characteristics of the members of Self Help Groups (SHGs).
2. To assess the impact of SHGs on the economic and social empowerment of women in the rural areas of Haldwani.
3. To analyze the income patterns of SHG members both prior to and following their involvement in Self Help Groups.

### Research Methodology

The study was conducted in the Haldwani block of Nainital district, Uttarakhand, with a sample size of 100, selected using the convenient sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the participants. Secondary data was sourced from research journals, articles, and websites. The gathered data was analyzed using tables, percentages, pie charts, and a five-point Likert scale to evaluate the levels of economic and social empowerment.

### Data Interpretation and Data Analysis

**Table 1: Socio Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Parameter	Description	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Age	Below 20 years	07	7%
	21 to 40 years	56	56%
	41 to 60 years	34	34%
	Above 61	03	03%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Education	Up to 8th	5	5%
	10th	16	16%

	12th	61	61%
	Graduate	13	13%
	PG	2	2%
	Illiterate	3	3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Caste</b>	General	44	44%
	SC/ST	27	27%
	OBC	29	29%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Religion</b>	Hindu	87	87%
	Muslim	13	13%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Family Structure</b>	Nuclear	38	38%
	Joint	62	62%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	77	77%
	Unmarried	23	23%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Present source of Income</b>	Agriculture	37	37%
	Poultry Farming	7	7%
	Dairy (Cow, Buffalo and goatery)	13	13%
	Labour	18	18%
	Shop	4	4%
	Job	13	13%
	Handicraft	7	7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Economic Status</b>	APL	14	14%
	BPL	86	86%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>From which source did you get to know about SHGs</b>	Relative	12	12%
	Neighbours	35	35%
	Friend	25	25%
	NGO	28	28%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary data**

### **OBSERVATIONS:**

Table 1 shows the socio demographic profile of respondents:

Age - Maximum no. of respondents belong to the age group of 21-40 years which is 56%, 34% of respondents are from the age group of 41-60 years, 7% of respondents are below 20 years and only 3% respondents are above the age of 61 years.

Education -5% of respondents are educated till 8<sup>th</sup>, 16% of respondents are educated till 10<sup>th</sup>, 6% of respondents are educated till 12<sup>th</sup>, 13% of respondents are graduates, 13% of respondents are post graduates and 3% of respondents are illiterate.

Caste - Status of SHG members, 44% of respondents belong to General category, 27% of respondents belong to SC/ST category, and rest 29% of respondents belong to OBC category.

Religion – 87% of respondents are Hindus, 13% of respondents are Muslims.

Family Structure – 38% of respondents live in nuclear family while 62% of respondents live in joint family.

Marital Status – 77% of respondents are married whereas 23% of respondents are unmarried.

Present Source of Income – 37% of respondents income comes from agriculture, 7% of respondents income comes from poultry farming, 13% of respondents income comes from dairy, 18% of respondents are labourer, 4% of respondents work in a shop, 13% of respondents income come from job, 7% of respondents are handicraft worker.

Economic Status – With regard to economic status 14% of respondents belong to APL family, 86% belong to BPL family.

The source from which respondents know about SHGs – it has been found that, 12% of respondents joined SHGs on recommendation of their relative, 35% of respondents found out about SHGs from their neighbour, 25% of respondents motivated to joined the SHGs by their friends, remaining 28% of respondents were persuade by NGOs to join the SHGs.

**Table 2:impact of SHGs in economic empowerment of women of rural area (Likert Ranking Scale Point)**

<b>Statement (Economic Empowerment Factors)</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
Increase in Income as a result of Joining SHGs	87	10	3	0	0	100
Asset holding	33	44	21	0	0	100
Savings	25	68	7	0	0	100
Understanding banking operations	11	57	32	0	0	100
Knowledge of credit system	11	58	31	0	0	100
Repayment Capacity	30	49	21	0	0	100

**Source: Primary data**

The above table no. 2 show the economic empowerment impact of SHGs. The researcher has asked the respondent to rate each statement according to their agreement level. Five point Likert scale has been used to rate the respondents.

