PROJECT PROPOSAL (MPAP-02)

"WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SEWA DELHI"

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF

MASTER OF ARTS (PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION), IGNOU, NEW DELHI-

110068

SUBMITTED BY:

ENROLMENT NO.:

SUBMITTED TO:

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY,

MAIDAN GARHI, NEW DELHI-110068

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment refers to increasing the economic, political, social, educational, gender, or spiritual strength of individuals and communities. Despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor and illiterate. They usually have less access than men to medical care, property ownership, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

The ability of women to control their own fertility is absolutely fundamental to women's empowerment and equality. When a woman can plan her family, she can plan the rest of her life. When she is healthy, she can be more productive. And when her reproductive rights—including the right to decide the number, timing and spacing of her children, and to make decisions regarding reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence—are promoted and protected, she has freedom to participate more fully and equally in society.

SEWA Delhi, which was established in 1999, is a part of the national organization, SEWA. As an early example of a successful non-governmental organization, SEWA was founded in 1972 by Ela Bhatt, a lawyer, in the western state of India, Gujarat, and can be found today in various locations in and outside of India. SEWA started as a branch of a union, Textile Labor Association (TLA), and in 1981 separated to continue as a separate organization. (Bhatt 2006) Organizations like SEWA work to bring out the confidence, skill set, and social linkages that will help underprivileged women gain access to the government resources they need to improve their wellbeing. According to the SEWA website, 93 percent of women in the Indian labor force work in the informal sector.

SEWA, advocating for these self-employed women working outside the protection of laws and official markets, holds literacy classes for them and their children, provides healthcare services, and supports vendors and workers create market linkages and fight for their rights among a wide-range of activities.

The area of women empowerment is so vast both in the national and international perspective. Hence, the work is mostly confined to the state of Delhi.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is "WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SEWA DELHI".

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In examining previous literature on women's empowerment in South Asia and SEWA, I sought to understand what the challenges to empowerment are for poor women in India. I then describe how I have understood the term empowerment and how it is framed in much of the literature on SEWA and SHGs in India. Then narrowing into studies done on SEWA in the past, I highlight the way certain indicators of empowerment, especially quantitative measures have been the focus on analyzing the strengths of SEWA. While these measures convey a part of the process, literature on women's empowerment leaves room for the addition of women's self-perceptions of change.

As a starting point to the process of change, it is also important to understand the starting point and challenges for the women whose perspectives were the basis of a renewed look at SEWA. In Scandal of the State Rajeswari Sunder Rajan outlines the barriers and structures that prevent progress when it comes equality and agency of women in India. (2003) she points to what may be an integral aspect of the lives of poor women, hindering

an expansion in their capabilities and confidence. She writes, "As difference theorists have been insisting, women are divided by caste, religion, class, race, and nationality, and so their interests cannot be identical; they are so deeply embedded structures of family, neighborhood, religion, and community, which offer them their primary identity, that these would claim their loyalties in a situation of competing rights; they do not naturally cohere in groups in any significant numbers or situations." (167)

In her study of SEWA in Gujarat, Kamila Rose also points to a reality that "…part of the reason women submit to the exploitation inflicted upon them in the first place is that they are not conversant with the formal, literate world, and that many of them live and deal in a limited circumscribed environment which does not promote unifying with people outside." (1992: 27)

Sunder Rajan and Roses' claims and the services of SEWA suggest that SEWA provides a comfortable and socially acceptable alternative in the face of these diverse interests and structures that they outline as hurdles to developing confidence and collective agency. Through SEWA, women in various neighborhoods of Delhi, and throughout the country, can join together and talk about similar goals in a place of composed mainly of women. It could be that the organization is able to provide a forum where they may come to see the commonalities that unite them despite the "embedded structures."

Sunder Rajan writes, "If we bring together these two observations – the acknowledgement of women's productivity in a variety of sites of discourse and policy, and women's active involvement in struggles around livelihood – we are led to ask if work might serve as a possible locus of women's collectivization and identity, hence an opening for them within civil society, an alternative to the all-subsuming private sphere

of the family and the (sole) public sphere of the religion-based community to which they are otherwise limited." (170-71). She points to the precise arena that SEWA targets as a union and producers' company in Delhi. Sunder Rajan's emphasis on "The identity of women as economically autonomous (nondependent) individuals promotes their self-respect and feelings of equality, strengthens their entitlements, and increases their bargaining power…" correlates almost exactly with the mission of the organization. (171) Yet, without the voices of women these claims remain abstract. By learning from the women how work functions in their lives and how they identify themselves as individuals in a community, we can understand which programs explicitly and indirectly work to these ends.

Galab and Rao's study of women's self-help groups, particularly in the section that they cover the DWCRA model, identifies changes in the participants' lives from markers of healthcare, education of children, to household expenditure decisions and even references the changes in the empowerment level, but does not answer the question of how. In terms of what facets of the SHGs from the women's perspectives enabled them to personally feel growth, their study is less satisfying. The authors provide little information on the participants' perceptions of the effects of the programs that would have benefited from qualitative study.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

A closer analysis of the available studies shows that studies on the women empowerment in state Delhi are very less. Therefore, the investigator was motivated to undertake this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following points are the main objectives of my study: -

- ❖ To understand the effects that SEWA can make in the "empowerment process" from the perspectives of the women of the SEWA.

