

A comparative study of Self-Help Groups on women empowerment and the development of financial growth between two sanghas in the district of Purba Bardhaman in West Bengal

Pameli Debnath, Dr. Abhijit Pakira

Department of Business Administration, The University of Burdwan Golapbag, Burdwan, W.B., India

Abstract: Women empowerment is now a widely debated term, and the impact of the empowerment idea can also be observed in developing countries like India. By explaining its dimensions including economic, socio-cultural, family/interpersonal, legal and political aspects, as well as the psychological well-being of individuals, groups and societies, scholars have defined the concept of women empowerment. The literature points to the possibilities of empowering women by providing them with economic freedom, enhanced well-being and social and political growth. This is achievable by allowing them access to savings and credit, encouraging greater economic position in decision-making, maximizing the wellbeing of families, enhancing women's expertise, autonomy, information and networking help. In order to tackle the problem of deprivation and encourage the society to better their quality of life, "Self-Help Groups" (SHGs) arose as an empowerment and financial paradigm that aimed in particular at mobilizing women in rural areas. The main purpose of this article is to explore how self-help groups work and how they serve poor women in rural areas of Kalna Block I (Progoti Sangha and Sandhan Sangha), Purba Bardhaman District, West Bengal. It is intended to provide a study of how such groups act as a support or financial model for women in this particular district, as well as a comparative study of two sanghas to determine which has worked best in women empowerment. We used the Welch Two Sample t-test to compare the financial transactions of two sanghas. In the instance of a financial transaction, it is expected that the number of SHG will be unequal (unequal variances) in both sangha, and the mean value of that transaction will differ, indicating that the null hypothesis is false and the alternative hypothesis is true. Thus, Welch Two Sample t-test (modification of Student's t-test) is used in this study. This comparative analysis reveals that Progoti Sangha outperforms Sandhan Sangha in terms of women empowerment and financial development.

Index Terms— SHG, NGOs, Sangha, Society, women empowerment, Economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment is a process of empowering women in a single sentence. However, empowerment can be described in many ways, when thinking about empowerment for women, empowerment means acknowledging and allowing women outside the decision-making process into it^[1,2]. The ability to make decisions is not a commodity to be exchanged; nor can it be implemented. The independent or decision-making power of women must be acquired and, once acquired, it must be maintained and preserved^[3]. The realization of the rural women's independent or decision-making power gave birth to self-help groups in rural areas. The self-help groups developed as a collaborative project in rural areas to make women self-reliant, self-awareness, and promote social empowerment, building capacity, and public visibility and engagement.

Self-help groups serve as mediators to motivate the rural women and helps them in different aspects. It is an informal voluntary association of people who have formed themselves to achieve collective or independent goals and are consistent in terms of their social background, heritage, caste and traditional occupations^[4]. This paper investigates whether the current self-help groups, Kalan block I (Progoti Sangha and Sandhan Sangha) in Purba Bardhaman District, West Bengal, serve as women's empowerment or financial model. This area (Progoti Sangha and Sandhan Sangha) was chosen for study following a random investigation into six villages and understanding the women's concept of self-help group.

The study focuses on self-help groups in rural areas as a financial model or empowerment model focusing on women's self-confidence, family support, access to resources, control of resources and assets, mobility, role in decision-making and changes in the role of women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since no such protocol has been previously demarcated, scholars have defined self-help groups as follows in a number of different ways. SHG was described by Facilitators for Change Ethiopia (2003) as a group of like-minded poor women in a community with common goals of working together for their economic, social and community growth. In India, SHGs are a widely accepted poverty reduction development strategy, as they are perceived as a powerful vehicle for promoting micro-credit and micro-financing especially for women^[5].

In India, the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) launched the SHG model as a central strategy for empowering women. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) continued this strategy with the government's commitment to encourage SHGs to act as agents of social change, women's development and empowerment (Planning Commission, 2002). It is the developing world's largest and fastest growing micro-finance programmer^[6, 7]. SHGs can be seen as the 'Empowerment Model' of growth that incorporates all. SHGs have emerged as an alternative credit source to the poor over the last year^[8, 9, 10, 11]. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) society considers the SHG to be an essentially financial model that facilitates a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families who have not been reached by the banking system^[12, 13].

SHGs have been instrumental in empowering poor women in rural areas by enabling them to work together in the collective agency. Although different views exist, many researchers, including Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), claimed that this movement helped empower women. According to their views, SHGs are successful in reducing poverty, raising awareness and ensuring environmental protection, which eventually results in the nation's sustainable growth. SHGs are reportedly emerging as the predominant model for eradicating poverty, empowering women and development^[14, 15].

Self Help Group – Bank Linkage Programme (SHG-BLP) supports financial transactions between formal and informal banking systems (SHGs). This system allows banks to will their trades, as well as to make small loans offer risk costs. The SHG-BLP model has emerged as a cost-effective method for providing financial services to the unreached and under-voiced poor households. Based on the findings of several research studies and an action research project carried out by NABARD. In 1992-93, what began as a pilot to connect about 500 poor SHG with formal financing institutions has now become, in terms of customer base and outreach, the world's largest microfinance system^[16, 17].

The self-help group (SHG), usually comprised of about 10-15 local women, is a village-based financial intermediary. Members make modest monthly savings contributions over a couple of months, before the community has ample resources to start loans. Funds can be loaned back for the purposes of the members or other people in the village^[18].

