CHAPTER-VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Women are integral part of society and constitute nearly half of the population of country. Women play multiple roles in social and economic fronts in the society, but from decades they have always been considered to be inferior to men. A consensus that has emerged at the global level is that a country cannot achieve its level of development until and unless women are considered equal to the men. Women welfare like accessibility to development and participation in decision making process are imperative. The economic independence is required in all spheres in order to gain their due rights in the society and live their life with confidence and dignity at par with men. Their empowerment in a male dominated society is important to promote gender equality at political, social or economic front.

In the present study, empowerment is understood as a multidimensional process, which should enable the individuals or a group of individuals to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. It consists of greater access to knowledge and recourses, and greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater ability to plan their lives. Women empowerment would also mean equal status, opportunity and freedom to develop their abilities. It would also mean equipping women to be economically independent and personally self reliant, with a positive self-esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation.

The socio-economic independence through access to self-generated income has been discussed as the major means of empowerment of women at the global level. This strategy is attempted and advocated by many governments in developing countries for empowering women. As, women’s income in a family is very important in relation to their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. However, as in the case of education, economic independence may also not give women the necessary decision making power and do not even make access to forums of decision making easy or smooth for them. The prevailing value system has put so many hurdles on the path for women’s equality through economic empowerment even so the role of the economic factor cannot be minimized.
Empowerments of women through income generating activities are considered as those initiatives that affect the economic aspects of women lives through the use of economic tools such as credit. It is being increasingly realized that women’s income in a family is very important in relation to the nutritional, economic and educational upliftment of the family. The strategy called, self-help groups, provides an appropriate platform for initiating and sustaining income generating activities. That is, self help groups are emerged as one of the major strategies for women’s empowerment. Various schemes of the Government of India have shown that strongwomen’s groups could contribute substantially to the development and convergence of services and activities. Experience with various programmes and a project has highlighted the benefits of formation of women’s groups for building confidence and focusing on development tasks.

Several studies have evaluated the status of women empowerment through self-help groups, though, very few attempts are made to measure the level of women empowerment and factors that contribute in empowering the women in Haryana context. The purpose of the present study is to evaluate the role of self-help groups in empowering women in four districts of Haryana. The empowerment in the study is understood as an improvement in socio-economic conditions of women, inculcating participative attitude and decision making power. The specific objectives of the study are as follow:

**Objectives of the Study**

This study is designed mainly to focus on extent of social and economic empowerment of rural women through income generating activities and constraints that are experienced by rural women. The main objectives are as follows:

- To review the genesis, formation and development of SHG’s and status of women empowerment in India and particularly in Haryana.

- To examine the impact of SHGs (micro-credit) on social as well as economic empowerment of rural women in selected districts of Haryana.
  - The social empowerment includes increase in their participation and decision making, etc. in household activities and outside. The economic empowerment includes increase in their income,
consumption expenditure and saving. This is examined across the sample districts by socio-economic status of the sample households.

- To highlight the problems in formation of SHGs, getting loans, effective utilisation of micro-credit funds and so on.

- To suggest policy measures for socio-economic empowerment of rural women as well as effective and efficient functioning of SHG’s.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

The study has tested the following hypotheses:

1. High poverty ratio in any districts leads to high number of SHGs.

2. The social and economic status (in terms of increase in participation and decision making, increase in income, consumption expenditure and saving) of rural women has increased significantly after joining the SHGs.

3. The social-economic-cultural factors negatively affect the functioning of SHGs.

**Data Source and Methodology**

The present study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. The secondary data are collected from Government Reports and Publications, various journals and other printed materials. The information regarding SHGs formation is taken from District Rural Development Authority, Haryana Rural Development Authority.

