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## Micro Finance- A Case Study

DIPTI SHARMA\* & DR. RONALD. V. MANI\*\*

\* Department of Business Studies, Allahabad Agricultural Institute Deemed University, Allahabad (U.P.)

\*\* Department of Business Studies, Allahabad Agricultural Institute Deemed University, Allahabad (U.P.)

### ABSTRACT

*This paper is to analyze the socio-economic impact of microfinance on rural poverty alleviation. For this purpose, we have analyzed the socio-economic impact of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana on poverty alleviation in Handia block of District Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. It explains concepts and measures of poverty and provides a brief review of literature on Indian planning experience with poverty reduction. This also tries to explain the basic difference between Micro Credit and Micro Finance. It presents a comparative picture for India and Uttar Pradesh on the basis of some income and non-income indicators of poverty.*

**Key words:** Micro Finance & poverty Alleviation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

The objective of this paper is to analyze the socio-economic impact of microfinance on rural poverty alleviation. For this purpose, we shall analyze the socio-economic impact of Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana on poverty alleviation in Handia block of District Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. The structure of the chapter is as follows: Section II explains concepts and measures of poverty. Section III provides a brief review of literature on Indian planning experience with poverty reduction. This section also tries to explain the basic difference between Micro Credit and Micro Finance. Section IV presents a comparative picture for India and Uttar Pradesh on the basis of some income and non-income indicators of poverty. Section V analyses the impact of SGSY on poverty alleviation in the Handia block of district Allahabad. It uses the same set of indicators that were used in Section IV. Section VI draws together the conclusions to suggest some appropriate policy measures.

### SECTION-II

#### POVERTY: CONCEPTS AND MEASURES

Poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon in which a section of the society is unable to fulfill even its basic necessities of life. In general, those who are unable to fulfill their minimum nutritional needs due to lack of income are considered to be poor.

Poverty could be relative (He has two cars and I only one.... sic....) as well as absolute (I don't have enough to have even one square meal). In developing countries like India, relative poverty is not taken to be a cause of concern but absolute poverty is.

The discourse on poverty largely revolves around the notion of a poverty line: a critical threshold of income, consumption, or more generally, access to goods and services below which the

individuals are declared to be poor (Ray, 2002). To determine poverty line based on nutritional requirements, the minimum physical quantities of cereals, pulses, milk, butter, etc. are determined for a subsistence level and then using price quotations, the physical quantities are converted into monetary terms. Aggregating these monetary terms for various physical quantities of commodities, the poverty line is thereby drawn. People whose income is below poverty line are said to be poor. The most common measure of poverty is the Head-Court ratio, defined as the percentage of population living below the poverty line.

In 1979, the Task Force on Projections of Minimum Needs and Effective Consumption Demand constituted by the Planning Commission of India, defined the poverty line for the country as a per capita consumption level, which meets the average per capita daily requirement of 2400 kcal in the rural areas and 2100 kcal in the urban areas, along with a minimum level of non-food expenditure. An average food basket was chosen which provides the required calorie and using the 28<sup>th</sup> round NSS data, the Task Force estimated that consumer expenditure of Rs.49.09 per capita per month, in 1973-74, met the calorie requirement in rural areas. This monetary equivalent of the calorie requirement was set as the rural poverty line and those with per capita expenditure below this level were defined as the poor. This was common for all states of India.

In 1993, the Planning Commission set up another Task force, under chairmanship of Prof. Lakadwala to remove the anomaly of a common poverty line for all states of India. The Lakadwala Committee retained the same consumption basket of 1973 and estimated separate poverty lines for each state.

The pioneering work by Prof. Amartya Sen and Prof. Martha Nussbaum put forward another way of analyzing the poverty. They identified it as a lack of capabilities and freedoms. The conceptual foundations of the Capability Approach (CA henceforth) can be found in Sen's critique of traditional welfare economics, which typically conflate well-being with either opulence (income, commodity command) or utility (happiness, desire fulfillment). Sen makes a distinction between commodities, human functioning/capability and utility which could be summarized.

