

Problem & Challenges faced by Women after Joining Self Help Groups

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ABSTRACT

Self help groups are formed by likeminded group members and the working include mutual selling and working with mutual cooperation, Inter selling between the group members and they should choose the product collectively which are easier to make and doesn't involve high technology and they can manage and fight efficiently with the competition and it is been observed that women participants face criticism while working. Some appropriate solutions to overcome constraints and difficulties faced by members of SHGs so that they can work and one common platform is required to showcase their products which are non-adulterated and of good quality.

Keywords: SHGs, bank linkage, Financial services, Capital formation

INTRODUCTION

Microfinance services today are accessed by million clients including the SHG- Bank linkage and MFI models. The mechanism of microfinance operates at three different levels: firstly the poor people or borrowers who take the loans and invest in their own enterprise. Secondly, the loan delivery and recovery system and thirdly the institutions i.e. banks, MFIs, NGO's and other microfinance supporting institutes that energise the whole system of microfinance. The growth of microfinance has been significantly responsible for building social capital and empirical evidence proves that there is a direct relation between social capital and the performance of credit delivery. Further 97% of the groups formed for microfinance are having female members. Some of the financial practitioners shrink their hands for extending financial support to female members as they feel that to give services and benefits to women can affect their financial working, they fear that it will affect their efficiency and professionalism because females are not as determined to work as compared to men, so may be their finance can become a bad debt. As a matter of fact, most state governments now consider it desirable to offer women's empowerment programs in order to alleviate poverty and to bring about women's development.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dasgupta (2005), in the study, "Microfinance in India: Empirical Evidence, Alternative Models and Policy Imperatives" commented that a paradigm shift is required from "financial sector reform" to "micro-finance reform". While the priority sector needs to be made lean, mandatory micro credit must be monitored rigorously. The study concluded space and scope have to be properly designed for providing competitive environment to micro-finance services. Sangwan (2008), in his study titled "Financial Inclusion and self-help groups" studied the extent financial inclusion across various states. The study examined the role of SHG bank linkage programme in achieving financial inclusion. The study suggested a significant role of SHG led programme in achieving financial inclusion. Beside this, the study tried to examine the role of other factors like banking density, financial literacy and per capita income in achieving financial inclusion. Bekaert *et al.* (2005), in their study titled, "Does Financial Liberalization spur growth?" examined a positive

impact of equity market liberalization on real economic growth. Further, they also observed the positive impact of capital account liberalization and quality of financial institutions i.e. NGO on economic growth. Sharma (2007), in the study, “Index of Financial Inclusion” through cross country empirical study examined a close relationship between financial inclusion and development. Further, the study found a positive relation between financial inclusion and different socio-economic variables like income, inequality, literacy, physical infrastructures. Sahoo *et al.* (2008), in the study, “Financial Inclusion-An Overview” had attempted to develop index of financial inclusion to examine the progress of financial inclusion and various determinants of financial inclusion using secondary data from various sources. In their study, they observed a MFI’s services positive impact on infrastructure development, education; self help group formation on financial inclusion both from financial widening and deepening perspectives.

Review of literature provides us with a structured observation guide, including the factors of compliance in groups. Different cases of group lending in different cultures are analyzed. These include, in chronological order, traditional self-help associations based on rotating savings and credit (ROSCA); solidarity group lending schemes without legal joint liability. The present study is conducted to fill the gap between microfinance supporting institutes policies, procedures and products can contribute to women beneficiaries.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Punjab state is divided into the three agro-climatic zones as under:

Sub-Mountainous Zone: This zone includes Hoshiarpur, Ropar, Nawan Shehar and Mohali (Zone-I).

Central Plain Zone: This zone includes Amritsar, Gurdaspur (except Pathankot), Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib, Taran Taran, Moga and Sangrur (Zone-II).

South-Western Zone: This zone includes Bathinda, Mansa, Faridkot, Mukatsar, Ferozpur, Abohar and Barnala (Zone-III).

The contact and postal addresses of Self-Help Groups working in different zones were taken from the office of Additional Deputy Commissioner-Development, Child Development Program Office, NGOs, Progressive youth forum etc. Zone wise SHGs were listed and randomly an approximate proportionate number of SHGs were selected from each zone. The selected SHGs came to 19, 42, 17 from Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively.

PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES FACED BY RESPONDENTS AFTER JOINING SELF HELP GROUPS : PROBLEMS FACED AFTER JOINING SHGs

Some problems were identified which were faced by the members after joining the MFI. The respondents were asked to express their extent of agreement on these problems in terms of ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Neutral’, ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’. The results shown in Table 1.1 indicated that the overall average score of ‘additional stress for saving and repayment of loan’ was 2.18 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The mean score came to be 2.23, 2.13 and 2.22 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the respondents in all the zones disagreed on the problem of additional stress for saving and repayment of loans.

Table 1.1 Extent of Agreement on Problems Faced after Joining the Group by the Respondents

Statement	Zone-I	Zone-II	Zone-III	Overall	F-ratio
	Mean \square SD	Mean \square SD	Mean \square SD	Mean \square SD	
You have additional stress for saving & repayment of loan	2.23 \square 1.20	2.13 \square 1.24	2.22 \square 1.23	2.18 \square 1.23	0.17
Your daily work is affected	1.79 \square 0.93	1.67 \square 0.92	1.67 \square 1.11	1.70 \square 0.96	0.33
You have neglected children	1.77 \square 0.88	1.75 \square 0.89	1.78 \square 0.98	1.76 \square 0.90	0.04
Non co-operation from your family/husband has increased	1.89 \square 1.05	1.72 \square 0.94	1.78 \square 1.08	1.78 \square 1.00	0.55
You have to face problems while facing the customer	1.79 \square 0.99	1.69 \square 0.89	1.78 \square 1.08	1.74 \square 0.96	0.28

The overall average score of 'adverse effect on routine work' was 1.70 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The mean score came to be 1.79, 1.67 and 1.67 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the respondents in all the zones disagreed on the problem of adverse effect on the routine work. The overall average score of 'neglecting children' was 1.76 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The mean score came to be 1.77, 1.75 and 1.78 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the respondents in all the zones disagreed on the problem of neglecting children after joining the SHGs.

The overall average score of 'increase in the non-cooperation from family/husband' was 1.78, showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The mean score came to be 1.89, 1.72 and 1.78 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the respondents in all the zones disagreed on the problem of non-cooperation from family/husband after joining SHGs. The overall average score of 'facing problems while facing the customer' was 1.74 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The mean score came to be 1.79, 1.69 and 1.78 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the respondents in all the zones disagreed on the problem that they faced any problem while facing the customer after joining the SHGs. The analysis revealed that there was no such problem faced by the members after joining the SHGs.

ATTITUDE RELATED PROBLEMS AFTER JOINING MFI

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on attitude related problems in terms of 'very frequently', 'frequently', 'often', 'sometimes' and 'never'. A perusal of Table 1.2 showed that the overall average score of 'having fear of failure' came to be 1.56 which indicated that the members have fear of failure at sometimes. The mean score worked at 1.62, 1.55 and 1.53 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the members in all the zones have sometimes fear of failure. The overall average score of 'solving the problems independently' came to be 2.19 which indicated that the members are of the opinion that they sometimes can solve the problems independently. But they are able to solve the problems independently always. The mean score worked at 2.13, 2.04 and 2.60 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the members in Zone-I and Zone-II can solve the problems independently at sometimes while the members in Zone-III are of better opinion that they can often solve the problems independently. The opinion in Zone-III was found to be significantly better as compared to that in Zone-I and Zone-II as conveyed by the calculated F-ratio of 3.18.

Table 1.2 Extent of Agreement on Attitude Related Problems Faced by the Respondents after Joining MFI

Statement	Zone-I	Zone-II	Zone-III	Overall	F-ratio
	Mean □□SD	Mean □ SD	Mean □□SD	Mean □ SD	
Do you have fear of failure	1.62 □□1.24	1.55 □□1.20	1.53 □□1.17	1.56 □□1.20	0.17
Do you solve the problems independently	2.13 □□1.50	2.04 □□1.46	2.60 □□1.51	2.19 □□1.49	3.18*
Do you think you will be able to manage the time within the time available	2.37 □□1.58	2.44 □□1.59	2.95 □□1.64	2.53 □□1.61	3.21*

The overall average score of 'able to manage the time within the time available' came to be 2.53 which indicated that the members are of the opinion that they often can manage the time within the time available. But they are able to always manage the time within the time available. The mean score worked at 2.37, 2.44 and 2.95 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This showed that the members in Zone-I and Zone-II can sometimes manage the time within the time while the members in Zone-III are of better opinion that they can often manage the time within the time available. The opinion in Zone-III was found to be significantly better as compared to that in Zone-I and Zone-II as conveyed by the calculated F-ratio of 3.21.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AFTER JOINING MFI

Five psychological constraints were identified to assess the extent of agreement among respondents about psychological problems after joining MFIs. The analysis given in Table 1.3 showed that the overall average extent of agreement on 'don't have confidence to work' was 1.34, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that they have confidence to work after joining MFIs. The zone-wise analysis showed that the average extent of agreement in Zone-I was 1.33, Zone-II 1.33 and Zone-III 1.36. This revealed that the respondents in all the 3 zones are confident to do work.

