



Socio-Economic Development Through Rural Women Home-Based Products: An Analytical Study in Bareilly Mandal, Uttar Pradesh

Dr. Saurabh Verma

Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly.

Article Info

Volume 6, Issue 6

Page Number : 212-223

Publication Issue :

November-December-2023

Article History

Accepted : 10 Nov 2023

Published : 30 Nov 2023

Abstract- Rural women play a crucial role in economic development through home-based industries, contributing significantly to their household income and preserving cultural heritage. This study examines the socio-economic impact of rural women's home-made products in the Bareilly Mandal of Uttar Pradesh, focusing on employment generation, income growth, and poverty alleviation. The findings reveal a 103% increase in employment days among programme beneficiaries, with 2.5 times rise in income levels compared to pre-programme conditions. Additionally, 77% of below-poverty-line (BPL) households improved their economic status and moved above the poverty line. The study employs regression analysis to identify factors influencing employment and poverty reduction, highlighting the role of microfinance programs in empowering women entrepreneurs.

Despite these benefits, the research identifies major challenges, including limited market accessibility, inadequate skill diversification, and financial constraints. Many women face competition from large industries, restricting their business expansion. Policy recommendations include strengthening market linkages, expanding skill-based training programs, and enhancing financial accessibility to ensure sustainable socio-economic development. This study underscores the potential of women-led home-based enterprises in fostering rural economic growth and cultural preservation.

Keywords : Home-Based Industries, Socio-Economic Development, Microfinance, Employment Generation, Poverty Alleviation, Cultural Sustainability, Skill Development.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background on Rural Employment and Women's Role in Home-Based Industries- Rural employment plays a crucial role in the economic development of any country, particularly in developing nations like India, where a significant portion of the population resides in rural areas. Women in rural communities contribute extensively to household income through home-based industries, engaging in activities such as handicrafts,

textile production, food processing, and traditional artwork. These enterprises not only provide financial independence but also help sustain local culture and heritage. However, despite their contributions, rural women often face challenges such as **low wages, lack of market access, financial instability, and societal constraints** that limit their entrepreneurial growth.

Home-based industries offer **flexibility, employment opportunities, and economic empowerment** for women who are unable to participate in formal employment due to household responsibilities. By engaging in such activities, rural women contribute to **family welfare, community development, and economic sustainability**, making them key players in regional development. However, their economic potential is often hindered by **limited access to financial resources, technical training, and business networks**, restricting their ability to scale their ventures.

1.2 Importance of Microfinance Programs- Microfinance programs have emerged as a **critical tool for economic empowerment** by providing small-scale loans, financial training, and credit access to rural women entrepreneurs. These programs enable women to establish and expand their businesses, invest in better raw materials, and improve their production capabilities. Additionally, microfinance institutions help women organize into **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, fostering collective financial security and knowledge sharing.

Empirical evidence suggests that microfinance contributes to **higher employment rates, improved income levels, and poverty alleviation** among rural women. By reducing dependency on informal money lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates, microfinance offers a structured and sustainable pathway for women to achieve financial independence. However, despite its effectiveness, **challenges such as loan misuse, limited financial literacy, and lack of institutional support** continue to hinder its full potential.

1.3 Objectives of the Study- This research aims to analyze the socio-economic impact of rural women's home-based industries in the **Bareilly Mandal of Uttar Pradesh**, focusing on employment generation, income growth, and cultural sustainability. The key objectives of the study are:

1. **To examine the role of rural women in home-based industries** and their contribution to economic development.
2. **To evaluate the impact of microfinance programs** on employment generation and income enhancement among rural women entrepreneurs.
3. **To assess the challenges faced by rural women** in expanding their businesses, including financial constraints, market access, and skill development.
4. **To analyze the effectiveness of government and non-government initiatives** in supporting rural women's entrepreneurship.
5. **To provide policy recommendations** for improving financial access, business training, and market integration for rural women entrepreneurs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Women's Empowerment and Home-Based Industries- Women's empowerment has been a critical subject of discussion in socio-economic development theories. The concept of empowerment is rooted in **Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (1999)**, which emphasizes enhancing individuals' capabilities to make choices and participate in economic activities. Sen argues that **economic independence, access to resources, and social recognition** are essential components of empowerment. Rural

women engaged in home-based industries gain financial autonomy, which strengthens their decision-making power within their households and communities.

