



EMPOWERING WOMEN IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH MISSION SHAKTI: AN OVERVIEW OF ODISHA, INDIA

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurship (SE) is a modern phenomenon of a country's socioeconomic development. It refers to the invention of solutions to societal problems through developing new ideas, enhancing social value, and persistently chasing new opportunities. Rather of private wealth creation, possibilities for the benefit of society are created. Entrepreneurship is regarded as one of the most essential variables influencing societal economic progress. Socioeconomic growth has been credited to entrepreneurs for starting it and keeping it going. In India, the idea of women entrepreneurs is still relatively new. Women are now more active in a variety of commercial fields and are more aware of their rights and circumstances. They have established successful corporate edifices of their own. They support the expansion of the economy and the improvement of people's social circumstances. The primary goals of social entrepreneurship are social welfare and value generation through the demonstration of corporate innovation, leadership, and risk management. The purpose of this research is to determine the elements influencing the development of women entrepreneurs in Odisha, which contribute to economic growth and the betterment of their socioeconomic conditions. Women's workforce ratio in the country is increasing as women's literacy rate in Odisha rises. In certain Indian states, the idea of self-help groups (SHGs) has been shown to be advantageous for rural women. Their social standing and wealth have both increased as a result. The operation of self-help groups (SHGs) in Odisha is also described in this paper. This article focuses on a number of difficulties, challenges, and potential outcomes related to women entrepreneurs in Odisha. The government of Odisha is setting the bar high for encouraging women's financial independence. They start Self-Help Groups on March 8, 2001, on International Women's Day. The fundamental goal of this programme is to teach women how to be socially, economically, and politically independent. This programme is now commonly referred to as "Mission Shakti of Odisha." A standardised questionnaire written in the local language was used to collect data from the districts of Angul and Khordha. This study will use both primary and secondary data. The study chose data acquired from various members of several women SHGs. The data was analysed using the SPSS programme. Today, social entrepreneurs are supported, funded, and advised globally by organisations, non-governmental organisations, foundations, governments, and individuals. A rising number of colleges and universities are developing programmes centred on social entrepreneurship education and training. This research tries to investigate some strategies for repositioning rural women as equal partners in entrepreneurship and economic development.

Keywords: *Women Entrepreneurs, Mission Shakti, Women Problems & workforce, Women empowerment, Self Help Groups.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The 1980s women's movement gave rise to discussions about women's empowerment as feminists, particularly those from third world nations, expressed discontent with the dominant development narrative, which was primarily political and economic in nature. Despite the fact that [Paulo Freire \(1973\)](#) did not use the phrase, his emphasis on conscientization served as a crucial foundation for social activists who worked with the underprivileged and marginalised communities. As a result, in the middle of the 1980s, the concept of "women's empowerment" began to develop and gain traction as a more political and transformative idea that posed a threat to not only patriarchy but also the class, race, ethnicity, and, in the case of India, caste and religion mediating structures ([Freire, 2020](#)). Although the Indian constitution guarantees that men and women have equal rights, in many rural areas of India, The socioeconomic independence enjoyed by women differs from that of males. Women in urban India have more options and opportunities in terms of education and gainful employment compared to women who reside in rural India, where they are still not a part of the organised labour market ([Fletcher et al., 2017](#)). They work primarily in the home and rely on their husbands or other male family members to provide for their financial requirements. Their domestic work is not valued in monetary terms and is not regarded as legal employment in society. Gender inequality is made worse by the lack of recognition caused by inactive engagement in the economy ([Agrawal et al., 2023](#)). Deep divisions are emerging among classes, castes, and gender as a result of India's economy's rapid growth. The lopsided distribution of wealth is driving those on the outside into deeper obscurity and poverty. Public monies are used for welfare obligations including schooling, Public transportation, health services, and for-profit social business models are all rapidly declining. continue to be out of the way of those at the pyramid's base ([Nayyar et al., 2007](#)). An entrepreneur is a person (or group of people) who spots an opportunity, collects the appropriate materials, develops something, and ultimately bears responsibility for the success of the Organisation. Both entrepreneurship and entrepreneurism are equally important; whereas an entrepreneur is someone who begins a firm, entrepreneurism is the method used to accomplish so. Entrepreneurs have a strong drive for success. Particularly, he differs from a regular businessman due to the characteristics of an entrepreneur (strong need for achievement and innovative). Stay out of the way of those at the base of the pyramid ([Ganiger, 2013](#)).

2. Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Activities among Women

Women's empowerment and female entrepreneurship are closely related and can have a significant impact on the economy and society. Giving women the tools they need to succeed as businesswomen can boost the economy, promote gender equality, and enhance social well-being. Women's empowerment is fundamentally based on education ([Ahl, 2006](#)). When women have access to high-quality education, they are more prepared with the abilities and information required to be successful business owners. Access to financing is one of the major obstacles women encounter when starting a business ([Shukla, 2021](#)). Access to loans, grants, and investment opportunities is a key component in empowering women in entrepreneurship. Women can benefit greatly from mentoring and entrepreneurial training programmes in terms of gaining the knowledge and self-assurance needed to launch and run successful enterprises. By guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities, supportive legal and legislative frameworks can promote women's entrepreneurship. This entails resolving concerns including inheritance laws, property rights, and anti-discrimination policies. Women entrepreneurs can gain a lot from creating a network of like-minded people and possible partners. Through networking, one may have access to important tools, data, and assistance ([Datta & Gailey, 2012](#)). The promotion of successful female entrepreneurs as role models can encourage other women to pursue their own business goals. Many women find it challenging to manage their family responsibilities with business endeavours. Policies like parental leave, flexible work schedules, and cost-effective childcare might help ease this difficulty. Women-owned enterprises must have access to both home and foreign markets in order to succeed. It may be crucial to have government backing while increasing market access. For women entrepreneurs in particular, it might be advantageous to create supporting environments that encourage entrepreneurship, such as business incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces ([Mair & Schoen, 2007](#)). To make sure that programmes focused at empowering women in entrepreneurship are successful and reaching their objectives, it's critical to monitor progress and assess their impact. It is crucial to recognise and solve the particular difficulties and obstacles that women entrepreneurs confront, such as societal expectations, gender bias, and lack of access to technology. Sustainability and social impact are major priorities for many women-owned enterprises, which help their local communities and the environment ([Mayoux, 1995](#)).

3. Role of Mission Shakti Women's Empowerment

Odisha's government has launched a programme called Mission Shakti with the goal of empowering women in social, economic, and political spheres. It emphasises advancing women's standing and safeguarding their security and wellbeing. Mission Shakti concentrated on creating and supporting SHGs, which were primarily made up of women. These organizations give women a place to connect, pool their resources, and make decisions together. Mission Shakti concentrated on creating and supporting SHGs, which were primarily made up of women (Caputo & Dolinsky, 1998). These organisations give women a place to connect, pool their resources, and make decisions together. Through SHGs; Mission Shakti facilitated women's access to credit and financial services. This increased the ability of women to obtain loans for businesses that would generate income. The programme offered SHG members, especially women, training and capacity-building opportunities to improve their abilities in a variety of fields like entrepreneurship, agriculture, and handicrafts. Mission Shakti provided female employment options in industries like farming, pet care, and handicrafts. It encouraged women to start businesses that would bring in money. Women were encouraged to establish and operate their own enterprises so they could become financially independent and support their families (Sumathi & Gunasundari, 2016). By developing women's self-confidence, leadership skills, and decision-making positions within their families and communities, Mission Shakti sought to improve the social status of women. Health and education for women: The programme frequently featured sections on women's health and education, placing a strong emphasis on the value of female literacy and access to healthcare. Additionally, Mission Shakti promoted gender equality and women's rights. It inspired women to become defenders of their rights and take part in community improvement projects. It encouraged women to run for office and take on leadership positions in local institutions of government like Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) (K. P. Singh, 1993).

4. JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

4.1. Gender Disparities in Entrepreneurship

Due to many societal, cultural, and economic hurdles, the participation of women in entrepreneurship has historically lagged behind that of men. For the purpose of advancing economic growth and gender equality, it is crucial to comprehend these inequalities. The economy can benefit significantly from women's entrepreneurship. Policymakers and stakeholders can develop strategies to realise this economic potential by researching the difficulties and possibilities women encounter when starting and expanding enterprises.