Thus, the lack of command over commodities (entitlement) leads to decline in the levels of utility and vice-versa.

Poverty invariably affects all the indicators of human development index. Thus, we should look at a comprehensive picture inclusive of both income and non-income indicators while analyzing overall poverty scenario.

This paper uses both income-poverty measures and social indicators which affect the capability of individual and utilizes the field data to see change in these parameters in the block sampled for the study.

### **SECTION-III**

#### **INDIAN PLANNING EXPERIENCE WITH POVERTY REDUCTION**

Since the inception of economic planning in India, efforts have been made in successive plans to mitigate the incidence of poverty. Depending on the dominant development paradigms of the age, India has tried various strategies for addressing the issue of poverty. Some of them could be

summarized as the Community Development, Trickle Down, Basic Needs, Human Resource Development, Labor Intensive growth with targeted programmers' and empowerment and enhancing security, to name a few. Despite all these efforts, there has been no conspicuous change at the poverty front: though the relative poverty has fallen marginally, the absolute poverty is still alarmingly high.

The growth strategy followed in 1960's and 1970's had presumed that a higher rate of economic growth, through "Trickle Down" effect, would enhance the standard of living of the poor. But the "Trickle Down" concept has failed to precipitate. Therefore, during the 1970s the Government of India had initiated Anti-Poverty Programs. Since the Sixth Plan (1980-85), a more direct approach was adopted. "The 'direct' approach to poverty reduction emphasizes that it is essential to directly provide the poor with adequate purchasing power, other assets or access to food grains at subsidized prices to meet their minimum consumption requirement" (Nayyar, 2005). "Bypassing the traditional growth approach, special Poverty Alleviation Programmers' (PAPs) were to be implemented in order to reduce poverty to 30 per cent by 1985. The schemes involved income generation for the poor, meeting their minimum basic needs (like rural drinking water supply, primary education, primary health care facilities, rural infrastructure electrification, low cost housing and other social services), and provide specific support for the backward areas" (Stuijevenberg, 1996). Program such as these were considered an acute necessity because there has been a gradual decline in the incidence of poverty, in absolute terms 277 million persons were still living below the poverty line, facing conditions of ill health and short life expectancy (Planning Commission, 1996-97). Lack of basic educational skills and access to the means of production, prevented the masses to participate in, and derive benefit from, economic growth. Besides, household in India often suffered from transient rather than chronic poverty. Their economic position also varied from year to year depending on a good or bad harvest, and within a year due to the seasonality of employment and wage earnings.

The Anti-Poverty Programs (APP henceforth) could be broadly classed into two groups: Rural Wage Employment Schemes and Rural Self-Employment Schemes. We have focused here on Self-employment programmers' only.

Rural Self-Employment Scheme includes an array of programmers' like integrated Rural Development program (IRDP), Training of the Rural Youth for self-employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA) and Ganga Kalyan Yojna (GKY) etc. All these programs were intended to sub serve specific areas in order to prepare the rural poor for self-employment and enable them to cross the poverty line.

The multiplicity of different programs without appropriate linkages was one of the cardinal reasons for the underperformance of these schemes.

Concerned over the sterile performance of these programmers', the Planning Commission subsequently set up a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Hashim to review and rationalize the various centrally sponsored schemes for poverty alleviation and employment generation. The Hashim Committee recommended integration of all rural wage employment programs into a single scheme and rechristened it as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna (JGSY) and that of all rural self-employment programs into a single scheme called Swarnajayanti Gram

Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY). The present exercise mainly focuses on the performance of the rural self-employment programs.

In case of rural self-employment programs, the Hashim Committee also recommended a concerted move from the predominantly individual beneficiary approach to a group approach, as well as on identification of activity clusters for concerted action

#### **MICRO CREDIT AND MICROFINANCE:**

It has generally been observed that the poor people don't have access to bank loans. Private money lenders charge very high interest rates. This makes it difficult for poor people to access funds for starting small income generation activities like sewing, buying buffalo, opening a tea stall or some other small shop. Micro Credit caters the need of people for small loans. Micro finance includes support services along with the loan component. In Micro Credit, more emphasis is placed on loans.

