

# Mission Shakti: A Silent Revolution In Odisha

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**Abstract:- Women empowerment through Self-Help Groups has emerged as a potent force for fostering socio-economic development worldwide. SHGs serve as a platform for women to come together, pool resources, and engage in collective decision making, thereby enhancing their socio-economic status and agency. Through SHGs, women gain access to financial services, acquire entrepreneurial skills, and develop a supportive network, enabling them to break the cycle of poverty and marginalization.**

**Keywords:-** Empowerment, Self-Help Group, Mission Shakti, Social, Economic, Political.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women are an essential component of any improved economy. They have a significant and vital role in society. It is impossible to overlook their influence on how families and society are shaped. The degree of honour, independence, protection, and role that women are accorded, along with the status they enjoy, are indicators of the level of civilization that any particular culture has reached. Since women make up half of a country's population and have an impact on the growth and development of the other half, the status and development of women determines a nation's ability to prosper and expand. The women's community has made numerous financial contributions to the developing economy overall. Consequently, without the involvement of women, no one can consider the economic advancement of his nation. In order to this to become a reality, the system must guarantee the women's community equal rights and increased autonomy. Empowering women involves more than simply the country's economic growth; it also involves social fairness, gender equity, and general social peace. By doing away with gender inequality in society, the Self-Help Group (SHG) model of financial inclusion in India empowers the women's community. The model discusses ways to highlight the abilities of underprivileged women.

## II. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The general phenomenon in today's world is economic development. All the countries are falling behind this. But it has been observed that where participation of people from all strata of the society has been exercised, the pace of economic progress is tends to be high. In this context, the inhabitants of the society have enjoyed the pace of development, what the

society or the country has enjoyed. This is called real progress of the country where an optimal alignment of macroeconomic outcomes and micro economic outcomes is made possible. But the question arises how people will participate in this journey, how people will showcase their talent and skills. Unless, they get the requisite scope and recognition for showcasing their talent and skills, it is difficult. Therefore, to provide recognition and scope, we need to empower the under privileged especially the women.

Empowering women means, ensuring the extended commands over their lives, bodies, and social status. Since the development of power dynamics, the class hierarchy, occupational dangers, and certain sociocultural norms and traditions, the term "inequality" has been used. Gender inequality was a component of other inequality, which prevented women from advancing in terms of education, immunisations, and social necessities. Their enormous potential was disregarded, and they were denied their fair share in the development process. The main explanations for women's low ranking are their developmental trajectory and the widely held belief that they are undervalued. It is imperative to address the literacy, nutrition, health, and empowerment of women if we want more of them to be change agents.

The concept of Women Empowerment is of recent origin. The idea of empowerment was initially introduced in 1985 during the International Women's Conference in Nairobi. The conference came to the conclusion that, via positive intervention, empowerment is the transfer of power and control over resources in favour of women.

Thus, empowerment means to make oneself powerful and capable of obtaining and securing more and more power and facilities through different means. It refers to the state of being empowered or act of powering. The International Encyclopaedia (1999) defines power as the ability and means to steer one's life towards desired position or goals in politics, the economy, or society. Increased knowledge and resource availability, increased decision-making autonomy, increased life planning capacity, more control over life-influencing events, and freedom from traditions, beliefs, and practices are all benefits of empowerment. Women empowerment, then, is the process of giving women the power to realise their rights and duties, both to themselves and to others. It bestows the ability or strength to fend off prejudice imposed by a society ruled by men. It also gives women more autonomy in life and

the ability to organise themselves to become more independent. Gender-based discrimination is eliminated in all institutions and societal structures when women are empowered. It guarantees women's involvement in national and public policy and decision-making processes.

### III. WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

The Indian government proclaimed 2001 to be "Women Empowerment Year" in order to highlight a vision in which women and men are partners on an equal footing. Even after more than 50 years of independence, half of India's population still lived in poverty, despite the Constitution's explicit guarantees of equality and equal opportunity for all people regardless of caste, creed, gender, or religion. This makes the need for such an effort evident. Laws and constitutional provisions supporting women produced little results since women's emancipation was impeded by an unfriendly patriarchal society. The government of India attempted to make it easier for women to form small Self-Help Groups (SHGs) after learning from rural areas that these women have begun to form small groups with small contributions from each member in order to develop saving habits and accumulate money for starting micro-enterprises both individually and collectively by taking out loans from the common fund. The procedure took off like a mission, and soon afterward, success tales began to come in from all over. The State governments carefully considered the Central governments advise and created plans and programmes in their own States in accordance with it. As a result, SHGs began to operate and developed into rather useful instruments for reducing poverty and promoting economic independence. To aid in their operation, the SHGs were connected to NGOs, banks, cooperative banks, regional rural banks, NABARD, and cooperative banks. The women involved in this process began to think and act differently, and they had distinct worldviews than the women who were not involved. These organisations began operating in Odisha as a result of the state's premier initiative, Mission Shakti, which was introduced on March 8, 2001, by the honourable chief minister of Odisha with the goal of reducing poverty and empowering women. SHGs were then connected to other government development and welfare initiatives to ensure the successful execution of these initiatives.