4.2. Mission Shakti as a Prominent Program

A well-known programme for women's empowerment in Odisha is called Mission Shakti. It focuses on the socioeconomic advancement of women, including entrepreneurship. Gaining insight into the success and areas for improvement of such efforts through analysis of their efficacy and influence on female entrepreneurs. Enhancing women's economic status through business can benefit both them and their families. Investigating the empowerment component can reveal the wider societal advantages and well-being. The results of this study can help guide decisions about programmes and policies that support women's entrepreneurship and empowerment, not just in Odisha but also in other areas that face comparable difficulties.

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the status of women social entrepreneurs in Odisha through Mission Shakti.
- To study the issues and difficulties experienced by women social entrepreneurs in Odisha.
- To make recommendations for overcoming the current obstacles to social entrepreneurship in Odisha

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to comprehend the research challenge in carrying out the specified work in through Mission Shakti, previous studies on the many dimensions and operation of women social entrepreneurs' status were examined during the study process. As a result, the numerous research projects related to Mission Shakti's operation are as follows.

Tentatively, "women's empowerment" often begins with a study of the ways in which and reasons for the oppression of women. Present three theoretical perspectives on women's helplessness their book about women's empowerment begins with: a system's gendered perspective, a single-domain perspective (such as the home or workplace), and a multiple-domain perspective that can take place sequentially or simultaneously. The authors lament the lack of practitioners-oriented field-level research that would help in understanding why women are oppressed and, more importantly, providing some tools and techniques that can be used to strengthen and empower women, despite the fact that they acknowledge the abundance of robust theoretical debate surrounding women's empowerment (Oecd, 1998).

In India, women face significant preconditions that are a result of pervasive gender discrimination. Women's access to resources, particularly jobs in the formal sector, is frequently hampered by cultural norms that devalue their responsibilities. In India, a more direct single-domain condition that leads to the

subjugation of women, especially among women of lower socioeconomic means, is the lack of macro-technical skills acquired in school or during vocational training. Often, social norms or family choices prevent girls from enrolling in skill-based education. Because they are lacking in particular abilities, many women can be hesitant to start their own businesses. But if a woman launches her own business in India because of the country's cultural gender dynamics, she might have to work a double shift (Brahme, 1984; Ghosh, 2004).

As said, indicates that comprehending women's empowerment requires an awareness of real achievements or outcomes. Quantifying specific results for women's empowerment might be challenging because of how communal power balances are constantly changing. As a result, the definition of empowerment may change throughout time and across different regions. When definitions change, tracking relevant longitudinal data that includes similar data points becomes more difficult. Qualitative data can be a great, educational resource to help in the process of measuring long-term successes in women's empowerment (Kabeer, 1999).

Entrepreneurship is the practise of attempting to create value through the identification of business possibilities, the management of risk-taking appropriate to the opportunity, and the development of managerial abilities to mobilise the human, financial, and material resources necessary to accomplish a project. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a task carried out by an entrepreneur that results in the creation of a new business (Dash, Das, 2023).

There is empirical evidence that shows that education and training in entrepreneurship assist entrepreneurs to give the inertia for development. The year 2003 emphasised that development is all-encompassing and requires upward progress in the good direction of a nation over a long period of time. This idea has changed how people view and acknowledge the crucial part that entrepreneurs play in the advancement of a country. to hasten the process of activating the different elements necessary for spreading the political, economic, social, and technological activities that would support sustainable development. As a result, it is an ongoing process designed to provide citizens with the fundamental managerial abilities needed to establish and manage businesses successfully. Although it has its roots in traditional entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship is a new breed of business owners (A. Singh, 2020).

In the year 2013 the research indicates that women's primary problems include being overly reliant on their families, being exploited by male family and social members, not receiving the proper

education and training, competing fiercely with men for networking opportunities and upward mobility, and not receiving financial support from their families. Government and society should make an effort to address these issues by providing orientation and skill-based training. They must have the opportunity to interact with successful entrepreneurs (Ganiger, 2013).