Microfinance, thereby, opens up channels for thrift, market assistance, technical assistance, capacity building, insurance, social and cultural programmers'. Thus, Microfinance has an element of 'Credit plus' while micro credit is 'only credit'.

#### **SECTION-IV**

#### **A COMPARISON ON SOME SELECTED INDICATORS :**

We are comparing India and Uttar Pradesh on both monetary and non-monetary indicators. For the farmer, the head-count ratio has been taken. For the non-monetary indicators, we are using Shelter and Quality of Housing, Access to drinking water, Access to sanitation facility, and last but not the least, Access to electricity.

#### **Income:**

The per Capita Domestic Product for Uttar Pradesh in 2000-01 was Rs. 5707, prices while the corresponding figure for India was Rs. 10306 (Planning Department of UP). This shows how much the state lags from India. Not only has the incidence of combined level increased from 2005-06 but it has enhanced to a more acute level in urban areas.

#### **Non-Income Indicators:**

Measuring household welfare in terms of consumption or income does not take into account his assets like type of house, access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity. Since access to these assets and services is not universal, a household with access to these may be enjoying welfare level quite higher than a household without access to these assets and services, though their income or consumption levels are almost similar.

#### **(i) Shelter and Quality of Housing:**

In developing countries, the single most important asset owned by household is often the dwelling in which they live. Hence, "the type of dwelling in which a household lives is an important indicator of its welfare level" (Monitoring Poverty in Uttar Pradesh, 2006).

NFHs-2 gives the data for quality of housing according to which during 2009-10, at all India level, 41.4 percent of household in rural areas were living in Kuccha house while the corresponding figure for Uttar Pradesh was 53.2 percent.

**Housing Characteristic (2009-10)**

Housing Characteristic	All India Level			Uttar Pradesh		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Kachha	9.4	41.4	32.5	8.4	53.2	47.3
Semi-Pucca	24.4	39.5	35.3	16.3	35.2	31.2
Pucca	66.0	19.0	32.0	75.1	11.2	24.8

**(ii) Access to Drinking Water:**

As per Census of India, if a household has access to drinking water supplied by a tap or a hand pump/tube well situated within or outside the premises, it is considered as having access to safe drinking water.

The Table shows a comparative picture of India and Uttar Pradesh for access to safe drinking water. Hardly 6 percent of the rural population in the state had access to safe drinking water source (piped water supply) to 25 percent at all India level.

**Sources of drinking water (2009-10)**

Source of drinking water	All India Level			Uttar Pradesh		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Piped	88.5	25.2	39.6	48.9	7.5	16.5
Hand pump	22.4	47.4	43.2	65.4	80.6	76.2
Well water	7.0	26.5	28.7	2.0	19.2	13.6
Surface water	1.4	3.6	3.8	1.2	3.5	1.8
Other	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.0

**(iii) Sanitation Facilities:**

Welfare of Households is also affected by their access to sanitation facility. Availability of sanitary environment reduces the risk of contamination of water bodies. The table shows the access to sanitation facility for all-India and Uttar Pradesh level.

**Access to sanitation facility (2009-10)**

Sanitation Facility	All India Level			Uttar Pradesh		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Flush toilet	68.9	8.8	24.0	58.6	3.6	10.2
Pit toilet/latrine	30.2	12.6	16.9	48.6	10.5	16.3
Other	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.6	0.2
No Facility	17.3	78.1	54.0	12.6	80.6	73.3

**(iv) Access to Electricity:**

An important infrastructural service provided by government is electricity. Access to electricity affects life of people in several ways. The farmer can get an electricity-operated pump set which

can be cheaper compared to one operate by diesel. This will reduce his costs. Availability of electricity will be helpful for village children to study. Table shows access to electricity at all-India and Uttar Pradesh level. Hardly 23 percent of rural household of the state have access to electricity as compared to about 49 percent at the all-India level.

