MICRO ENTERPRISE: WAY FOR DEVELOPMENT RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UTTARAKHAND (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

Economic independence is the need of the hour. Participation in income generating activities helps in the overall empowerment of women. The SHGs had major impact on social and economic life of rural women. It helps women increase in social recognition of self, status of family in the society, improvement of standard of living. The concept of Self Help Groups (SHGs) is proving to be a helpful mechanism for the women empowerment. SHG is an organization of rural poor, particularly of women that deliver micro credit to undertake the entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship development and income generating activities are a feasible solution for empowering women. It generates income and also provides flexible working hours according to the needs of homemakers. This paper reviews in brief the literature in this field and addresses women entrepreneurs in rural areas. It examined the impact on women empowerment through micro entrepreneurship development. Keywords: Micro enterprise, micro credit, rural entrepreneurship, self help groups, women entrepreneur.

I. Introduction

Micro enterprise is an effective instrument of social and economic development. The micro finance is agenda for empowering poor women. Micro enterprises are an integral part of planned strategy for securing balanced development of the economy of the poor women. Rural women’s participation in agro-based activities is much more than what statistics reveal. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the work done by the women at farm and home is disguised as daily chores. Mechanization and easy availability of labour provide more time to energetic women to engage themselves in self-employment or entrepreneur ventures. Rural women are having human and nonhuman resources to take up an enterprise need one an innovative mind and motivation.

Several surveys conducted in different parts of the world regarding women entrepreneurship management show that women have provided to be good entrepreneurs for the following reasons Economic independence, Establishing own credit idea, Social Identity, Achievement of excellence, Confidence, Status in society, Greater freedom and mobility.

Entrepreneurship is a prime solution to the growing employment among rural youth. It helps to generate employment for a number of people within their own social system. This is more beneficial for women in rural areas as it enables them to add to the family income while taking care of their own home and livestock centered task. Rural women possess abundant resources to take up enterprises. Entrepreneurship development among rural women helps to enhance their personal capabilities and increase decision-making status in the family and society as a whole.
Entrepreneurship development through self Help groups (shg)

A Self-help group is a small economically homogenous and sign If I can’t group of rural urban poor voluntarily formed to save and mutually agreed to contribute to a common fund to be lent to its members as per group decisions. These are groups, which have similar social identity, heritage, caste or traditional occupations and come together for a common cause and manage resources for the benefit of the group members. The Self Help Groups scheme was introduced in Tamilnadu in 1989. (Poornima et al.) Found that a typical rural women’s SHG is a good example of capacity building for prospective entrepreneur. Its aims include enabling members with no educational or industrial or entrepreneurial background to become self dependent and self reliance.

Pattanaik (2003) reveals that SHGs are continuously striving for a better future for rural women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the domestic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. But due to certain constraints like gender inequality, exploitation, women torture for which various SHGs is not organized properly and effectively. Members in SHG agree to save regularly and convert their savings into a common fund and to use this common fund for management and business activities. (Suguna, 2006) SHG provides an opportunity to improve their financial social and political status by their involvement as a team.

Concept of Self Help Groups (Shgs)

The concept of Self Help Groups serves to underline the principle “for the people, by the people and of the people”. The Self Help Groups is the brain child of Gamelan Bank of Bangladesh, which was founded by Prof. Mohammed Yunas of Chittagong University in the year 1975. SHG is proving to be a helpful instrument for the women empowerment and organization of rural poor, particularly of women that deliver micro credit to undertake the entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship development and income generating activities are a feasible solution for empowering women. It generates income and also provides flexible working hours according to the needs of homemakers. Economic independence is the need of the hour. Participation in income generating activities helps in the overall empowerment of women. The SHGs had major impact on social and economic life of rural women. It helps women increase in social recognition of self, status of family in the society, improvement of standard of living. SHGs could be linked to literacy programmes run by government and it could be made an integral part of SHG activities. Raised literacy level could be helpful for the SHG members to overcome cognitive constraints and to understand government policies, technical understanding and gaining required skills.

In India National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is top institution, recognized with all matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural India with a vision to facilitate sustained access to financial services for the unreached poor in rural areas. NABARD has been working as a catalyst in promoting and linking more and more SHGs to the banking system. It is considered as a landmark development in banking for the poor.