- ❖ To examine the changes in the members of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in New Delhi as an effect of being part of SEWA.

- ❖ To study a complete picture of how development programs, in this case a women's self-help group, can improve women's lives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research

The advanced learner's dictionary of current English as "a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge"

Redman and More define research as a "systematized efforts to gain new knowledge"

A Research Methodology defines the purpose of the research, how it proceeds, how to measure progress and what constitute success with respect to the objectives determined for carrying out the research study. The appropriate research design formulated for this study is detailed below.

Exploratory research: This kind of research has the primary objective of development of insights into the problem. It studies the main area where the problem lies and also tries to evaluate some appropriate courses of action.

The research methodology for the present study will be adopted to reflect these realties and help reach the logical conclusion in an objective and scientific manner.

Research design: A plan of proposed study prepared by a researcher stating the research

activities to be performed in this proposed study before he undertakes his research work is called "Research Design". The research design for the current study is an exploratory one which sought to explore the women empowerment in Delhi**.**

DATA COLLECTION:

Sources of data collection:

Primary data

Primary data are collected afresh and for the first time. It is the data originated by the researcher specifically to address the research problem.

In this study, primary data will be collected primarily to understand the women empowerment in state Delhi. The primary data will be collected using a questionnaire which will be designed and then administered to the respondents.

Secondary Data

Secondary data will be collected from internet, registers, records, journals, articles, magazines and annual reports of the organization.

Data collection Instrument:

Questionnaire Design begins with an understanding of the capabilities of a questionnaire and how they can help in research. If it is determined that a questionnaire is to be used, the greatest care goes into the planning of the objectives. A questionnaire will be designed and administered to the women to collect the data.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study will pave the way for other researchers to conduct similar studies in any districts, any states and any countries to bring to limelight the WOMEN EMPOWERMENT.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study will be delimited to the state Delhi only

- ❖ The time for the study is quite limited.

- ❖ The material on the study is quite vast and it is not possible to study all material.

CHAPTERIZATION

The chapterization of the thesis is proposed to be made, keeping in mind the objectives

- ❖ The first chapter shall be an introduction about the women empowerment and its research objectives.

- ❖ The second chapter shall be the review of earlier studies related to women empowerment.

- ❖ The third chapter shall be the research methodology of the present study.

- ❖ The forth chapter shall deal with the interaction with SEWA members and the information collected which shaped the findings of the proposed study.

- ❖ The last chapter shall give the further directions and conclusions of the present study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ❖ Bhatt, Ela. We are Poor but So Many. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

- ❖ Datta, Rekha. "From Development to Empowerment: The Self-Employed Women's Association." International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society 16, no. 3 (Spring 2003).

- ❖ Desai, Raj M., and Shareen Joshi. Scaling up in Agriculture, Rural Development, and Nutrition. Issue brief no. 14. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2012.

❖ Desai, Raj M., and Shareen Joshi. The Role of Self-Help Groups in Community Development: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Rural India. Georgetown University, 2010.

❖ Galab, S., and N. Chandrasekhara Rao. "Women's Self-Help Groups, Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment." Economic and Political Weekly 38, no. 12/13 (March 22, 2003): 1274-83.

❖ Jejeebhoy, Shireen J., and Zeba A. Sathar. "Women's Autonomy in India and Pakistan: The Influence of Religion and Region." Population and Development Review 27, no. 4 (December 2001): 687-712.

❖ Kabeer, Naila. "Is Microfinance a 'Magic Bullet' for Women's Empowerment? Analysis of Findings from South Asia." Economic and Political Weekly 40, no. 44/45 (October 29, 2005): 4709-18.

❖ Paula, Kantor. "Women's Empowerment through Home–based Work: Evidence from India." Development and Change 34, no. 3 (June 2003): 425-45.

❖ Karim, Lamia. Microfinance and Its Discontents. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

❖ Kraus-Harper, Uschi. From Despondency to Ambitions: Women's Changing Perceptions of Self-Employment. Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998.

❖ Malhotra, Anju, and Sidney Ruth Schuler. "Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development." In Measuring Empowerment, edited by Deepa Narayan, 71-88. Washington: World Bank, 2005.

❖ Mason, Karen Oppenheim. "Measuring Women's Empowerment: Learning from Cross-National Research." In Measuring Empowerment, edited by Deepa Narayan, 71-88. Washington: World Bank, 2005.

❖ Rahman, Aminur. Women and Microcredit in Rural Bangladesh. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999.

❖ Rose, Kalima. Where Women Are Leaders. London: Zed Books, 1992. Sen, Amartya. Commodities and Capabilities. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1985.

❖ Sunder Rajan, Rajeswari. The Scandal of the State. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.