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Women Empowerment

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Abstract

Women's Empowerment has been an issue of immense discussions and contemplation over the last few decades world-wide. This as an agenda has been on top of the lists of most government plans & programs as well. Efforts have been made on a regular basis across nations to address this issue and enhance the socio-economic status of women. However, it has been observed that most of the policies and programs view empowerment in the economic sense only working in the belief that economic self-reliance empowers women ignoring other variables like health, education, literacy etc. It further aims towards understanding the linkages between SHGs & women empowerment and proposing suggestions to accelerate the empowerment drive paying due attention to the local level area specific factors for a developing country like India which have a crucial impact upon region specific women empowerment process and thereby point the way for further research in the area.

Keywords: Women Empowerment; Socio-economic status; income; economic self reliance.

Introduction

The strength of chain is the strength of its weakest link. In a society, women are the weakest links, so that they may be strengthened for strengthening the society as a whole and that is possible only by empowering them. Nehru said, "Women should be uplifted for the upliftment of the nation, if a woman is uplifted, society and nation is uplifted." Women empowerment is critical to the process of development of the community. Empowerment of women is essential to harness the women labour in the mainstream of economic development. According to Swami Vivekanand, "..... there is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of the women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing" (Yojana, Aug. 2001). Women have to play an important role in the building up of every economy. Women who form almost one half of the world's population constitute the visible majority of the poor. Women either solely or largely support an increasing number of families. Women experience poverty more than man. When money is given to men, it may not benefit the family but when women manage money, it is found to be better utilized. Projects aiming to improve the living conditions of the poor cannot, therefore be effective unless women participate in their formulation and implementation as contributors as well as beneficiaries. "Increasing women's capabilities and empowering them is the surest way to economic growth and overall development."

