

Progress of Self-Help Groups – Bank linkage programme in India between 2000 and 2019

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is to create a business activity that generates regular income and to raise the standard of living of weakest section of the society. It is vital that SHGs are linked with a business activity which is in favor of the region in which SHGs are established. Women are an integral part of nation building. Indian women contribute their entire earnings for meeting the requirements of their family. This is a sure measure towards eradicating poverty. There are tremendous efforts made by members of Self - Help Groups - Bank Linkage Programme to increase their savings and invest funds which will reap benefits for them.

The savings are pooled together and are put in investment activities. These investments made by SHGs are essential for capital formation and economic growth in a developing country, like India. The analysis is done on loan disbursed, savings and non-performing assets with the help of basic statistical measures. Through the provision of microfinance by banks to Self - Help Groups- Bank Linkage Programme numerous people have come under financial inclusion which every government and banking system works for.

Keywords: *Self Help Groups, Self - Help Groups - Bank Linkage Programme, Non - Performing Assets, Savings, Bank Outstanding.*

1. Introduction

Self-help group - Bank linkage Programme (SBLP) was introduced in the year 1992 in various parts of Indian economy by the apex bank for agriculture and rural development known as National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for eradicating poverty slowly in rural areas of India. Self Help Groups (SHGs) are the financial intermediary group comprising of 10 - 20 members (female or male) who have come together to save funds and help each other to fight a common problem like poverty and unemployment. Self Help Groups are also known as mutual support groups or mutual aid groups. In India, the SHGs are linked to one or other bank to provide them funds for their activity which will help them to earn their livelihood. Each member of the SHGs saves fixed amount of funds monthly for increment of the SHG bank account.

SHGs work on co - operative principle, to extend their support to one another and provide means to empower themselves. To improve the accountability and transparency of SHGs, the Government of India with the help of National Bank for Agriculture And Rural Development (NABARD) set up SHG - Bank Linkage Programme and brought it under organized financial system. Most of the SHGs are engaged in activities such as animal husbandry, dairy production, pottery, etc.

It was so successful that even in urban areas of India this programme has been adopted by weaker section of the society. This SHG movement has brought thousands of Indians under the scanner of organized financial system known as 'Financial Inclusion'. SHGs

are formed under different federations and community institutions. These institutions have been set up to support the livelihood and empower the rural population of India. SHGs have mix of men and women but its success is mainly due to one fact: inclusion of women in income generating activities. The SHGs are provided with loan by the banks and the recovery of loans is 80%, which is highest among the loan portfolio of any bank. SHGs are mainly aimed at poor households, poor communities, marginalized community, and ST/SC tribes of Indian economy.

Definition

Self Help Groups is a holistic programme of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self-employment, organization of the rural poor into self-help groups and their capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology, credit, and marketing.

RBI & NABARD

These two apex banking institutions of India together took three policy decisions regarding SHGs. They are:

- Banks could lend to SHGs without finding out the purpose for which loan is granted to borrower.
- Banks are permitted to sanction loans to SHGs without taking physical collateral.
- Banks can lend to unregistered SHGs.

The basic objectives for linking SHGs with banks are:

- To set up a strategy of credit reaching the poor.
- To build mutual trust relationship with the bank and poor Indians.
- To encourage savings mobilization and credit management among the poor and therefore growth of the bank.

This programme was not limited to commercial banks but it has been extended to cooperative banks and regional rural banks (RRBs).

Features of SHG

- SHG is organized on the grounds of homogeneity between the group members.

- Its ownership lies in hands of the members and run by the principles of self-help and mutual benefit.
- SHG are mostly organized by women with membership ranging from 10 to 20.
- SHGs meet up in regular intervals, help in collective decision making, pool all the savings, encourage the habit of thrift, build credit worthiness, and protect usage of their own and raise required debt funds.
- SHGs have binding code of conduct on all its members.
- SHGs functions in democracy allowing the members free exchange of thoughts.
- To inspire the savings and banking habits among its members for accumulating their capital resources.
- For productive purposes availing of loans are remade possible.
- Collective wisdom in organizing and managing the finance and distributing the benefits among themselves.
- Sensitize, build confidence, collective decision making and capabilities in women are created.
- To encourage women to grasp social responsibilities in relation to women empowerment.