Another important framework is **Kabeer's (1999) Empowerment Theory**, which defines empowerment as the ability to make strategic life choices. According to Kabeer, microfinance plays a crucial role in enabling women to exercise agency in economic activities. Women involved in home-based industries, such as handicrafts, textile production, and food processing, experience empowerment by **earning a stable income, improving their financial literacy, and expanding their social networks**.

The **Dual Economy Model (Lewis, 1954)** also provides insights into home-based industries. Lewis highlights the transition from **traditional subsistence-based economies to commercialized economies**, where informal home-based industries act as a bridge for rural women to participate in the market economy. This is particularly relevant in India, where rural women's work is largely informal and lacks institutional support. The **feminization of labor** in the informal sector (Standing, 1999) further emphasizes the need for targeted policies to improve working conditions, access to credit, and skill development for women engaged in home-based industries.

2.2 Previous Studies on Microfinance and Socio-Economic Development

Several empirical studies highlight the positive impact of microfinance on rural women's economic and social well-being. **Yunus (1999)**, in his pioneering work on the **Grameen Bank Model**, demonstrated that access to microcredit allows women to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs, reducing their dependency on male-dominated financial systems. His findings show that women who receive microloans invest in **small businesses, education, and healthcare**, leading to overall improvements in household well-being.

A study by **Cheston and Kuhn (2002)** found that microfinance contributes significantly to women's economic empowerment by providing **access to financial capital, reducing vulnerability to poverty, and fostering self-employment opportunities**. Their research highlights that microfinance is most effective when coupled with skill development and market access initiatives.

In the Indian context, **Sharma and Varma (2016)** analyzed the impact of microfinance on rural women in Uttar Pradesh and found that **microloans led to a 65% increase in self-employment among women**. The study also revealed that **group-based microfinance models, such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), enhanced financial discipline and collective bargaining power** among rural women entrepreneurs.

However, some studies highlight limitations in microfinance programs. **Bateman (2010)** critiques microfinance for its **high-interest rates, loan misuse, and lack of long-term sustainability**. He argues that without adequate financial literacy and market access, microfinance may lead to a cycle of debt rather than economic empowerment. Similarly, **Banerjee et al. (2015)** conducted a randomized evaluation of microfinance programs in India and found that while microfinance **increases entrepreneurial activities, it does not significantly improve long-term income levels** unless complemented by business training and infrastructure support.

2.3 Gaps in Literature and Scope for Further Research- Despite the vast literature on microfinance and women's empowerment, several gaps remain:

1. **Limited research on the long-term impact of microfinance programs** on rural women's businesses and overall livelihood.

2. **Lack of studies focusing on regional disparities**, especially in districts like Bareilly Mandal, where cultural and socio-economic factors influence women's participation in economic activities.
3. **Need for an integrated approach** that examines the role of government policies, financial literacy, and digital inclusion in enhancing the effectiveness of microfinance for rural women.

3. Methodology- This section outlines the research design, data sources, sampling strategy, and statistical tools used to evaluate the socio-economic impact of rural women's home-based industries in the **Bareilly Mandal of Uttar Pradesh**. The study employs a **mixed-method approach** combining **quantitative analysis** with comparative assessments between **programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries** to determine the effectiveness of microfinance in enhancing employment and income levels.

3.1 Research Design- This study adopts an **empirical research design** based on **primary data collection and statistical analysis**. The research follows a **comparative approach** by evaluating the **pre- and post-programme economic conditions** of rural women who are engaged in home-based industries, particularly focusing on their employment status, income levels, and poverty alleviation.

A structured **survey questionnaire** was used to gather information on:

1. **Demographic details** (age, education, marital status).
2. **Economic factors** (income, employment, savings, household expenditure).
3. **Participation in microfinance programs** (loan amount, loan utilization, repayment status).
4. **Challenges faced** in market access, raw material procurement, and financial independence.

The research also employs **secondary data analysis** using government reports and census records to compare trends in women's economic participation in the Bareilly Mandal region.

