

## UNRAVELING THE NEXUS: WOMEN'S NEEDS, PARTICIPATION, AND EMPOWERMENT ACROSS SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

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### Abstract

Women are a crucial part of India's workforce and play a significant role in the country's economy. Historically, women have been primarily confined to domestic responsibilities, resulting in challenges and hardships. In India, around 50% of the population consists of women, with 75% of the female population residing in rural regions. Promoting women's empowerment is vital for a society characterized by equality. This study aimed to examine women's empowerment through self-help groups (shgs) in the papumpare region of Arunachal Pradesh. A comprehensive sample of 214 respondents, including 120 SHG groups, was selected to assess the perceived level of women empowerment. The researchers used a perceived empowerment index to determine the levels of empowerment among participants. The study found that the involvement of shgs has led to women's empowerment in various aspects, including social recognition, social standing enhancement, self-employment opportunities, and the cultivation of savings habits. A significant proportion of respondents reported experiencing a moderate level of overall empowerment as a result of their participation in these groups.

**Keywords:** *development, economic activity, women's empowerment, social recognition, self-employment.*

### Introduction

Women in India play a crucial role in both social and economic development. The achievement of a nation's comprehensive development depends on the equitable treatment of both men and women. Women possess inherent leadership qualities, but historically, they have been primarily relegated to domestic responsibilities, resulting in several challenges and hardships. Around half of the population in India consists of women, with approximately 75% of the female population residing in areas.

Women's empowerment is defined as the progressive attainment of women's capacity to exercise democratic and calculated decisions in their lives, within a framework where such agency has previously been withered from them. Over the course of secular growth in India, the status of women has shown signs of improvement, although at a slow rate. The imperative of fostering gender equality in various domains of social and economic endeavors is essential for the development of a society characterized by equal rights and opportunities for women.

Selvarani's research in 2006 found that a significant proportion of women perceived a moderate level of empowerment across various dimensions, including social, economic, and political aspects. Gupta's study in 2007 found that self-help groups (SHGS) have a significant impact on improving women's lives positively.

Tandon (2016) provided A comprehensive analysis of options and viewpoints on women's empowerment, encompassing both psychological and economic aspects. Rachit (2017) focused on women's empowerment in Uttar Pradesh, while Rahman et al. (2017) found that microfinance has A favorable influence on various measures of women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

Women in India play A significant and essential labor force that plays A crucial role in both social and economic development. The promotion of gender equality and the role of self-help groups in empowering women is essential for achieving A more equitable society.

### **The sociological dimensions**

Women's empowerment in SHGs in Arunachal Pradesh, India. The study was conducted in the Palampure region, which has 819,855 shgs, with 8,300,251 women (about half the population of New York) beneficiary's members. The study was conducted in the Palampure region, which had A significant representation of around 42 percent of the total SHG formations in the state. The study used A purposive sampling method to select three districts based on the first implementation of the SHG program and guidelines of the United Nations development program (UNDP). The third stage involved A random sampling process in selecting to villages from each mandal, based on the distance from the mandal headquarters, three villages situated between the two previously chosen villages, and 30 villages with an equal representation of 15 villages from each district. The final stage involved A random selection process to choose four SHG groups from each village, with three individuals recruited, including A leader and two more members.

The study found that A significant proportion of female members reported A high level of empowerment in terms of their ability to freely voice their opinions and address group issues at group meetings. The study also revealed that participants had not made significant progress in utilizing their abilities to preserve records, make difficult judgments, explore opportunities, and develop leadership capacities.

The study found that the moderate degree of psychological empowerment among respondents can be attributed to the women's exposure to SHGS, which has enabled them to develop self-confidence, exhibit high levels of self-reliance, engage in moderate decision-making, and foster high aspirations. The sociological dimension of women's empowerment refers to the assistance provided to others through SHGS in order to acquire practical and impactful skills.

The study highlights the importance of addressing the sociological dimensions of women's empowerment in shgs in Arunachal pradesh. By focusing on the sociological dimensions of empowerment, organizations can better support and empower women in their communities.

The study reveals that A significant proportion of women in the rayalaseem region of Arunachal pradesh have experienced sociological and economic empowerment. This has been achieved through the implementation of regular saving habits, active participation in decision-making processes related to initiating their own enterprises, increasing awareness of women's rights, addressing social issues, and learning about interest rates and access to credit for income-generating activities.

The results show that 65.2% of respondents in kurnol and 68.1% in anantapur expressed this perception. In the *papumpare* district, 18.33% of participants chose to embrace A high degree of sociological empowerment, while

16.11% chose to embrace a low level. Women also reported a sense of complete empowerment in terms of their social standing, social acknowledgment, and involvement in group decision-making upon becoming members of the self-help group (SHG).

### **The Economic dimension**

Women's empowerment extends to the sustained development of women's active participation in self-help group (SHG) activities, including conducting SHG elections, identifying and recruiting future leaders, and effectively managing the self-help circle through ballot decision-making processes. This aspect of women's empowerment pertains to the process of selecting leaders within shgs, where collective decision-making is used to select a leader.

S.No.	Category	No.	Percent
1	Low	49	21
2	Medium	112	56
3	High	53	21
	Total	214	100

Based on the findings of the current study, it is recommended that additional training and increased awareness be provided to members to enhance their economic standards through the cultivation of entrepreneurial concepts. Non-governmental organizations should establish learning opportunities aimed at embracing the abilities of all members. Members of SHGs should be provided with opportunities to participate in skill development programs, which can enhance their internal confidence and foster self-motivation.

It is recommended that each individual within the group take turns assuming a leadership role, as this practice promotes the cultivation of robust decision-making abilities among group members and affords them opportunities for social acknowledgment. The act of mobilising individuals to participate in innovative economic pursuits enables them to explore alternate methods of securing their livelihoods by maintaining a regular practice of saving.

### **Conclusion**

The research conducted on the topic of women's empowerment through SHGs in the region of Arunachal Pradesh yields a noteworthy outcome. Over the course of decades of democratic growth in India, there has been A gradual improvement in the position of women, although at A slow rate. Promoting women's empowerment through various domains of social and economic endeavors is vital for the establishment of a society that upholds principles of equality.

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