Rural women could be motivated to avail finances for starting the entrepreneurial activities. Awareness created about various credit facilities, financial incentives and subsidies through Self Help Groups. As women were found technologically less empowered, they are to be imposed to the technologies which are labour saving, drudgery reducing, income generating and productivity increasing. Entrepreneurship education and trainings could be introduced at all levels from basic education.
II. MICRO ENTERPRISES

Micro enterprise is an effective instrument of social and economic development. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises is defined in India “the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006” of Government of India. According to the act MSMEs micro enterprise is classified on the basis of capital investment does not exceed Rs. 2.5 million in manufacturing sector and Rs.1 million for service sector. This is more beneficial for women in rural areas as it enables them to add to the family income while taking care of their own home and livestock task. The micro entrepreneurship are strengthening the women empowerment and remove the gender equalities. Self Help Group’s micro credit mechanism makes the members to involve in other community development activities.

Micro-Enterprise Development
Depending on number of factors ranging from landholdings, subsidiary occupations, agro climatic conditions and socio-personal characteristics of the rural women and her family member the areas of micro-enterprises also differ from place to place.

The micro enterprises are classified under three major heads:
i. Micro Enterprise development related to agriculture activities it is cultivating to organic vegetables, flowers, oil seeds and seed production are some of the areas besides taking up mushroom growing and bee keeping. Some more areas can be like dehydration of fruits and vegetables, canning or bottling of pickles, chutneys, jams, squashes, dairy and other products that are ready to eat.
ii. Micro-enterprise development related to livestock management activities it is dairy farming, poultry farm, livestock feed production and production of vermi composting using the animal waste can be an important area in which women can utilize both her technical skills and raw materials from the farm and livestock to earn substantial income and small scale agro-processing units.
iii. Micro-enterprise development related to household based operations, It is generally handicraft related enterprises where women perform activities like knitting, stitching, weaving, embroidery etc.

Advantages of micro enterprise in building women Empowerment
A micro enterprise is not only enhancing national productivity, generate employment but also helping to develop economic independence, personal and social capabilities among rural women.

Some of the personal and social capabilities, which were developed enterprise
• Economic liberty
• Improved standard of living
• Self -reliance
• Enhance awareness
• Sense of achievement
• Increased social interaction
• Engaged in political activities
• Increased participation in social meetings
• Development in leadership qualities
• Involvement in solving problems related to women and community
• Decision making capacity in family and community

Challenges and opportunities for rural entrepreneurs
Kishor and Choudhary ( 2011) in his study emphasize on the role of women entrepreneurs, as they have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in India, However, it is
potentially empowering and liberating only if it provides women an opportunity to improve their well-being and enhance their capabilities. On the other hand, if it is driven by distress and is low public support than it may only increase women drudgery.

Kumari, et. al. (2010) conducted work in the rural areas, the results of the study indicate lack of supportive network, financial and marketing problems were the major problem areas for rural women entrepreneurs and major de-motivator for other women. Srinivasan (2009) Microfinance has made great strides during the last decade, the SHG bank linkage programme has continue to make good progress in India but at a slower pace. It is found that poor quality of information about microfinance that is available to people renders their decision making and conservatives. The main challenges faced by rural women in business are lack of technical knowledge and skills and to make balance their time between work & family.

Some of the challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs are as follows:-

**Dual role of women overlapping of responsibility of Business and family:**
As the boundaries between the business and the family tend to be indistinct, women operating family businesses face a unique set of issues related to personal identity, role conflict, loyalties, family relationships, and attitudes towards authority.

**Problem of Finance**
There are several gap in availability of credit for women. The multiplicity of schemes is not adequately listed nor is there networking among agencies. As a result, clients approaching one institution are not made aware of the best option for their requirements.

**Illiteracy among rural women:**
The literacy rate of women in India is found at low level compared to male population. The rural women are ignorant of new technology or unskilled. They are often unable to do research & gain the necessary training.

**Less Risk Bearing Capacity:**
Women in India lives secure and protected life in family. Decision making power related to business activities is less due to economic dependent and domination of male headed society.

**Lack of visibility as strategic leaders:**
Changing the perceptions about the likely success of women-owned businesses depends on increasing women’s visibility in leadership positions within the greater business community.