Microfinance through SHGs

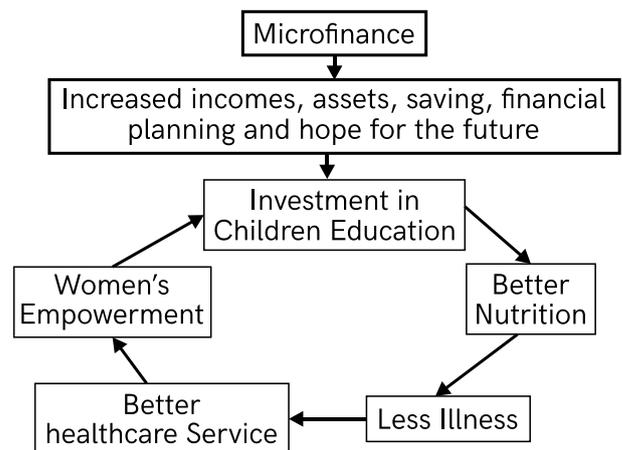


Figure 1: Microfinance through SHGs (Source: <http://www.humanityforchildren.org/node/102>

Cited on 16-11-2013)

The following are the important key notes which explain the role of NABARD in supporting SHGs. They are as follows:

- SHGs were set up with emphasis of self-help, economic development and raising funds to promote eradication of exploitation.
- SHGs were formed with uniformity regarding caste and income generation activities.
- These SHGs were given freedom for their governing, their working and to protect their funds and for repayment of loans undertaken.
- Women's SHG were successful in mobilization of savings, credit management and promoting income generating activities.

2. Review of Literature

Since this study is primarily focused on the Self-Help Groups, the literature in that arena has been viewed intensively and those predominant reviews are as follows.

Singh, Ruivenkamp and Joost Jongerden(2011) states that Self Help Group is a strategy that has been adopted by the Indian Government for rural development, meeting rural population's requirements of funds and invest the funds, thereby, fulfilling and empowering the rural people. The authors found that, by creating networks in rural area will strengthen their ability of expanding the business undertaken by SHGs.

Murthy and Narasaiah (2014) explained that for rural financing there is requirement of regional rural banks, commercial banks and co - operative banks. They feel the role played by regional rural banks and co - operative banks should be more effective in catering to the financial needs of the area in which they are operating. The authors are of the opinion that most of India's population consists of poor people and to reduce this growing poverty the government and RBI should set up regional rural banks and co - operative banks which will provide credit to these people.

Navulla and Sunitha (2016) have introduced SHGs as such, to see if there is any remarkable variation between number of loans disbursed and amount of loans issued. They observed the relationship between amount of loans disbursed and number of loans issued along with appropriate suggestions to strengthen the financial assistance provided to the self-help groups. The authors found the relationship between loans disbursed in amount and number of loans disbursed is moderate.

Nagalakshmi (2017) says in India, SHG-Bank linkage measure and scheme has registered phenomenal growth under the NABARD initiatives and launching of SGSY, which led to microfinance movement. The members of self-help groups are the real owners and managers of a very small bank. They within themselves decide who will get loans, when they should get it and at what cost of interest. They are indirectly paid for all their management, time, and effort. Self-help groups are informal voluntary groups who on their own have derived characteristics from the homogenous composition of members. The author has observed women are the stronger force in working of self-help group bank linkage program.

Setia, Tandon and Brijpal (2017) concludes; A Self-Help Group is one of the measures undertaken, which has radically contributed through its efforts to the zeal, which has led to the growth of women empowerment. Self Help Groups have given opportunities to poor women to manage and bring a positive change in their lives through the mode of savings along with making them self-reliant to run their own small-scale businesses. The authors found that all women were interested in providing good financial support for their family members.

Srivastava and Rao (2017) states that self-help groups are made of 10 - 15 women who are motivated in saving their funds and found encouragement to invest the funds in income generating activities. The self-help group's bank linkage program is playing an important role to encourage the rural savings and promoting

investment activity. The authors are introducing to the audience the Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Program.

Paudmal (2018) has concluded that the efforts made by Self Help Group Bank Linkage Program have been successful due to the involvement of women in the maximum. Therefore, the government should empower women by making them as a deciding partner to bring about social and economic transformation.

Shirisha, Devi, and Devi (2018) have stated that the process of upholding and maintaining rural development will lead to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Such goals can be achieved only through the modern tool to reduce poverty and ensure rural development, commonly referred to as microfinance through SHGs. Apart from savings and credit, SHGs were also able to fight and manage various social issues like health, education, sanitation, drinking water, alcoholism etc. The authors found that lakhs of the marginalized Indians are seeking for the benefits from SHGs for building their lives and improving the standard of living.