A Self-Help Group (SHG) may be a registered or not registered group of micro entrepreneurs with a homogenous social and economic background. It may be voluntary to come together to save on a regular basis small sums of money. The community leaders use mutual experience and peer pressure to ensure correct credit end-use and timely repayment. This program removes the need for collateral and is deeply connected with the lending of solidarity that microfinance institutions commonly use.

The flat interest rates are used in most loan calculations to make bookkeeping simple enough to be dealt with by the Members. In general, self-help groups are established by non-profit organizations (NGOs) which usually have broad anti-poverty agendas. These groups are viewed as instruments for a range of goals, among which women are empowered, poor people's leadership skills developed, school enrolment increased, nutrition improved and birth control. The intermediation of finance is usually seen rather than as a primary objective as a point of entry for these other goals.

According to existing literature, the concept of creating SHGs and linking them to banks would increase incomes and expand financial markets by mainly providing credit to small businessmen and thus reducing poverty amongst other services^[19]. This also results in empowerment of women, as mainly women

are customers in microfinance programmes^[20, 21]. The microfinance program for linking SHGs to banks plays a critical role in poverty reduction and empowering women socially, politically and economically, India, whose population lives in rural areas at around 70% and the majority are poor. Because the SHG concept is over 25 years old, a series of studies have studied microfinance effects.

In several areas, SHGs have played a role in empowering women of the grass root. There was positive progress from various regions with regard to all group members becoming educated, village differences are being mitigated, children's health and education improved, village roads are kept clear and all group members can be exposed to transactions of banks, etc. In many other ways, it helped to replace money lenders, to change crop patterns, to improve organic pesticides and fertilizer use, to build seed banks and to improve the awareness of nutrition, health and hygiene. It encouraged people to participate in regular savings and internal lending, assisted them in setting up micro-enterprises and managing lending systems, used public loans, carried out savings accounts and public funds and kept financial records. It encouraged people to participate in regular savings and internal lending, assisted them in setting up micro-enterprises and managing lending systems, used public loans, carried out savings accounts and public funds and kept financial records. Furthermore, SHGs have been involved in rainwater recovery systems, in the creation, use and restoration of rainwater reclamations, and in politics. SHGs are environmentally conscious. Women also gained professional knowledge and basic management and community building values. Such organizations also create networks to assist women in various regions to unite for a common cause. It depends on social awareness and the acceptance of such efforts that the program is effective^[22].

Rural loan organizations such as RRBs, micromedicine institutions, NABARD, etc. are a mechanism to ensure that million rural Indians who lack the livelihood can live on a sustainable basis. Those organizations play a significant role in providing rural India with credit facilities. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) establishes and controls policies and procedures to enabling most people in need to access rural credit facilities. Despite a number of efforts by different organisations, several challenges

will prevail in future years to increase the rural credit facility^[23].

In terms of self-confidence, there was also a significant increase in the moral strength of SHG members, as demonstrated in their decision-making and communication skills. Sustainability of SHGs has been well founded in terms of increased asset value and savings rate, enhanced access to institutional loans, higher loan repayment rates, reduction of informal sources and impressive social empowerment. Studies have found the savings and lending facilities to be the most common facility. Savings provide common benefits for employment, lodging, weddings and celebrations, and unique savings. Loans provide both small and big loans at a cheaper rate than any offered in the market. Scholars conclude that prosperity can be measured by three criteria, such as economic, social and political, and enhanced well-being. They also found out that the micro-finance system does not describe the powerful type of empowerment for women but instead is a weak form of empowerment for women^[24, 25]. Scholars note that the resultant economic development of SHGs is far from the financial intermediation of SHGs. In addition, SHGs are established as financial intermediaries enabling a supplementary credit distribution system for poor families that the banking sector hasn't met. Hence the concept of economic empowerment is very distinct from the dimension of SHG's financial model^[26].

The SHG is regarded by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development as essentially a financial model which facilitates a supplementary credit distribution mechanism for poor families not reached by the banking system^[27, 28]. Self-help groups have two sides to the study. In the one side, they feel socially and morally free as they allow a constant saving and the leaders remain by the individual in the moment of conflicts. At the other side, people believe their income is trapped in a single system, so no real profits are derived from it^[29, 30].

METHODOLOGY AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY

The study takes place at Progoti Sangha and Sandhan Sangha in Kalna Block I of the Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, India. Kalna (community development block) is an administrative division in the

Kalna subdivision of Purba Bardhaman district in the Indian state of West Bengal. Kalna is an old town in the Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, India. Kalna is 72.3 km from its District Main City Purba Bardhaman main and 48 km from its State Main City, Kolkata.

In this area, the self-help groups fell in line with Dr Muhammad Yunus's idea of micro-credit and microfinance. A potential cure to poverty seems to have been discovered in developed nations, recognized as microcredit. The Microfinance Movement has come a long way since Yunus first received loans for the needy people in Bangladesh. Muhammad Yunus believed "People aren't poor because they're stupid or lazy." According to Dr Yunus people are poor because they have no financial structures to help them. He also found that the poverty is a structural problem, not a personal problem^[31, 32].

There are two forms of self-help groups in the area, one made up of cooperative banks and the other of the Panchayat Comprehensive Area Development Corporation system. In 1998, the first self-help community was established in Kalna Block-I. The cooperative banks began and controlled it but struggled to survive for a long period of time. NGOs in the community find a fresh group in 2001 receiving assistance from the cooperative bank.

