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A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats: Mission Shakti's Role in Women's Empowerment in Koraput

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Abstract
This study looks at the effect of Mission Shakti, a major program, on empowering rural women through self-help groups in the Koraput District of Odisha. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the research examines how factors like capacity building, entrepreneurship, and empowerment are connected. The results show that while some actions have a strong positive impact on women's empowerment, the overall effect is still small. This points to the need for focused strategies and ongoing evaluation. The study highlights the importance of improving rural development programs to boost socio-economic conditions, support gender equality, and reduce poverty in underprivileged areas. It provides useful insights for policymakers, managers, and those working on rural empowerment, offering a guide for creating more effective and lasting development initiatives.

Keywords: Rural Women Empowerment, Self-Help Groups, Mission Shakti, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Livelihood

Introduction

Gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial, as shown in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Mahatma Gandhi emphasized that the status of women reflects the level of a society's civilization, stating, "Train a man and you train an individual, train a woman and you build a nation." The term 'Women's Empowerment' was defined at the 1995 Beijing Conference by the United Nations, focusing on five main areas: self-worth, choice, access to resources, control over life, and the ability to drive social change (United Nations, 1995).

In India, especially in Odisha's Koraput district, the Mission Shakti program has played a major role in empowering women through self-help groups (SHGs). Launched on International Women's Day in 2001, the Odisha Mission Shakti Scheme aims to financially strengthen women by providing SHGs with support, skills, and market connections. The program offers seed money, revolving funds, and interest-free loans, helping women become financially independent. Being part of SHGs improves income, savings, and skills, leading to economic, social, political, and psychological empowerment. Regular SHG meetings create social networks and provide access to resources, allowing women to make empowered decisions and contribute to long-term development (United Nations, 1995).

1. Background and Literature of the study

India has made women's empowerment a priority for social and economic development. Launched in 2001 in Odisha, Mission Shakti plays a key role in this effort, especially in rural areas like Koraput. Many studies show the positive effects of SHGs and Mission Shakti on women's empowerment, financial inclusion, and social standing in Odisha (Satapathy & Prusty, 2018; Patnaik & Biswal, 2021; Singh et al., 2021). However, more research is needed to explore the specific ways and challenges in empowering rural women (Mohanty & Pattanaik, 2019). The unique socioeconomic conditions in Koraput require a thorough evaluation of Mission Shakti's impact, concentrating on SHG participation, financial inclusion, and livelihood improvements. This assessment will help inform future strategies and enhance the program's

effectiveness in empowering women in the area (Pani & Mohapatra, 2021; Dash & Sahoo, 2021). The initiative supports Women-led Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to improve women's economic, social, and political status. Koraput, with its tribal population and difficult terrain, has experienced significant support from Mission Shakti, including microcredit initiatives that have enhanced financial inclusion and livelihoods for rural women (Mishra & Hota, 2015; Panda & Rath, 2020).

Women's empowerment is essential for social and economic growth, especially in developing countries like India. Many programs have been started to help improve the status of women, with Mission Shakti being an important initiative launched in Odisha in 2001. This program focuses on promoting Women-led Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to improve women's economic, social, and political status, particularly in rural areas like Koraput. Research has shown that Mission Shakti has positively impacted women's empowerment and financial inclusion. Mishra and Hota (2015) and Panda and Rath (2020) found that the microcredit support provided by Mission Shakti has led to better financial inclusion and improved livelihoods for rural women. Access to credit through SHGs helps women gain financial independence, which is crucial for their empowerment.

Other studies, such as those by Satapathy and Prusty (2018), Patnaik and Biswal (2021), and Singh et al. (2021), highlight the significant role of SHGs in improving women's social status and economic participation in Odisha. These studies show that being part of SHGs helps women increase their income, savings, and skills, fostering their overall empowerment.