The primary data are collected through a direct dialogue with the self-help group respondents from different village which fall under four zones of Haryana. From each zone one district namely Bhiwani, Gurgaon, Jind and Karnal are selected. As per the per capita income criteria, two districts fall in low income category namely Jind and Bhiwani and other two with high income namely Karnal and Gurgaon. From the field, observations of the participant relating to the functioning and problems of SHGs are recorded.
The study had planned to select 100 SHGs members from each of the four districts of Haryana. Therefore, the planned universe of the study was to cover 400 Self-help Groups members. But because of insurgency in the state during the survey period the last visit in district Gurgaon could not be made. Therefore, from Gurgaon, only 80 SHGs members were selected. In total, the study surveyed 388 SHG members covering 104 from district Bhiwani, 80 from Gurgaon, 100 from Jind and 104 from district Karnal. The women Self help Groups consist of 10 to 20 members and has been working actively from 1 to more than 10 years are selected. The women of the selected Self-help Groups are the unit of the study. In order to gather information form primary data, interview schedules have been used as tools to collect data. During the interview with SHGs members, several observations of members relating to SHGs functioning and other problems and strength of SHGs are recorded.

**Estimation Procedure and Data Analysis**

The collected data and information have been evaluated, classified and tabulated in the form of frequency and percentage and tabulation are presented in simple one way and two way form. After tabulating, data have been analysed in precise way to focus the answers of the existing research questions. Further, to test the hypothesis of the study some cross-section regression equation by employing Ordinary Least Square Method and logistic (both logit and multinomial logit model) regression equations are estimated. To measure the impact of micro-credit on economic empowerment of rural women (whether income increased after joining the SHGs), the Paired Samples t-test is used. This test compares the means of two variables. It computes the difference between the two variables for each case, and tests to see if the average difference is significantly different from zero. This test generally is used in ‘before-after’ studies, or when the samples are the matched pairs, or the case is a control study.

The study also examines the determinant factors that impact the change in household income. For the purpose, logistic regression equations are estimated using Logit Model. A logit model is a univariate binary model. This model is applicable when the dependent variable is in binary (one or zero) form. This binary value should be 1 for those who have reported yes in any response and the 0 for those who have replied or respond no in any response. While measuring the impact on women empowerment various socio-economic characteristics (like age, education, caste, family type,
household size, households occupation are used) of the sample households and indicators of women empowerment are used. In order to measure the women empowerment across social, economic, decision making etc. the Bordacount Ranking Approach is followed.

Findings of the Study

- The analysis shows that the gender disparities have decreased over the years, but India GDI score as compared to the world average is low. Out of 145 countries, India rank in overall global Gender Gap Index (GGI) turned at 108 positions. The low income country like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and emerging economies like China and Thailand even have scored better GGGI ranking as compared to India. The ranking of sub-indexes of GGI, like the Economic Participation and Opportunity sub-index is recorded to be very high about 139 out of the 145 countries.

- The Educational Attainment sub-index of GGI measures the gap between women’s and men’s current access to education primary, secondary and tertiary level education. India rank is recorded at 125 positions in 2015 out of the 145 countries, indicating a dismal position in education attainment for female. The Health and Survival sub-index provides an overview of the differences between women’s and men’s health in sex ratio at birth and gap between women’s and men’s healthy life expectancy. India rank recorded at 143 positions in 2015 out the 145 countries. This is one of highest as compared even of many developing countries.

- Political Empowerment sub-index measures the gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making through the ratio of women to men in minister-level positions and the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions. India rank is recorded at 9th position out of total 145 countries, which is a healthy indication of women political empowerment. This may be because in a democratic country like India implementing and involving women in political process is easier as compared to the other polices.
The gender development index value shows that India GDI score value 0.795 is lower than the 0.924 of world average, indicating high gender disparities in the country. Even the human development index (HDI) of both male and female indicates that female have low score 0.525 than the male score 0.66. The life expectancy at birth of female is however higher than the male. The expected years of schooling for both male and female are almost equal. The estimated per capita income of male is almost 4 times higher than the female.