In 2002 a self-help project was established in the same community by the extensive area development corporation. Both programmes West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation and cooperative banks have helped in emergence of a number of self-help groups. In total, n=405 self-help groups were chosen deliberately, keeping in mind the group's daily operation, ongoing transaction with banks, and the full members' availability. The limitations encountered by the researcher were the unavailability of members, the violent disposition of women to the delivery information regarding their wellbeing and the transactions not well reported by the bank or the area development government authorities. Eleven were sponsored by the cooperative bank, and five were supported by the panchayat program (CADC). This article provides a case study of women in those categories.

The main reason for selecting this district was the coming money transaction survey, which categorically indicates that more than fifty percent of SHGs had zero money transactions or very less amount of money

transactions. As a methodology for this particular study, the researcher was an observer participant and carried out all the investigations by interacting with the women and participating in the activities. A preliminary survey of their family members, income, education, social status, and livelihood procedures was done during the primary stage. Later, case studies were taken through an interaction of one-to-one. In order to obtain a financial transaction report, an interaction is conducted with the respective government authority in the Block Development Office, which is specifically assigned to deal with these SHGs in this specific area. A descriptive design for the study has been adopted in this survey. It was important for the study groups to capture the socioeconomic characteristics such as demographic data, economic status, social benefits and entrepreneurship. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Details on the numbers of self-help groups in the respective development blocks and the financial transaction report was given by the Block Office. Although getting proper transaction reports in detail is not easy because some transparency may be lacking due to some unknown reason. In this article, we are going to try to uncover the explanation.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Background of the Village

Purba Bardhaman district is very large in size and is divided into 23 blocks, each of which contains a number of villages and small towns. Our focus block is Kalna-I (Progoti Sangha and Sandhan Sangha), which consists of 98 villages and three small towns, including Dhatrigram Census Town, Uttar Goara Census Town and Piarinagar Census Town, with a total population of 2,06,945(2010-2011). Women from both Hindu and Muslim backgrounds are being studied. They're all married, and some are widows. They are either members of a joint family, in which the male members work for a living, or members of a nuclear family, in which they work alongside their peers. The types of work done range from being contract or seasonal workers to assisting banks with e-banking or non-e-banking services. The family's male members are the primary breadwinners, working as labourers or running their own small businesses like shop etc. The level of education varies; most have only completed primary school, but some have earned

bachelor's degrees. Self-help groups have aided some of the poor women in learning to sign and encouraging family education. Some Muslim women have taught the Arabic language to their children for religious and spiritual reasons. Muslim mothers effectively incorporate the same values in their children. The village has a mix of Pakka (brick) and Kacca (mud) houses and offers a variety of services.

Formation of Groups

Commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks cooperative banks through NGO's and the West Bengal CADC (Comprehensive Area Development Corporation) through Panchayat, which acts as a multi-agency rural credit delivery structure with a vast network in the village, are the two major sources of assistance in the emergence and formation of Self-Help Groups. SHGs are linked to banks by NGOs for the purpose of opening savings accounts and obtaining credit. Banks lend to these groups after evaluating their creditworthiness based on factors such as group discipline, regularity of meetings, savings, fund rotation, bookkeeping, group record keeping, loan repayment, and so on. The bank assists group members who are involved in activities such as running a retail store, cattle rearing, jori work, tailoring work, candle making, artificial jewellery making, and so on. The West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation, or CADC, is a statutory autonomous body established in 1974 with the goal of achieving all-round rural economic development through an integrated approach to diverse activities such as irrigation, agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, literary, preventive health, women and child development, rural industries, and farmer development. Because it was a novel concept that had never been tried before, many practical issues arose during the early stages of implementation. As a result, the original model had to be revised and modified on a regular basis. The formation of self-help groups in this village was primarily for the purpose of financially empowering women.

Functions of the Group

The architecture of self-help groups follows a democratic pattern, with one member serving as a 'animator' and two members serving as representatives. The animator is chosen for a two-year contract. The maximum number of members in a

group is 20. Every month, the members of the group hold a meeting in various topics. They talk about group savings, group fund rotation, bank loans, loan repayment, and social and community action programs. On the seventh month, all of the self-help groups under investigation meet and pay the required amount. The bank transaction is handled by the secretary of the group or the representative. The poorest women would gather in such a group in the event of an emergency, disaster, social reasons, economic support, or social interaction. It's either a registered or unregistered organization.

Self Help Groups Regulated by Cooperative Banks

Due to the size of the Kalna-I block and the large number of self-help groups, providing financial support for a single funding agency is extremely difficult. Nearly fifty percent self help groups are funded by Cooperative Banks. The groups, according to the women, are a mix of APL (Above Poverty Level) and BPL (Below Poverty Level) groups. Women from APL (Above Poverty Level) families want to join BPL (Below Poverty Level) families because the facilities are better. According to the women of the village, there were many groups in the village, but they all disbanded due to a lack of interest among the members. One of the self-help groups under investigation has been around for over ten years. These women started the group by paying fifty rupees every month and later took out a two-lakh loan from the bank. At the moment, there are ninety-six women in the groups who are withdrawing and depositing money in the bank. This group meets once a month, usually on the seventh of the month. The funds are primarily used for agriculture, animal husbandry, and colour fishing. The block development office also assists the groups by providing them with a low-interest loan. The bank has also given it a subsidiary. New accounts are created on a regular basis. If one of the women decides to leave the group, she will receive a refund of the money she has invested. After 2001, the names of self-help groups, their founding year, members, monthly fee, loan amount, and loan usage are listed below. Women in the village began forming groups shortly after 2001 and again in 2006, indicating that they felt the need for such groups. Women believe that these groups not only give them a sense of belonging, but also install a sense of self-confidence in them, transforming them from housewives who are unaware