**Access to electricity (2009-10)**

Electricity	All India Level			Uttar Pradesh		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Yes	96.3	68.1	60.1	92.5	38.8	36.6
No	3.7	31.9	39.9	7.5	71.2	63.4

Source: NFHS-2

**SECTION-V**

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SGSY**

Uttar Pradesh has been divided into four regions namely, Western, Central, Eastern, and Bundelkhand. District Allahabad comes under Eastern region. We have studied impact of SGSY in Handia block in District Allahabad.

**Impact on Income:**

The study couldn't find any significant impact of SGSY on income of beneficiaries in the Handia block. The Mann-Whitney test comes to be insignificant for the variables 'Status of the Respondent: SHG or Non-SHG' and 'what has been the change in income for Households from 2006-2012'.

**N Par Tests, Mann-Whitney Test, Ranks**

	Status of the respondent SHG or Non-SHG	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
What has been the change in income for households from 2006 to 2012.	Non-SHG	50	53.63	2681.50
	SHG	50	47.37	2368.50
	Total	100		

**Test Statistics**

	What is the change in income for households from 2006 to 2012
Mann-Whitney U	1093.500
Wilcoxon W	2368.500
Z	-1.085
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.278

**A Grouping Variable: Status of the Respondent SHG or Non-SHG**

The following additional findings may indicate toward the plausible reasons:

- (1) 64 percent of beneficiaries have reported that they have not received any kind of training in the program me.
- (2) 76 percent of the beneficiaries were engaged in individual activities. Only 8 percent were involved in some kind of group activity, while 16 percent had not started any activity at all.
- (3) Only 42 percent of beneficiaries have created any asset out of the SGSY-loan which was operational at the time of survey. 4 percent were not operational while 28 percent hadn't created any asset at all.
- (4) 40 percent of respondents said that they would not form an SHG in future, if given opportunity.

There has been one very interesting finding from field data. A point-biserial<sup>1</sup> correlation between the sex of the respondent and the change in income was found to be statistically significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The test results are given below:

**Point-Biserial Correlation between Sex of the Respondent and the Change in Income from 2006-2012.**

		Sex of the Respondent	Change in Income for Households from 2006 to 2012
Sex of the Respondent	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	-.408**
	N	100	100
What is the change in Income for Households from 2006 to 2012	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.408**	1
	N	100	100

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It has often been pointed out in many studies that women-SHG's perform better than those formed by men. We attempted to analyze whether there has been any significant relationship between the number of women members in a SHG and the change in Income during 2006-2012. For this we performed a Pearson correlation test for the ratio of women members with the total number of members in a SHG. The resulting correlation coefficient was found to be statistically significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The Table 8 summarizes the result.

**Correlations**

Status of the Respondent SHG or Non-SHG			Change in Income for Households from 2006 to 2012	Ratio of Female member to total members in a SHG
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SHG	What is the change in Income for Households from 2006 to 2012	Pearson Correlation (2-tailed)	Sig.	1	-.643**
				.	.000
		N		50	50
				-.643**	1
Ratio of Female member to Male members in a SHG		Pearson Correlation (2-tailed)	Sig.	.000	.
				50	50
		N			

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

But contrary to other studies, we found that the sign of the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was negative. This indicates a negative relationship between the ratio of women members to total members in a SHG and the change in income from 2006 to 2012. A plausible explanation to this finding could be as follows: Most of the women members in a SHG were working as a proxy for their husband. Since the officials emphasized on formation of women SHGs, or since the male members were already engaged in some kind of gainful employment, they made their wives/mothers/ daughters a member of the SHG and used the loan for their own purpose. This had two-fold effect: first, the number of women members increased significantly in a SHG, second, the income couldn't increase significantly as the loan was not used properly.

Despite this finding, we also came across some women SHGs that were very well functioning and the women showed great enthusiasm. These SHGs were the best performers in the study field.

