



# DRIVING CHANGE: EXAMINING MANAGERIAL ABILITIES AND SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT IN WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUP ENTREPRENEURSHIP-A REVIEW

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra15298>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra15298

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Women entrepreneurs act as change agents and accelerators for the prosperity and economic growth of emerging and developing countries. Many women's self-help groups opened the path for the creation of self-employment and the reduction of poverty by engaging in entrepreneurial activities. The purpose of the research paper is to examine how women's self-help groups are empowered through entrepreneurial endeavors, focusing mainly on their managerial abilities and socioeconomic impact.

**Approach/Design/methodology:** The descriptive technique is used in this study to explain the existing condition and offer a reason. Secondary sources, such as journals, papers, books, and other relevant resources, are used to perform a complete evidence-based assessment of the managerial abilities of self-help group women entrepreneurs.

**Findings/result:** Despite the many obstacles they encountered, women entrepreneurs were able to advance socially, economically, entrepreneurial, and technologically due to entrepreneurship education, training, and supporting legislative frameworks. To improve the managerial abilities of women entrepreneurs in self-help groups, motivational programs, risk management, financial management, and awareness program should be offered.

**Originality /value:** Fewer studies have been done on the managerial skills of women self-help group entrepreneurs, even though many studies have been done on the empowerment of women through their entrepreneurial activities. This research article emphasizes and highlights the managerial skills of women self-help group entrepreneurs and contributes to the literature on the various conventional and nonconventional managerial skills adopted by women entrepreneurs of self-help groups.

**Type of paper/paper type:** Review

**KEYWORDS:** Women entrepreneurs, self-help groups, empowerment, managerial abilities, socioeconomic impact

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment involves financial, intellectual, skills, knowledge, and confidence for personal and societal growth. Economic empowerment is crucial for a country's advancement, and women's access to economic opportunities can lead to positive societal outcomes. India aims to have self-sufficient and independent women. Women can significantly contribute to a nation's development by improving families, society, and the economy. Women's empowerment has become a global policy agenda, and entrepreneurship is a crucial tool for women to gain self-confidence and support their country's growth, especially in countries with high unemployment rates.

Micro-enterprises, often managed by women, significantly boost a country's economy by creating job opportunities, increasing household income, enhancing purchasing power, reducing costs, and offering added convenience in accessing goods and services.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) provide microcredit for women to start micro-entrepreneurship, enabling them to overcome challenges and influence their environment. They are crucial in promoting economic independence among rural women,

generating income and financial independence.[1].Women's entrepreneurial development, particularly among rural women, benefits both the rural and national economies[2].

## 2. CONCEPT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS, WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS ENTREPRENEURSHIP WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The Indian constitution upholds gender equality through its preamble, basic rights, fundamental duties, and directive principles. It grants the state the authority to enact laws that promote positive discrimination against males, as per the National Policy For The Empowerment of Women, 2001[3]..

Women's empowerment is a continuous process that empowers women to resist oppressive forces, access resources and opportunities, and control resources. It involves enabling women to make strategic life choices, which they have previously been denied. The World Bank Report (2001) emphasizes the importance of enhancing individual and group women's capacity to make choices and translate them into desired actions. Women's empowerment transitions from being weak to powerful, disadvantaged to privileged, and



managing resources across social, economic, political, intellectual, and cultural domains[4].

### WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are groups of fifteen members from the same class who work together to solve shared issues. They pool resources, establish voluntary thrifts, and lend money at interest. SHGs gain knowledge of financial intermediation, prioritization, term setting, and account maintenance. Banks can lend money to SHGs at market interest rates, without collateral, and up to a specified multiple of their total savings[5]. Microfinance aids women by offering independent income sources outside the home, reducing dependency on husbands' income, increasing women's assertiveness, and providing exposure to new ideas, values, and social support[6]. Self-help groups (SHGs) are voluntary gatherings of individuals who address unmet needs or problems not addressed by existing organizations. Their primary goal is to bring personal and social-economic change for members and society. SHGs empower rural people and improve their social and economic status. They are supported by governments or NGO's and focus on providing employment opportunities through training to generate income and employment[7].