2018 asserts in his research paper titled "A study of Social Entrepreneurship in India" that social entrepreneurs have the power to alter India's social landscape. Understanding social entrepreneurs' roles and responsibilities, challenges, contributions, and solutions for overcoming those challenges were the study's main goals. Due to the numerous social issues, India's prospects for social entrepreneurs are stronger than those of other nations. They aim for the greatest possible social impact in whatever they do. They are better able to socially innovate and offer original solutions to society's challenges. Growth in social entrepreneurship improved healthcare, education, and employment. The government has begun to recognise the value and influence of social entrepreneurs, despite the fact that their growth is less than that of wealthy nations (Tripda Rawal, 2018)

Research on "A Study of Women Entrepreneurs in India" conducted in 2015 showed that women are a significant resource for the nation's growth and development. Traditional social attitudes and government indifference are the biggest barriers to the growth of women businesses. Lack of a life goal, difficulty juggling job and family obligations, lack of property in their names, lack of freedom, ignorance of their abilities, male-dominated work cultures, etc. are some of the key obstacles to their development. To educate women about the various business practises, continuous, there should be extensive initiatives to support, inspire, motivate, and work with women entrepreneurs (Goyal, 2021).

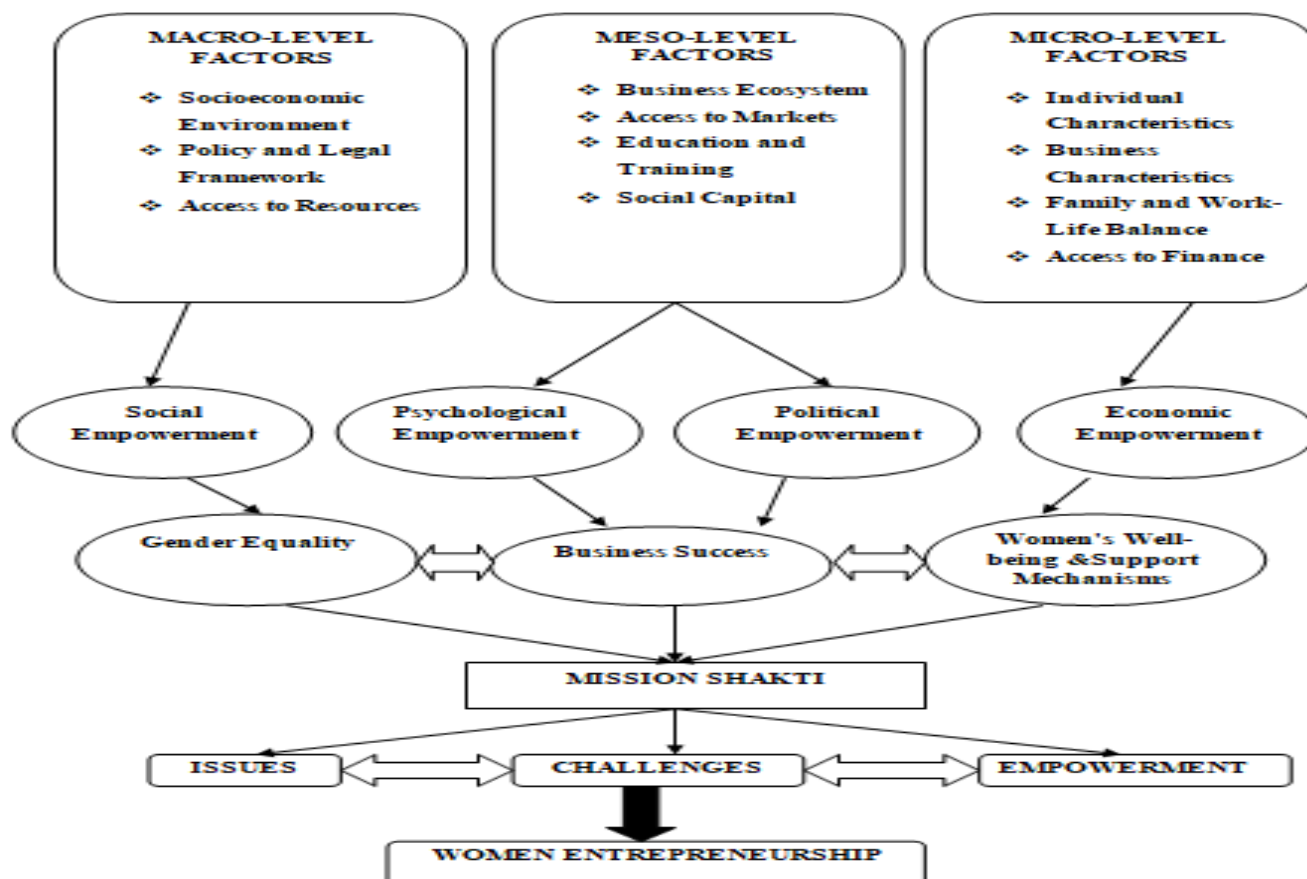
In the year 2018 a research came to the conclusion that female entrepreneurs are more self-assured and that they look for untapped prospects. There is no doubt that they are becoming more involved in entrepreneurship. Women can start businesses give other housewives employment, something the country needs right now. Achieving the goal of sustainable development depends on empowering women. Major Actions need to be taken to promote entrepreneurial awareness, orientation, and skill development. programmes to help women regain the spotlight and stand on their own two feet (Entrepreneurship & Sustainability, 2018).