of the outside world to empowered women. It also promotes literacy because most women who could not sign before the formation of such groups are now able to do so. SHG formation promotes capacity development, skill development, and resource and asset management. It enables women to work and learn skills provided by institutions in order to advance socially and economically. It's worth noting that one of the female employees is in charge of the bank's e-banking system, which she effectively manages. When compared to those who have not joined the groups, women have superior decision-making abilities.

Self Help Groups Regulated by West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Corporation

The women were discovered to be members of self-help groups that have existed since 2002. Almost half of all SHGs are still in this category. These groups have ten to twenty members. They have made monthly deposits of fifty rupees. The president and secretary each go to the bank to withdraw or deposit money. Every month, the members of the group gather to make their monthly payment. Women, in turn, go to the bank and deposit the money. Every group is well-coordinated and managed. The present groups are incredibly cohesive and cooperative. As a result of depositing and withdrawing money from the bank, many women have learned to sign their names. Money is borrowed from the bank for business purposes, animal husbandry and poultry framing, vermin composting, and sewing.

These groups receive training on a regular basis. Wool sewing, beauty courses, vermi-compost fabrics, and embroidery are among them. They also assist the village of Aganwari by preparing midday meals for the children. Some of the women enrolled in the NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) project. One group believes that the block office benefits them and that cattle-rearing training was provided. They were unable to manage sheep by the time they were given them to rear. They notified the office, but no precautions were taken.

Because the majority of the women in the groups are uneducated, monetary transactions are difficult for them. In the village, there is a distinction between APL (Above Poverty Level) and BPL (Below Poverty Level) groups, with the latter receiving preferential treatment. Family members, particularly males, assist these women in obtaining these benefits. They also

borrow money from the block office for a variety of purposes, including farming, animal husbandry, and machine purchases. They've registered their organization as a block office. Because more than half of the members work, this is possible. They supplement the income of the family's male members. It's a group that works well together. The main issue with all of these organizations is that women are unaware of their importance or the opportunity to earn 2% interest from the bank. Women demand that the money be returned right away. The formation of self-help groups necessitates inter-household conflict. The women believe that the bank employees mistreat them because of their illiteracy. If the form contains even the tiniest error, it will be rejected. It is illegal for a woman to have two accounts. The existence of such groups, according to the women in this group, serves as a catalyst for empowerment. This allows them to communicate with the outside world, which was previously impossible. In the rural setting, the formation of self-help groups serves as an empowerment and financial model. Despite the numerous challenges, women believe that self-help groups enable not only economic but also social advancement for women.

The ground reality of all SHGs is visible as daylight after investigating the real data collected from the block development office. Collecting all of this information regarding SHGs from any organization is extremely difficult. Though the organization's main authority promises to provide any information regarding the SHGs, the record keepers are notoriously uncooperative. There are other sources, such as funding agencies, gathering information from them is a different level of difficulty. The few SHGs leaders who are cooperative, but their record keeping system is not systematic. Another set of information is collected by question answering the member of the SHGs.

The supplementary tables for n=405 SHGs in two Sanghas include all quarterly monetary transaction details, cumulative savings, loan details, and so on.

Table 1 shows the quarterly transaction details summery. There are total n=4229 active members in two Sanghas. The total amount of savings money in the reporting quarter of those two sangha are Rs. 678360 rupees [$678360 > \alpha * (50 * \beta)$ where α

represent the number of member and β represents the number of months] which reveals that each member provided 50 rupees in each month and few provided more than 50 rupees. This reveals that all the group members are very regular in their savings money.

The Cumulative savings is a savings plan that allows you to make multiple deposits into your account over a set period of time. Instead of a monthly payment of Rs. 50, members of the SHGs deposited multiple amounts of money over time. In some cases, the SHG is involved in a small business that increases their cumulative savings.

Individually or as a group, group members can obtain loans from any corporation or bank, such as (Cooperative Banks), for a variety of purposes, such as small business or personal needs. The group leader is

generally solely responsible for obtaining loans and repaying them. The total amount of loan taken by the two sanghas in this studied quarter of the year is 2859700 rupees.

The group member is very regular in the group, but the financial condition of the members is not good enough to empower those members, as evidenced by the quarterly transaction report and the oral conversation report. Though it is not possible to have an oral conversation with every member of two sanghas, we chose more than 200 women at random from various SHGs. According to the report, more than 95 percent of the members' financial situation remained unchanged after joining the group. Now we'll look into the member's financial situation by digging through the financial transaction reports.

Sl No.	Name of the Sangha	Number of SHGs	Total no of Members	Total Amount of savings in reporting quarter	Cumulative savings till Date	Total Loan
1	Progoti Sangha	153	1689	273210	4832509	1769900
2	Sandhan Sangha	252	2540	405150	8027883	1089800

Table 1: Transaction details summary of the two Sanghas.