A self-help group (SHG) is a voluntary group of low-income individuals, typically from the same socioeconomic background, providing microcredit to entrepreneurial individuals. These groups can be mixed-gender, all-women, or all-male, and are often linked to banks in India for microcredit [8].

### WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is vital for economic development and progress. In India, women have become more aware of their rights and entered various business fields, establishing successful empires. The government has prioritized women's empowerment, introducing schemes to uplift them. The women workforce ratio in India is increasing due to increased literacy rates. Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been beneficial for rural women, raising their income and social status[9].

### 4. RELATED RESEARCH WORK

Table 1 : Review of Articles Related to women self-help groups.

Sr.no	Focus	Contribution	References
1	Impact of women self-help groups	Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have significantly impacted the living patterns and lifestyles of disadvantaged women, empowering them at various levels. They come together to solve common problems through self-help and mutual aid, making the "SHGs" approach more appealing and requiring less work. This approach is effective in alleviating poverty and promoting women's business and financial assistance in India.	Kondal, K. (2014). [12]
2	Information needs of women self-help groups.	Establishing an information center for women SHGs can enhance resources in education, healthcare, agriculture, marketing, and distribution techniques, bridging the urban-rural divide and improving productivity. This can be motivated by NGOs and serve as a training center.	Sornam, S. A., & Babu, P. B. (2007). [13]
3	The Role of Women Self – Help Groups in	Members of self-help group believes that joining the organisation has increased their awareness of the value of children's education, health, banks, and their role in society. They also believe that their confidence in	Manjunatha, S. (2013).[14]

Government and NGOs are encouraging women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to start self-employment using local resources. Microcredit has greatly benefited SHG women, leading to the creation of micro-businesses. NGOs and financial institutions are providing training programs to enhance the entrepreneurial abilities of rural women, enabling them to specialize in manufacturing or service industries, making microentrepreneurship increasingly popular among rural women[10].

UNICEF suggests that women possess entrepreneurial potential that can be cultivated with proper guidance and training. They emphasize the importance of creating an entrepreneurship incubator for women, considering the numerous opportunities for successful small businesses. This should be considered when formulating rules for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their female members[11].

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Examine the empowerment of women's self-help groups through their engagement in entrepreneurial activities.
- Investigate the development of managerial abilities among women entrepreneurs within self-help groups.
- a comprehensive understanding of the transition of women in self-help groups to self-employment through entrepreneurship.
- Enrich the understanding of both conventional and unconventional managerial approaches adopted by women entrepreneurs in self-help groups.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To explore a thorough and evidence-based assessment of the managerial skills of women entrepreneurs within self-help groups, the research methodology used is an inductive qualitative approach that is descriptive and draws on secondary data from sources, including academic journals, research papers, books, and other pertinent resources related to women's self-help groups, entrepreneurship, empowerment, and managerial skills.



	Rural Development	living better lives has increased.	
4	Empowerment of women help groups members through microfinance	The success of microfinance, a financial service offered to low-income people, in eradicating poverty and promoting rural development is acknowledged on a global scale. Self Help Groups (SHGs) benefit in particular because they empower women and raise awareness, which eventually results in sustained national progress. Members anticipate additional revenue-generating training sessions.	Gundappa, M. (2014). [15]
5	Role of women Self-Help Groups in Achieving Gender Equity	SHGs have significantly impacted women's gender roles and social dynamics by funding property and cattle ownership, challenging traditional rural norms, and empowering them as decision-makers in democratic, economic, and social arenas, thereby enhancing their equal status.	Samaddar, S. (2023).[16]
6	Challenges of women self - help group members towards marketing	Members of Self-Help Groups typically sell food items at fairs and exhibits, where they encounter difficulties with product selection, price negotiating, and income creation. Their ability to generate revenue is substantially influenced by their level of education, marital status, and income after joining SHGs.	Vasantha, S., & Thaiyalnayaki, M. (2015).[17].

