

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN BENEFICIARIES THROUGH GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SCHEMES IN GOA

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Abstract

Women's empowerment is the process of empowering women. Empowerment raises the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment equips and allows women to take life-determining decisions. They may get the opportunity to redefine gender roles, which in turn provide them more freedom to pursue desired goals. Women's economic empowerment is an important component of inclusive growth of the country and is also vital for the development of a nation. Hence, creating a favourable climate for women's active participation in the economic growth is an essential component of women empowerment. The Government of India has started various schemes for the upliftment of women especially for their social and economic growth. One of the schemes initiated by the Central Government in the year 2020 for the benefit of women in the micro food processing industry is the Prime Minister's Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises. The present study deals with the advantages of availing this scheme for the women in Goa and their economic empowerment through this scheme. The finance under this scheme can be availed by women through the SHG membership and individually. The objectives of the study were to determine whether the women beneficiaries were economically empowered and to assess the impact of challenges faced by the women beneficiaries. A study among 150 women beneficiaries was conducted to determine their economic empowerment. The sample was collected by using convenient sampling. Mean, standard deviation and ANOVA were used to analyse the data. The mean values of various economic variables selected for the purpose of the study were found to have increased after availing the scheme.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Individual Women Beneficiaries, Economic Empowerment, Government Scheme, Micro Food Processing Enterprises

Introduction

Women's economic empowerment is critical for the overall development of a nation. It is a vital component of inclusive growth of a country. Keller and Mbwe (1991) stated that Empowerment is a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society (Bayeh, 2016). Empowerment is the process of becoming aware and conscious of the need for capacity building, effective decision-making and authority and control. The inclusive growth of any nation would be incomplete without the involvement of women in the economic decision making. Government of India along with the State Governments have been implementing several schemes for women relating their social empowerment, welfare schemes, economic empowerment, health, education etc.

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Women Empowerment

Empowerment is a “social action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities in gaining control over their lives in their community and larger societies” (Stein, 1997). Hashemi and Schuler (1993) defined the empowerment of women through the use of six spheres: 1) sense of self and a vision of the future, including resisting negative behaviours of the husband; 2) mobility and visibility, including how women are treated when they are traveling; 3) economic security, including cash income, new skills and knowledge; 4) status and decision-making power within the household, including making purchases on their own; 5) ability to interact effectively in the public sphere, such as joining credit programs, and 6) participation in non-family groups, such as credit programs and solidarity movements. The active participation and involvement of the women would generate new economic possibilities.

Women’s Economic Empowerment

Women’s economic empowerment includes women’s ability to participate equally in existing markets; their access to and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives, and bodies; and increase voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions. It is good for economic growth and business. Economic empowerment of women ensures participation in decision making within a household and the drive to participate in politics. Many women nowadays have started their own ventures. The schemes from the government too have made it possible for the women to take up entrepreneurship.

Prime Minister’s Scheme for Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises

The Prime Minister’s Scheme for Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises was started in the year 2000 for the benefit of women. The finance through this scheme may be availed by women who are members of the Self Help group as well as individual women. Women nowadays are growing more aware of their own existence, rights and their employment conditions and hence have resorted to starting their own businesses. The scheme would provide financial assistance to groups and individual women for the activities like up-gradation of individual micro food processing units, capital investment along the value chain, seed capital for the purchase of tools and working capital to self help groups and for common infrastructure development such as cold storage and warehouses. The main objective of this scheme is to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganized segment of the food processing industry and to promote formalization of the sector.

Review of Literature

Prabhu, J, John, J. (2019) in their article have stressed on empowerment of rural women through business and the pointed interest enterprise among the rural women. It was concluded that financial empowerment of women prompted development of family and network. **Ramesh, B. (2018)** in the article discussed about the problems and prospects of women entrepreneurs in India. Even though the government organizes women by various associations, they are not ready to undertake the business. It was observed that compared to men, women were less motivated to start business units due to some unwanted fear, lack of motivation and kind of activities. **Arya, S., Panda, S.C. & Kaur, G. (2017)** The main purpose of the paper was to find out the status of women entrepreneurs in India. It further focussed on the rationale behind a woman taking up entrepreneurship. An attempt was made to analyze the policies and measures undertaken by Indian government for the growth of