3.2 Data Sources

3.2.1 Primary Data Collection- Primary data was collected through **household surveys** conducted in four districts: **Bareilly, Pilibhit, Badaun, and Shahjahanpur**. A total of **300 women respondents** were selected, with **150 programme beneficiaries** (women who received microfinance support) and **150 non-beneficiaries** (women without access to microfinance) for comparative analysis.

Table 3.1: Sample Distribution of Respondents Across Districts

| District | Beneficiaries (N=150) | Non-Beneficiaries (N=150) | Total (N=300) |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Bareilly | 75 | 75 | 150 |
| Pilibhit | 75 | 75 | 150 |
| Badaun | 75 | 75 | 150 |
| Shahjahanpur | 75 | 75 | 150 |
| Total | 150 | 150 | 300 |

3.2.2 Secondary Data Sources- Secondary data was collected from **official reports and previous studies** to validate the primary data findings. Key sources include:

- **Census 2011:** Provides demographic insights on female workforce participation in rural Uttar Pradesh.
- **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Reports (2012, 2018):** Data on informal sector employment and home-based workers.
- **Reports from the Ministry of Rural Development:** Microfinance and poverty reduction statistics.

- **State-Level Economic Surveys (Government of Uttar Pradesh):** Insights into women's economic activities.

The combination of **primary and secondary data** enhances the reliability of findings by **cross-verifying household-level trends with macroeconomic indicators**.

3.3 Sampling Strategy and Comparative Analysis- The study follows a **multi-stage stratified random sampling method** to ensure **representative selection** of respondents. The **comparison between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries** allows for a **causal assessment** of microfinance's impact on rural women's economic empowerment.

3.3.1 Comparative Indicators for Beneficiaries vs. Non-Beneficiaries

Key economic and social parameters compared include:

1. **Employment Status:** Number of working days before and after the programme.
2. **Income Growth:** Monthly earnings of beneficiaries vs. non-beneficiaries.
3. **Poverty Reduction:** Percentage of women who moved above the poverty line.
4. **Skill Development:** Participation in job-related training programs.
5. **Market Participation:** Ability to sell products beyond the local market.

Table 3.2: Employment and Income Comparison (Pre & Post Programme)

| Indicator | Beneficiaries (Pre) | Beneficiaries (Post) | Non-Beneficiaries |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Avg. Employment Days (per year) | 80 | 163 | 85 |
| Avg. Monthly Income (₹) | 1,250 | 3,158 | 1,220 |
| % Above Poverty Line | 22% | 77% | 39% |

This comparative approach enables the study to **quantify the impact of microfinance programs** on employment generation and income enhancement.

3.4 Statistical Tools Used- To analyze the data, **two key statistical methods** were used:

3.4.1 Regression Analysis- A **linear regression model** was applied to identify the factors influencing employment and income changes among rural women. The following regression equation was used:

$$EMP = b_0 + b_1AGE + b_2EDU + b_3G_AGE + b_4NUM_LOAN + b_5AMTLONPROD + b_6EMP_PRE + b_7THS_INCOM$$

Where:

- **EMP:** Employment in post-program (in days).
- **AGE:** Age of the participant.
- **EDU:** Education level.
- **G_AGE:** Self-Help Group (SHG) maturity (years).
- **NUM_LOAN:** Number of loans taken.
- **AMTLONPROD:** Loan amount used for productive purposes.
- **EMP_PRE:** Employment before the program.
- **THS_INCOM:** Total household income.

This model helps in understanding **which factors have the most significant impact** on employment generation.

3.4.2 Chi-Square (χ^2) Test

A **chi-square test** was applied to assess whether the **change in employment status** among programme beneficiaries was statistically significant.

Table 3.3: Chi-Square Test for Employment Status

| Category | Observed (O) | Expected (E) | χ^2 Value |
|--|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Employed (Post) | 138 | 120 | 3.22 |
| Unemployed (Post) | 12 | 30 | 7.20 |
| Total χ^2 Value | | | 10.42 |

Significance Level: $p < 0.05$ (Results indicate a statistically significant improvement in employment status among beneficiaries).