**Table 2 : Review of articles related to women empowerment of self-help groups members**

Sr.no	Focus	Contribution	References
1	Economic empowerment	Women's economic empowerment may lead to increased engagement in decision-making and negotiating power. Education and awareness are needed for greater involvement and decision-making in society.	Swain, R. B., & Wallentin, F. Y. (2009). [18]
2	Social empowerment	Although enhanced self-confidence may not always lead to empowerment, it can make a significant difference in a woman's capacity and desire to resist the societal injustices and discriminatory institutions she faces. This suggests that as women's financial status improves, so does their self-confidence and negotiating strength inside the home, which leads to their social empowerment.	Vachya, L., & Kamaiah, B. (2015). [19]
3	Political empowerment	Through social events, SHG participation introduced women to women's rights, and through networking, it gave them access to political capital. Their SHG participation also encouraged them to speak out on political issues like accountability and transparency. Additionally, women who participated in local village governments said that SHG membership aided them in assuming leadership positions in the government.	Brody, C., Hoop, T. D., Vojtkova, M., Warnock, R., Dunbar, M., Murthy, P., & Dworkin, S. L. (2017). [20]
4	Financial empowerment	women's engagement in microfinance programs promotes social transformation and female empowerment. Women can start new businesses or grow current ones to generate more income when they have access to fundamental financial products like savings and loans. A woman's capacity to change her life through access to financial services depends on a variety of variables, some of which are related to her unique position and capabilities and others to her environment both inside and outside the family. women's microfinance programs are marketed as a means of empowering women as well as reducing poverty.	Sahu, G. B. (2015). [21]
5	Intrinsic empowerment	Women might become more empowered as a community or as an individual through time; empowerment is a process. It has nothing to do with a gift that one may give to others. Power cannot be given as a gift or entrusted; it can only be exercised via empowerment. Empowerment refers to the "power-within" and the "inner voice" for growth. Thus, the growth of internal empowerment occurs.	Mathur, P., & Agarwal, P. (2017). [22]
6	Psychological Empowerment	A person's internal strength is highlighted by psychological empowerment, also known as personal empowerment. It is characterised by enhanced self-confidence, self-reliance, self-esteem, decreased psychological suffering, questioning gender stereotypes, and other traits. Microfinance through self-help groups is thought to boost women's collective effectiveness, proactive mindset, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.	Khan, S. T., Bhat, M. A., & Sangmi, M. U. D. (2023). [23]



**Table 3: Review of articles related to entrepreneurial activities of women self-help groups**

Sr.no	Focus	Contribution	References
1	Women's entrepreneurship development through participation in self-help groups	SHGs empower marginal entrepreneurs by enabling self-reliance and participation in various activities. Members earn income by preparing mid-day meals in primary schools and starting private entrepreneurship at home. They engage in productive activities like agarbatti production and food preparation, with easy marketing available. SHGs serve as a platform for women to be role models for their families.	Mishra, S., & Sahoo, C. (2018). [24]
2	Marketing challenges of women entrepreneurs of self-help groups	SHG must be able to compete on a national and worldwide stage. Participating in exhibition events and creating an internet marketing system are two strategies for improving SHG's performance. Participation in exhibits increases the value of local wisdom, drawing members of the community both domestically and globally. While ensuring consumer transparency, online marketing platforms provide benefits such as time efficiency and product purchasing.	Andajani, N., & Ardini, L. (2023).[25]
3	Entrepreneurial motivation by women self help groups members	Women often pursue entrepreneurship for financial gain, economic independence, and social prestige. They often do so as a hobby alongside their family career. However, challenging market conditions and strict legal requirements pose significant challenges. Additionally, they often face personal obstacles due to lack of information and conflict between work and family life.	Rathna, C., Badrinath, V., & Anushan, S. S. S. (2016).[26]
4	Problems and challenges of women SHG entrepreneurs	Due to a lack of knowledge, poor training, and a lack of marketing expertise, SHGs fail to promote livelihood through government and bank initiatives. There are also less opportunities for rural women entrepreneurs. Due to time, financial, and familial commitments, SHG performance is hampered by low participation and irregular attendance. Other issues are the bank staff's uncaring attitude and lack of cooperation.	Iyer, R. [27]
5	Entrepreneurial activities of rural women	SHG is a rural poor women's organization that provides microcredit for entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurship development and income-generating activities create revenue while also providing flexible working hours to meet the demands of housewives. Rural women's self-confidence, self-reliance, and independence increased as a result of their participation in SHG entrepreneurship and other activities. Entrepreneurship education and training might be implemented at all levels, beginning with school days.	Sharma, P., & Varma, S. K. (2008). [28]
6	Entrepreneurs Development Programme for economic and social empowerment	The government should fund Entrepreneurs Development Programme (EDP). For a variety of reasons, it remains more theoretical than practical. Due to marketing issues, SHG members have not achieved self-sufficiency in entrepreneurial activities, which are catalysing these changes and contributing to their social, economic, and political activities. These are the primary issues confronting SHG members in the research region. Now, the NGOs must advertise themselves as a bridge between members and launch a skill development programme for SHG in Nithari Village.	Kapoor, S. (2019). [29]

