

## Women Empowerment in Rural Punjab : The SmartPLS Analysis Approach

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### Abstract

The study aimed to develop a model for evaluating the impact of participation in SHGs on women empowerment using three dimensions (Authority, Autonomy, and Inter-spouse consultation) of women empowerment. A well-structured questionnaire was prepared using a 7-point Likert's scale. The targeted population was the women who are members of SHGs in rural Punjab. In total, 432 respondents were chosen from rural areas of Punjab after dividing it into different regions, districts, and then into blocks. Data analysis was performed using EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) and CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) with the Smart PLS 3.0 tool. The present study is based on the reflective-formative construct model wherein higher order construct, i.e., women empowerment, has been taken as a dependent variable. The results depicted that participation in SHGs has a significant impact on women empowerment.

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**JEL Code :** C83, O18, I31

**Keywords :** SHGs; Participation; Women; Empowerment; Decision-making; Social and Economic Development; EFA; CFA; India

### I. Introduction

MICROCREDIT IS A powerful instrument for empowering women. It is a device used to alleviate poverty and uplift the living standard of people. SHGs dominate the panorama of Microfinance. It is a significant factor in improving the financial conditions of women by giving jobs to less and highly-educated women (Senapati and Ojha, 2019). It provides options to economically underprivileged groups through small savings and access to credit facilities. SHGs in India have been facilitated by the government, various NGOs, and banks (Desai and Joshi, 2014), where members facilitate each

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women by creating awareness about their rights, nutrition, health, and sanitization issues like recently the government has started DAY - NRLM (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission) through which government provide cost-effective affordably priced financial services to rural women of our country and also creating awareness among women about their rights. Gender sensitization is one of the issues which can also be dealt with only after empowering women by participating in SHG programs. The government should launch motivational plans for women to join SHG, which will aid in addressing other issues like gender-based violence, child marriages, and the retention of children in schools. Government should foster an environment that encourages the growth of SHGs which will lead to the advancement of women, and it is rightly said that a mother's children appear better when she has reasonable control over the family's financial resources (Pitt, Khandker and Cartwright 2006).

SHGs serve as a multi-facet way with the help of which women can attain continuous growth and development and get an opportunity to enhance their living standard. The study revealed that women's awareness of their rights had increased after joining SHGs, which helped in the socio-economic development of women. As an authoritative instrument for mounting the backward rural area, SHGs helped to empower women.

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### Annexure I The Result of The Reflective Measurement Model

Construct and Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Discriminant Validity
Authority		0.848	0.898	0.688	Yes
Auth1	0.801				
Auth2	0.863				
Auth3	0.799				
Auth4	0.853				
Autonomy		0.847	0.897	0.689	Yes
Auto1	0.859				
Auto2	0.883				
Auto3	0.880				
Auto4	0.680				
IS		0.840	0.887	0.610	Yes
IS1	0.797				
IS2	0.785				
IS3	0.834				
IS4	0.753				
IS5	0.734				
SED		0.928	0.943	0.704	Yes
SE1	0.874				
SE2	0.756				
SE3	0.871				
SE4	0.735				
SE5	0.780				
SE6	0.918				
SE7	0.916				

Source : Self Computed