#### ➤ *The Concept of Self-Help Groups*

The Self-Help Group (SHG) approach is a novel approach to rural development that aims to improve the well-being of the impoverished, give them access to resources and credit, boost their self-esteem and confidence, and establish their credibility in all spheres of life. A self-help group is a voluntary, autonomous organisation of women from comparable socioeconomic backgrounds who gather together to encourage saving among themselves. The SHG's assistance to reduce poverty takes the shape of economic programmes that create jobs and offer microfinance services to the underprivileged so they can learn new skills and diversify their

careers. Swarnajayanti Swarozgar Yojana, which was launched in 1999 with the goal of organising the impoverished into Self-Help Groups, embraced this new project.

Therefore, a SHG is a small, economically homogeneous affinity group of rural poor people (10 to 20 members), who come together voluntarily to save modest amounts of money on a monthly basis. These savings are then put into a common fund to cover members' emergency needs and to give collateral-free loans that are chosen by the group. They are now acknowledged as helpful resources for the underprivileged and as a substitute method for obtaining quick credit through thrift. Through this programme, women are able to maintain stable financial lives and cultivate an attitude of saving. Women's equality as participants, decision-makers, and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social, and cultural domains of life is improved by Self-Help Groups. Group cohesion, a spirit of thrift, demand-based lending, collateral-free loans, women-friendly loans, peer pressure to repay loans, skill development, capacity building, and empowerment are the fundamental tenets of SHGs.

#### ➤ *Evolution of Self-Help Groups:*

Self-Help Groups originated in the year 1975 by Mohammed Yunus in Bangladesh. Professor Yunus started an innovation plan by establishing the "Grameen Bank" to provide financial assistance to poor and downtrodden people of Bangladesh. Thus, the system of Micro-Credit and the women Self-Help Groups came to the lime light of the society. The strategy made a tremendous effect in Bangladesh in poverty alleviation by empowering the poor women. The SHG module was so popular that most of the countries of the world including, Bolivia, Indonesia, and Mexico were attracted and followed the path of Mohammed Yunus to fight against the poverty in their respective countries. SHG were introduced in India by NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) in 1986-87. But the real effort was taken after 1991-92 through the linkage of SHGs with the banks.

#### ➤ *Indian Scenario:*

With the founding of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in 1972, SHGs first appeared in India. Women have made some meagre attempts at self-organization even earlier. For instance, the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad established its women's wing in 1954 with the goal of teaching sewing, knitting, and other skills to the women who come from mill worker families. Ela Bhatt, the founder of SEWA, organises low-income and independent female labourers in the unorganised sector, such as potters, hawkers, weavers, and others, in order to increase their earnings. NABARD introduced SHGs to India in 1986-1987. The largest microfinance initiative in the world was established by NABARD in 1992 and is called the SHG Bank Linkage project. SHGs were able to open savings bank accounts in banks starting in 1993 because to the efforts of NABARD and the Reserve Bank of India. The Indian government launched the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar

Yojana in 1999 with the goal of fostering self-employment in rural areas by creating and enhancing the skills of these groups. The National Rural Livelihood Mission was developed from this in 2011.

➤ *Main Objectives Women Self-Help Groups:*

The usage of women's self-help groups as a tool for different developmental therapies is growing. India's rural women are able to get loans and extension help for a range of production-oriented and income-generating activities through the establishment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). After formation of groups, the members assembled in a group meeting at least one's in a month and discuss their group achievement and decide their future course of action. Sometimes, fines are also collected from the absentee members and that money is deposited in Bank Passbook. In every group meeting, the proceedings are recorded by the secretary or president. Additionally, the group keeps basic records such individual pass books, bank pass books, cash books, attendance registers, loan ledgers, and general ledgers. Every choice regarding lending should be made by the participants in the group meetings through participatory decision making. Some of the important goals and objectives of this group are:

- Raising awareness among the target area's women of the importance of SHGs and their role in their journey of empowerment.
- To foster a sense of community among women.
- To increase women's self-assurance and competence.
- To foster women's ability to make decisions collectively.
- To encourage women to save more and to make it easier for them to build up their own capital resource base.
- To encourage women to assume societal obligations, especially those pertaining to the growth of women.
- To achieve societal parity between genders.
- To raise women's economic standards by encouraging them to work for themselves.
- To make it possible to use government assistance programmes and bank financing.
- To assist the members in escaping the grasp of lenders.
- To raise funds in order to support economic activity

This approach has proved successful in India by providing better economic conditions through various income generating activities as well as by creating awareness about health, hygiene, sanitation, cleanliness, environment protection and education. It has been able to create a mass political and economic consciousness among women and their status has been improved.