Table 1.3 Extent of Agreement on Psychological Problems Faced by the Respondents after Joining MFI

Statements	Zone-I	Zone-II	Zone-III	Overall	F-ratio
	Mean □□SD	Mean □ SD	Mean □□SD	Mean □ SD	
You don't have confidence to work	1.33 □□0.65	1.33 □□0.79	1.36 □□0.68	1.34 □□0.73	0.09
The presence of male at work affects your confidence	1.30 □□0.46	1.31 □□0.70	1.33 □□0.47	1.31 □□0.60	0.11
The fear of failure that the work started with borrowed money	1.49 □□0.56	1.29 □□0.66	1.27 □□1.41	1.33 □□0.58	0.78
You fear of being physically weak	1.26 □□0.44	1.27 □□0.65	1.43 □□0.52	1.30 □□0.61	0.56
You have fear of character assassination, sexual harassment when you are working	1.37 □□0.51	1.28 □□0.67	1.72 □□0.49	1.40 □□0.58	3.09*

The overall average extent of agreement on 'the presence of male at work place affects the confidence' was 1.31, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that the presence of male at the work place does not affect their confidence. The zone-wise analysis showed that the average extent of agreement in Zone-I was 1.30, Zone-II 1.31 and Zone-III 1.32. This revealed that the respondents in all the 3 do not lose their confidence to work even if male members are there at the work place. The overall average extent of agreement on 'the fear of failure that the borrowed money with which work started will not be recovered' was 1.37, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that the money will be

recovered. The zone-wise analysis showed that the average extent of agreement in Zone-I was 1.49, Zone-II 1.29 and Zone-III 1.27. This revealed that the respondents in all the 3 zones do not fear that the money with which the work started will not be recovered. The overall average extent of agreement on 'the fear of being physically weak' was 1.39, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that they will become physically weak after joining MFIs. The zone-wise analysis showed that the average extent of agreement in Zone-I was 1.26, Zone-II 1.27 and Zone-III 1.43. This revealed that the respondents in all the 3 zones do not fear that they will be physically weak after joining MFIs.

The overall average extent of agreement on 'the fear of character assassination/sexual harassment when working' was 1.40, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that there is no fear of character assassination/sexual harassment at the place of working. The zone-wise analysis showed that the average extent of agreement in Zone-I was 1.37, Zone-II 1.28 and Zone-III 1.72. This revealed that the respondents in Zone-I and Zone-II strongly disagreed that they have fear of character assassination/sexual harassment while of Zone-III disagreed that they have fear of character assassination/sexual harassment when working.

Therefore, the analysis revealed there was no psychological problem to the members after joining MFIs. Rather their confidence has increased to fare better at work places.

FAMILY PROBLEMS AFTER JOINING MFI

The respondents were asked to register their extent of agreement on some problems related to their family life. The results are presented in Table 1.4. It is evident from the Table that the overall average extent of agreement on 'lack of cooperation from the family' came to be 1.21, thereby indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was any lack of cooperation from the family after joining MFIs. The zone wise analysis showed that the average score of the statement was 1.28, 1.16 and 1.24 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This indicated that there was no lack of cooperation from the family.

Table 1.4 Extent of Agreement on Family Problems Faced by the Respondents after Joining MFI

Statements	Zone-I	Zone-II	Zone-III	Overall	F-Ratio
	Mean □ SD	Mean □ SD	Mean □ SD	Mean □ SD	
Lack of cooperation from the family	1.28 □ 0.66	1.16 □ 0.46	1.24 □ 0.58	1.21 □ 0.54	1.13
Opposition from husband	1.30 □ 0.67	1.37 □ 0.44	1.37 □ 0.48	1.35 □ 0.34	0.98
Increase in family dispute/tension since you working	1.32 □ 0.71	1.15 □ 0.42	1.41 □ 0.42	1.25 □ 0.61	2.21
Husband alcoholism problem	1.13 □ 0.23	1.39 □ 0.54	1.12 □ 0.61	1.27 □ 0.53	1.17

The overall average extent of agreement on 'opposition from husband' came to be 1.29, indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was any opposition from husband against working in MFIs. The zone wise analysis showed that the average score of the statement was 1.30, 1.37 and 1.37 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This indicated that there was no opposition from husband.