2017 came to the conclusion that social entrepreneurship is a developing industry that offers young people the chance to create societal and

economic value over the long term. The political environment in India, or more precisely the political issues that have arisen since independence, greatly influences social entrepreneurship. Numerous social

entrepreneurs in India work to close the significant gap between formal law and social reality (H. Singh & Singh, n.d.).

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

8.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Research methodology is a crucial component. The 'Descriptive Research Design' was consequently chosen for this investigation in this paper. Members of "Mission Shakti" in the Odisha districts of Angul and Khordha were polled. Both primary and secondary data were used to generate this descriptive study. An interview schedule that was structured was used to collect the primary data. A sample of SHG members from several districts in Odisha provided the information. The sample was made up of 145 women who were members of 16 SHGs that were active in villages in the Districts of Angul and Khordh. Each SHG had an average of 10–12 women. Depending on the group, the typical membership ranges from 10 to 12. Families often consist of five or more people. The amount each member saved each month varied from Rs 100 to Rs 500. The women's SHGs received Rs. 300,000 in total under Revolving Fund Assistance. The total amount of the outstanding loans for the eight groups was Rs. 2,32,900. The bank gave the 21 women in 8 SHGs an average of Rs. 10,000. The Cooperative Bank offered Rs 3,000 under a microcredit programme

with a fluctuating interest rate of 18% per year. Sixteen SHGs, or 60%, were active in the economy. Most of the women in the 500 homes examined participated in ongoing economic activities, and some also started new ones. 145 women participate in the economy overall. The bank added 18% interest to the microcredits supplied to the women's SHGs. The monthly interest rate for the loan was 2%. Nearly all of the SHGs in this study likewise reported 100% payback. The SHG president, treasurer, and circle coordinator of the NGO all deposited the monthly loan in the bank. For a loan of Rs 10,000, the SHG deposit paid Rs 1000 per month, and for a loan of Rs 15, it paid Rs 1500 per month. According to SHGs, roughly half of the loan was utilised to upgrade their line of work, buy a buffalo, a vegetable cart and a small shop close to their home. Among the 21 participants, 15% of the funds were used for economic activity, 75% for economic activity, 10% for education, and 15% for debt payments and home construction. The SHG movement has raised women's consciousness. The percentage of female SHG members who attended village meetings was around 30%. The majority of the women were employed by the women pradhan in initiatives like AHM (Associated Nurse Midwives) health camps as well as local activities to

promote cleanliness and health. The women participated in discussions about how to improve the future of the community. The village also talked about concerns relating to women's and children's health. The women ranged in age from 18 to 50 years. About 85% of the women were between the ages of 18 and 40, with the remaining 15% falling between the ages of 40 and 50. Approximately 97.93 (142) of the 145 members were married, 1.38 % were widows, and 2.37 % were single women. The average respondent had completed primary school, while approximately 15.17% had completed high school. Furthermore, only 10% of people lacked literacy.