The state level position reveals that in 1996, Kerala had the highest score in the country achieving scores of 0.736 on HDI and 0.721 on GDI. However, in 2006, Kerala was ranked 2nd on HDI and 3rd on GDI with scores of 0.764 and 0.745 respectively. Other States which increased their GDI scores by more than the All-India average of 0.076 points include Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Bihar, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Rajasthan and Haryana.

Haryana rank in GDI in 2006 out of 29 states is reported to be 14, which is middle of the ranking. In GEM, Haryana position is recorded on 5th position, indicating in gender empowerment measure, Haryana performance is good. Over the period from 1996 to 2006 the score value GDI and GEM of Haryana shows increasing trends, indicating gender disparities in the states is declining over the period, but still low.

The aggregate score for GEM of Haryana is recorded to be around 0.532 for the year 2006, which is higher than the score value of India 0.497. Scores for sub-indices of GEM like PI, EI and PoERI for the year 2006 are 0.682, 0.586 and 0.328 respectively. The score value of these sub-indices is slightly higher than the score value of India. Over the period from 1996 to 2006, the overall GEM and its all three sub-indices show increasing trends for the state of Haryana.

There is high improvement in infant mortality across states of India. Male IMR of Haryana decreased from 63 in 2001 to 41 in 2012 and female IMR declined from 70 to 44 during the same period. Haryana IMR of both male and female is almost equal to the all India average. However, the status of IMR of
Haryana is significantly higher than the Kerala. The sex ratio of Haryana is adverse and worrisome. Though, there is a minor improvement in rural sex ration whereas urban ratio declined during the recent past decade.

- The status of women empowerment and gender based violence indicators in Haryana between 2005-06 to 2015-16 reveals that there is no improvement in the currently married women who usually participate in household decision. Similarly, the women who worked in the last 12 months who were paid in cash are almost equal in the last decade. There is no improvement in the women owning a house and/or land (alone or jointly with others) during the recent past decade. There is significant improvement in the women having a bank or savings account that they themselves use. There is also positive indication in women having a mobile phone that they themselves use.

- In Haryana, male literacy rate, for persons of age 6 years and above, stood at 78.4 percent as compared to 55 percent for female in 1999-2000. In 2011-12, the figures stood at 86.83 percent and 69.15 percent respectively. Thus gender equality literacy rate in Haryana in 6 years and above age group has improved during this period. The literacy rate between 6-14 years of age has deteriorated in its rank in all states of India from 24th to 26th during the two rounds of NSSO. However, state’s ranking in gender equality of literacy rate for children of school going age 6-14 years has improved from 24th position to 19th position during this period.

- The gender equality in GER for school-going girls is measured as a proportion (percent) of GER for school-going boys. Gender equality of GER for school-going children in Haryana has improved, which is evident from the fact that Haryana’s rank of gender equality in GER of this level has improved from 16th position in 1999-2000 to 14th position in 2011-12.

- The labour force work participation of women shows that the self employment status of urban women of Haryana is around 200 as compared to the urban men 424, indicating self employment status of urban female in Haryana is significantly lower than the male. The self employed status of rural female of Haryana is significantly higher (753) than the male self-employment status
The female labour force participation rate of Haryana across all status is lower than the all India average.

- The results show that the penetration of microfinance in the state is very low as comparison to other states. This may be because of the level of development, as in general, penetration remained low in states where level of income high - Haryana is one of the developed states of India. The share of microfinance in Haryana is not even one percent of that in the whole country in terms of number of SHGs, savings amount and loans disbursed. Bank loans outstanding against SHGs are 4.40 percent as against the loans disbursed to the tune of only 0.15 percent.

- Over a period of time from 2007-08 to 2015-16, the number of SHGs formation increased from 23570 in 2007-08 to 42921 in 2015-16 in Haryana. During the same period, the saving amount increased from Rs. 13.65 crore to 158.91 crore, loan disbursement and bank loan outstanding against SHGs show a significant rise from Rs. 26.15 crore and Rs. 107.42 crore in 2007-08 to Rs. 53.99 crore and Rs. 205.13 crore in 2015-16.