To get a clear picture of the financial situation, we randomly divided the loan amount and cumulative savings into a few classes. Figure 1's x axis depicts various classes of cumulative savings, such as where each SHG saved 0 to 5000 Rs, 5000 to 20000 Rs, 20000 to 50000 Rs, 50000 to 1L, and 1L to 3L Rs. The number of SHGs is indicated on the y axis. Figure 1 shows that the majority of SHGs are able to save money in the 5k to 20k Rs range and the 20k to 50k Rs range. There are a few groups that are capable of making cumulative savings ranging from 50k to 1L Rs and from 1L to 3L Rs. There are a few SHGs that have very little cumulative savings as of now. The cumulative savings are very low, which can be explained in two ways: first, the group is very new, and second, the group is not very active in doing different

group work that generates money. Other SHGs that have been able to increase their cumulative savings money have either started their group science for a long time or the group is active in doing different projects that make money.

The Fig 1 shows only 5% SHGs have the cumulative savings money less than 5000 Rs. There are 37% of SHGs with cumulative savings of more than 5000 rupees but less than 20000 rupees, and 41% of SHGs with cumulative savings of more than 20000 rupees but less than 50000 rupees. There are 15% of SHGs with cumulative savings more than 50k Rs but less than 1L Rs. Surprisingly, we discovered that 2% of SHGs have cumulative savings of more than 1L but less than 3L.

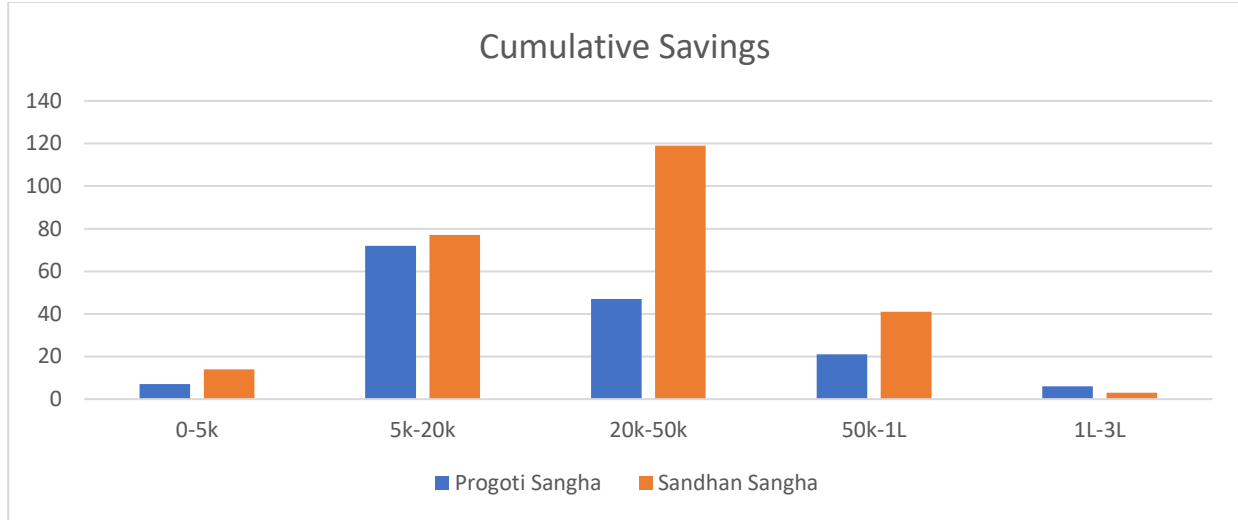


Figure 1: It depicts the total amount of cumulative savings of all SHGs in a categorical manner up until today, with the X axis indicating the five different clauses of cumulative savings money. The cumulative savings are randomly divided into five different categories (such as 0-5k, 5k-20k etc.), with the Y axis indicating the number of SHGs. Both colours represent the two different Sanghas on which the research is being conducted.

The term "financial development" refers to advancements in the production of information about potential investments and the allocation of capital, which is directly related to taking out loans for productive work or development and repaying them over time. The financial development of a SHG can be clearly visualized by looking at the amount of money borrowed for various development purposes and the amount of money returned over time. The total loan transaction scenario is depicted in **Figure 2**. As with the cumulative savings money analysis, we have randomly classified the loan amount into different classes such as 0k, 1k to 5000 Rs, 5k to 20k Rs, 20k to

50k Rs, 50k to 1L Rs, and 1L to 3L Rs. The x axis represents the classified amount of the loan taken by each SHG. The number of SHG is indicated on the y axis.

This plot shows that nearly 48 percent of total SHGs in both sanghas do not seek loans from any organizations. There are 24% of SHGs that have only taken loans of less than 5000 Rs. Only 25% of SHGs took loans of less than 20000 Rs, while the remaining 3% took loans of very large amounts. The loan amount indicates that the women were unable to use the loan money and thus were unable to make any financial progress.