### 5. ABCD LISTING ANALYSIS

The ABCD analysis framework, introduced in 2016, is a tool for analyzing various systems, concepts, ideas, strategies, products/services, and materials, using both qualitative and quantitative methods[30]. The ABCD Analysis is a strategic tool used to evaluate Women Entrepreneurial Development

within Self-Help Groups (SHGs) focusing mainly on their managerial abilities and socioeconomic impact.. It categorizes factors into four groups: Advantages (A), Benefits (B), Constraints (C), and Disadvantages (D). Advantages (A) highlights the positive aspects, Benefits (B) focuses on the outcomes, Constraints (C) identifies challenges, Disadvantages



(D): points out risks. This analysis helps to understand the complexities and potentials of women's entrepreneurial initiatives within SHGs.

ABCD analysis of women entrepreneurial development through self-help groups focusing on managerial abilities are as follows:

<p><b>A (Advantages)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SHG has helped women entrepreneur members develop public speaking skills, bank transactions, and confidence in leadership roles,</li> <li>● Female entrepreneurs in self-help groups have demonstrated strong management skills, including decision-making, leadership, and conflict resolution, which has positively impacted the group dynamics and the success of their firms.</li> <li>● When female entrepreneurs of self-help groups are successful, the unemployment rate is reduced because they provide new job opportunities for people in the community, which in turn boosts economic growth by encouraging local businesses to invest and support their growth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>B (Benefits)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Women's self-help groups have significantly empowered women by enabling them to engage in entrepreneurial activities, leading to financial independence and improved quality of life.</li> <li>● Women SHG members' involvement in entrepreneurial projects boosts self-confidence, decision-making capacity, self-identity, and psychological empowerment, leading to economic, social, and technological empowerment of self-help group entrepreneurs.</li> <li>● Female self-help group members serve as role models, encouraging others to pursue entrepreneurial dreams, challenging gender norms, and advocating for social change and equitable opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>C (Constraints)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Many women lack knowledge and experience in advanced technologies and marketing strategies, affecting business efficiency due to inadequate education.</li> <li>● Sociocultural norms and gender prejudices hinder women entrepreneurs' confidence and decision-making abilities, making overcoming social expectations and stereotypes a significant hurdle in their entrepreneurial journey.</li> <li>● Urban SHG women entrepreneurs exhibit greater flexibility and dynamicity compared to their rural counterparts</li> </ul>	<p><b>D (Disadvantages)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restricted microfinance in India prompts women in mature Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to continue relying on informal sources for financial assistance.</li> <li>● Women's commercial operations suffer from a lack of expertise and knowledge, resulting in a loss of income.</li> <li>● Women entrepreneurs face challenges in accessing capital, training, and technology, which can hinder their growth and sustainability in their entrepreneurial ventures despite progress.</li> </ul>

