

Gender Equality and Microfinance

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ABSTRACT

Microfinance is a type of Banking Service that is Provides to unemployed or Low Income Individuals or group who would otherwise have no other means of gaining financial service. Microfinance as the modern tool to combat Poverty for Rural development. Microfinance and self help group are effective in Reducing Poverty. Empowering women and creating awareness which finally result is sustainable development of the nation. The main Aim of Microfinance is to empower women.

In 1990 the problems of women workers in unorganized sector's fro bad to worse as most of the women who were engaged in various self employment activities have last their livelihood, Despite in Substantial contribution of women's to both household and national Economy, their work is considered Just an Extension of household domain and remains non-monetized. In India's Microfinance Scene is dominated by SHG as an Effective Mechanism for providing financial service to the unreached poor and also in strengthening their collective self help capacities leading to their empowerment. Rapid progress in SHG formation has now turned into an empowerment movement among women Across the country. Microfinance is necessary to overcome exploitation, create confidence for Economic Self Reliance of the Rural Poor Particularly among Rules women. Although no magic bullet. They are potentially a very significant contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. Through their contribution to women ability to earn an Income. These programs have potential to Initiate a series of virtuous spirals. Economic empowerment and social political empowerment.”

Keywords: Gender equality. micro finance, working women's, empowerment, skills.

Concept of women empowerment:

Today's, women share equal status as men. More stress should be laid on empowering Rural women and their development. A Special focused should be on empowering girls & women. Since it will lead to a change in the society which would be sustainable and will be in effect for ages to come. A united approach must be followed while empowering women it is a social cause that Requires stewardship and continues attention from every Individuals. Society needs to enhance its efforts for women empowerment and boost the progress being made by women. It is society's Constitutional, Moral and Social responsibility to confirm women progress giving women equal opportunities and Rights.

Women Today's are Ruling over the world and making their mark in various fields with the dedication and hard work shown by them to excel in their area of Expertise. Women are not Treated as an object or slave, rather they have now become Independent of unethical, social norms Imposed on them as a Result. Companies are hiring are women force n ore numbers since they have should

excellence in dedication towards their work as well as striking a perfect balance between their social, Personal and professional life. Female Job Seekers were not given much preference earlier but now they are preference candidate for many Jobs. The Terms women empowerment refers to the Increasing of the Spiritual, Social, Political or Economical Strength of all women. It is frequently seen that the empowered in their capacities develop confidence.

Women empowerments refers to Increasing and Improving the Social, Economic, Political and Legal Strength of the women to ensure equal Right to women and to make them confident enough to claim their Rights. It is also Refers to the creation of environment for women there they can make decision of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society.

Empowerment of women is conceivably the sum total of the points listed below or parallel capacities:-

- Having the power of making decision for self.
- Having Access to Resources and Information for Proper decision making.
- Ability of showing Assertiveness while making decision collectively.
- Ability of development new skills for group power and self Improvement.
- Ability to using democratic means to change perceptions of others.
- Adopting changes and a growth process that are self Initiated and never ending.
- On Increase positive self-Image.
- Freely live their life with a sense of self worth, Respect and dignity.
- To have Equal Right to participate in social religious and public Activities.
- Have Equal Rights for Social, Economic Justice.
- Get Equal Opportunity for Education.
- Get Equal Employment Opportunity without any gender bias.
- Get safe and comfortable working environment.

Introduction:

Microfinance self-helps group has recognized internationally group of the modern tool. To combat poverty far rural development.

Microfinance & SHG are effecting in Reducing poverty empowering women and creating away. Which finally Result in sustainable development of the nation.

Women have been the most under privilege and **discriminated** state ay the society not only in India but the world over.

in spite of the Govt. & non Govt. efforts, they have been lightly ignorant clients of the financial sector. In the recent time microfinance was bias emerging as a powerful Instrument for Empowering women partially the rural women. A part from the Informal sector of finance the formal & semi formal sector like commercial Bank NGO etc. use taking much interest providing.

Microfinance to women considering it to be profitable Commercial Activity women use also participating in the Microfinance service being provided the various financial channel.

The main Aim of Microfinance is to empower women Microfinance is provision of financial services to low income client. Including consumer & the self employer, who traditionally lack access to Banking as Related services Microfinance (i) Unbankable's, brining, credit, saving of other essential finance services within the reach of million of people who are too poor to be served. By Regular Books

most cases because they are unable to offer sufficient collateral women make up a large proportion of Microfinance beneficiaries.

