

# **In Pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals**

*This page intentionally left blank*

# **In Pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals: Success Stories of Women Entrepreneurs in Emerging Economies**

BY

**NISHI MALHOTRA**

*Indian Institute of Management Sambalpur, India*

AND

**PALANISAMY SARAVANAN**

*Indian Institute of Management Tiruchirappalli, India*



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited

Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2025

Copyright © 2025 Nishi Malhotra and Palanisamy Saravanan.

Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

**Reprints and permissions service**

Contact: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83608-533-1 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83608-532-4 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83608-534-8 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*We dedicate this book to the Indian Armed Forces, Defence personnel,  
women entrepreneurs, the Government of India, and rural India.  
Most importantly, our heartfelt dedication goes to the PRME chapter for their  
unwavering support in the pursuit of sustainable development and growth.*

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

List of Abbreviations	<i>ix</i>
About the Authors	<i>xi</i>
Preface	<i>xii</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>xiv</i>
<b>Chapter 1 Sustainable Development Goals and the Case of Successful Entrepreneurs: Case for the Communities of Women Entrepreneurs</b>	<i>1</i>
<b>Chapter 2 Bandhani: A Timeless Craft Weaving Through History and Borders</b>	<i>19</i>
<b>Chapter 3 Case of Pashmina and Nakashi: Supply Chains are the New Mantra of Success</b>	<i>35</i>
<b>Chapter 4 Marketing: The New Business Model of Successful Communities Unveiled – A Case Study of Kannauj Perfume</b>	<i>51</i>
<b>Chapter 5 Changing the Paradigm of Handicrafts Using Geographic Indicators to Enhance Sustainability: Case of Nagercoil</b>	<i>69</i>
<b>Chapter 6 Leadership as a Social Innovation for Sikki and Sujani Artists in Bihar</b>	<i>121</i>
<b>Chapter 7 Impact of Digitalization on the Financial Sustainability of SHGs</b>	<i>145</i>
<b>Chapter 8 Impact of SHG Linkages on Financial Health</b>	<i>159</i>

<b>Chapter 9 Women as Better Risk Managers: Some Fables from Self-Help Groups and Communities</b>	<i>171</i>
<b>Chapter 10 Factors Impacting the Adoption of mCommerce in Rural India</b>	<i>193</i>
References	<i>207</i>
Index	<i>215</i>

# List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Form</b>
CGTMSE	Credit Guarantee Trust for MSE
CRP	Community resource person
DAY NRLM	Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojana and National Rural Livelihood Mission
FFDC	Fragrance & Flavour Development Centre
FMCG	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
ERP	Enterprise resource planning
GDP	Gross domestic product
GI	Geographic indication
JKHDC	Jammu and Kashmir Handloom Development Corporation
JLG	Joint liability groups
LED	Light-emitting diode
MBA	Master in Business Administration
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MIS	Management Information System
MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprise
MSP	Minimum support price
MYRADA	Mahila Rural Adult Education and Development Association
NABARD	National Bank for Rural and Agricultural Development
NAM	National Agricultural Markets
NBFC	Non-banking finance company
NHDC	National Handloom Development Corporation
NHDP	National Handloom Development Programme
NIFT	National Institute of Fashion Technology
NGO	Non-government organization
NOC	No objection certificate

*x List of Abbreviations*

PBC	Perceived behavioural control
PEOU	Perceived ease of usage
PMMY	Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana
PSM	Propensity score matching
PU	Perceived usage
RBV	Resource-based view
RCT	Rural community training
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association
SHG	Self-help group
SHPI	Self-help Promoting Institution
SRLM	State Rural Livelihood Mission
TAM	Technology acceptance model
TPB	Theory of planned behaviour
UN SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

## About the Authors

**Nishi Malhotra** currently serves as an Assistant Professor at the Indian Institute of Management Sambalpur, India.

**Palanisamy Saravanan** is Dean (Corporate Relations & Faculty Affairs) and Professor in the area of Finance and Accounting at the Indian Institute of Management Tiruchirappalli, India.

