MICRO FINANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPOWERMENT OF SCHEDULED CAST WOMEN:
AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF SHGS OF UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT
The world has understood the importance of women empowerment which in turn leads to the socio-economic development of a society. A key instrument for women's empowerment is the Self Help Groups (SHGs). Women empowerment can be done through SHG's formation, its stabilization and linking with viable micro enterprises. The study attempts to analyze the impact of microfinance services in empowering the scheduled cast rural women of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.). The study is empirical in nature and based on mainly primary data collected from field survey, conducted in 4 districts of U.P. covering the sample of 128 SHG’s in 86 villages. Findings reveal that most of the beneficiaries belonged to the age group of 26-45 years. They were found either illiterate or educationally backward. They were mostly married and had a nuclear family. The beneficiaries were mainly self-employed housewives. The respondent’s husbands were either unemployed or self-employed. The household income of respondents families has been reported to be low, however, the contribution of beneficiaries to the family income has been significant. The saving rate per member has been reported to be low i.e. less than Rs. 50 per month. The prominent factors for becoming a part of SHG, by scheduled caste women, were self-respect, emergencies, medical, social security, agricultural operations, festivals, marriages, education of children etc. The most important purpose among the factors was cited for was found to be self-respect (100%) of the women.

KEYWORDS: Financial Freedom, Microfinance, NGOs, Socio-Economic, Women Empowerment.

REFERENCES
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