## 6. FINDINGS

Findings collectively highlight the multifaceted benefits of self-help groups for women entrepreneurs, ranging from economic empowerment and skills development to leadership, innovation, and cultural sensitivity. The findings are as follows:

1. Women in self-help groups experienced enhanced economic empowerment with increased financial independence and stability through entrepreneurial ventures, which allowed them to support their families, invest in education, and healthcare.
2. Women entrepreneurs in self-help groups experienced improved social status, gained community recognition, and served as role models, challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes.
3. Participation in entrepreneurial activities enhanced women's skills in financial management, marketing, and negotiation, providing them with practical knowledge essential for business success.
4. Self-Help Group Participants in Female-Led Businesses exhibit exceptional leadership skills, team management, resource organization, and collaboration,

making critical business decisions and structuring their teams effectively.

5. Female Entrepreneurs in self-help groups manage teams, addressing conflicts, fostering teamwork, and ensuring a positive work environment, often acting as mentors to guide others in the group.
6. Women in self-help groups transitioned from dependency to self-reliance, embracing an entrepreneurial mindset that fostered ownership, control, innovative thinking, and problem-solving.
7. Self-help groups provided women with access to resources like microloans, training programs, and market linkages, facilitating a smoother transition to self-employment ventures
8. Women entrepreneurs in self-help groups (SHGs) employ various managerial skills, both conventional and non conventional, for successful business operations, financial management, and overall growth.
9. In order to interact with suppliers, clients, and other business owners and gain access to resources and



market prospects, women self -help entrepreneurs rely on networking.

10. Entrepreneurial Women Self-Help Group Participants actively pursue innovation by introducing distinctive products, services, or business models, in order to retain their venture's relevance and competitiveness.
11. Women Business Pioneers in Community Ventures deal with setbacks, but women entrepreneurs display resilience by learning from their mistakes and persisting in their pursuit of their goals.
12. SHGs operate in diverse cultural contexts, demonstrating cultural sensitivity by entrepreneurs who respect traditions and customs while conducting business activities.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS

1. To boost entrepreneurial activities among women in self-help groups, it is essential to address social constraints, enact supportive policies to alleviate household burdens, and instigate a fundamental change in men's attitudes toward women in business.
2. In order to empower SHGs women through business opportunities, it is crucial to remove cognitive, personal, organisational, infrastructural, and marketing barriers.
3. A Comprehensive Strategy is needed to change attitudes, increase legal protection, and support women's entrepreneurial development of self -help groups.
4. Government agencies and banking agencies must provide comprehensive training and guidance to women entrepreneurs, ensuring their success in business through periodic visits and proper guidance.
5. Women entrepreneurs of SHGs should be enhanced with the understanding of government policies, technical knowledge, and skills through literacy programs, financial awareness through credit facilities, technical training on labor-saving technologies, and entrepreneurship education at all levels to instill confidence in rural women.
6. Transitioning from self-help group membership to self-employment is crucial for women, but lack of advice can hinder progress, necessitating training and mentorship.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

The transformative impact of entrepreneurial activities within women's self-help groups (SHGs) illuminates that women entrepreneurs within SHGs are not only agents of economic change but also catalysts for societal growth. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to resources, sociocultural norms, and technological gaps, the resilience and innovation displayed by these women emphasize the critical role of empowerment programs, education, and supportive legislative frameworks in enhancing managerial skills. Women's self-reliance through entrepreneurial endeavors reduces poverty, promotes economic independence, and challenges traditional gender roles. As they transition from dependency to ownership, they contribute to economic prosperity and serve as inspirational figures, challenging stereotypes and fostering

a culture of entrepreneurship. The insights gained from this research provide valuable contributions to the literature on women's empowerment through entrepreneurial activities, emphasizing the need for continued support, training, and policy interventions to amplify further the impact of women in self-help groups on both economic and societal fronts.

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