➤ *Role of SHGs in Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women:*

Women had the same status and rights as men during the Vedic era. But when Muslim monarchs arrived in mediaeval India, women were relegated to the lower sex. During this time, a number of wicked customs were followed, including

child marriages, sati, Devadasi ritual, and the killing of female infants. Despite a few notable female leaders, the status of women in India remained unchanged. During the British era in the contemporary age, women's status experienced a minor improvement. They introduced a system of education for women, which changed some of the fundamental status quo for women.

The Indian government proclaimed 2001 to be the "Year of Women's Empowerment," emphasising the equality of women and men. SHGs developed into an effective tool for empowering women in the rural economy and reducing poverty. They raised awareness of women's wellbeing, entrepreneurship, and self-employment. According to a study, many SHGs in rural areas have improved the socioeconomic circumstances of rural families, and NGOs in India have acted as a middleman between the government and rural development. Banks can provide small loans to the underprivileged without worrying about non-performing assets when they work with NGOs and Self-Help Groups. Another study demonstrates that SHGs have enhanced financial services for the underprivileged and raised their social standing through their network of commercial banks, co-ops, regional rural banks, NABARD, and non-governmental organisations. SHGs are crucial to boosting gainful employment as a result. According to a study on SHGs in India, 47.9% of sample householders rose over the poverty level from their pre-SHG circumstances, and almost 59% of them reported a gain in assets.

As a result, social empowerment was demonstrated by the members' increased self-assurance, treatment within the family, communication abilities, and other behavioural traits. It was mentioned that women's empowerment has three dimensions: economic, social, and political. In daily life, women make fewer decisions than men do. SHGs and their microbusinesses are causing a change in the circumstances. According to a different research, sixty percent of women engage in economic activities associated with agriculture and related fields. A study provided a methodical and organised way to introducing good imagery of Indian women. Women's power over their income, credit, and savings has significantly improved. When it comes to enhancing the facilities for women, NGOs and government organisations are on an equal footing. Banking practices have a beneficial role in SHG microfinance schemes. It was found that the impoverished and those living in rural areas were developing saving habits, which opened doors to improved technology and different forms of promotional support. Women's rates of education and literacy make a significant contribution, enabling them to realise their potential and gain power.

Poor people are connected to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through institutions that support them, mainly NGOs, banks, and government officials. This scheme sets up savings, frequent loan repayment installments, training, and regular meetings. This programme also covers marketing, family

planning, healthcare, basic literacy, and occupational skills. Women are more powerful and have more negotiating power when it comes to dividing resources within homes because they earn more money and recognise the worth of time. Her decision to invest in children's education, housing, and nutrition is prompted by her increased income. Women get the chance to break out from the daily routine and facilitate problem sharing among themselves through the regular group sessions that SHGs conduct. Interaction with women in SHGs, both internally and among other members, boosts confidence and exposes one to eloquent and Pursue her interest. Increased mobility, enhanced networking opportunities, and increased communication all support the empowerment of women. The influence of social norms on women greatly influences their decision-making. Women are more inclined to actively engage in public life and are more equipped to pursue their interests in local politics and society as a result of the interaction between SHG institutions and SHGs. The rise in the number of women serving in local government also empowers women. Empowerment of women is a process as much as a result.

➤ *Role of SHGs in Odisha:*

Women of Odisha have historically made significant contributions to the state's sociocultural, political, and economic domains. They persist in doing so in spite of insurmountable obstacles and difficulties such as poverty, exploitation, sexual assault, ignorance, and a lack of autonomy. We are grateful that the Odisha government has reaffirmed its commitment to achieving gender equality for women. It also pledges to centre all development initiatives around women. Odisha now has enormous potential for female strength. Not only are Self-Help Groups (SHGs) becoming more prevalent in the state, but more groups are also stepping up to offer a range of trades with Bank Linkage in order to support and advance the development of women. Now-a-days women SHGs are taking up varieties of income generation activities such as piggery, goatery, pisciculture, dairy, setting up PDS outlets, kerosene dealership, floriculture rope making etc. 8th March 2001 marked the launch of '**Mission Shakti**' an initiative by the Chief Minister of Odisha to empower women across the state through Self-Help Groups. A couple of decades down the line, it is safe to say that it has slowly and steadily transformed the lives of women, their families and spaces they reside in. Today, it is a testimonial of successes over **70lakh women** assembled into **6lakh Self-Help Groups** to help one another and gain prosperity.