However, more research is needed to understand the challenges that rural women face when trying to become empowered through programs like Mission Shakti. Mohanty and Pattanaik (2019) suggest exploring the barriers to empowerment and the factors that can help overcome them. The unique conditions in Koraput, with its tribal population and difficult geography, require a careful assessment of Mission Shakti's impact. Pani and Mohapatra (2021) and Dash and Sahoo (2021) emphasize the need to focus on SHG participation, financial inclusion, and livelihood improvements. Such evaluations are important for shaping future strategies and enhancing the effectiveness of programs aimed at helping women. Kumar and Singh (2018) also point out that access to microcredit enables women to start income-generating activities, boosting their financial independence. This access is vital for encouraging entrepreneurship, which leads to better economic outcomes (Rao & Kaur, 2020).

Furthermore, Gupta and Sharma (2019) found that SHGs help promote women's collective action and decision-making. Participation in these groups increases women's confidence and social status, allowing them to express their opinions and engage in community development. SHGs serve as platforms for women to share knowledge and resources, which are essential for their empowerment. In the face of the benefits of Mission Shakti, challenges still exist. Verma and Patel (2021) note that many women encounter barriers like limited education and traditional gender roles that restrict their economic participation. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving empowerment efforts. While Mission Shakti has made significant progress in empowering women in Odisha, ongoing research is necessary to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. By addressing these issues, policymakers can create more effective strategies to promote gender equality and improve the lives of rural women.

1.1. Research Gap and Statement of Problem

There is a gap in the current research about how Mission Shakti specifically affects women's empowerment in Koraput district of Odisha. This gap is particularly evident in areas like participation in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), financial inclusion, livelihood improvement, and social empowerment. While many studies have looked at microcredit programs and SHGs in general, there is not enough detailed analysis focused on this region. Even though government efforts like Mission Shakti, the actual impact of the program on rural women in Koraput is still not well understood. This study aims to fill this gap by assessing how well Mission Shakti promotes women's empowerment in this unique context. By examining the program's outcomes and challenges, this research provides important insights for policymakers and development practitioners. These insights can help improve strategies for enhancing women's empowerment in the region.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The study aims to evaluate how the Mission Shakti program affects rural women's empowerment in the Koraput district of Odisha. The specific objectives are:

a. To assess how Mission Shakti influences socio-economic empowerment.
b. To examine its role in forming and sustaining Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
c. To analyze the factors that influence women's participation in SHGs.
d. To investigate the program's impact on financial inclusion and improving livelihoods.

These objectives aim to provide a clear understanding of how effective Mission Shakti is in promoting women's empowerment through self-help groups in this region.

1.3. Hypotheses of the study

The study proposes that the Mission Shakti program has a positive effect on rural women's empowerment in the Koraput district of Odisha, especially through the creation and operation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The specific hypotheses are:

H1: Access to Financial Resources (AFR) significantly boosts the Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW).H2: Capacity Building and Skill Development (CBSD) significantly enhance the Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW).

H3: Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Promotion (ELP) significantly improve the Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW).

These hypotheses are tested to assess the program's effectiveness in achieving its objectives and to identify areas for potential improvement.

2. Methodology

The study uses a descriptive, cross-sectional research design to evaluate the impact of the Mission Shakti program on women's empowerment in the Koraput district. Primary data is gathered through structured surveys given to Self-Help Group (SHG) members, beneficiaries, and program coordinators. The surveys focus on how SHGs function, participation levels, financial inclusion, and livelihood outcomes. To prevent selection bias, participants are specifically chosen from SHGs that have received loans under Mission Shakti. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics to summarize key indicators, as well as inferential statistics, such as correlations and regression analysis, to explore relationships between variables and test the study's hypotheses. This approach provides comprehensive insights into the program's effectiveness.

3.1. Research Instruments

The study uses structured survey questionnaires to test the hypotheses, focusing on various aspects of women's empowerment through SHGs. These aspects include SHG participation, financial inclusion, livelihood improvement, and social empowerment. The questionnaires feature Likert scale items that are adapted from established scales to ensure validity and reliability.

3.1.1. Formation and Functioning of SHGs

This instrument measures how effective SHGs are in promoting collective action, mutual support, and socio-economic development. The questionnaire includes questions about the formation of SHGs, the regularity of meetings, decision-making processes, member participation, and socio-economic outcomes. Sample questions include: “How often do your SHG meetings occur?";"To what extent does your SHG provide mutual support?";"What socio-economic benefits have you experienced?".