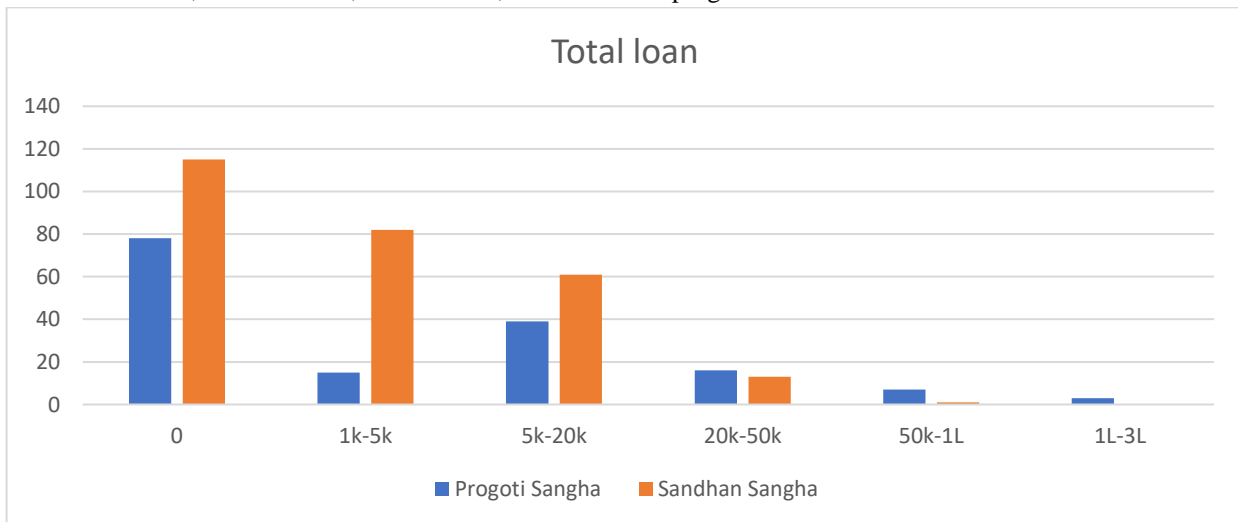


Figure 2: In a quarter of a year, it shows the total amount of loans taken by all SHGs with the X axis indicating five different categories. The total loan amount is randomly divided into five different categories (such as 0k, 1k-5k, 5k-

20k, and so on), with the Y axis indicating the number of SHGs. Both colours represent the two different Sanghas on which the research is being conducted.

The two sanghas' monetary transaction data sets reveal a wealth of information about SHGs, allowing us to better understand the present situation of poor women who belong to a self-help group. A box plot is a graph that depicts how the values in the data are distributed. The cumulative savings amount of SHGs is presented in this box plot in a distributed manner. Each dot represents a self-help group. In this comparative study, we used the Welch Two Sample t-test to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between two Sanghas.

Figure 3 compares the total amount of cumulative savings collected by the two sanghas from the beginning to this point. There is a discrepancy in the number of SHGs in each sangha, with Progodi Sangha having n = 153 SHGs and Sandhan Sangha having n = 252 SHGs. Figure 3A shows a comparison between two sangha where the cumulative savings ranged between 1000 Rs to 5000 Rs. The t-value (t = -2.1268) in this range of cumulative savings shows that Sandhan Sangha has a substantial quantity of money, but the difference between groups is not significant because the p-value is bigger than 0.05. Figure 3B shows a comparison between two sangha where the

cumulative savings ranged between 5000 Rs to 20000 Rs. The t-value (t = 0.88406) in this range of cumulative savings shows that Progodi Sangha has a substantial quantity of money, but the difference between groups is not significant because the p-value is bigger than 0.05. The t-value (t = -0.69152) in Figure 3C, which shows the cumulative savings ranging from 20000 Rs to 50000 Rs, demonstrates that Sandhan Sangha has a large amount of money, but the difference between groups is not significant because the p-value is more than 0.05. The t-value (t = 2.0342) in Figure 3D, which shows the cumulative savings range from 50000 Rs to 100000 Rs, reveals that Progodi Sangha has a substantial amount of money and that the difference between groups is significant. The t-value (t = -0.21172) in Figure 3E, which shows the cumulative savings range from 100000 Rs to 300000 Rs, reveals that Sandhan Sangha has larger amount of money but the difference is not statistically significant. Though there is a difference in collecting the cumulative savings in each comparison between two sanghas, there is a considerable difference in Figure 3D, where the Progodi Sangha performs very well in money saving.