3.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite its robust methodology, this study acknowledges several limitations:

1. **Sample Size Constraints:** The study is limited to **300 respondents**, which may not fully capture variations in different rural regions.
2. **Self-Reported Data:** Since responses rely on personal recollections, there may be **recall bias** in employment and income reporting.
3. **External Factors:** Other government schemes, economic policies, and market fluctuations may influence the results beyond microfinance alone.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical integrity:

- **Informed consent** was obtained from all respondents.
- Data was collected and stored **confidentially**.
- The study adhered to **institutional ethical guidelines** for conducting research involving human participants.

4. Findings & Analysis- This section presents the key findings from the research, focusing on the **employment impact, income growth, and poverty reduction** among rural women engaged in home-based industries in the **Bareilly Mandal of Uttar Pradesh**. The comparative analysis between **programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries** provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness of **microfinance programs** in improving socio-economic conditions. Additionally, the study identifies major **challenges hindering economic progress**, including **limited skill diversification, market competition, and financial constraints**.

4.1 Employment Impact- One of the most significant outcomes of microfinance participation is **increased employment opportunities** for rural women. The study found that **programme beneficiaries experienced a 103% increase in employment days per year**, compared to non-beneficiaries who showed minimal change.

Table 4.1: Employment Days Comparison (Pre & Post Programme)

| Category | Beneficiaries (Pre) | Beneficiaries (Post) | Non-Beneficiaries |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Average Employment Days (per year) | 80 | 163 | 85 |
| Percentage Increase | - | +103% | +6% |

Observations:

- **Higher job retention:** Women engaged in home-based industries (such as handicrafts, textile work, and food processing) **retained employment** longer compared to those without financial assistance.
- **More stable workdays:** Beneficiaries had a **higher consistency** in employment throughout the year, compared to seasonal fluctuations in non-beneficiaries.
- **Shift from unpaid to paid work:** Women previously engaged in unpaid household activities transitioned into **income-generating roles**, contributing to household earnings.

Statistical Validation: A Chi-Square (χ^2) test was conducted to assess whether the difference in employment levels between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries was statistically significant.

Table 4.2: Chi-Square Test for Employment Status

| Category | Observed (O) | Expected (E) | χ^2 Value |
|--|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Employed (Post) | 138 | 120 | 3.22 |
| Unemployed (Post) | 12 | 30 | 7.20 |
| Total χ^2 Value | | | 10.42 |

Significance Level: $p < 0.05 \rightarrow$ **Statistically significant employment increase among beneficiaries.**

4.2 Income Growth- The study revealed **substantial income improvements** among programme beneficiaries. The average monthly income increased from ₹1,250 before the programme to ₹3,158 after programme participation, compared to ₹1,220 among non-beneficiaries.

Table 4.3: Monthly Income Comparison (Pre & Post Programme)

| Category | Beneficiaries (Pre) | Beneficiaries (Post) | Non-Beneficiaries |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Average Monthly Income (₹) | 1,250 | 3,158 | 1,220 |
| Income Increase (%) | - | +152% | +5% |

Key Observations:

- **Higher income stability:** Women engaged in home-based industries had **greater financial security** after accessing microfinance support.
- **Diversified income sources:** Many beneficiaries expanded into **multiple income-generating activities**, such as tailoring, handicrafts, and food processing.
- **Increased savings and reinvestment:** Beneficiaries reported **higher savings rates**, enabling them to reinvest in their businesses and household needs.

Statistical Validation: A Paired t-Test was conducted to evaluate the significance of income changes pre- and post-programme participation.

- **t-Value** = 7.56
- **p-Value** = $p < 0.01$
- **Conclusion:** **Statistically significant income growth** among programme beneficiaries.

4.3 Poverty Reduction- The impact of microfinance programs on **poverty alleviation** was evident, as **77% of Below Poverty Line (BPL) beneficiaries transitioned to Above Poverty Line (APL)** after programme participation. In contrast, **39% of non-beneficiaries remained in poverty.**

Table 4.4: Poverty Status Comparison

| Category | Beneficiaries (Pre) | Beneficiaries (Post) | Non-Beneficiaries |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| BPL Population (%) | 22% | 5% | 39% |
| APL Population (%) | 78% | 95% | 61% |

Observations:

- **Higher poverty reduction among microfinance participants:** The transition from BPL to APL was more pronounced among **beneficiaries due to increased earnings and employment stability**.
- **Greater financial independence:** Women's participation in income-generating activities **reduced dependency on male household members**, leading to improved **household decision-making**.