Akter, Ahmad, Jaafar, Zawani, Islam and Islam, (2018) suggests that government must empower women by increasing their knowledge, skills, and technology usage. The authors found that women were highly responsive among the members of the group.

Hundekar (2019) states that SHGs was started with multiple aims including access to loan, enabling income generation, encouraging savings, and eventually empowering the poor. This study aims to find out regarding the penetration of financial inclusion through SBLP in the state of Karnataka using financial inclusion index as a yardstick. The author's observation has been to adopt a geographical area and extend the credit to the poor through self-help group bank linkage program.

The in-depth review of literature enumerates the importance of Self-Help Groups in developing the rural areas of India by creating opportunities like new small-scale ventures by women population. Rural development has also been viewed as one of the utmost

objectives of such financial entities. Hence, the objectives of this study focus on how SHGs financially perform in India with reference to Bank Linkage Programme.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- i. To study the financial performance of SHG - Bank Linkage Programme in India from 2000 - 01 to 2018 - 19.
- ii. To analyze the level of loans disbursed to SHG - Bank Linkage Programme in India from 2006 - 07 to 2018 - 19.
- iii. To examine the level of savings of SHG - Bank Linkage Programme in India from 2006 - 07 to 2018 - 19.
- iv. To evaluate the NPAs of SHG - Bank Linkage Programme in India from 2007 - 08 to 2018 - 19.

4. Research Methodology

Type of the Research: Descriptive research type has been employed.

Sample Unit: Consists of Self-Help Groups under NABARD.

Timeline: Between April 2000 and March 2019 (Financial Years).

Data Type: Secondary data has been gathered according to the nature of the study.

Data Sources: Reports and Publication by NABARD.

Analysis: Simple Percentage Analysis and Correlation Analysis have been used to achieve the objectives.

Tools: MS Excel

Research gap

The Government of India, many societal service entities and bodies are keenly looking on the opportunities to elevate the rural standard of living, women entrepreneurship and boosting rural development, and implement many initiatives in this context. One among those is Self Help Groups. It is

important for the researchers in finance area to understand the role of such initiatives, the transacting abilities and the growth & development pavements for not only contributing to the literature but also to support the entities for their intensive betterment and improvement of standard of living. Thus, this study has been found relevant to the financial scenario.

Scope for future Research

- i. A study of poverty removal in the regions which are not covered under financial inclusion through SBLP.
- ii. For a financially healthy India requirement of women entrepreneurship in rural areas of India via SHGs is a must.
- iii. Growth of women entrepreneurship in rural areas through SHGs.
- iv. An analysis of removing of poverty of the areas covered under financial inclusion which is the primary goal of SBLP.
- v. An evaluation of the empowerment of women in India.
- vi. A comparison of state wise loan disbursement, recovery of loans and savings of SHGs.
- vii. A comparison of region wise loan disbursement and savings of SHGs.

5. Analysis and interpretation

Table 1.1: Progress of Self-help Group-Bank Linkage Programme (Amount in Rs Lakhs)

Year	No. of SHGs Credit Linked		Bank Loan Disbursed	
	During the year	Cumulative	During the year Credit	CumulativeCredit
2000 - 01	149050	149050	480.88	480.88
2001 - 02	197653	346703	545.40	1026.28
2002 - 03	255882	602585	1022.30	2048.58
2003 - 04	361731	964316	1855.50	3904.08
2004 - 05	539365	1503681	2994.20	6898.28
2005 - 06	620109	2123790	4499.10	11397.38
2006 - 07	1105749	3229539	6570.39	17967.77
2007 - 08	1227770	15457309	8849.26	26817.03
2008 - 09	1609586	17066895	12253.31	39070.34
2009 - 10	1586822	18653717	14453.30	53523.64
2010 - 11	1196134	19849851	14547.73	68071.37
2011 - 12	1147878	20997729	16534.77	84606.14
2012 - 13	1219821	22217550	20585.36	105191.50
2013 - 14	1366421	23583971	24017.36	129208.86
2014 - 15	1626238	25210209	27582.31	156791.17
2015 - 16	1832323	27042532	37286.91	194678.08
2016 - 17	1898120	28940652	38781.16	233459.24
2017 - 18	2261132	31201784	47185.88	280645.12
2018 - 19	2698400	33900184	58317.63	338962.74

Source: Compiled from NABARD Annual Reports and NABARD publications, *Progress of SHG-Bank Linkage in India* and *Status of Microfinance in India*.