- The amount of gross NPAs increased to Rs. 28.25 crore in 2015-16 from its very low amount about Rs 2.03 crore in 2007-08. The NPA as percentage to the loan outstanding also increased significantly from its low share of 1.89 percent in 2007-08 to 13.77 percent in 2015-16.

- The Ministry of Rural Development set target for forming the number of SHGs as well as target for total loan amount to SHGs in a particular state. The achievement of SHGs formation and loan disbursement remained only 12 percent and 23 percent of the total targets, which are significantly lower than the targets as well as lower than the many states of India.

- The Public Sector banks remained dominant in loan disbursement and saving account/amount, but during last recent three years from 2012-13 to 2014-15, the share of Public Commercial Banks is declining whereas the private commercial banks show a positive change in their stance from zero disbursals in 2012-13 to 866 SHGs in 2014-15 and 2057.83 worth of loans to exclusive women SHGs. The share of RRBs has decreased by more than 70 percent over
the last three years. Overall, it reveals from the analysis that in terms of number of SHG, loan disbursement amount, loan outstanding there is no consistent pattern of growth across the different banks during the period.

- The analysis of distribution of SHGs across districts in Haryana reveals that among the 21 districts, Kaithal district secure first place in the formation of SHGs and has formed 2021 SHGs followed by Jind (1962), Karnal (1883), Rewari (1706), Kurukshetra (1620), Sirsa (1594), Hissar (1568), Yamunanagar (1469), Ambala (1390), Bhiwani (1296), Sonipat (1211), Rohtak (1157), Mahendragarh (1135), Fatehabad (1031), Mewat (1027), Palwal (1017), Panipat (890), Panchkula (641), Jhajjar (511), Faridabad (462) and Gurgaon (423).

- The southern part of the State comprising Gurgaon, Mewat, Rewari and Mahendergarh districts has larger share of SHGs. The women SHGs in the sample districts namely Bhiwani, Gurgaon, Jind and Karnal are reported to be around 934, 299, 1153 and 1489 in numbers.

- As regards to the relationship between number of SHG and poverty status across districts of Haryana the correlation coefficient matrix also shows the positive relation between the two. The correlation coefficient between number of SHG and rural poverty is turned out to be positive with coefficient value around 0.51. The coefficient value is significant at 5 percent level of significance. This may mean that number of SHGs is higher in districts where poverty level is high. It can be interpreted that a large number of SHG are formed in district where poverty is high especially to tackle the poverty level in the districts.

- The results show that out of total sample size 388 the district Bhiwani cover 26.80 percent, Gurgaon 20.62, Jind 25.77 and Karnal 26.80. Out of different active microfinance groups, SGSY membership cover only 9.28 percent sample size and remaining 90.72 are the other self-help group. The SCRIA and Swayamsiddha has no membership in the sample districts. Majority of the members below middle standard education level but have across the age between 21-68 years. About 63.92 percent members belong to SC category,
24.74 percent from BC/OBC and general caste constitute only 11.34 percent. Majority of the households belong to low income group. The households belongs to Gurgaon district have high average annual income as compared to the other districts.

- A large number of members around 53 belong to 4-5 family size. About 78 percent of the members are living in joint families. In majority, about 69 percent, of the households, there is only one earning hand. A large number of them, about 37 percent, are non-agricultural and agricultural labour. A large number about 50 percent are engaged in household work, which is considered a non-paid work in the society and other major share employed seasonally, indicating they don’t have regular work in hand.

- In order to understand the proper and effective functioning of the SHG, the study has presented the results whether the group follows the democratic process and what is the level of member participation in group activities. The results show that about 97 percent members reported that the leader of their groups is a member from the group itself. A majority of members about 74 percent mentioned that the group members nominate the leader unanimously rather than the outside authority. About 69 percent of the members say that group meeting took place every week. About 78 percent of the members say that they have a common place to meet for the group meeting.