3.1.2. Capacity Building and Skill Development

This instrument assesses how training programs impact women’s skills, knowledge, and confidence in income-generating activities. It measures the effectiveness of training, new skills learned, and how these skills are applied in economic activities. Sample questions include: "How would you rate the effectiveness of the training programs?";"What new skills have you learned?"; "How confident are you in applying these skills?".

3.1.3. Access to Financial Resources

This instrument evaluates women’s access to microcredit, savings, and financial services, as well as their financial resilience. It assesses how Mission Shakti has improved access to financial resources, the use of microcredit, and saving behaviours among participants. Sample questions include: "Have you received microcredit through your SHG?";"How has your saving pattern changed?";"How prepared do you feel to handle financial emergencies?".

3.1.4. Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Promotion

This instrument measures the impact of livelihood promotion initiatives on women’s economic independence and sustainability. It evaluates the support for entrepreneurship, development of micro-enterprises, and the economic benefits gained from these activities. Sample questions include: "What type of livelihood activities have you engaged in?"; "How has your economic situation improved?"; "What challenges have you faced in sustaining your enterprise?"

3.1.5. Empowerment through Collective Action

This instrument assesses the sense of solidarity, collective action, and leadership within SHGs and their communities. It explores opportunities for leadership, group cohesion, and benefits of collective action among women in SHGs. Sample questions include: "Do you feel a sense of solidarity with other members of your SHG?"; "Have you taken on leadership roles?"; "What collective actions has your group undertaken, and what were the outcomes?"

3. Data Analysis and its Interpretation

Data analysis transforms raw information into insights by using quantitative methods like Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (Hair et al., 2014), along with qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Combining these quantitative methods with qualitative analysis provides a thorough understanding of Mission Shakti's impact on women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs). This approach helps to contextualize statistical findings within the real-life experiences of the women, highlighting how SHG participation influences their economic, social, and psychological empowerment (Kabeer, 1999).

The study employs various statistical analyses to validate the measurement model and examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs. A two-stage Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach was used to validate the hypothesized model. The first stage involved Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which confirmed the reliability of the measurement model. In the second stage, a structural model was developed to test the relationships between the variables. Additionally, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) ensured that the measured variables had significant factor loadings (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Reliability and validity were checked using Cronbach's alpha, Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio coefficients. The results confirmed both discriminant and convergent validity for the constructs and the significance of the proposed relationships.

Scale reliability was analysed using SPSS 26 and Smart PLS4. The Cronbach's alpha values for the constructs showed good to excellent internal consistency, with Capacity Building and Skill Development (CBSD) at 0.818, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Promotion (ELP) at 0.895, Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW) at 0.939, Functions of Self Help Groups (FSHG) at 0.861, and Mission Shakti (MISS) at 0.785. These values, presented in Table 1, demonstrate that the scales reliably measure their respective constructs, ensuring the data's consistency and dependability for further analysis (Nunnally, 1978).

Table-1: Convergent Validity test of Measurement Mode-Cronbach's alpha, Composite reliability (rho_c), and Average variance extracted (AVE)

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha (standardized)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CBSD	0.818	0.820	0.532
ELP	0.895	0.895	0.589
ERW	0.939	0.976	0.887
FSHG	0.861	0.905	0.654
MISS	0.785	0.790	0.510

Source: Author's Estimation

3.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to evaluate the factor loadings of the proposed items and their connection to the respective constructs. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic was 0.880, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 5454.328$, $p < 0.05$) confirmed that the sample size was adequate and the data were suitable for factor analysis (Hair et al., 2013), as shown in Table 2.