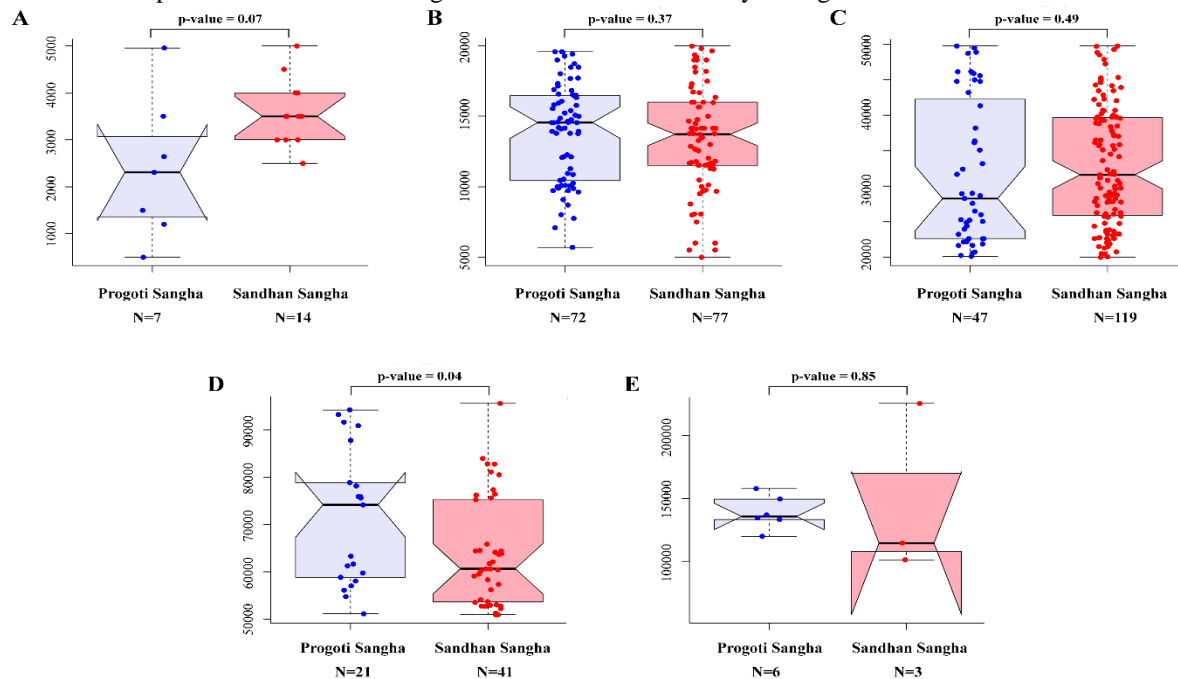


Figure 3: The Box scatter plots represent a comparative study based on the cumulative savings of Progodi Sangha and Sandhan Sangha. The x axis represents the both sangha and the y axis represents the amount of cumulative savings. Each dot (N) represents a SHG in this diagram.

In Figure 4, we compared the total amount of loan borrowed by each sangha in a quarter of a year. Figure 4A depicts a comparison of two sanghas where the total amount borrowed ranged from 1000 Rs to 5000 Rs in a quarter of a year. The t-value ($t = 1.1447$) in this range of borrowed amount indicates that Progoti Sangha has a sizable loan, but the difference between groups is not significant. Figure 4B depicts a comparison of two sanghas where the total amount borrowed ranged from 5000 Rs to 20000 Rs in a quarter of a year. The t-value ($t = 2.5766$) in this range of borrowed amount suggests that Progoti Sangha has

a substantial loan, with a significant difference between groups. Figure 4C compares two sanghas where the total amount borrowed ranged from 20,000 Rs to 50,000 Rs in a quarter of a year. The t-value ($t = -0.98874$) in this loaned range indicates that the Sandhan Sangha has a substantial amount of loans, but there is no significant difference between the groups. The remaining two comparisons, where the total amount of loans varied between 50000 Rs and 100000 Rs and 100000 Rs to 300000 Rs, no SHG in Sandhan Sangha took loans to make a comparison.