From the above Table 1.1, it can be observed that banks (commercial banks, regional rural banks, and cooperative banks) are disbursing the loans to self-help groups - bank linkage. The SHGs with bank linkage grew at steady rate with bank credit availed. Since the year 2000 - 01 the 1,49,050 SHGs availed credit from banks to the extent of Rs 480.88lakhs till the year 2018 - 19 the SHGs increased to 33,900,184 availed credit from the banks to the extent of Rs 338962.74.

Correlation between Self-help Group-Bank Linkage Growth and Bank Loan Growth

SHGs Growth and Bank Loan Growth

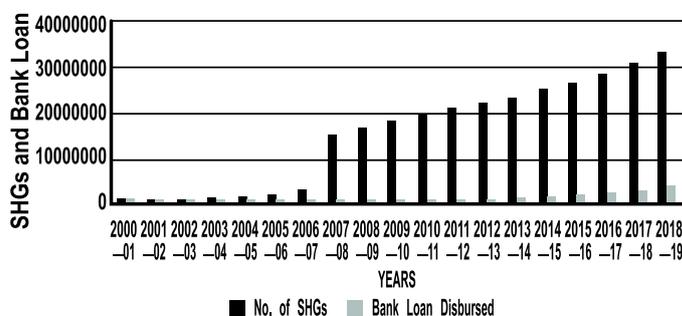


Figure 2: Correlation between Self-help Group-Bank Linkage Growth and Bank Loan Growth

From the above figure 2 it can be clearly observed that the self-help group - bank linkage growth and bank loan disbursed growth are correlated. The coefficient of correlation gives positive result of 0.8861 between self-help group - bank linkage growth and bank loan disbursed growth. This implies to a great extent the bank loan disbursed during the 18 years has been highly dependent on growth of Self-Help Groups - Bank Linked.

Table 1.2: Savings of SHGs with Banks (Amount in Rs Lakhs)

Year	Savings of SHGs	Cumulative Growth in Savings	Growth of Savings	Percentage Growth in Savings
2006 - 07	351270.79	351270.79	—————	—————
2007 - 08	378538.94	729809.73	27268.15	7.20%
2008 - 09	554561.82	1284371.55	176022.88	31.74%
2009 - 10	619870.89	1904242.44	65309.07	10.54%
2010 - 11	701630.28	2605872.72	81759.39	11.65%
2011 - 12	655141.46	3261014.18	-46488.82	-7.10%
2012 - 13	821725.47	4082739.65	166584.01	20.27%
2013 - 14	989741.54	5072481.19	168016.07	16.98%
2014 - 15	1105984.07	6178465.26	116242.53	10.51%
2015 - 16	1369139.01	7547604.27	263154.94	19.22%
2016 - 17	1611422.64	9159026.91	242283.63	15.04%
2017 - 18	1959211.52	11118238.43	347788.88	17.75%
2018 - 19	2332448.15	13450686.58	373236.63	16.00%

Source: Compiled from NABARD Annual Reports and NABARD publications, *Progress of SHG-Bank Linkage in India* and *Status of Microfinance in India*.

Savings and their growth of SHGs with Banks

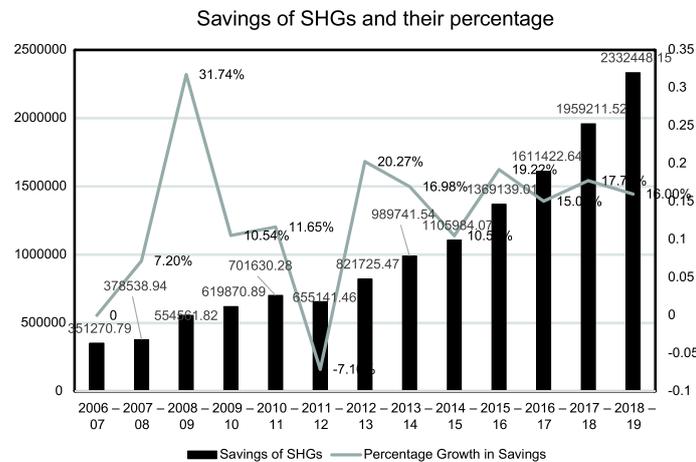


Figure 3: Savings and their growth of SHGs with Banks

From the above figure 3 it can be clearly observed that the savings and percentage of growth in savings of self-help group - bank linkage in the year 2008 - 09 increased tremendously to 31.74%, in the year 2011 - 12, it deteriorated very significantly to - 7.10% and it grew at steadily thereafter, in the year 2018 - 19 it has grew up to 16%.