All proposed items had significant loadings on their respective factors, with loadings above the acceptable threshold of 0.40. For Capacity Building and Skill Development (CBSD), item loadings ranged from 0.643 to 0.800, indicating strong correlations with the CBSD construct. The items for Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Promotion (ELP) showed loadings between 0.723 and 0.809, demonstrating their effectiveness in measuring this construct. The items related to the Functions of Self-Help Groups (FSHG) had loadings from 0.709 to 0.779, indicating they reliably measure FSHG functions. The Mission Shakti (MISS) items ranged from 0.428 to 0.831, with the item MISS2 at 0.428 showing a weaker correlation that needs further review. The Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW) items exhibited high loadings between 0.806 and 0.898, confirming their strong alignment with the ERW construct.

Table-2: KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.880
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5454.328
	Df	276
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's Estimation

3.2. Measurement Model Assessment (CFA)

The measurement model was evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to examine the relationships between constructs and indicators. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to check for internal consistency and convergent validity (Sarstedt et al., 2014). CFA included goodness-of-fit indices for each latent construct individually and for all constructs combined in a pooled model (Schreiber et al., 2006). Testing for multivariate normality showed that the data deviated from a normal distribution, which may have led to exaggerated chi-square values based on maximum likelihood (ML) estimation (Curran et al., 1996). The five-factor pooled measurement model, illustrated in Figures 1, was assessed for common method bias (CMB) as described by Podsakoff et al. (2003).

The convergent validity of the pooled model was confirmed, with AVE values above 0.5 and CR values exceeding 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as shown in Table 1. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with values below 0.85 (Kline, 2015). This was further supported by diagonal values that were higher than the correlations in their respective rows and columns, indicating valid differentiation between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

3.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is evident among all the study constructs. To validate this, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) technique proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was utilized, which evaluates discriminant validity by analyzing the inter-correlations between a specific construct of interest and all other indicators in the model.; values below 0.85 indicate the achievement of discriminant validity (Kline, 2015. Table-3 displays Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio-coefficients for the latent variables: Capacity Building and Skill Development (CBSD), Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Promotion (ELP), Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW), Functions of Self Help Groups (FSHG), and Mission Shakti (MISS). HTMT ratios, all below 0.85, confirm good discriminant validity. Notable ratios include CBSD and ELP (0.389), CBSD and ERW (0.361), and CBSD and FSHG (0.402), indicating moderate correlations. CBSD and MISS (0.087), ELP and MISS (0.092), highlighted in table-3, and other pairs show low correlations, confirming each construct's distinctness (Kline, 2015; Gaskin & Lim, 2016).

Table-3: HTMT Ratio-coefficients

Latent variables	**CBSD**	ELP	**ERW**	**FSHG**	**MISS**
CBSD					
ELP	0.389				
ERW	0.361	0.284			
FSHG	0.402	0.546	0.311		
MISS	0.087	0.092	0.049	0.089	

Source: Author's Estimation

4. Structural Model Assessment

The proposed theoretical framework was assessed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation. In SEM, factor loadings and parameter estimates are important for understanding the relationships between latent constructs and their observed indicators (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2016).

Factor loadings, which are standardized coefficients, indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between latent variables and their indicators. They show how much variance in each observed variable is explained by its underlying latent variable (Brown, 2015). Parameter estimates include path coefficients, error variances, and covariance, which provide insights into the proposed structural relationships and help evaluate how well the model fits the data (Kline, 2016; Kaplan, 2009). T-values and p-values linked to these estimates show the statistical significance of the relationships, which is essential for testing the theoretical hypotheses (Brown, 2015).

Table-4: Structural Model Fit Indices	**Estimated model**	**Null model**
Chi-square	919.201	8406.278
Number of model parameters	58.000	24.000
Number of observations	589.000	n/a
Degrees of freedom	242.000	276.000
P value	0.000	0.000
ChiSqr/df	3.798	30.458
RMSEA	0.069	0.224
RMSEA LOW 90% CI	0.064	0.220
RMSEA HIGH 90% CI	0.074	0.228
GFI	0.870	n/a
AGFI	0.839	n/a
PGFI	0.702	n/a
SRMR	0.055	n/a
NFI	0.891	n/a
TLI	0.905	n/a
CFI	0.917	n/a
AIC	1035.201	n/a