### Impact on Non-Income Indicators:

#### (i) Shelter and Quality of Housing:

The data shows that the change in type of house was more prominent for the Non-SHG group than for the SHG group. The reason may be found in the fact that the SHG people had been at a better position to begin with. And they were still better at the absolute number but the change was more in favor of Non-SHG people. This may be partly due to the fact that SHGs have not been able to influence the income change significantly so far.

#### Type of House: Handia Block

Type of House	Status of the household: SHG or Non-SHG					
	Non-SHG 2006	Non-SHG 2012	ΔNon-SHG	SHG 2006	SHG 2012	ΔSHG
Pucca	14	64	33	32	58	36
Half Pucca	4	8	5	19	23	3
Kuchha	72	28	-38	49	19	-39
Total percent	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Field data

#### (ii) Access to Drinking Water:

The Table 10 shows the change in scenario of drinking water. The SHG were better off to begin with as 42 percent of them had own hand pump, compared to 24 percent for the Non-SHG. They

also faired well as the percentage change in favor of own hand pump was also more for SHGs. The plausible reason may be two-fold: either the SHGs were quite aware group who were conscious to provide safe drinking water to their family, or the SHGs were well-off than Non-SHG since beginning and figured in the BPL list erroneously. Further analysis of data is needed to reach at a concrete conclusion. The good news, however, was that dependence on wells compared to all sources was decreasing in both SHGs and Non-SHG.

**Change in Sources of drinking water (2006-2012)**

Source of Drinking water	Status of the Respondent SHG or Non-SHG (%)					
	Non-SHG	Non-SHG 2012	ΔNon-SHG	SHG	SHG 2012	ΔSHG
Own Handpump	28	367	22	46	58	18
Public Handpump	12	36	28	9	26	26
Well	66	32	-36	52	30	-36
Others	3	3	2	2	2	2

Source: Field data

**(iii) Sanitation Facilities:**

The Access to sanitary facilities was comparatively better for SHGs to begin with and it improved more than that for the Non-SHGs. This may again be due to the fact that some well-off people have got selected in SHGs by officials due to erroneous list. The only exception was that 10 percent of the Non-SHGs respondents were having access to public toilet in 2006, while none of the SHGs respondent had this facility.

**Change in Access to Sanitation Facilities (2006-2012)**

Sanitation Facility	Status of the Respondent SHG or Non-SHG (%)					
	Non-SHG 2006	Non-SHG 2012	ΔNon-SHG	SHG 2006	SHG 2012	ΔSHG
Flush Toilet	0	3	3	3	7	5
No Facility/Bush/Field	88	92	1	97	93	-4
Public Toilet provided by government	12	5	-4	0	0	0

Source: Field data

**(iv) Access of Electricity:**

Most of the SHGs respondents were having access to electricity, both legal and illegal, in 2006 than their Non-SHGs counterparts. This indicates their high level of awareness; though negative awareness in case of ill-legal connections. Also the change is much more pronounced for SHGs respondent than Non-SHGs respondent. the study further shows that about 2 percent of SHGs

respondent had also moved away from ill-legal connection to legal one (may be because of pressure from peers).

**Change in Access to Electricity (2006-2012)**

Type of connection	Status of the Respondent SHG or Non-SHG (%)					
	Non-SHG 2006	Non-SHG 2012	ΔNon-SHG	SHG 2006	SHG 2012	ΔSHG
No connection	78	65	-10	48	40	-8
Legal Connection	3	3	0	16	12	-4
Ill-Legal Connection	42	42	0	42	40	-2

Source: Field data

**Other benefits due to SGSY (Spin-Off Effects):**

*(i) Saving on interest paid to loans:*

Prior to joining the SGSY, the prime lending source for the villagers was the village money lender who charged exorbitant rate of interest. About 86 percent of respondents (including both SHGs and Non-SHGs) reported that they used to borrow from village money lenders. However, after joining a SHG, they could get loans at 1 percent per month while it used to be around 4 to 5 percent per month in case of money lenders. Even the Non-SHGs respondents could borrow from SHGs at considerably lower rate of interest.

