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ROLE OF NGOS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WAYANAD DISTRICT, KERALA

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Abstract :
India has always been termed as a ‘Developing Country’ for a very long time. Studies have proved that for the development process to be successful and reach the next stage, development should be started from the lower level. India is the second largest Country in the World but not the second richest country. Most of our population is from the lower and the middle class community residing in rural areas. Out of the above said rural population the majority are women. Hence, for the nation to develop it is necessary to empower the women population of the country. Empowerment of women has emerged as an important issue in recent times. Empowerment of women facilitates for sustainable rural development by the uplifting the economic, social and political status of women in India. Empowering the women in these aspects is necessary to convert the idle society into self-sustainable society. Women empowerment can be achieved through provision of adequate education facilities, political support, and effective legislation system and employment generation for women. Here, NGO’s and the self-help groups (SHG) play a very pivotal role in women empowerment by providing basic education, vocational training, training for self-employment, legal aid, protection for women and self-awareness programme. Thus they are mainly concerned with the upliftment of the women in the society. This paper looks into the dynamism of the process through which women empowerment is achieved and the status of women is uplifted with the aid of NGO’s and self-help groups. This paper deals with empowerment of rural women through NGOs and the advantages entrepreneurship among the rural women. This paper seeks to explore some measures that should be adopted in order to (re) position rural women as equal players in entrepreneurship and economic development.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, sustainable rural development, NGOs, Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Introduction
The term NGO is of recent origin and is commonly used in addressing issues related to poverty alleviation, financial support to micro entrepreneurs, gender development etc. There is, however, no statutory definition of NGO. The taskforce on supportive policy and Regulatory Framework for Microfinance has defined