women entrepreneurship in India to see the adequacy or otherwise of such measures so taken for the growth of women entrepreneurship. **Rafiqul, I. et. al (2019)** in their study have explored women empowerment through small-scale dairy farming in Bangladesh. It was observed that the confidence level of the rural women increased due to the improvement in educational, nutritional, and legal right awareness. It was seen that the women's confidence level enhanced their efficiency and productivity in the small-scale dairy farming and this led to increased standards of living and impacted their role in family and at the community level. **Venugopalan, K. (2014)** the researcher studied the influence of Kudumbashree on the rural women for their empowerment. For the purpose of study five micro units of Kudumbashree of Kozhikode district were selected by random sampling method. It was found that decision making power of Kudumbashree members had greatly improved after joining in Kudumbashree along with their self-confidence and personal skills. **Kumbhar, V. (2013)** in the study reveals that absence of definite agenda of life, absence of balance between family and career obligations of women, poor degree of financial freedom for women, absence of direct ownership of the property, the paradox of entrepreneurial skill & finance in economically rich and poor women, no awareness about capacities, low ability to bear risk, problems of work with male workers, negligence by financial institutions, lack of self-confidence, lack of professional education, mobility constraints and lack of interaction with successful entrepreneurs are major problems of women entrepreneurship development in India. **Sultana, S. & Hasan, S.S. (2010)** in their study have analyzed the impact of micro-credit on rural women's economic empowerment. The results showed that the women who joined the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee were more economically empowered as compared to the others.

Objectives of the Study

- 1 To determine whether the women beneficiaries are economically empowered.
- 2 To identify the challenges faced by the women beneficiaries while availing the scheme.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the monthly income of the women beneficiaries after availing the Scheme.

H₀₂: The challenges do not have any impact on the availing of scheme by the women beneficiaries.

Research Methodology

The data for the study was collected from the primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data was collected from women beneficiaries who have availed the scheme through a structured questionnaire. 200 women beneficiaries were selected based on convenient sampling for the purpose of the research. The techniques used for analysing the data were percentage analysis, One-Way ANOVA, Mean and Standard Deviation.

Data Analysis and Results

The demographic profile of the women beneficiaries is as under:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age Group	Upto 25 years	12	8.00
	26-40 years	24	16.00

	41-60 years	84	56.00
Education	Primary	15	10.00
	Secondary	8	5.33
	Higher Secondary	42	28.00
	Graduation	32	21.33
	Post-Graduation	18	12.00
	Others	35	23.33
	Monthly Income	Upto Rs. 5,000	28
5,001- 10,000		55	36.67
11,001-20,000		34	22.67
More than 20,000		33	22.00
Marital Status	Married	96	64.00
	Unmarried	54	36.00
No. of family members	1-2	51	34.00
	2-4	47	31.33
	More than 4	52	34.67
Social group	General	81	54.00
	OBC	48	32.00
	SC	15	10.00
	ST	6	4.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1 shows the demographic details of the women respondents. It was seen that majority of the women belonged to the age group of 41-60 years accounting for 56 percent. 28 percent of them at completed their higher secondary education. 55 percent of the women had monthly income between ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 10,000. Majority of the respondents belonged to the general category accounting for 54 percent. 96 out of 150 women were married i.e., 64 percent. 34.67 percent had more than four members in their family.

Table 2: Economic Position of Women before and after availing the Scheme

Sr. No.	Economic Indicators	Before Availing the Scheme		After Availing the Scheme	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1.	Participation in household financial decisions	3.01	1.04	3.74	0.87
2.	Acquisition of assets	1.96	0.95	2.28	1.20
3.	Contribution to family income	2.81	1.10	3.69	0.84
4.	Generation of earnings	2.25	0.99	3.18	1.15
5.	Savings and investment	2.21	1.05	2.90	1.21
6.	Improvement in standard of living	2.69	1.08	3.70	1.02
7.	Control over household expenses	3.25	1.02	3.69	0.91
8.	Access to bank and other financial institutions	2.30	1.15	3.27	1.25

The above table shows the mean and standard deviation obtained after analysing the data. It is evident that “Control over household expenses” had the highest mean value before availing the scheme followed by “Participation in household financial decisions”. “Acquisition of assets” had the lowest mean value. “Access to banks and other financial institutions” had the highest standard deviation indicating that the women beneficiaries who have started their own businesses did not give much priority to this indicator. After availing the scheme Participation in household financial decisions” had the highest mean followed by

“Improvement in standard of living.” “Access to banks and other financial institutions” still had the highest standard deviation, followed by “Savings and Investment” which showed that the women beneficiaries lack concentration on these variables. However, it is evident from the table that the mean and standard deviation values have improved after the availing of schemes by women.