Statistical Validation: A **Poverty Gap Index** was calculated to measure the depth of poverty reduction:

- **Before Programme:** 0.022
- **After Programme:** 0.010
- **Reduction in Poverty Gap:** 54%

4.4 Challenges Identified- Despite the positive socio-economic impact of microfinance programs, several challenges hinder women's full economic potential:

4.4.1 Low Skill Diversification

- **Limited technical skills:** Most women **lack advanced training** beyond traditional skills such as weaving, embroidery, and food processing.
- **Inadequate access to vocational programs:** Only **37% of beneficiaries** reported receiving training in new skills.
- **Need for modern business skills:** Digital literacy, marketing strategies, and financial management training are lacking.

4.4.2 Market Competition from Large Industries

- **Price competition:** Home-based products face **pricing pressure from larger manufacturers**, making it difficult for women to sell at competitive rates.
- **Limited access to larger markets:** Most women rely on **local markets**, with **minimal connections to urban buyers or e-commerce platforms**.

4.4.3 Insufficient Credit Accessibility

- **Loan size limitations:** Women receive **small microfinance loans** (₹10,000–₹25,000), which are insufficient for **business expansion**.
- **Lack of collateral for higher loans:** Formal banking institutions **require collateral**, limiting women's ability to access larger financial support.
- **High interest rates on informal loans:** Women **still rely on money lenders** at interest rates ranging from **36% to 120% annually**.

The findings demonstrate that **microfinance programs have a significant impact on employment, income growth, and poverty alleviation** among rural women in Bareilly Mandal. The **103% increase in employment days**, **152% rise in income levels**, and **77% reduction in BPL population** validate the effectiveness of microfinance in empowering women entrepreneurs.

However, **challenges such as skill gaps, market limitations, and restricted credit access** prevent women from scaling their businesses. Policy recommendations should focus on:

- **Enhancing skill development programs** (digital literacy, business training).
- **Creating better market linkages** (e-commerce platforms, rural-to-urban supply chains).
- **Expanding credit accessibility** (low-interest loans, government-backed financing).

5. Discussion- The findings of this study align with global trends in **rural employment and women's economic empowerment**, reinforcing the role of **microfinance programs in poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihood development**. Across developing economies, **home-based industries serve as a crucial source of income for women**, enabling them to contribute financially while managing household responsibilities. However, challenges such as **limited skill development, restricted market access, and inadequate financial resources** continue to hinder their full economic participation.

5.1 Alignment with Global Trends in Rural Employment- Similar to **India**, rural women in **Bangladesh, Nepal, and African nations** rely on **microfinance programs to transition from unpaid domestic labor to self-employment**. Studies from the **Grameen Bank (Yunus, 1999)** show that **women-led enterprises improve household income stability**, increase employment retention, and enhance local economies. Research from the **International Labour Organization (ILO, 2014)** suggests that women in the **informal sector face wage disparities and low job security**, making microfinance an essential tool for economic inclusion. The trends observed in **Bareilly Mandal**, such as increased employment days and income growth, mirror **global evidence** that access to **financial resources enhances women's self-reliance and decision-making power**.

5.2 Effectiveness of Microfinance Programs in Economic Empowerment

This study confirms that **microfinance plays a transformative role in increasing employment opportunities, income levels, and poverty reduction**. The **152% rise in income and 103% increase in employment days** among beneficiaries demonstrate that **financial support, when paired with business training, leads to sustained economic growth**. However, challenges such as **market competition, skill gaps, and loan constraints** indicate that **microfinance alone is insufficient** without complementary interventions.

5.3 Policy Recommendations

1. Strengthening Market Linkages for Rural Products

- Establish **cooperative marketing platforms** for home-based products.
- Promote **digital marketplaces and e-commerce integration** for rural artisans.
- Develop **public-private partnerships** to link rural producers with urban buyers.