Traditionally, women especially those in underdevelopment, countries have been unable to readily participate in economic activity. Microfinance provides women with business ventures and activity. Participating in the economically active gives the participants an impetus to improve their state and make them more active in decision making.

Thus, encouraging gender equality according to CGAP, long-standing MFIs even report a decline in violence towards women since the inception of microfinance.

The most of the microfinance institutions and agencies all over the world focus on women in developing countries. Life observation and experience shows that women are a small credit risk, reporting their loans and tend more often to benefit the whole family in other aspects. It is also viewed as a method giving women more status in a socioeconomic way of changing the current conservative relationship between gender & class.

A recent World Bank report confirms that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay the cost of greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker government, and a lower living standard for all people. At a macro level, it is because 70% of the world's poor are women. Women have a higher employment rate than men in virtually every country and make up the majority of the informal sector of most economies. They constitute the bulk of those who need microfinance services.

Giving women access to microfinance loans therefore generates a multiplier effect that increases the impact of microfinance institution activities benefiting multiple generations.

Factors that affect gender equality:

- **Access to Capital:** Microfinance provides women with access to capital, enabling them to start or expand small businesses, fostering economic independence.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Microfinance promotes financial inclusion by reaching out to women in underserved communities, offering them opportunities to engage in formal financial systems.
- **Entrepreneurship Development:** Through microfinance, women can develop entrepreneurial skills, as they use the provided funds to establish and manage income-generating activities.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Microfinance often involves smaller, manageable loan amounts, reducing the financial risks for women entrepreneurs and making it more feasible for them to engage in business activities.
- **Capacity Building:** Microfinance institutions often provide training and capacity-building programs, equipping women with the skills needed to manage businesses effectively.
- **Community Impact:** The benefits of microfinance extend to the community, as empowered women contribute to local economic development and social improvement.
- **Women's Decision-Making Power:** Microfinance enhances women's decision-making power within households, leading to increased influence in family matters and community affairs.
- **Social Empowerment:** Beyond economic aspects, microfinance contributes to social empowerment by improving women's status, recognition, and participation in various spheres of life.
- **Flexible Repayment Schedules:** Microfinance institutions often offer flexible repayment schedules, accommodating the dynamic nature of women's businesses and income streams.
- **Breaking Gender Norms:** Microfinance challenges traditional gender norms by providing financial resources directly to women, challenging stereotypes and fostering a more equitable society.

2. Entrepreneurial Opportunities: It provides women with the means to start their own businesses and engage in income-generating activities.

3. Poverty Alleviation: Microfinance plays a vital role in lifting women and their families out of poverty by creating economic opportunities.

5. Improved Livelihoods: By providing financial resources, microfinance contributes to improving the overall quality of life for women and their families.

6. Asset Accumulation: Microfinance enables women to accumulate assets, creating a foundation for long-term economic stability.

7. Women's Decision-Making Power: Empowered by financial independence, women gain more influence in household and community decision-making.

9. Healthcare Access: Improved financial status allows women to access better healthcare services, positively impacting their well-being.

- **Community Development:** Empowered women often play key roles in community development initiatives, fostering positive change beyond their individual businesses.
- **Flexible Repayment Structures:** Microfinance institutions often offer flexible repayment options, accommodating the unpredictable nature of small businesses.
- **Social Networks and Support:** Microfinance groups create supportive networks, offering women a platform to share experiences and overcome challenges collectively.
- **Microenterprise Growth:** Microfinance helps women grow their microenterprises, contributing to economic development at the grassroots level.
- **Empowerment Through Ownership:** Ownership of businesses and assets through microfinance empowers women by giving them control over their economic destinies.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Small, manageable loan amounts in microfinance reduce financial risks for women entrepreneurs, making entrepreneurship more accessible.
- **Crisis Resilience:** Empowered women are often more resilient in the face of economic crises, having diversified income sources through microfinance.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Microfinance encourages innovation as women explore creative solutions to business challenges and market demands.
- **Access to Markets:** Microfinance not only provides capital but often connects women to markets, expanding their reach and customer base.
- **Psychological Empowerment:** Beyond tangible benefits, microfinance instills a sense of confidence and self-esteem in women, contributing to their psychological empowerment.

Conclusion:

At the end we can say that Microfinance is playing a vital role in the social, psychological as well as Economic empowerment of women in India. Microfinance loan Availability and its productive Utilization found to be having a profound role and Impact on women empowerment. Today Microfinance is striving to match the convenience and flexibility of Informal sector while Adding flexibility and continuity.

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