
**AN EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY OF WOMEN SELF HELP GROUP (SHG)
FUNCTIONING IN NAGAON DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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ABSTRACT

Self Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socioeconomic background. The government also wants to promote the SHG by the way of providing the grants which is either interest free or on a very nominal interest. The members of SHG come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self- help and mutual help. The SHG promotes small savings among its members. The savings are kept with a bank. This common fund is in the name of the SHG. Usually, the number of members in one SHG does not exceed twenty. This is one of the most effective ways to promote the micro-finance in the society & seen as an important tool for the empowering of women. This research paper is an empirical case study which focuses on the functioning on Women Self Help Group. Primary data for the present study was obtained from original sources by the researcher himself. It was gathered specially for a project on hand. Primary data for the present study was collected through personal interview & by administering structured questionnaires. The time span of the study consisted of 30 days in the month of August 2013 & sample consisting of 100 SHG members were interviewed in Nagaon district.

KEY WORDS: *Self Help Group, SHG, Women Empowerment, Micro-Finance*

INTRODUCTION

Self help groups are increasing rapidly in our country. Especially in rural India it works very well and shows good effect on the economy and society. With the help of SHG's lot of poor women become self employed with the available local resources and their skills and knowledge they started their own business. Now a day's SHGs play pivotal role in the rural economy. SHG signifies not only empowering women but also in respect of investment, production and marketing effort of women. This is one of the most effective ways to promote the micro-finance in the society & seen as an important tool for the empowering of women. Self Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socioeconomic background. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help. The SHG promotes small savings among its members. The savings are kept with a bank. This common fund is in the name of the SHG. Usually, the number of members in one SHG does not exceed twenty.

FORMATION OF SHG

The ideal size of SHG is 10-20 members. A smaller size is preferred because in a big group members cannot participate actively. The group may or may not be registered. Only one person

from one family can become member of a SHG. A group of either men or women is formed. A mixed group is generally not preferred. It is important that the members have a common social and financial background. For example, the group should be of farmers, artisans, craftsmen, housemaids, mill workers etc. The advantage of a homogeneous group is that members can interact freely. Following could be some of common factors for membership of SHG:

Women / men from poor households.

1. Those with dry land holding not more than 2 acres.
2. Having no access to safe drinking water
3. Having illiterate adults in family
4. Presence of alcoholic or drug addict or a person with prolonged illness in the family.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the study

1. To find out the impact of SHG on society
2. To find out the income group of women SHG members
3. To find out the education status of the women SHG members
4. To find out the major purpose of women SHG groups

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following methodology has been used for this study:

1. Selecting the sample method & samples: The method adopted for this research was purposive sampling method.
2. All the respondents were interviewed with the help of structured questionnaire which included both close as well as open ended questions.
3. The approved questionnaire was executed & responses were taken. Any difficulties felt in understanding of the question were cleared.
4. The finding was classified, tabulated and analyzed.
5. Sample size: The total 100 number of women SHG members were selected as sample size which comes to around 3 % of the total population.

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data is obtained from original sources by the researcher himself. It is gathered specially for a project on hand. Primary data is personally developed. It gives the latest information primary data is the data that has been observed or recorded by the researcher for the first time best of his knowledge. Primary data here was collected through personal interview & by administering structured questionnaires. The time span of the study consisted of 30 days & sample consisting of 100 SHG members interviewed in Nagaon district.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Income per annum of SHG Members

Sr. No.	Income per Annum	No. of Respondents
1	Below Rs. 10, 000	0
2	Rs 10000 to Rs. 20000	4
3	Rs. 20000 to Rs. 30000	15
4	Rs. 30000 to Rs. 40000	37
5	More than 40000	44
Total		100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table shows the income level of the respondents. From the collected respondents 4% respondents are having income from Rs. 10000 to Rs. 20000, about 15% respondents are having income from Rs. 20000 to Rs. 30000, about 37% respondents are having income between Rs. 30000 to Rs. 40000 and about 44% respondents are have income more than Rs. 40000.\

Education Status of SHG Members

Sr. No.	Education Status	No. of Respondents
1	Illiterate	15
2	Primary	5
3	Secondary	3
4	Higher Secondary	51
5	Graduation	26
6	Post Graduation	0
Total		100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table shows the education status of the respondents. From the collected respondents 15% respondents are illiterate, 5% have got education up to primary level, 3% are have education up to secondary level, 51% have education up to higher secondary level and 26% respondents are graduate but no one is there post graduate.