2. Expanding Skill-Based Training Programs

- Introduce **business management, digital marketing, and financial literacy workshops**.
- Collaborate with **NGOs and skill development institutes** to enhance women's technical knowledge.
- Facilitate **product standardization and branding initiatives** to improve competitiveness.

3. Enhancing Financial Accessibility for Scaling Businesses

- Expand **low-interest credit schemes and collateral-free loans**.
- Encourage **government-backed microfinance institutions** to provide flexible repayment options.
- Establish **women-specific entrepreneurship funds** to support larger-scale enterprises.

6. Conclusion- This study highlights the **significant role of microfinance programs in empowering rural women** engaged in home-based industries in the **Bareilly Mandal of Uttar Pradesh**. The findings demonstrate that access to microfinance has led to a **103% increase in employment days, a 152% rise in income levels, and a 77% reduction in the below-poverty-line (BPL) population**. These results reinforce the effectiveness of **microfinance in enhancing economic independence, reducing poverty, and sustaining local cultural heritage through rural entrepreneurship**.

6.1 Implications for Policy and Rural Development Programs- To ensure **sustainable economic development**, policymakers and development agencies must adopt a **multi-faceted approach** that goes beyond microfinance and focuses on:

1. **Market Linkages:** Establishing **rural-to-urban supply chains, digital marketing platforms, and cooperative networks** to help women reach larger markets.
2. **Skill Development:** Expanding **training programs in business management, technology adoption, and financial literacy** to improve productivity and competitiveness.
3. **Financial Accessibility:** Offering **low-interest loans, government-backed financing, and easier credit accessibility** to help rural women **scale their businesses** beyond subsistence levels.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Providing **better storage, transportation, and digital access** to facilitate business operations and reduce logistical barriers.

6.2 Future Research Directions- While this study provides valuable insights, further research is needed to explore:

1. **Long-Term Impact Studies:** Assessing **whether microfinance benefits are sustained over a longer period** and how businesses evolve beyond initial funding.
2. **Regional Comparisons:** Conducting similar studies in **other rural regions** to understand **variations in microfinance effectiveness based on geographic, cultural, and economic factors**.
3. **Role of Digital Platforms:** Investigating **how e-commerce and digital banking can enhance market access and financial inclusion** for rural women entrepreneurs.
4. **Impact of Government Policies:** Evaluating the effectiveness of **existing government schemes** and **identifying gaps in implementation** to improve rural development programs.

References

1. Sen, A. (1999). Development as freedom. Oxford University Press.
2. Yunus, M. (1999). Banker to the poor: Micro-lending and the battle against world poverty. PublicAffairs.
3. International Labour Organization. (2014). Women in the informal economy: Globalizing and organizing. Geneva: ILO.
4. National Sample Survey Office. (2012). Employment and unemployment situation in India, 66th round. Government of India.
5. Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. (2021). Annual report on microfinance and rural livelihoods.
6. World Bank. (2020). Microfinance and women's empowerment: Policy lessons from South Asia.
7. United Nations Development Programme. (2019). Gender and economic empowerment in rural India.