**Lack of information and assistance:**
Another important need of many women business owners is obtaining the appropriate assistance and information needed to take the business to the next level of growth. In a study conducted to gather information needs of women entrepreneurs, those who were just starting their ventures, requested assistance and training in implementing the business idea, identifying initial sources of financing, and advertising/promotion.

**Need of training and development:**
Furthermore, in business schools where most of the professional advisers today were trained, the male model of business is still being taught by overwhelming majorityof male professors. Examples of women entrepreneurs have been left out of textbooks, and rarely is a female business owner used as the example or case study. Neither the women nor the men students are learning about the natural abilities and talents women are using to succeed as business owners today. Unfortunately, without some very strong initiatives on the part of educators, the process will be slow to change.
Male dominated society:
The male - female competition is another factor, which develop hurdles to women entrepreneurs in the business management process. Despite the fact that women entrepreneurs are good in keeping their service prompt and delivery in time, due to lack of organizational skills compared to male entrepreneurs women have to face constraints from competition.

Lack of Infrastructure:
More than 70 percent of enterprises are micro- and small enterprises but their growth and the competitiveness is greatly challenged by a lack of business management, marketing and technical skills besides the overall weak infrastructure and complicated legal frameworks for business processes, especially in global online transaction context. This is the problems for the rural women entrepreneurs. They have to depend on office staffs and intermediaries to get the things done, especially the marketing and sales side of business.

Mobility constraints:
Rural women in Indian society have got restricted mobility. The carrier of women is limited in four walls of kitchen. There is hardly any opportunity to cross this boundary. The mobility problem has been solved to certain extent by the explosion of Information technology & telecommunication facilities.

Opportunities for Rural Entrepreneurs
Therefore there is generous evidence to suggest that if more women are motivated and are given the necessary encouragement and help for becoming entrepreneurs, they would contribute effectively in running viable commercial enterprises. There are several schemes and plans both by centre and state government at different levels for the encouragement and support to rural women entrepreneurs in India. In 1999-2000, the Government of India launched “Swarna Jayanthi Grama Swarojgar Yojana” programme for promoting poverty alleviation through self-employment and the organization of poor into Self-Help Groups (SHG). Loans sanctioned under this scheme are treated as medium-term loans. The SHGs have given a new lease of life to the women in villages for their social and economic empowerment. There is national policy for creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential. These policies provide opportunities of equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and participation in economic progress of the nation. There are diversified vocational training programmes for women by ministry of labour and employment; they have established regional vocational training institutes for development of entrepreneurial skills.

Following are the major programs for development of entrepreneurship in India:

- **Integrated rural development programme**:-
  The main objectives of integrated rural development Programme is to increase the income generating power of family who are below the poverty line to alleviate the poverty. They impart technical & entrepreneurial skills & raise the income level of the poor.

- **IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme)**:- and its allied programmes
  - **TRYSEM** (Training Rural Youth for Self Employment)
  - **DWCRA** (Development of women and Children in Rural Areas.)
  - **JRY** (Jawahar Rozgar Yojna):- It is wage Employment programme implemented by Panchayats at Village, Block & District level in the ratio. 70:15:15 etc.
• Support and Training and Employment Programme for Women (Step) By Ministry Of Rural Development
• Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
• Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), including Food Grains Component
• Assistance for Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes
• National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
• National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)
• National Food for Work Programme (NFWP)
• National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP)
• Credit Support Programme
• Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana
• Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme
• Workshed Scheme for Khadi Artisans

III. Conclusion

Women entrepreneurs can play a role of catalyst in social and economic development of country like India. They faced many obstacles specifically in finance and marketing of their produce. The rural women are having basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise. Now, what is the need is knowledge regarding accessibility to loans, various funding agencies procedure regarding certification, awareness on government welfare programmes, motivation, technical skill and support from family, government and other organization. Micro finance is playing a vital role in the success of SHGs, particularly the entry of rural women in micro enterprises will be encouraged and aggravated. Women entrepreneur networks are major sources of knowledge about women’s entrepreneurship and they are increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for its development and promotion. This will motivate other rural women to engage in micro entrepreneurship with the right assistance and they can strengthen their capacities adding to the family income and national productivity.

Bibliography