Table 1.3: Bank Loan outstanding against SHGs (Amount in Rs Lakhs)

Year	Bank Loan Outstanding	Cumulative Growth in Bank Loan Outstanding	Growth in Bank Loan Outstanding	Percentage Growth in Bank Loan Outstanding
2006 - 07	1236649.39	1236649.39	-----	-----
2007 - 08	1699990.66	2936640.05	463341.27	27.26%
2008 - 09	2267984.25	5204624.3	567993.59	25.04%
2009 - 10	2803828.07	8008452.37	535843.82	19.11%
2010 - 11	3122116.55	11130568.92	318288.48	10.19%
2011 - 12	3634000.18	14764569.1	511883.63	14.09%
2012 - 13	3937529.72	18702098.82	303529.54	7.71%
2013 - 14	4292752.40	22994851.22	355222.68	8.27%
2014 - 15	5154546.14	28149397.36	861793.74	16.72%
2015 - 16	5711923.47	33861320.83	557377.33	9.76%
2016 - 17	6158130.36	40019451.19	446206.89	7.25%
2017 - 18	7559845.12	47579296.31	1401714.76	18.54%
2018 - 19	8709815.43	56289111.74	1149970.31	13.20%

Source: Compiled from NABARD Annual Reports and NABARD publications, *Progress of SHG-Bank Linkage in India* and *Status of Microfinance in India*.

From the above Table 1.3, it can be observed that banks (commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative banks) have been disbursing the loans to self-help groups - bank linkage and these loans have remained

outstanding by the end of the year. The SHGs with bank linkage has outstanding loan growth with alarming numbers. Since the year 2007 - 08 the bank loan outstanding by SHGs grew at the rate of 27.26%, it reduced during the year 2012 - 13 to 7.71%, further grew again in the year 2017 -18 to 18.54% and in the year 2018 - 19 it shows drastic fall to 13.2%.

Table 1.4: Non-Performing Assets of Banks against SHGs Loans Outstanding

Year	Bank Loan Outstanding	Non-Performing Assets (NPAs)	Percentage of NPA of Bank Loan Outstanding	Growth in NPAs	Percentage Growth in NPA
2007 - 08	1699990.66	42292.28	2.49%	—	—
2008 - 09	2267984.25	62586.78	2.76%	20294.5	32.43%
2009 - 10	2803828.07	82304.14	2.94%	19717.36	23.96%
2010 - 11	3122116.55	147410.80	4.72%	65106.66	44.17%
2011 - 12	3634000.18	221273.18	6.09%	73862.38	33.38%
2012 - 13	3937529.72	278692.95	7.08%	57419.77	20.60%
2013 - 14	4292752.40	293266.51	6.83%	14573.56	4.97%
2014 - 15	5154546.14	381470.65	7.40%	88204.14	23.12%
2015 - 16	5711923.47	368622.90	6.45%	-12847.75	-3.49%
2016 - 17	6158130.36	400218.81	6.50%	31595.91	7.89%
2017 - 18	7559845.12	462805.51	6.12%	62586.7	13.52%
2018 - 19	8709815.43	452401.05	5.19%	-10404.46	-2.30%

Source: Compiled from NABARD Annual Reports and NABARD publications, *Progress of SHG-Bank Linkage in India* and *Status of Microfinance in India*.