Table 3: ANOVA Statistics of Women Beneficiaries regarding Economic Empowerment

Sr. No.	Economic Empowerment Indicators	Monthly Income	Before Availing the Scheme			After Availing the Scheme		
			Mean	S.D	P	Mean	S.D	P
1.	Participation in household financial decisions	Upto Rs. 5,000	3.25	1.00	0.000	3.81	0.75	0.000
		5,001- 10,000	2.82	1.05		2.67	1.38	
		11,001-20,000	2.12	1.28		2.74	1.41	
		More than 20,000	1.00	0.00		3.29	0.00	
2.	Acquisition of assets	Upto Rs. 5,000	1.99	1.00	0.087	3.91	1.27	0.004
		5,001- 10,000	1.69	0.45		1.87	0.35	
		11,001-20,000	2.05	0.00		4.99	0.00	
		More than 20,000	1.00	0.00		2.99	0.00	
3.	Contribution to family income	Upto Rs. 5,000	2.87	1.05	0.001	3.65	0.77	0.001
		5,001- 10,000	2.35	1.45		3.41	1.55	
		11,001-20,000	2.05	0.89		4.43	0.49	
		More than 20,000	2.99	0.00		3.89	0.00	
4.	Generation of earnings	Upto Rs. 5,000	2.40	1.99	0.001	3.12	1.08	0.005
		5,001- 10,000	1.47	0.80		2.87	1.61	
		11,001-20,000	1.75	0.41		3.98	0.00	
		More than 20,000	2.00	0.00		2.89	0.00	
5.	Savings and investment	Upto Rs. 5,000	2.29	1.10	0.236	2.89	1.25	0.007
		5,001- 10,000	2.31	0.89		3.69	1.02	
		11,001-20,000	1.61	0.85		2.76	1.19	
		More than 20,000	2.00	0.00		5.00	0.00	
6.	Improvement in standard of living	Upto Rs. 5,000	2.78	1.01	0.001	3.81	0.97	0.035
		5,001- 10,000	2.58	1.29		3.79	0.91	
		11,001-20,000	1.97	1.40		3.68	1.21	
		More than 20,000	1.00	0.00		3.99	0.00	
7.	Control over household expenses	Upto Rs. 5,000	3.37	0.99	0.001	3.69	0.88	0.159
		5,001- 10,000	2.87	1.41		3.87	0.77	
		11,001-20,000	2.61	0.98		3.66	1.21	
		More than 20,000	2.00	0.00		4.00	0.00	
8.	Access to bank and other financial institutions	Upto Rs. 5,000	2.31	1.13	0.081	3.31	1.21	0.014
		5,001- 10,000	2.28	1.10		2.91	1.40	
		11,001-20,000	2.51	1.41		2.51	1.60	
		More than 20,000	1.00	0.00		5.00	0.00	

Source: Author's Compilation (At 5% level of Significance)

The above table shows the calculated values of mean and standard deviation before and after availing the scheme. ANOVA was applied to determine if there was any significant difference between the monthly income of the women beneficiaries before and after availing the schemes. It is evident from the above table that the “Acquisition of assets,” “Savings and

investment” and “Access to bank and other financial institutions” had p-value more than 0.05 which showed that there was no significant difference between income of the women beneficiaries in terms of assets purchase, savings and access to bank and other financial institutions. However, the p-values of each of the variables is less than 0.05 except that of control over household expenses. Hence, it may be concluded that the income of the women beneficiaries improved significantly after availing the scheme and starting their own business.

Table 4: Challenges Faced by the Women while Availing the Scheme

Challenges faced by women	High level		Medium level		Low level	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender based distribution	12	8.00	36	24.00	102	68.00
Lack of support from family	49	32.67	28	18.67	73	48.67
Lack of awareness	57	38.00	52	34.67	41	27.33
Lack of education	35	23.33	41	27.33	74	49.33
Lack of support from society	42	28.00	51	34.00	57	38.00

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the various challenges faced by the women beneficiaries while availing the Prime Minister’s Scheme for Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises. It is seen that lack of awareness about the scheme was a major challenge faced by the women, followed by lack of support from family and society. However, despite these challenges the women availed the scheme and started their own small business.

Conclusion

The above study focussed on the Prime Minister’s Scheme for Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises and its women beneficiaries. The objective of the study was to evaluate the economic position of women before and after availing the scheme and to identify the challenges faced by the women beneficiaries while availing the scheme. It was concluded that the monthly income of the women beneficiaries significantly improved after availing the scheme due to the business started by them. This has led to improvement in their economic position at their family level and also improved their standard of living. There were challenges faced by the women during and after the availing of the scheme however, they managed to avail the scheme successfully and start their own ventures. Although the scheme has been recently started still it has been observed that it has been availed by women. Thus, it would be advisable for the government to start and sustain such schemes to boost women entrepreneurship ultimately leading to women empowerment.

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