- Around 95 percent of the members mentioned that they maintain the quorum requirement and every time the required number of members attend the group meeting, indicating the active participation of the members in the group activities. Almost all members of the group attend the meeting. Around 64 percent mentioned that they play active role in the meeting and remaining 26 percent and 10 percent reveal that they give advice and ask questions in the meeting respectively.

- Around 95 percent of the members mentioned that group have rule and regulation book to maintain the records of the meetings as well as activities of the group which is a positive sign of the effective functioning of the group. The meeting records are generally is maintain by the member which is
appointed for the same purpose and the field observations reveals that if the appointed member is absent then the group leader maintain such records. The decision at the group to a large extent is influenced either by all the members of the group together or by the group leader.

- To identify what factors determine the better functioning of SHG, a logit regression equation is estimated for dependent variable, if group function well then it takes value=1 and 0 otherwise. The results show that probability of better functioning increases if group follow the nomination/democratic process to elect the group leader. With the increase in frequency of group meeting the probability of better functioning of the group is increase. Having common place of meeting is also increase the probability of better functioning of the group. Decision influenced by the member in the meeting is also influence the group functioning positively.

- Around 72 percent of the members say that issues relating to how to promote/increasing saving are discussed at SHG forum. The second most important issues that was discussed at SHG forum is the discussion on awareness about education of children where 39 percent members says that education of children was discussed. Followed by this around 38 percent says importance of health and sanitation issues were discussed, 24 percent says a discussion about participate in local development activities and related problems, 22 percent say how to take up income generating activities and how to repay loan.

- The discussion on issues related to credit, acquiring skill for IGA management, training to promote business activities, how to develop natural resources remained less priority in the SHG forum.

- About 48 percent members received benefited on education issues, 44 percent received financial benefit, 36 percent received information about access to market for our products to sell, 20 percent received awareness about health, 16 percent acquire skill and training for income generating activities, 13 percent received awareness about family planning. The benefit on financial risk is received very low about 3 percent. Only 2 percent members say they did not receive any benefit from SHGs. This reflects that benefits received by the
members are encouraging and positive and after joining the groups they started various income generating activities.

➢ As regards to the improvement, around 75 percent members say that they can speak now freely and frankly in household decision making, 67 percent spoke freely and frankly in the SHG meeting, even 45 percent say they can speak effectively in public meeting. The improvement in speaking effectively and frankly with other higher authority however was very low around 9 percent.

➢ As regards to the extent at which the socio-economic empowerment of members improved. A large numbers of households say that their income and saving increased and generated or acquired more assets after joining the group. About 56 percent say there is some diversity in income earning sources after joining the SHGs. About 75 percent reported that the dependency on money lender decreased to the considerable extent.

➢ About 80 percent members admitted that empowerment in financial matter increased significantly. About 40 percent members feel that they learned better financial management to the considerable extent after joining the group. About 42 percent say the learning on financial management was limited.

➢ About 71 percent of the members feel that their empowerment in social (at community and village level) decision-making increased significantly. Around 78 say there was significant increase in empowerment especially in household decision making. Around 48 percent and 37 percent members feel that there is a significant improvement in the hesitation which was earlier while speaking to someone inside and outside the house respectively. Now, they feel less hesitant in speaking to someone.

➢ The women members became more confident in speaking at different forum like the village level and SHG meetings. Around 35 percent and 51 percent say that there is a significant change in the confidence while speaking in the village level group meetings. The other 61 percent and 46 percent said that they are more confident in speaking in village level.

➢ Around 58 percent reflect that they are more confident in visiting the concerned official, if needed. As regards to the empowerment in the freedom
to travel and freedom to take decision for herself and for their children, around 70 percent each say that they can travel to the city alone for personal as well as household work and can visit to city for medical check-up for children as well as for herself. Around 62 percent say that they can keep some amount of money in hand for spending it freely on various components of their needs. The change in such freedom increased significantly after joining the group. More than 55 percent women members reveal that they can take independent decision while casting their vote in PRI, Assembly or Parliamentary elections.

