ROLE OF MICRO FINANCE ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF UNORGANISED WOMEN WORKERS

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Introduction

Alleviation of poverty, the core of all developmental efforts has remained a very complex and critical concern for developing countries. In spite of considerable improvement in the status of women, they still comprise the largest section of deprived population. Empowerment of women is seen as one of the most important means of poverty eradication. Lack of capital is a serious constraint to the development of poor women in the rural, semi-urban and urban areas who find little or no access to credit. Credit can help women to respond to the opportunities created by the process of development. Micro finance is the provision of thrift, credit and other financial services and products of very small amounts mainly to poor in rural, semi-urban and urban areas for enabling them to raise their income level and improve living standards. Micro finance has become a key word with Governments, NGOs and international institutions. It has proven to be an effective and popular measure in the ongoing struggle against poverty as well as for women empowerment.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to analyse the economic empowerment of unorganized women workers in relation to their social status.

The economic empowerment of unorganized women workers has been measured through the statements such as personal income, ability to save for future needs, able to meet

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day today expenses for the family, able to meet the household needs, capacity to give education to the children, able to meet medical requirements, ability to spend some amount on family functions, ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, Government/private banks and capacity to repay the loan. Empowerment is a qualitative variable which cannot be quantitatively measured, because level of empowerment cannot be quantitatively measured. It is a relative term which cannot be relatively measured and compared with one unorganized women worker to other. Hence in quantifying the qualitative variable namely level of empowerment of the unorganized women worker scaling technique is employed. The qualitative variable namely empowerment is assessed through scaling technique

Economic Empowerment among different Age group of Unorganised women workers

Unorganised women workers of different age groups have different economic empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in economic empowerment among different age group of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, **"There is no significant difference in economic empowerment among different age group of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district".** The result of 'ANOVA' test for economic empowerment among different age group of unorganized women workers is presented in Table 1

Table 1

Economic Empowerment among different Age group of Unorganised Women Workers

Economic Empowerment	Age Group (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	Above 50 years	
Personal income	3.3585	3.6444	3.6425	3.6159	1.179
Ability to save for future needs	3.3774	3.7964	3.9412	3.7971	4.533*
Able to meet day today expenses for the family	3.7547	3.6657	3.7149	3.5507	0.531
Able to meet the household needs	3.2453	3.5167	3.5611	3.5435	0.806
Capacity to give education to the children	3.2264	3.0881	3.4434	3.0435	2.332
Able to meet medical requirements	3.1887	3.4529	3.5068	3.4638	0.852

Ability to spend some amount on family functions	4.0943	4.4833	4.5294	4.5797	2.714*
Ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks	3.5660	3.5319	3.6787	3.5217	0.680
Capacity to repay the loan	3.5472	3.7173	3.8778	3.7536	1.453

Source: Primary data   *-Significant at five per cent level

Table 1 shows the mean score of economic empowerment among different age group of unorganized women workers along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers are in the age group of 20 to 30 years are ability to spend some amount on family functions and able to meet day today expenses for the family and their respective mean scores are 4.0943 and 3.7547. Among the unorganized women workers are in the age group of 30 to 40 years, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.4833 and 3.7964. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers are in the age group of 40 to 50 years are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.5294 and 3.9412. Among the unorganized women workers are in the age group of above 50 years, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.5797 and 3.7971. Regarding the economic empowerment, the significant difference among the different age group of unorganized women workers, are identified in the case of ability to save for future needs and ability to spend some amount on family functions since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Economic Empowerment among different educational qualification of Unorganised women workers

Unorganised women workers of different educational qualification have different economic empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in economic empowerment among different educational qualification of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, **"There is no significant difference in economic empowerment among different educational qualification of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district".** The result of

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'ANOVA' test for economic empowerment among different educational qualification of unorganized women workers is presented in Table 2

Table 2

Economic Empowerment among different Educational Qualification of Unorganised women workers