The above table shows that 87% of respondents strongly agree that there is increase in their income as a result of joining SHGs. There are 10% respondents who agree that their income has increased after joining SHGs and 3% respondents are neutral

33% of respondents strongly agree that their asset holding has been increased after joining SHGs, while 44% are agreed with this statement rest 21% respondents are neutral.

According to 68% of respondents it has been agreed that there savings has been increased after joining SHGs, 25% of respondents are strongly agreed with this statement and 7% are neutral with this statement.

A majority of 57% of respondents agreed that there is an increase in the understanding of their banking operations, 11% of respondents are strongly agreed with the statement and 31% respondents are neutral.

There are 11% of respondents who strongly agree that there is increase in their knowledge of credit system after joining SHG, while 58% of respondents agree to the statement, rest 31% of respondents are neutral in this regard.

30% of respondents strongly agree that there is increase in the repayment capacity due to joining SHGs, there are 49% respondents who agree with this statement, while 21% of respondents are neutral.

**Table 3: impact of SHGs in social empowerment of women in rural area (Likert Ranking Scale)**

<b>Statement (Social Empowerment Factors )</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
Participation level (Now you are feeling hesitate while participating in training/workshop/education exposure at cluster/district and state level)	13	78	9	0	0	100
Self confidence	77	18	5	0	0	100
Level of awareness of SHG programmes in the district	33	55	12	0	0	100
Your importance in the family is increased after becoming the member of SHG	11	78	11	0	0	100
Positive change in the attitude of relative and neighbour	38	45	17	0	0	100

**Source: Primary data**



The above mentioned table shows the impact of SHGs in Social empowerment of women.

Majority of 78% of respondents agree that their participation level has increased, now they are less hesitant in participating in training/workshop, while 13% respondents strongly agree with the statement, rest 9% respondents are neutral.

77% of respondents strongly agree that there is an increase in their self confidence level, while 18% agree with this statement and rest 5% respondents are neutral.

There are about 33% of respondents who strongly agree that there is increase in the level of awareness of SHG programmes, 55% respondents agreed with this statement, rest 12% respondents are neutral.

11% of respondents strongly agree that their importance in the family has increased after joining SHG, 8% agree with the statement, remaining 11% of respondents are neutral.

According to the 38% of respondents it is been strongly agreed that there is a positive change in the attitude of relative & neighbour after joining SHG, while 45% of respondents agree with this statement, rest 17% respondents are neutral.

**Table 4: Income of the respondents**

	<b>Before Joining Monthly Income</b>	<b>After Joining Monthly Income</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Less than 4000	52	24
4000 to 8000	28	42
8000 to 12000	12	21
12000 above	08	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Primary data**

Table 4 indicates the distribution of monthly income of respondents. It is been observed that before joining the SHGs 52% of respondents income was less than 4000, followed by 28% whose income was between 4000 to 8000, 12% of respondents income was between 8000 to 12000, 8% of respondents income was 12000 above. After joining the SHGs the monthly income of 24% respondents earn less than 4000, the income of 42% respondents is between 4000 to 8000, the income of 21% respondents is between 8000 to 12000 and 13%

respondents income is above 12000. Which clearly shows that the income of the respondents have significantly increased after joining the SHGs.

## Conclusion

Women play a crucial role in driving the progress and development of a nation. The fundamental philosophy behind Self Help Groups (SHGs) is women's empowerment. These groups have emerged as a powerful force for the welfare of women. The involvement of women in SHGs has had a profound impact on their empowerment, both socially and economically. This study was conducted in the Haldwani block of Nainital district, Uttarakhand, with a sample size of 100 participants, selected through the convenient sampling method. A structured interview schedule was used to gather data from the respondents. The main objectives of the study were to examine the socio-demographic profile of SHG members, analyze the economic and social empowerment of women in rural Haldwani, and compare the income patterns of SHG members before and after joining the groups. The findings revealed an increase in income, improved access to savings, enhanced assets, greater knowledge of the banking system and credit, as well as higher levels of self-confidence. Additionally, there was a noticeable positive shift in the family's attitude, and the perception of both relatives and society toward these women changed after their involvement in SHGs. Thus, the study concluded that SHGs play a key role in empowering women and contributing to their social and economic development.

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