# Preface

India is a nation known for its rich diversity, with women constituting a significant portion of the population. Despite numerous reforms, until 2014, many rural women were not actively involved in the country's economic advancement. Their roles were often limited to domestic duties and family obligations, rather than being part of the developmental agenda. This book seeks to showcase and honor the artistic and cultural legacies of various tribes and indigenous communities across India. The country's cultural heritage is illustrious, encompassing the Bandhani art of Rajasthan, Minakari crafts from Banaras and Nagercoil in South India, and Zardozi, Pashmina, and Nakashi from Jammu and Kashmir. Artisans proficient in these crafts long struggled without proper financial resources. The book tries to explore the rich cultural heritage and history of these art forms and celebrate the life of the artisans while providing a glimpse into their day-to-day lives. It tries to delve into the cultural experiences and historical knowledge of the artisans in India and explores how it has the potential to transform the living conditions of these artisan families and contribute to economic growth through sustainable growth and development. Various case studies from across different parts of India have been included to explore how Indigenous knowledge is helping to combat the challenges of the new world including climate change, global warming, and ecological imbalance. The main objective of the book is to capture the relevance of local art and handicrafts in ensuring entrepreneurship and financial inclusion for the people at the bottom of the pyramid. However, through initiatives like the self-help groups' bank linkage programmes, marginalized artisans have gained access to microfinance on favorable terms. This scheme has proven fruitful for artisans at the grassroots level, empowering them economically. Through a compilation of case studies, this book sheds light on the immense cultural wealth held by Indian artisans and underscores the government's role in fostering the interests of small-scale entrepreneurs and artisans. The advent of digitization and technological advancements has transformed the entrepreneurial landscape in India, presenting artisans with a plethora of new opportunities and business prospects. Furthermore, the text delves into the transformative changes ushered in by the new administration led by Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. With a vision focussed on development and inclusive growth, the government introduced the concepts of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) and 'Viksit Bharat' (prosperous India). This book aims to elucidate the practical implications of how the Indian government reshaped rural development by fostering a model of women entrepreneurs through self-help groups, leading to the

emergence of a million female wealth creators ('Lakshpati Didis'). By documenting and celebrating the triumphs of these women entrepreneurs through insightful discussions and analysis, this book aims to provide a foundation for understanding the strategic initiatives spearheaded by Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It serves as a valuable resource for future generations, offering a glimpse into the transformative policies and programmes that have reshaped India's socio-economic landscape.

## Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India, parents, and Emerald Publishing for their unwavering cooperation and support, which has been instrumental in reaching this significant milestone. Above all, we express our deepest appreciation to the artisan community for their invaluable contributions, without which this endeavour would not have been possible. We also wish to extend a special note of thanks to the Editorial and Production team at Emerald, including Sir Daniel Ridge, Lucy, Lauren, and Varsha, for their exceptional and invaluable contributions to this journey. Your dedication and expertise have truly enriched this endeavour, and we are sincerely grateful to each one of you for your support and guidance.

## Chapter 1

# Sustainable Development Goals and the Case of Successful Entrepreneurs: Case for the Communities of Women Entrepreneurs

### Introduction

Intersectionality is a crucial factor in promoting diversity, equity, and social inclusion, particularly for economically disadvantaged women within the financial system. This study emphasizes the role of the intersection of gender, class, and occupation in shaping individuals' experiences. Economically underprivileged individuals often face discrimination due to the lack of physical collateral, hindering their access to finance (Beck, 2009). Initiatives like the self-help group (SHG) bank linkage programme employ a bottom-up approach to provide financial access to the base of the societal pyramid. Joint liability groups (JLGs) offer opportunities for the poor to access finance conveniently. Financial exclusion affects different segments of society unevenly, with women, especially craftsmen and artists, bearing a heavier impact. Through social capital-driven financial inclusion, the SHG bank linkage programme aims to include the poor in the financial system. Notably, women, who are disproportionately affected by financial exclusion, also experience high levels of domestic violence. This intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, and class underscores how financial exclusion perpetuates extreme poverty and suffering among economically disadvantaged women. Promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) of poverty reduction and women empowerment is pivotal, and programmes like the SHG bank linkage programme play a crucial role in achieving these objectives. Initiatives like Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana and National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY NRLM) and *Aajeevika* are specifically designed to facilitate access to bank loans for members of SHGs. The SHGs are often based on the principle of homogeneity, bringing together women from the same community, locality,