Economic Empowerment	Educational Qualification (Mean Score)				'F' Statistics
	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary	
Personal income	3.6304	3.6810	3.7306	3.9846	2.819*
Ability to save for future needs	3.8023	3.8351	3.8056	3.7073	0.203
Able to meet day today expenses for the family	3.6619	3.6774	3.6111	3.7073	0.063
Able to meet the household needs	3.5158	3.5627	3.3472	3.4878	0.488
Capacity to give education to the children	3.2264	3.1900	3.0694	3.1951	0.166
Able to meet medical requirements	3.3410	3.5627	3.4306	3.6829	1.951
Ability to spend some amount on family functions	4.4728	4.5663	4.4306	4.5707	1.705
Ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks	3.5960	3.5771	3.6111	3.3415	0.499
Capacity to repay the loan	3.5221	3.5817	3.6806	3.9902	2.870*

Source: Primary data   *Significant at five per cent level

Table 2 shows the mean score of economic empowerment among different educational qualification of unorganized women workers along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers had primary education are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.4728 and 3.8023. Among the unorganized women workers had middle school education, the important economic

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empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.5663 and 3.8351. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers had high school education are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.4306 and 3.8056. Among the unorganized women workers had higher secondary education, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and capacity to repay the loan and their respective mean scores are 4.5707 and 3.9902. Regarding the economic empowerment, the significant difference among the different educational qualification of unorganized women workers, are identified in the case of personal income and capacity to repay the loan since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Economic Empowerment among different religion of Unorganised women workers

Unorganised women workers of different religion have different economic empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in economic empowerment among different religion of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, **"There is no significant difference in economic empowerment among different religion of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district".** The result of 'ANOVA' test for economic empowerment among different religion of unorganized women workers is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Economic Empowerment among different Religion of Unorganised women workers

Economic Empowerment	Religion (Mean Score)			F-Statistics
	Hindu	Christian	Muslim	
Personal income	3.5182	3.4921	3.6207	5.938*
Ability to save for future needs	3.1683	3.2434	3.3793	0.434
Able to meet day today expenses for the family	3.4493	3.4392	3.5862	0.230
Able to meet the household needs	4.4512	4.5979	4.4138	0.117
Capacity to give education to the children	3.5583	3.5820	3.8621	0.303

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Able to meet medical requirements	3.6883	3.9524	3.7931	0.163
Ability to spend some amount on family functions	3.5908	3.7037	3.1724	1.305
Ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks	3.3021	3.4550	3.3103	0.768
Capacity to repay the loan	3.4990	3.5079	3.4483	3.502*

Source: Primary data   *Significant at five per cent level

Table 3 shows the mean score of economic empowerment among different religion of unorganized women workers along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers belong to Hindu are able to meet the household needs and able to meet medical requirements and their respective mean scores are 4.4512 and 3.6883. Among the unorganized women workers belong to Christian, the important economic empowerments are able to meet the household needs and able to meet medical requirements and their respective mean scores are 4.5979 and 3.9524. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers belong to Muslim are able to meet the household needs and capacity to give education to the children and their respective mean scores are 4.4138 and 3.8621. Regarding the economic empowerment, the significant difference among the different religion of unorganized women workers, are identified in the case of personal income and capacity to repay the loan since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Economic Empowerment among different caste of Unorganised women workers

Unorganised women workers of different caste have different economic empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in economic empowerment among different caste of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, **"There is no significant difference in economic empowerment among different caste of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district".** The result of 'ANOVA' test for economic empowerment among different caste of unorganized women workers is presented in Table 4.

