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*By Dr. Ajaykumar B. Naik*

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Women Empowerment through Self Help Groups (A Study of Pardi Town SHGs  
in Valsad District, Gujarat)

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**ABSTRACT:**

Women constitute fifty percent of the world population and received hardly ten percent of the world income and owner of even less than one percent of world's property. In this scenario in most of the developing countries more and more emphasis is laid on the need for development of women and their active participation in the main stream of development process today. It is very crucial for the development of the country. The Constitution of India grants equality to women in all aspects and 2001 was celebrated as the Women Empowerment Year.

Empowering women is allowing them to make their own decisions in every walk of their life. The major strategies for women empowerment include social empowerment, political empowerment and economic empowerment.

All over the world is a realization that the best way to tackle poverty and enable the community to improve its quality of life is through Self Help Groups. SHGs are informal associations consisting of 10 to 20 members mostly ladies created for the purpose of enabling members to reap economic benefits out of mutual help, solidarity and joint responsibility. The SHGs are the tool for economic empowerment of women.

The present study is confined to Pardi Town in Pardi Taluka of Valsad District, the highest Schedule Tribe populated district of Gujarat. For the study a structured interview schedule was used for collecting the necessary data from the respondents. The result of the study revealed that SHGs have had greater impact on economic aspects of the beneficiaries.

**Key Words:** Women empowerment, Self Help Group, Schedule Tribe