or profession, such as artisans and craftsmen. Despite their financial needs, these women face challenges in accessing traditional bank loans due to the absence of physical collateral. Individual members of these groups lack physical collateral, making it difficult for them to secure financing independently. Moreover, the higher prevalence of loan defaults among economically disadvantaged individuals at the base of the socio-economic pyramid has made banks cautious about extending loans to this demographic. Efforts to bridge this gap through inclusive financial programmes like the SHG bank linkage initiative are essential for empowering women, reducing poverty, and fostering sustainable economic development. These programmes strive to ensure financial inclusion and social upliftment by providing access to financial resources for those who are traditionally marginalized in the banking sector. The challenges faced by individuals and SHGs from the lower strata of society in accessing finance are indeed multifaceted. The imposition of heavy penalties and punitive financial actions for non-repayment of bank loans can exacerbate financial hardships, particularly for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Moreover, the utilization of collection agencies by banks further intensifies the financial burden on these individuals and SHGs. In this context, the collective power and social capital within JLGs provide a mechanism for members to access loans (Oh et al., 2004). However, the punitive measures imposed by banks can significantly impede the ability of economically disadvantaged individuals to secure and maintain access to financial resources. Efforts to address these challenges are crucial for fostering financial inclusion and reducing the barriers faced by individuals from the lower strata of society in accessing essential financial services (Cicchello et al., 2021). Initiatives that support alternative approaches to lending, repayment structures, and proactive measures to mitigate punitive practices are essential to ensure equitable access to financial resources for all members of society. These people face much fear of loss of social face and social stigma, due to the constraints imposed by the financial institutions. In this context, schooling and shoaling is a kind of behaviour in which the members of the vulnerable group tend to group due to the fear of predation (Pitcher et al., 2012). This behaviour of moving together provides the access to credit to the members of the group and also has various advantages such as protection, enhanced communication, exchange of ideas, and joint decision-making. It also helps to improve peer monitoring among the members of the SHG. SHGs are formed under the principle of joint liability, under which the members assume the liability for the payment of loans by the other members of the group. DAY NRLM is based on the principle of social capital or allocative strength due to financial relationships among the members of the group. This schooling also leads to a critical mass and through more collaborative efforts, it leads to the diffusion of power (Agapitov et al., 2019). The power and collective strength enable the members to bargain with the financial institutions to access financial capital in the form of loans without physical capital or collateral. From the analysis of the data, the social and the cultural environment have an impact on the success of the credit groups.

## Research Problem

Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) introduced the concept of intersectionality, highlighting the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. These interconnected factors form an overlapping and interdependent system of discrimination, emphasizing the unique and compounded experiences of individuals with intersecting identities. In the context of women in rural India, the absence of physical collateral poses a significant barrier to accessing finance from banks and financial institutions. This issue is a pervasive challenge that affects the economic opportunities and empowerment of women in rural areas. The existing literature highlights the marginalization of women and the focus of feminism is a domain to find gender equality. The women have been marginalized in various aspects of life, in the workforce, politics, and social norms. Intersectionality emphasizes that the magnitude and impact of marginalization differ based on the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, and age to name a few. The women of colour and from lower strata of caste classification or the Dalit community face more oppression in society. This research study aims to measure the impact of gender and caste on the financial exclusion of women in rural India. The study mainly explores the various factors that impact the financial exclusion of poor rural women in India. And how does the SHG bank linkage programme help to mitigate the extent of financial exclusion among the poor rural women in India? Fig. 1 depicts the various factors that are responsible for the financial exclusion of the poor.