BIC	1289.150	n/a

Source: Author's Estimation

A standard bootstrapping technique was used to assess the implications of path coefficients, p-values, t-values, and the R^2 value. This approach involved using 5,000 bootstrap samples (Reinartz et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014). A good model should have a Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of less than 0.08 (Henseler et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2014), as shown in Table 4. In this study, the SRMR value is 0.055, which is below the threshold, indicating a good fit for the model. The SRMR measures the difference between the estimated model and the observed data; a lower SRMR signifies a better fit. The estimated model has a chi-square value of 919.201 with 242 degrees of freedom, resulting in a significant p-value of 0.000, which also indicates a good fit. The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (ChiSqr/df) is 3.798, suggesting a reasonable fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.069, which is within an acceptable range, with a 90% confidence interval from 0.064 to 0.074. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted GFI (AGFI) are 0.870 and 0.839, respectively, reflecting a good fit. The Parsimony GFI (PGFI) is 0.702, showing adequate model complexity.

Other fit indices also support the model: The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.891, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.905, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.917. The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) is 1035.201, and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) is 1289.150, which further confirm the model's adequacy. In contrast, the null model has a much higher chi-square value of 8406.278 with 276 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a poor fit, as evidenced by a ChiSqr/df ratio of 30.458 and an RMSEA of 0.224. These results indicate that the estimated model fits the data well, while the null model does not, confirming the validity of the proposed measurement structure.

4.1. Hypothesis Testing

In structural equation modeling (SEM), hypothesis testing helps researchers evaluate the significance and strength of path coefficients, allowing them to test the proposed theoretical model against observed data (Hair et al., 2019). To determine the significance of the relationships in the structural model, t-values are compared to the critical t-values for a significance level of 0.05, as shown in Table 5.

Table-5 : Path Coefficients details of structural Model

Path coefficients-Mean, STDEV, t-Values, P-values	**Hypotheses**	**Original sample (O)**	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**T statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**
AFR -> ERW	H1	0.334	0.343	0.083	4.041	0.000
CBSD -> ERW	H2	0.238	0.235	0.079	2.998	0.003
ELP -> ERW	H3	0.132	0.135	0.078	1.692	0.091

Source: Author's Estimation

Hypothesis(H1), which examines the impact of Access to Financial Resources (AFR) on the Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW), shows a strong positive relationship. The original sample path coefficient is 0.334, with a sample mean of 0.343 and a standard deviation of 0.083. The t-value for this relationship is 4.041, and the p-value is 0.000. This indicates that the relationship is statistically significant, meaning that as access to financial resources increases, the empowerment of rural women also increases.

Hypothesis(H2), looks at Capacity Building and Skill Development (CBSD) and its effect on ERW. The original sample path coefficient is 0.238, and the sample mean is 0.235, with a standard deviation of 0.079. The t-value is 2.998, and the p-value is 0.003, showing that this relationship is also significant. This suggests that enhancing skills and capacities contributes positively to the empowerment of rural women.

Hypothesis(H3), examines the relationship between Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Promotion (ELP) and ERW. Here, the original sample path coefficient is 0.132, with a sample mean of 0.135 and a standard deviation of 0.078. The t-value is 1.692, and the p-value is 0.091. Although this path indicates a positive relationship, it is not statistically significant at the traditional 0.05 level. This implies that while promoting entrepreneurship may have some impact on empowering rural women, the evidence is not strong enough to confirm this relationship definitively.

To sum up, the findings highlight that access to financial resources and capacity building play significant roles in empowering rural women, whereas the impact of entrepreneurship promotion is positive but not statistically significant.

5.2. R^2 Analysis

The R^2 value is used to assess how much of the variability in the dependent variable can be explained by one or more independent variables. In this study, the R^2 value is deemed acceptable according to the established guidelines. According

to Falk and Miller (1992), an R^2 value greater than 0.10 is considered acceptable. Additionally, R^2 values are classified into three categories: a value of 0.60 is regarded as good, 0.33 as moderate, and 0.19 as weak, as noted by Chin et al. (2003). Therefore, the R^2 value in this study indicates a meaningful relationship between the independent variables and the empowerment of rural women, highlighting that the model can effectively explain a significant portion of the variance in the outcome being measured.