We could arrive at the saving on interest rates paid on loans due to SGSY by using the following formula:

The Model value for  $R_{Save_{sgsy}}$  from our field data was 5.0 while Median was 4.0. The mean is 3.78 which is due to the fact we have some people who don't take loans before joining SGSY (They may be either well-off or too poor to get a loan).

**Statistics for  $R_{Save_{sgsy}}$**

**The difference in rate of interest paid before SHG and after SHG**

N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean	3,8776	
Median	4,2000	
Mode	6,00	

We could also get similar values for those who are not a member of any SHG under SGSY but took loans from some SHG-member. They may also have some saving on rate of interest to be paid on loans as the SHGs charge a bit less than the money lender to be competitive. Let's call this  $R_{Save_{NON-SHG}}$ . This could be calculated using the following formula:

$$R_{Save_{NON-SHG}} = \text{Rate of interest}_{PRIOR} - \text{Rate of interest}_{SHG}$$

The Model value of  $RSave_{NON-SHG}$  from our field data is 5.0 while Median is 2.0. The mean is 2.71.

#### Statistics for $RSave_{NON-SHG}$

##### The saving in interest rate for Non-SHG individuals

N	Valid	100
	Missing	0
Mean		2,8200
Median		2,2010
Mode		6.00

#### CONCLUSION:

On the basis of analysis, the following conclusions could be drawn:

The SGSY has not contributed significantly in the change in the level of income of the beneficiaries. The reason could be several. The foremost being that there has been no infrastructural facility or any other kind of support to the SHGs to start a viable micro enterprise. Most of the beneficiaries were encouraged to go for individual works (remember it is in contradiction with the spirit of program me as it focuses on group approach), specially buying a cow or buffalo. This promoted nothing but corruption as several respondents showed their existing live stocks as purchases under SGSY. When a new asset was not created at all, how would it generate any fresh stream of income? Two, officials have been selecting beneficiaries often based on erroneous list. There may be three plausible reasons for it: one, they are eager to show the scheme a success (Mosley and Hulme, 1998), secondly, they get bribe for it, and the last, the beneficiaries somehow fooled the officials about their economic conditions and surreptitiously entered the BPL list.

Women have showed greater enthusiasm in the making of SHGs and these SHGs were vibrant too. But conclusion about the relation between gender and significant change in income can be drawn only after a more detailed analysis.

Keeping in view the other findings, we can suggest that the efforts should be made to check corruption in implementation of SGSY and that women should be given more encouragement in the making of SHGs.

The analysis has also shown that SGSY has the positive impact on non-income indicators too. Beneficiaries have shown improvement at access to safe drinking water, sanitation facility, and electricity. Housing conditions have also improved.

We suggest including an element of public accountability in the working of the scheme, ensuring community involvement, bringing forth transparency in selection of beneficiaries viz stage shows, organizing nukkad nataks, using radios broadcasts, door-to-door campaigns etc. on social issues could change the scenario significantly. The help of professional bodies with requisite experience could also be useful.

The local college youths, especially those who have joined NSS, should be encouraged to organize one day camps at villages where they can motivate the villages to join these schemes and also tell them the intricacies of the scheme through nukkad nataks, and also help them to

lodge complaints against malfunctioning of the scheme in a proper way. These youths could also be given a basic training about using the Right to Information and they should convey the same to the villagers by means of nukkad nataks. The government should provide the youth participating in such activities some extra credit so that they also have proper incentive for engaging in these.

A radio club could be formed in each village and people could be encouraged to come and listen some programmers' that spread awareness about government schemes.

Group activities should also be promoted by officials. Training workshops must be organized. If the SHGs come up with a finished product, there should be infrastructural support for its marketing.

The time has come when the policy makers should realize that any Micro finance program is not like a "Fire and Forget" kind of missile. It needs constant and sustained monitoring. It can also be a magic wand or just dry twig, depending on how it was handled.

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