Table-1: Age group of the Mission Shakti women

Age	No	Percentage (%)
18-30	51	35.17
30-40	72	49.65
40-50	22	15.17
Total	145	100.00

Table-2: Marital status of the Mission Shakti women

Women status	status	Percentage (%)
Unmarried	2	1.37
Married	143	97.93
Widow	1	0.68
Divorcee	0	
Total	145	100.00

Table-3: Educational status of the Mission Shakti women

Women status	status	Percentage (%)
Primary	113	60.33
High School	22	15.17
Illiterate	10	14.5
Total	145	100.00

Table-4: Economic Activities of the Mission Shakti women

Economic Activities	Before joining in Mission Shakti		After joining in Mission Shakti	
	No	%	No	%
Traditional economic activities	30	20.68	96	66.20
New economic activities	0	0	4	2.75

Table-5: Annual income of the Mission Shakti Women

Annual Income Level	Before joining in Mission Shakti	After joining in Mission Shakti
Less than Rs15000	6	2
15001-25000	22	10
25000-40000	47	30
40000-60000	45	55
60000-80000	20	32
Rs80000 and above	5	16

The women in the village were stay-at-home housewives. Only 96 (66.20%) of the 145 sample women participated in household chores such as washing, cooking, and cleaning after the formation of SHGs, while 45 (31.03%) were housewives and 4 (2.75%) took part in new economic activities like defusing bulbs and sewing. However, 100 women were directly involved in economic activities after joining SHGs. For 45 of them, education, awareness, and participation in charitable causes had improved. There were 4-5 people in the family, and there was only one breadwinner. Some women were employed as maids to clean and do laundry

in surrounding homes. The women's annual income increased dramatically as a result of the SHG and microcredit programme. The majority of women were found to earn between Rs25,000 and Rs40,000 annually. 20% of inhabited concrete houses are rented out, however most individuals live in their own homes. The majority of women had access to LPG, had electricity, used the Public Distribution System (PDS), and had communication tools. Government schools are located nearby.

9. CONCLUSION

This study was able to prove that women's entrepreneurship in Odisha has made a significant contribution to sustainable development. The degree of innovation and creativity in Odisha has had a negative impact on sustainable development. Based on the aforementioned findings, the researchers suggested that government programmes and entrepreneurship courses be developed to attract highly motivated businesspeople who will become inventive and creative in finding solutions to socio-economic challenges. Mission Shakti is a potent tool for assisting women in improving their social and economic standing. They have, to a quantity of extent, aided in empowering Indian women to start modest businesses. Additionally, it has inspired women to conserve money after spending it on family support and domestic requirements. With the help of microcredit, women are managing catering businesses, canteens, providing home-cooked meals to schools, running tailoring businesses, and more. As part of a larger global development strategy, the self-help group is being promoted more aggressively, and this has spread to Odisha as well. When a bottom-up alternative resource is involved with empowerment, the world bank employs the conventional terminology of capacity building. Women are sure that by making crucial decisions, they can accomplish their goals for their families and realise how significant they are to society and their families. Over time, exceptionally accomplished women have been observed in politics, academia, and other fields. Business, government, and the media have all demonstrated their abilities and leadership. In the dynamic social, political, cultural, economic, and legal environments. Currently, we need a well-thought-out strategy with a more transformational goal. a thorough reevaluation of the current priorities. Women's organisations from all around the world have been advocating for and demonstrating various techniques. Men's and women's societal attitudes can be changed to effect change. Improving the legal system with the aim of eradicating all types of violence against women and young girls; taking into account cultural variables that have an impact on women. Effective economic and social policies for the advancement of women can help us reach our greatest potential. Making decisions is the crucial turning point

for women's social, political, and economic independence. Positive migration policies in the areas of business, government, families, and culture will provide women more influence and expose them to more opportunities on a global scale. The socioeconomic empowerment of women will be deeply anchored and positively impacted by gender equality. Women now have easier access to microcredit, jobs, and information in general because to information and communication technologies. Women still face significant obstacles in the world of entrepreneurship because it is still largely male-dominated.

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