Table-6: R-square and R-square adjusted	R-square	R-square adjusted
ERW	0.164	0.154
MISS	0.010	0.005

Source: Author's Estimation

The R-square value for Empowerment of Rural Women (ERW) is 0.164, which means that the constructs in the model explain 16.4% of the variance in ERW. This is considered acceptable according to Falk and Miller's (1992) threshold of 0.10. This suggests that the model has moderate explanatory power, fitting into the weak to moderate category defined by Chin et al. (2003). The adjusted R-square value for ERW is 0.154, which takes into account the number of predictors in the model, further supporting its validity.

5. Implications of the Study

This This study provides important insights for improving rural empowerment programs and self-help groups, highlighting areas for social, managerial, and practical improvements. The findings can help policymakers and practitioners refine strategies to address challenges and achieve better outcomes and sustainable impacts.

The social implications of this study emphasize the importance of empowering rural women and how self-help groups contribute to socio-economic development. By demonstrating the positive effects of programs like Mission Shakti, the study advocates for policies that improve conditions in underserved communities, fostering greater gender equality and social unity. This aligns with earlier research showing that empowering women drives community development (Kabeer, 1999; Agarwal, 2018). Focusing on building skills and promoting entrepreneurship can also help reduce poverty and enhance the quality of life in rural areas (Smith, 2015).

From a managerial perspective, the study provides valuable insights into how effective rural development programs can be. It highlights the need for targeted strategies to strengthen the impact of self-help groups and empowerment initiatives. Managers can use these findings to improve program designs, allocate resources effectively, and adopt best practices that benefit rural women. This supports the idea that tailored program designs are crucial for successful rural development (Chambers, 1983; IFAD, 2019). Additionally, the results can guide the creation of training and support systems that address the specific challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs and self-help groups (Datta & Gailey, 2012).

On a practical level, the study offers a framework for continuously evaluating and improving rural development programs. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as a method helps assess the relationships between different factors and their effects on empowerment and performance (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). Practitioners can use these insights to create evidence-based interventions, track their progress, and make decisions based on data. The study stresses the importance of ongoing evaluation to ensure programs remain relevant and effective, leading to sustainable outcomes (Patton, 2011).

6. Suggestions and prospective notes for future research

Future Looking ahead, future research should focus on several important areas to better understand and improve rural empowerment programs and self-help groups. Longitudinal studies could shed light on the long-term effects of these interventions on rural women's lives, providing a clearer view of sustainability. Expanding research to compare different cultures could help evaluate these programs across various social and economic contexts, revealing unique challenges and successes. Including qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups could enrich the quantitative findings by offering deeper insights into participants' experiences.

However, exploring the role of technology could show how digital tools can enhance access to resources and market opportunities. Conducting sector-specific studies could help tailor interventions to meet the needs of different industries, while policy analysis could examine how different regulations affect program success. Comparing various models of self-help groups and empowerment initiatives, along with detailed economic assessments, could identify the most effective strategies and improve overall program effectiveness. Finally, developing new measurement tools and evaluation metrics will be vital for refining how these interventions are assessed and ensuring they remain impactful.

7. Conclusion

This study highlights the positive impact of the Mission Shakti program on the empowerment of rural women in Koraput district, Odisha. By focusing on self-help groups, the program has improved access to financial resources, skill

development, and entrepreneurial opportunities for women. The findings emphasize the importance of tailored strategies to enhance the effectiveness of such programs and promote sustainable socio-economic development in rural areas.

The results suggest that while there are moderate effects of the program on women's empowerment, further improvements can be made by addressing the unique challenges faced by rural women. Ongoing evaluation and adaptation of these programs are essential to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Future research should explore long-term impacts, cross-cultural comparisons, and the role of technology in further enhancing these initiatives. Inclusively, empowering rural women not only improves their individual lives but also contributes to stronger communities and greater social equality. By continuing to invest in and refine programs like Mission Shakti, we can work towards a more inclusive and equitable society needs.

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