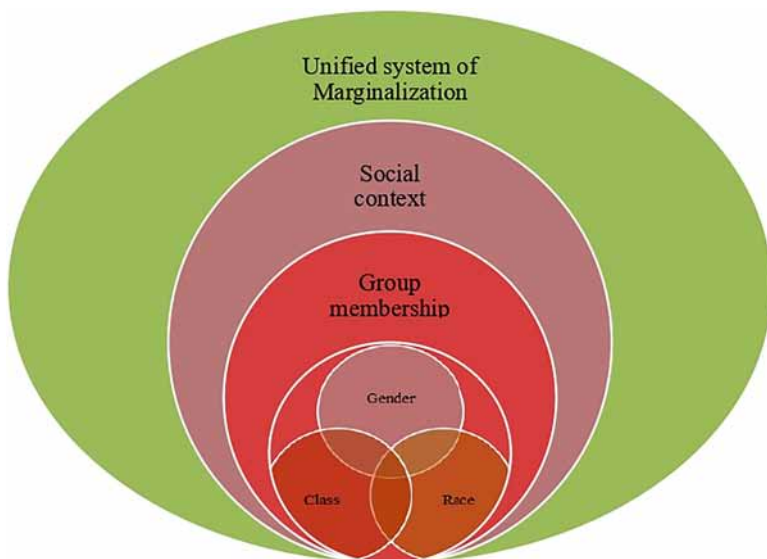


Fig. 1. Intersection of Various Factors Impacting Marginalization of Women.

#### 4 *In Pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals*

*RQ1.* What factors are responsible for the financial exclusion of poor rural women in India?

*RQ2.* How does SHG bank linkage help to mitigate the financial exclusion among rural women in India?

*RQ3.* What initiative have been undertaken by the members of group to nurture entrepreneurship through incubators, accelerators, and boot camps?

### **Literature Review**

The research advocates for establishing cooperative SHGs to enhance social capital and empower women, aligning with findings (Sanyal, 2009). The lack of collateral among the disadvantaged individuals restricts their access to finance and loans, fostering behaviours like shooaling and schooling where financially excluded individuals unite to combat the threats posed by money lenders and the informal sector. These groups focus on promoting financial inclusion among disadvantaged populations but encounter challenges due to conflicts stemming from diverse member backgrounds. Financial inclusion aims to provide door-step financial access to underserved communities (Cicchello et al., 2021). The groups are constituted of the members who are similar either in occupation or in neighbourhood. Homogeneous groups offer benefits like reducing moral hazard and agency problems but can also lead to stereotyping and excessive pressure. Conversely, heterogeneous groups diversify risks but may face moral hazard issues. Another major social theory given by Marxists is that the individuals and the groups within the society interact on the basis of conflict rather than the consensus. The conflict theory highlights that the social relations in a society lead to the social problems in the society. The most powerful groups use the power and the conflict, in order to bond with each other rather than the consensus. Thus, the conflict theory is of great importance in the management of the group. Effective conflict management is vital, with positive strategies enhancing group performance, while negative approaches disrupt dynamics (Syna Desivilya & Yagil, 2005). Underbanked and unbanked individuals face barriers such as collateral and creditworthiness challenges, resulting in concerns about moral hazard and adverse selection. JLGs address these issues through peer monitoring and social capital, yet performance is hindered by the lack of regulation. The SHG-bank linkage programme provides insights for scholars and banking professionals, emphasizing peer monitoring and enforcement to bolster JLGs' financial sustainability. The SHG bank linkage programme represents a social innovation that grants financial access to the economically marginalized through social capital. Transformational leaders empower group members, while intersectionality connects discrimination to the social, economic, and legal milieu, empowering women and addressing discriminatory power dynamics. JLGs operate on the principle of collective liability, and financial contracts are governed by social agreements. Historically, culture plays an important role in forming social relations in the society and epistemologically, culture is the integration of

the social relations and identities. Sociology is based on three paradigms namely conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, and functionalism. Functionalism, a social paradigm, emphasizes the interaction of social structures and institutions in society, ultimately contributing to societal stability. Emile Durkheim developed functionalism, aiming to understand how society maintains stability and survival. Durkheim classified society into 'old' and 'new' categories, with the 'old' society being highly mechanical and the 'new' society being more dependent, where the success of one part is dependent upon the success of the other unit. Organizations exhibit manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions represent the institution's stated vision and goals, while latent functions refer to their unintended yet consequential roles. Thus, Durkheim also highlighted the importance of the rituals and shared norms for the success of the society. Functionalism perceives social structures as a set of elements that form a society, providing cybernetic feedback to the system to satisfy essential functions. Functionalism is concerned with how the social stratification helps to maintain an order and stability in the society. The relationship between the members of the group should be of interdependence and cooperation. The studies highlight that the social stratification and inequalities in the society are very much related to each other. Cultural diversity influences group effectiveness, with homogeneous groups excelling but facing conflicts of interest. The attainment of group goals hinges on task attraction, social cohesion, and physical cohesiveness. Each group member acts as a node interconnected through shared norms, leading to social cohesion and goal achievement. The adherence to shared norms creates a cohesive ecosystem geared towards meeting group objectives. The literature highlights that the success of the society is attained through the social structures in a society. According to the literature, social systems and structures help to bring about more stability in the society. In order to retain the power, the groups tend to use their set of power. Symbolic interactionism highlights that the contribution of the members to the society depends on the meaning that the things in the society have for the individuals. This paradigm helps us to understand how human beings interact with the social environment around them. Symbolic interactionism depends on the meaning that the users give to the things happening around them. The sociological theories work on the principle of integration of the processes at the micro-level. Various cultural factors from Hofstede Prism have an impact on the performance of the micro-finance institutions.