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Table 4

Economic Empowerment among different Caste of Unorganised women workers

Economic Empowerment	Caste (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	BC	MBC	SC/ST	OC	
Personal income	3.5238	3.5789	3.7067	3.7027	1.529
Ability to save for future needs	3.7381	3.9013	3.8000	4.0000	1.275
Able to meet day today expenses for the family	3.5952	3.5789	3.7100	4.1351	2.141
Able to meet the household needs	3.4127	3.4474	3.6000	3.8108	1.592
Capacity to give education to the children	3.1667	3.1447	3.2200	3.4054	0.270
Able to meet medical requirements	3.3968	3.5132	3.4533	3.5676	0.357
Ability to spend some amount on family functions	4.2460	4.5921	4.6133	4.6757	6.325*
Ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks	3.5476	3.6908	3.4833	4.0541	2.684*
Capacity to repay the loan	3.5397	4.0461	3.7700	4.0000	6.549*

Source: Primary data   * Significant at five per cent level

Table 4 shows the mean score of economic empowerment among different caste of unorganized women workers along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers belong to BC are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.2460 and 3.7381. Among the unorganized women workers belong to MBC, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and capacity to repay the loan and their respective mean scores are 4.5921 and 4.0461. The important economic empowerment among the unorganized women workers belong to SC/ST are ability to spend some amount on family functions and ability to save for future needs and their respective mean scores are 4.6133 and 3.8000. Among the unorganized women workers belong to OC, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and able to meet day today expenses for the family and their respective mean scores are 4.6757 and 4.1351. Regarding the economic empowerment,

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the significant difference among the different caste of unorganized women workers, are identified in the case of ability to spend some amount on family functions, ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks and capacity to repay the loan since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Economic Empowerment among different marital status of Unorganised women workers

Unorganised women workers of different marital status have different economic empowerment. In order to find out the significant difference in economic empowerment among different marital status of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district, 'ANOVA' test is attempted with the null hypothesis as, **"There is no significant difference in economic empowerment among different marital status of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli district".** The result of 'ANOVA' test for economic empowerment among different marital status of unorganized women workers is presented in Table 5

Table 5

Economic Empowerment among different Marital Status of Unorganised women workers

Economic Empowerment	Marital Status (Mean Score)				F-Statistics
	Married	**Unmarried**	**Widowed**	**Divorced**	
Personal income	3.6440	3.0606	3.5932	3.7778	3.587*
Ability to save for future needs	3.8018	3.3636	3.8898	4.0222	3.064*
Able to meet day today expenses for the family	3.6183	3.0303	3.8983	4.0889	5.652*
Able to meet the household needs	3.5009	2.9091	3.6610	3.7556	3.183*
Capacity to give education to the children	3.1431	2.2424	3.4322	3.9111	7.045*
Able to meet medical requirements	3.4000	3.0000	3.6610	3.8667	4.181*
Ability to spend some amount on family functions	4.5156	4.1515	4.3898	4.6444	1.770

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Ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks	3.5303	3.0909	3.7458	4.0444	4.530*
Capacity to repay the loan	3.8165	3.5152	3.5763	3.7333	1.853

Source: Primary data   *Significant at five per cent level

Table 5 shows the mean score of economic empowerment among different marital status of unorganized women workers along with its respective 'F' statistics. The important economic empowerment among the married unorganized women workers are ability to spend some amount on family functions and capacity to repay the loan and their respective mean scores are 4.5156 and 3.8165. Among the unmarried unorganized women workers, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and capacity to repay the loan and their respective mean scores are 4.1515 and 3.5152. The important economic empowerment among the widowed unorganized women workers are ability to spend some amount on family functions and able to meet day today expenses for the family and their respective mean scores are 4.3898 and 3.8983. Among the divorced unorganized women workers, the important economic empowerment are ability to spend some amount on family functions and able to meet day today expenses for the family and their respective mean scores are 4.6444 and 4.0889. Regarding the economic empowerment, the significant difference among the different marital status of unorganized women workers, are identified in the case of personal income, ability to save for future needs, able to meet day today expenses for the family, able to meet the household needs, capacity to give education to the children, able to meet medical requirements and ability to avail loans from the banks such as NGO, SHG, govt/pvt banks since the respective 'F' statistics are significant at 5 per cent level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

Women empowerment is critical to the process of development of the economy. It plays a critical role in the alleviation of poverty and in the all round progress of the nation. Among the various measures targeted towards women empowerment, the provision of micro finance assumes great importance. Evidences from successful experiments testify that micro credit has helped to improve the status of women and has enabled the poor to expand and diversify the provision of micro finance to increase their income.

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