- One of the important components to measure the women empowerment is whether households seek their opinion when they make any kind of decision in the house. Around 45 percent women member reveal that there is significant change in opinion seeking after joining the group. Now their household seeks their opinion when any major decisions took place in the house and when house buy any consumer durables.

- After joining the group a majority of members reveals that the amount of income that they have earned through various IGA activities can spend with their own discretion on consumer durables, for acquiring any physical assets, social events/festivals, health, child education, to start IGA activities can give loan to household member, relatives, villagers etc.

- The various cross-sectional, logit and multinomial logit regression estimation show that authority/control over earned resources, regular earning of women, extent of IGA activities that have actually been started by women and extent of training received by the women turned out be highly significant with positive sign in influencing the women empowerment. The households’ expenditure on different important components like food consumption, education and health also increase after joining the group. About 34 percent, 36 percent and 27 percent members reveal that there was a major increment in the consumption, education and health expenditure respectively.

- There is great diversity in the expenditure on different important components of the households that have generated income from SHG activities and the households that have not generated income from SHG activities. The household that have not generated any income from SHG activities do not
spend on purchasing physical assets and expenditure on social event and festivals.

- On an average around 38 percent of the annual income is earned through income generated activities undertaken by the members in the group and 25 percent of income is generated by taking loan from SHGs and then using them in the productive purpose. Average income earning from IGA activities of group is one of the highest in 83 percent in Gurgaon, and followed by 62 percent in Karnal, 40 percent in Jind and 14 percent in Bhiwani.

- The members of Jind earn more income by using loan in productive purpose and followed by district Bhiwani. The mean difference in income of households that have generated and have not generated income from SHGs activities is measured by adding the income from SHGs activities into the annual income of the households.

- The t-test results show that there is a significant difference in the mean income between these two groups of households. The mean income of households that have generated income from SHGs activities is significantly higher, a one percent level of significance, than the mean income of households that have not generated income from SHG activities. Their income is found to be significantly high across districts and different income groups of households. The income of the households is not only influenced whether the members have generated income from SHG activities, the socio-economic factors also affected the level of household income.

- As regards to the member opinions and suggestions around 72 percent reported that their SHG is working/doing well for generating member’s income, spreading awareness about empowerment, capacity building through training of the members, overall socio-economic empowerment, freedom and decision making empowerment. However, there is a need to give agriculture training, training for livelihood earning with new income generating methods and activities which may be suitable and sustainable for livelihood.

- There is also need to start proper direction how to increase income, require training for mobilization of resources, to start new business, training for skill
development, computer knowledge, cooking and start agri-business activities, effective and useful training of better utilization of loan amount from SHG.

SUGGESTIONS

➢ For more active participation of women in functioning of SHG, few privilege or benefits such as priority in giving loans may be given to their respective households so that the male members of those households would favour and allow them for the participation.

➢ As per the results and contribution of SHGs in reference to their objectives, DRDA should initiate to start a new mechanism of giving grades / rates to SHGs by an independent rating agencies which should comprise representation of all stakeholders of SHGs.

➢ In reference to strong hand of rural women, new types of SHGs regarding to establish on Rural Tourism specially on form tourism based SHGs. These SHGs may bring paradigm shift in the spectrum of SHGs in Haryana.

➢ Academic participation in the promotion of women empowerment may yield fruitful outcomes. Students of PG and UG levels in university and colleges should be encouraged for conducting minor projects on women empowerment through SHGs. In this regard, priority may be given to girls students. This will accelerate this momentum in diversified manner.

➢ DRDA in collaboration with academic institutes like universities and colleges etc. should organise more conference, seminars, training camps especially in rural areas to aware and motivate rural women about the relevance and benefits of joining the SHGs.

➢ To ensure smooth and effective functioning of SHGs, regulators may introduce a position of technical advisor in SHGs for technical rural boy or girl of the respective area. It may bring two fold benefits - one is proper functioning of SHGs and second, generation of employment opportunities for educated rural youth.