## **Research and Methodology**

This research study aims to explore the various factors that are responsible for the financial exclusion of the poor. The multiple case study methods have been used to explore the factors that are responsible for the financial exclusion of women in rural India (Halkias et al., 2022). The data are collected by conducting the semi-structured interview with four SHGs, covered under the SHG bank linkage programme. Then post-collection of data, the qualitative data were analysed using selective coding and focussed coding, through the theoretical lens of the social theory of intersectionality.

## Theoretical Lens

### *Theory of Intersectionality*

This study deploys the social theory of intersectionality, which was developed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), serves as a framework to explore how the diverse social identities based on caste, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age intersect and give rise to marginalization. Through the lens of gender, race, and class, this chapter aims to explore the impact of social innovation on financial inclusion and outcomes of marginalized women.

In Fig. 2, it is illustrated that women in rural India who are impoverished, marginalized, and affiliated with the artisan and craftsmen sector face financial exclusion. This exclusion stems from their lack of collateral, making banks hesitant to extend loans to them, further perpetuating their financial isolation. To combat this issue, SHGs, characterized by a cohesive membership sharing commonalities in gender, class, and race, play a crucial role. These groups offer social capital that aids in the financial inclusion of these disadvantaged artisans, leveraging the interconnected relationships within the group to facilitate access to financial services and opportunities.

## Discussion and Analysis

### *Case of Financial Exclusion of a SHG*

Financial inclusion, facilitated by the utilization of financial services, is at the crossroads of knowledge and innovation. A recent interview with a seasoned member of a SHG shed light on the SHG bank linkage programme's objective: providing financial access to individuals at the base of the economic pyramid. This programme leverages social capital, defined as the social ties within the group, to facilitate access to finance. The interview focussed on a group engaged in manufacturing banana chips and banana powder, showcasing the practical application of the programme in empowering individuals to access financial resources.

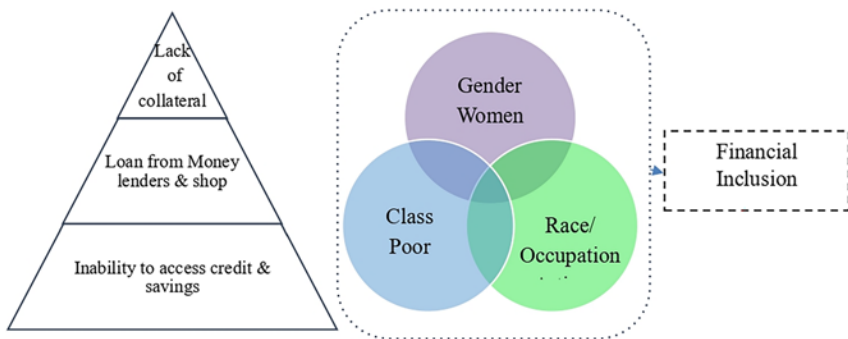


Fig. 2. Theory of Intersectionality and Financial Inclusion.