Members working in SHG

Sr. No.	Members of SHG	No. of Respondents
1	Less than 5 Members	25
2	6 to 10 Members	25
3	11 to 15 members	22
4	16 to 20 Members	18
5	More than 21 members	10
Total		100

Source: Field Work Data

From the collected respondents 25% SHG group have below than 5 members, another 25% groups are have members up to 6 to 10 members, 22% groups are have 11 to 15 members, 18% groups have members between 16 to 20 members and 10% groups are have more than 21 members.

Basic purpose of SHG

Sr. No.	Purpose of SHG	No. of Respondents
1	Self-employment	12
2	Starting Group business	27
3	Personal work	25
4	Any other	36
	Total	100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table shows the purpose of the SHG group. From the collected respondents 12% groups have basic purpose is self employment, 27% respondents purpose is starting group business, 25% are have personal work purpose and 36% respondents opined the purpose is any other.

Average of amount of loan borrowed by the SHG MEMBERS

Sr. No.	Loan borrowed	No. of Respondents
1	Below than Rs. 5000	2
2	Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10000	6
3	Rs. 10000 to Rs. 15000	21
4	Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20000	24
5	More than Rs. 20000	47
	Total	100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table it is shown average amount of loan borrowed by SHG members. From the collected respondents 2% says that it is below than Rs. 5000, 6% says that it is between Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10000, 21% respondents says that loan amount is between Rs. 10000 to Rs. 15000, 24% opined that it is between Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20000 and 47% respondents it is said that loan amount borrowed more than Rs. 20000.

Self Help Group receive any government grant

Sr. No.	Government grant to SHG	No. of Respondents
1	Yes	100
2	No.	0
	Total	100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table shows that all the respondents have got government grants to their Self Help Group.

Started any small scale business in your SHG

Sr. No.	SSI Unit	No. of Respondents
1	Yes	55
2	No	45
	Total	100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table it is shown that how many SHG group has started SSI unit. From the collected respondents 55% SHG group opined that they have started SSI unit and 45% groups didn't started any SSI unit.

Interest rate on the SHG loan to members

Sr. No.	Interest Rate	No. of Respondents
1	Below than 2%	2
2	2% to 4%	23
3	5% to 6%	48
4	More than 6%	27
	Total	100

Source: Field Work Data

Above table it is shown that from the collected respondents 2% respondents SHG group loan interest rate is below than 2%, 23% says that it is between 2% to 4%, 48% says that it is between 5% to 6% and 27% says that it is more than 6%.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Following are the findings have been drawn from the study:

1. It is found that many SHG group members are from the Lower to Middle income group. Hence we can say that the SHGs are very beneficial for the Socio-Economic Development of BPL families as well as low income families.
2. It is found that many groups have below than 10 members. Only 20% groups have more than 10 members in its SHG
3. It is found that many groups have started for the start group business and personal work.
4. It is found that many SHG groups capital is more than 50000/- the percentage of this is more than 65%.
5. It is found that all SHG members are have saving account in the banks.
6. It is found that all the SHG groups are got government grants to their Self Help Group.
7. It is found that many members drawn more than 10000 Rs as a loan from the group.
8. It is found that 55% SHG group opined that they have started SSI unit and 45% groups didn't started any SSI unit.
9. It is found that 40% SHG groups have started social activity and 60% don't have started any social activity.
10. It is found many SHG group loan interest is below than 6%.

SUGGESTION OF THE STUDY

Following are the suggestion has been drawn from the study:

1. SHG group should have a mix of members from the high income group & members from BPL as well as Low income families.
2. SHG groups should concentrate to increase its members.
3. SHG group should increase some capital amount from other sources.
4. SHG groups give some training to the members for smooth working.
5. Minimize the instalment amount to attract low income group members also.
6. Every SHG group should start some social activity.

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