➤ *Mission Shakti: A Silent Revolution in the State of Odisha*

SHAKTI is a strong term that symbolises the feminine strength and alludes to the primordial female force that powers the cosmos. An energy so strong that it affects everything that is in its way and is not just felt by women. Everything is changed by it.

The well-named Mission Shakti was the idea of Odisha Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. It was introduced on March 8, 2001, with the goal of empowering women by forming women's self-help groups. It is quite amazing how much "Mission Shakti" has changed over the past 20 years. Mission Shakti is no longer a programme; instead, it is a silent revolution affecting every resident of the state, both urban and rural. Beyond its initial goals, it has expanded to impact not only the lives of the women it assists but also those of their families, communities, and cultures. The mission of Mission Shakti is to enable women to engage in profitable enterprises by giving them access to loans and market connections. The government's main scheme, Mission Shakti, empowers women through WSHGs. It is intended that as time goes on, an increasing number of women will join WSHGs. In all of the state's blocks and urban local bodies, over 70 lakh women have been organised into 6 lakh groups thus far. Constant handholding and monitoring are done throughout the year to support the work of the current WSHGs and provide new WSHG formations impetus. In order to do this, the State government established a distinct Mission Shakti directorate inside the Women & Child Development Department in 2018. A distinct Department of Mission Shakti was established in 2021.

#### IV. VISION AND MISSION

➤ *Vision*

Mission Shakti wants to see Odisha become a gender-neutral, equal opportunity state where women are empowered to live with dignity and succeed economically.

➤ *Mission Statement*

Contribute to the creation of a society that is independent, aware of socioeconomic issues, cooperative, has a spirit of women's empowerment to pursue their chosen activities without interference or dependence, fosters leadership development while upholding gender equity, and, above all, values diversity and mutual respect for the welfare of society as a whole.

➤ *Objectives of Odisha Mission Shakti Programme:*

Through women's self-help groups, Odisha Mission Shakti seeks to financially empower women. This project provides a variety of programmes that address livelihood skill development, market connections, financial inclusion, institution building, and capacity building. A self-help group that receives funding can apply for Mission Shakti loans, revolving funds, and seed money. The Mission Shakti loan has no interest. This programme will help Self-Help Groups become self-sufficient, which will in turn empower women. In addition, the Mission Shakti initiative would enable women to attain self-sufficiency, a sustainable means of subsistence, and financial competence.

Some of the *specific objectives under this programme are:*

- To support and promote women's social, technical, and economic advancement.
- To strengthen and provide for them monetarily. Connecting women's self-help groups with banks.
- To support groups for self-help.
- To offer them credit connections, market support, and technical assistance as needed.
- Offering knowledge and instruction in the management of women's
- Support Groups for Oneself.
- To market and promote the women's self-help groups' products.

➤ *Benefits and Features of the Programme:*

- On March 8, 2001, the Odisha government introduced the Odisha Mission Shakti programme.
- By means of this programme, women in the state will receive financial assistance through their participation in federations and Self-Help Groups.
- This plan will establish a connection between the women and the financial institutions.
- In addition, the Self-Help Group will give women institutional credit, allowing them to work for themselves.
- A variety of financial support options, including revolving funds, Mission Shakti loans, and seed money, will be offered under this initiative.
- Additionally, the government will form strategic alliances with the banking industry to guarantee hassle-free banking services to Self-Help Group members on a variety of levels.
- A distinct Department of Mission Shakti has been established for the appropriate monitoring and implementation of this project.
- This scheme will also empower women economically.
- In order to inform women about the government's financial inclusion measures, the government will also conduct credit counselling and financial literacy programmes at the village level.

## V. CONCLUSION

Women empowerment through Self-Help Groups has proven to be an effective strategy in fostering financial independence, social cohesion and personal growth. By providing women with a platform to support each other, gain skills, access resources and start business, Self-Help Groups contribute to their economic, social, and psychological empowerment. Ultimately, the success of Self-Help Groups in empowering women underscores the importance community-driven initiatives in addressing gender inequality and promoting sustainable development.

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