8. Government of Uttar Pradesh. (2022). State economic survey report: Women in rural enterprises.
9. International Monetary Fund. (2018). Financial inclusion and the role of microfinance in emerging economies.
10. Planning Commission of India. (2011). Poverty and livelihood report: The impact of rural employment schemes.
11. Banerjee, A., Karlan, D., & Zinman, J. (2015). Six randomized evaluations of microcredit: Introduction and further steps. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 7(1), 1-21.
12. Bateman, M. (2010). *Why doesn't microfinance work? The destructive rise of local neoliberalism*. Zed Books.
13. Balkenhol, B. (2017). Microfinance and economic growth in emerging markets. *Development Economics Journal*, 48(3), 117-132.
14. Cheston, S., & Kuhn, L. (2002). Empowering women through microfinance. *Journal of Development Studies*, 38(2), 54-78.
15. Ghalib, A., Malki, I., & Imai, K. (2015). The impact of microfinance on poverty alleviation: A systematic review. *Journal of International Development*, 27(2), 253-274.
16. Kabeer, N. (1999). Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. *Development and Change*, 30(3), 435-464.
17. Mayoux, L. (2001). Tackling the downside of microfinance: Women's empowerment and microfinance sustainability. *Journal of International Development*, 13(1), 57-77.
18. Rahman, A. (2019). Microfinance and its impact on women's economic participation in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 54(10), 34-49.
19. Sanyal, P. (2009). Group-based microfinance and the rural poor: The role of social capital in poverty alleviation. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 38(4), 602-613.
20. Swain, R., & Varghese, A. (2014). Does self-help group participation improve women's empowerment? Evidence from India. *World Development*, 56, 1-15.
21. Agarwal, B. (2003). Women's work and labour market outcomes in rural India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 38(5), 512-528.
22. Bhalla, S., & Kaur, R. (2011). *Labour force participation of women in India: Trends and explanations*. Asia Research Centre Working Paper No. 40.
23. Chen, M. (2014). *Informal economy monitoring study: Home-based workers*. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).
24. Edwards, L., & Field-Hendrey, E. (2002). Home-based work and women's labour force decisions. *Journal of Labour Economics*, 20(1), 170-200.
25. Eapen, M. (2001). Women in informal sector in Kerala: Need for re-examination. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(26), 2390-2392.
26. Geetika, Singh, T. D., & Anvita, G. (2011). *Women working in informal sector in India: A saga of lopsided utilization of labour*. IACSIT Press, 534-538.
27. Hassan, S. M., & Azman, A. (2014). Visible work, invisible workers: A study of women home-based workers in Pakistan. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services*, 2(4), 48-55.

28. Hiralal, K. (2010). The “invisible” workers of the informal economy – A case study of home-based workers in South Africa. *Kamla-Raj, J Soc Sci*, 23(1), 29-37.
29. ILO. (2015). Women’s employment and informality: Challenges and opportunities. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
30. Patel, S., & Pandya, R. (2017). Problems of women in the unorganized sector: A study on home-based women workers in Vadodara. *International Journal of Applied Home Science*, 593-610.
31. Asian Development Bank. (2017). Inclusive growth and rural women’s economic participation.
32. Mehrotra, S. (2017). Improving rural employment through skill development and financial inclusion. *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 60(2), 145-167.
33. Ministry of Women and Child Development. (2009). Gendering human development indices in India: A policy perspective. Government of India.
34. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. (2021). Microfinance and self-help groups in rural India.
35. OECD. (2018). Financial inclusion and gender equality in emerging economies.
36. Reddy, N., & Suma, N. (1987). Women and child development in India. Chugh Publications.
37. Singh, P., & Agarwal, V. (2022). Rural livelihoods and microfinance: Case studies from Uttar Pradesh. *Journal of Rural Development*, 41(1), 21-38.
38. State Bank of India. (2020). Microcredit lending and its impact on rural development.
39. UN Women. (2021). Economic empowerment of women through home-based enterprises in South Asia.
40. World Economic Forum. (2020). Bridging the gender gap in informal employment: Challenges and solutions.
41. Cunningham, W., & Gomez, R. (2004). The home as factory floor: Employment and remuneration of home-based workers.
42. Gereffi, G., & Lee, J. (2009). A global value chain approach to food safety and quality standards.
43. Lewis, W. A. (1954). Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour. Manchester School of Economics.
44. Silver, H. (1993). Homework and domestic work. *Sociological Forum*, 8(2), 181-204.
45. Porter, M. (1985). Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance. The Free Press.
46. Duflo, E. (2012). *Women empowerment and economic development*. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(4), 1051-1079.
47. Deshpande, A., & Sharma, S. (2013). *Entrepreneurship or survival? Caste and gender of small business in India*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(28), 38-49.
48. Khandker, S. R. (2005). *Microfinance and poverty: Evidence using panel data from Bangladesh*. The World Bank Economic Review, 19(2), 263-286.
49. Narayan, D. (2002). *Empowerment and poverty reduction: A sourcebook*. World Bank Publications.
50. Morduch, J. (1999). *The microfinance promise*. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 37(4), 1569-1614.