Impact assessment of Self Help Group Bank Linkage Programme on Women Empowerment in the State of Himachal Pradesh, India

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Abstract
Microfinance is one of the important tools for providing financial services to the poor and unprivileged section of the society. Women have become the focus point of these programmes in India. Self Help Group Bank Linkage Programme is one of the successful programmes for disbursing microfinance services and most of the Self Help Groups (SHGs) are women SHGs. Therefore assessing the effect of this programme on women empowerment is of great importance. This research paper examines the impact of the SHG Bank Linkage Programme on the empowerment status of the members. The five dimensions of the empowerment have been studied in this paper i.e. economic empowerment, social empowerment, personal empowerment, decision-making autonomy and political empowerment. In present study, the selection bias effect is considered and therefore Propensity Score Matching method has been applied to reduce such effect. Propensity score matching method helps in matching treated and control groups based on the propensity score calculated and excludes the unmatched cases for further analysis. Analysis shows that SHG Bank Linkage Programme has positively affected the empowerment level of SHGs members of in Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Microfinance, SHG, SHG Bank Linkage Programme, Women Empowerment

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