The overall average extent of agreement on 'increase in family dispute/tension since working in MFIs' came to be 1.25, indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was any family dispute/tension due to work in MFIs. The zone wise analysis showed that the average score of the statement was 1.32, 1.15 and 1.41 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This indicated that there was no family dispute/tension due to their working in the MFIs.

The overall average extent of agreement on 'husband's alcoholism problem' came to be 1.21, indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was no problem of alcoholism from husband side after joining MFIs. The zone wise analysis showed that the

average score of the statement was 1.13, 1.39 and 1.12 in Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-III respectively. This indicated that there was no problem of husband's alcoholism after joining MFIs.

This showed that there was none of the family problems faced by the respondents after joining MFIs. This reaffirmed that MFIs helped significantly the women to get rid of the attitude related, psychological and family problems. This in turn helped them to develop and grow, to enhance voicing concerns and revolutionizing attitude of the society towards working women.

In all the areas we have observed that their role in decision making at house hold level is much lower when compared to decision making at the collective group level. This is quite understandable as women are in a better position to take decisions as a collective than at the house hold level, where the individual woman is confronted with other family members and might not always have the decision making power. The SHG members who took loan for consumption purposes, But it is only the 3rd loan taking which has shown that they starting involving themselves in those but fruitful economic activity. Consumption consists of medical purposes, education of children, house construction, and repayment of old debts etc.

FINDINGS REGARDING VARIOUS PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN BENEFICIARIES FOR AVAILING BENEFITS OF MICROFINANCE:

- The weighted average score of 'adverse effect on routine work' was 1.70 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The weighted average score of 'neglecting children' was 1.76 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem.
- The weighted average score of 'increase in the non-cooperation from family/husband' was 1.78 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem. The weighted average score of 'facing problems while facing the customer' was 1.74 showing that the respondents disagreed on this problem.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'don't have confidence to work' was 1.34, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that they have confidence to work after joining MFIs.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'the presence of male at work place affects the confidence' was 1.31, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that the presence of male at the work place does not affect their confidence.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'the fear of failure that the borrowed money with which work started will not be recovered' was 1.37, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that the money will be recovered.
- The weighted average score of 'able to manage the time within the time available' came to be 2.53 which indicated that the members are of the opinion that they often can manage the time within the time available. But they are able to always manage the time within the time available.
- It has been observed that all the information is not given to the female respondent, as they are not considered as responsible as men for returning the loan amount and some of the financial institute shrinks their hands.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'the fear of being physically weak' was 1.39, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that they will become physically weak after joining MFIs.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'the fear of character assassination/sexual harassment when working' was 1.40, which indicated that the respondents strongly disagreed with this. They were of the view that there is no fear of character assassination/sexual harassment at the place of working.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'lack of cooperation from the family' came to be 1.21, thereby indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was any lack of cooperation from the family after joining MFIs.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'opposition from husband' came to be 1.29, indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was any opposition from husband against working in MFIs. The overall average extent of agreement on 'increase in family dispute/tension since working in MFIs' came to be 1.25, indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was any family dispute/tension due to work in MFIs.
- The overall average extent of agreement on 'husband's alcoholism problem' came to be 1.21, indicating that the respondents strongly disagreed that there was no problem of alcoholism from husband side after joining MFIs.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that development and growth of members has significantly increased after joining the SHGs, except the increase in the educational level. However, their literacy level has improved a lot and there was no psychological problem to the members after joining MFIs. Rather their confidence has increased to fare better at work places. There was no problem of husband's alcoholism after joining MFIs. This showed that there was none of the family problems faced by the respondents after joining MFIs. This reaffirmed that MFIs helped significantly the women to get rid of the attitude related, psychological and family problems. This in turn helped them to develop and grow, to enhance voicing concerns and revolutionizing attitude of the society towards working women. It could not improve its voice concern regarding freedom to choose life partner. This is not the fault of the SHGs but its roots are there in the conservative nature of the society. Therefore, it will take time to enjoy freedom of choosing life partner till the society changes from conservative to progress values.

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