

## Overcoming Adversity: Women with Disabled Children and Microfinance Solutions

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**Abstract :** In recent years, microfinance has emerged as a critical tool for promoting financial inclusion and empowering marginalized communities, particularly women. In India, where poverty and lack of access to financial services continue to be significant challenges for many, microfinance has the potential to provide much-needed support to women with disabled children. These women face unique challenges, including discrimination, lack of access to education and employment, and limited support systems, making it even more difficult for them to break out of poverty and provide for their families. Microfinance, by providing small loans, savings products, and other financial services, can help these women to start or grow businesses, build assets, and achieve financial independence. India has adhered to an SHG-bank linkage model of microfinance since 1980, and programs like IRDP and SGSY were initiatives in the same direction. In the year 2011, India launched DAY-NRLM, a restructured version of SGSY. DAY-NRLM is an SHG-based microfinance program targeting the rural women of India. It aims to organise these poor women into SHGs and link them to banking institutions for creating sustainable livelihoods. The program has a reservation for disabled women but has no special status for mothers with disabled children. The impact of microfinance on women with disabilities and their families has been well documented. Studies have shown that women participating in microfinance programs are more likely to start businesses, increase their income, and improve their standard of living. Furthermore, these women are more likely to invest in their children's education and health, which can have long-term positive effects on their family's well-being. In the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the programme started in 2013 and is running smoothly to date. Women with children having a disability have not been documented as a category within the programme. The core aspect of this study is to delve into these women's lives and analyse the impact of SHG membership on their lives and their children. The participants were selected purposively. For data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted. The findings of the paper show that microfinance has the potential to play a significant role in promoting financial inclusion and empowering women with children having disabilities in Kashmir. By providing access to small loans, savings products, and other financial services, microfinance can help these women to start or grow businesses, build assets, and achieve financial independence. However, more work is needed to ensure that these women have equal access to financial services and opportunities and that microfinance institutions are equipped to effectively serve this population. Working together to address these challenges can create a brighter future for women with children having disabilities and their families in India.

**Keywords :** DAY-NRLM, microfinance, SHGs, women, disabled children

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