Correlation between Bank Loan Outstanding and Non - Performing Assets of SHGs - Bank Linkage Programme

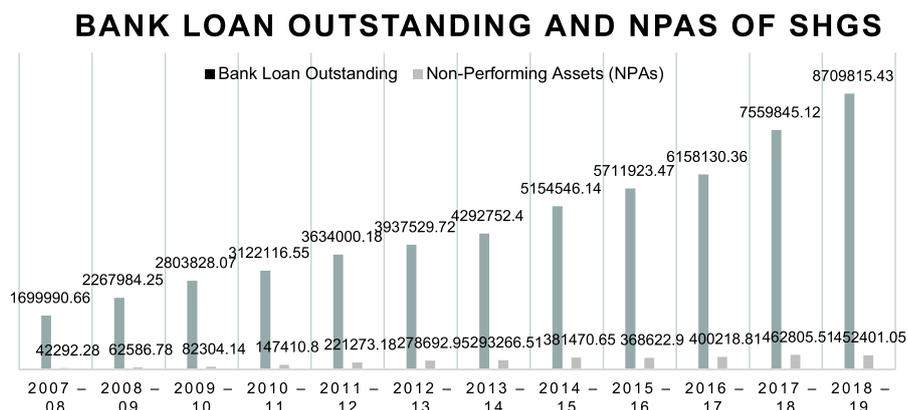


Figure 4: Correlation between Bank Loan Outstanding and Non - Performing Assets of SHGs - Bank Linkage Programme

From the above figure 4 it can be clearly observed that the non - performing assets and bank loan outstanding of self-help groups - bank linkage are correlated. From the statistical calculation, the coefficient of correlation gives positive result of 0.9317 between the non - performing assets and bank loan outstanding of self-help group - bank linkage. This implies to a great extent the non - performing assets during the 12 years is highly dependent on bank loan outstanding of Self-Help Groups - Bank Linkage Programme.

6. Findings

- i. There is a very strong and positive coefficient of correlation between Self Help Groups - Bank Linkage and loans issued to the SHGs. The more of SHGs, the more is the amount of loans issued during any given period.
- ii. The savings of SHGs are increasing Year on Year, in 2007 - 08 it showed a growth of 7.2%, it decreased tremendously in 2011 - 12 to -7.1% and again showed an increase to 16% in 2018 - 19. This shows SHGs are heading towards self-dependency.
- iii. The percentage growth of bank loan outstanding was 27.26% in the year 2007 - 08 while it decreased to 13.2% in 2018 - 19. These observation further shows SHGs are achieving self-independency.
- iv. NPA among SHGs is decreasing, to an extent of - 2.3% during the year 2018 - 19. This is because the SHGs savings are increasing and they are in position to repay their loans, therefore, NPAs are decreasing.
- v. The coefficient of correlation shows that NPAs are increasing in comparison with bank loan outstanding. This means with the increase of SHGs the banks are giving increased loans and SHGs require time to get on their feet.

7. Suggestions

- i. There should be more encouragement to form SHGs - Bank Linkage Programme to help banks to

disburse loans to weaker section of the society and earn an interest amount on the loan given to SBLP.

- ii. Savings should be encouraged among women of the SHGs and earn an income for SHGs. Banking their savings which is good in terms of credit creation of banks. It also enables the women to earn an income through SHGs.
- iii. NPAs are decreasing for financially developed SHGs but it is increasing for the newly formed SHGs on the loan disbursed.
- iv. There should be more encouragement to set up SHGs - Bank Linkage because it can reduce poverty and provide employment to unemployed people.
- v. The SHGs should be encouraged on savings by giving a higher rate of interest on funds registered under SHGs name.
- vi. Their NPAs are declining and this should be popularized, so that these SHGs feel pride in them and continue their saving habit.
- vii. The RBI and NABARD should order the banks to set up a counter and Government of India should formulate the loan policy for SHGs.
- viii. Helping to set up the SHGs helps creating and providing employment opportunities, thereby, strengthening our nation.
- ix. One bank officer each may be appointed between every closely situated 3 SHGs. The officer may monitor their work and provide necessary advice to SHGs in their difficult times which enable the bank to take appropriate measures to reduce NPAs. He can also enable the government to fight against the unemployment problem by providing necessary information.

8. Conclusion

India, a developing country, requires women's active participation in development process. The government is actively involved in upliftment of women and empowerment to abolish poverty and unemployment. A self-help group which sustains for a longer period is

able to achieve financial independency. The self-help group can handle it leadership, trouble shoot and resolve their conflict successfully with minimal help from outside parties. The government should provide help whenever required by self-help groups.

Finally, the government, RBI and NABARD have been successful to achieve financial inclusion through providing SHGs microfinance. Despite facing difficulties these SHGs have sustained and are progressing well. The SHGs are savings funds for themselves and non - performing assets are declining over time. NABARD through latest technology and improved digitization of SHGs can help build our country into a developed country by tapping potential of SHGs.

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