*Interview with the Member of the SHG*

I interviewed a member of the SHG. The SHG is dedicated to the production of various banana-based products such as banana chips and banana paper. The leader of the group has recognized the pivotal importance of effective leadership in propelling the group towards success. Moreover, all members possess financial literacy, and the leader has been instrumental in cultivating self-reliance among the group members. This emphasis on leadership and financial literacy underscores the group's proactive stance in pursuing success and sustainability. The SHG is actively involved in producing a variety of banana-based products, including banana chips and banana paper. The leader of the group has underlined the crucial role of effective leadership in driving the group's success. All members are financially literate, and the leader has played a significant role in fostering self-reliance among the group members. The emphasis on leadership and financial literacy within the group showcases a proactive approach towards achieving success and sustainability. The leader's proactive approach to resolving members' issues through training, hands-on guidance, and the enforcement of shared norms creates a supportive and structured environment within the group. Furthermore, the group's commitment to open communication and coordination is evidenced by the regularity of meetings at intervals of 15 days, 7 days, or weekly. Additionally, the substantial involvement of the bank leader in financial transactions underscores the critical importance of effective financial management within the group. The democratic process of selecting the leader through voting, along with the significant roles played by office bearers, emphasizes a collaborative and inclusive approach to leadership. This ensures that the group's direction is guided by the collective will and consensus of its members. However, the challenges encountered by the SHG under the SHG bank linkage programme reveal a deficiency in government-provided marketing support. This gap has the potential to impede the group's effectiveness in promoting its products and reaching its target market. While government schemes sporadically provide chances to partake in international exhibitions and conferences, the group member's articulate dissatisfaction with the overall efficiency of the government machinery in promptly and effectively addressing their grievances. Additionally, the perception among group members that salaried employees may prioritize their financial interests and lack a personal stake beyond their salary underscores the need for greater engagement and alignment of incentives within the organizational structure to bolster overall effectiveness and commitment levels. The respondent's perspective underscores the importance of appointing employees within organizations like State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM), Aajeevika, and Kudumbashree based on commission as a means to enhance motivation and performance. The concern about salaried employees primarily focussing on regulatory requirements highlights the need to balance compliance with operational effectiveness and innovation. Moreover, emphasizing the significance of practical experience over formal education such as Master in Business Administration (MBA) and engineering degrees suggests a preference for individuals with hands-on experience and the ability to connect directly with the challenges faced by SHGs. This preference for practical

knowledge and on-the-ground experience aligns with the respondent's view that graduates with 8–10 years of work experience may be better equipped to effectively lead and encourage SHGs compared to those with theoretical academic backgrounds. This holistic approach places value on real-world expertise and the ability to navigate practical challenges effectively when supporting such community-driven initiatives. The emphasis on practical knowledge over theoretical and formal education aligns with the growing recognition of the value of hands-on experience and real-world applicability. The respondent's perspective underscores the importance of leadership qualities in effectively addressing the challenges encountered by members of SHGs, highlighting the pivotal role of leadership in creating solutions and fostering positive outcomes within such community-driven initiatives. The respondent's perspectives highlight a shift towards valuing practical knowledge and real-world experience over formal education, notably in the context of leadership within SHGs. The analogy regarding the construction of a house underscores the importance of technical proficiency and hands-on skills, emphasizing that practical ability often transcends formal qualifications. Moreover, the emphasis on working knowledge and efficiency as products of experience and expertise aligns with a broader recognition of the value of practical skills and capabilities in driving effective outcomes. According to him, efficiency is an output of the working knowledge and the not formal MBA course. MBA, according to the respondent is a measure of accreditation, and accreditation is different from ability. He gave an example that the house is made by the people proficient with technical knowledge and technical proficiency and not the engineers and the architecture. Marketing of the product in the SHG is done through social media and website, and currently, the group is not using the India Mart. The marketing strategy of the SHGs involve leveraging social media and their website to promote their products. Expanding to platforms like India Mart could provide additional visibility and access to a broader market, potentially enhancing their reach and sales opportunities. It might be beneficial for the group to consider exploring India Mart as a potential platform to further promote their products and connect with a wider customer base. For website development, the group receives training from the incubator and content developers, indicating a proactive approach to enhancing their online presence. The emphasis on localized content development suggests a tailored strategy to connect with their target audience effectively. In terms of raw material procurement, the group demonstrates self-reliance by sourcing bananas from members' lands to produce banana paper and chips. This self-sufficiency ensures independence in the raw material supply chain, contributing to the group's operational autonomy and sustainability.

#### *Analysis of This Interview*

Reflecting on the importance of knowledge, innovation, and social impact his statement 'In our village, the house is made by the mason and not the architect, and it's important to be able rather than highly educated' prompts a vital dialogue on the intersection of practical skills and formal education. While practical abilities are undeniably valuable, it's essential to recognize the pivotal role of architects