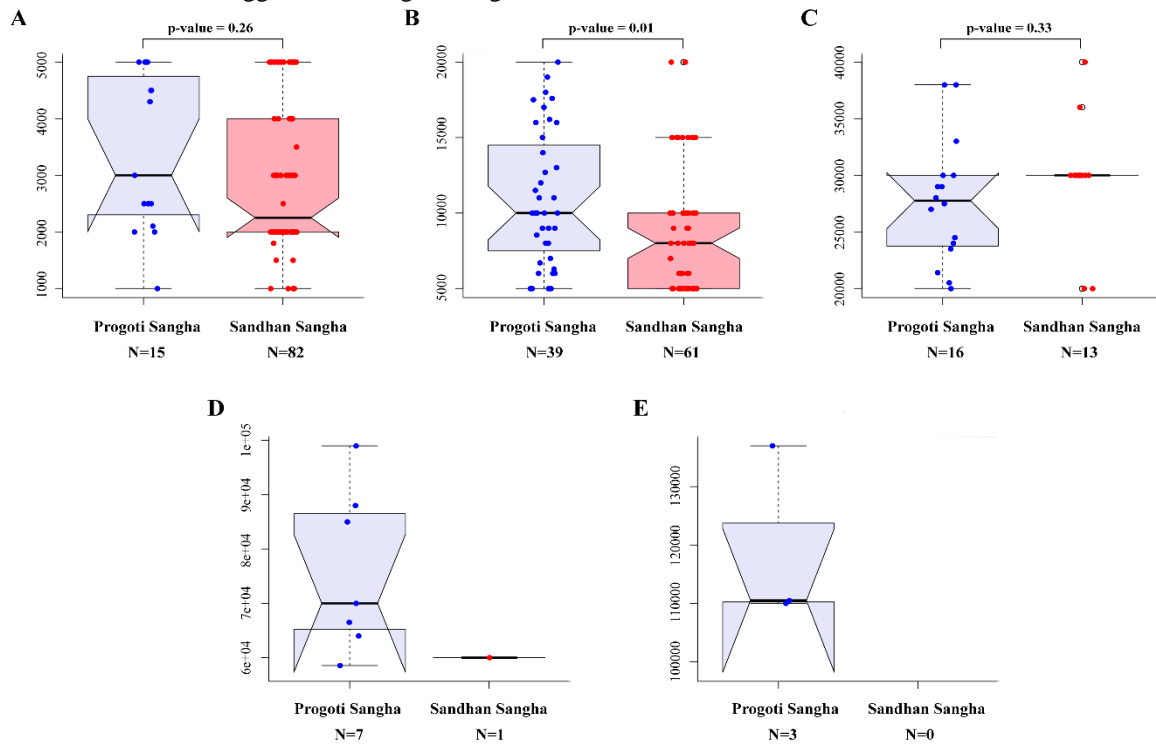


Figure 4: The Box scatter plots represent a comparative study based on the total amount of loan of Progoti Sangha and Sandhan Sangha. The x axis represents the both sangha and the y axis represents the total amount of loans. Each dot (N) represents a SHG in this diagram.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It was expected that SHGs, will be emerged as a key tool for empowering women, relieving poverty, and providing disadvantaged people with an alternative finance source. In this research work we have studied n=405 SHGs in two Sanghas, however the ground reality differed from what was expected. The two types of observation methods, first oral chat with the poor women in the SHG and the second analysis of their monetary transaction data, reveal the genuine

facts about the poor women's current situation. The quarterly savings money document demonstrates their consistency in the SHG, and the attendance sheet demonstrates that they are present at all meetings and training sessions. Despite having a lot of time on their hands to grow themselves and monetary help from different organization, those poor women are unable to develop themselves. According to the monetary transaction table, there are 2 to 3 percent of SHGs that are performing well, but the bulk of SHGs (98 to 97 percent) are still in the same state in which they began.

We have identified a number of the causes that are to blame for the current plight of those poor women in SHGs.

- 1) Training program and corruption: The data and oral conversations with the women in this area show that they only attend the training program reluctantly, but there is some kind of element at play to raise the number of attendees (n = 4229). The greater the number of participants in a training program, the greater the demand for training funds from the organization or the government. Unless those who generate the force gain in some way, this is obviously true.
- 2) Lack of motivation: It has also been found that those women lack motivation to better themselves. Each self-help group lacked the necessary spark to keep them motivated.
- 3) Illiteracy: Illiteracy is another key factor that creates roadblocks on the path of self-development for disadvantaged women.
- 4) Lack of proper Goals: The majority of the poor women simply used the money they borrowed through SGH for their basic household needs. Very few women used this money to start their own small businesses.
- 5) Lack of Bonding: There is no such profound sense of cohesiveness or ties amongst the members of the group.

There are lots more such things. To develop Self-help groups by assisting underprivileged women in increasing their skills, knowledge, and capacities in order to empower themselves, a comprehensive Human Resource Development framework is required. Though there are other issues that must be addressed in order to empower poor women. We compared the cumulative savings amounts between sanghas, as well as the loan amounts between two sanghas. The large quantity of cumulative savings suggests that the self-help group did some extra labour, such as starting a small business, which enhanced their savings. According to the analysis, there is no difference in cumulative savings between the two sanghas. However, based on our findings, Progoti Sangha borrowed significantly more money than Sandhan Sangha. Small loans are initially made available to members from the common fund to cover their productive and emergency credit needs. If the sum is large, it may be necessary to borrow from a bank, indicating that the self-help group, either collectively

or individually, is attempting to accomplish some significant productive activity. Based on the analysis of cumulative savings and loan amount, we can infer that Progoti Sangha has outperformed Sandhan Sangha in terms of empowering underprivileged women.

REFERENCE

- [1] Kabeer, Naila. "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal 1." *Gender & Development* 13.1 (2005): 13-24.
- [2] Mosedale, Sarah (2005-03-01). "Assessing women's empowerment: towards a conceptual framework". *Journal of International Development*. 17 (2): 243-257. doi:10.1002/jid.1212. ISSN 1099-1328.
- [3] Pillai, Jaya Kothai. *Women and empowerment*. Gyan Publishing House, 1995.
- [4] Suguna, B. (2011). *Empowerment of Rural women through Self Help groups*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- [5] Chant, Sylvia, and Carolyn Pedwell. "Women, gender and the informal economy: An assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward." (2008).
- [6] Seibel, Hans Dieter, and Shyam Khadka. "SHG Banking: a financial technology for very poor microentrepreneurs." *Savings and Development* (2002): 133-150.
- [7] Swain, Ranjula Bali, and Maria Floro. *Effect of microfinance on vulnerability, poverty and risk in low-income households*. Department of Economics, Uppsala University, 2007.
- [8] Kumar, Anant. "Self-help Groups, Women's Health and Empowerment: Global Thinking and Contextual Issues." *Women's Health and Empowerment: Global Thinking and Contextual Issues* (January 21, 2009). *Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management Studies* 4, no. 3 (2006): 2061-2079.
- [9] DIVYA, B. "A STUDY ON INCOME GENERATION POTENTIAL AND PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN SELF-HELP GROUPS IN TV MALAI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU."
- [10] Singh, Shweta, Guido Ruivenkamp, and Joost Jongerden. "A state of the art of Self help groups

- in India." *Journal of Human Ecology* 36, no. 2 (2011): 91-102.
- [11] Nabavi, S. Abdol Hossein. "Poverty and micro enterprise development." *European Journal of Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2009): 120-128.
- [12] Tankha, Ajay. "Self-help groups as financial intermediaries in India: Cost of promotion, sustainability and impact." *Países Bajos: Interchurch Organization for Development Co-operation and Memisa-Mensen in Nood-Vastenaktie (Cordaid)* (2002).
- [13] Sinha, Sanjay, and Meenal Patole. "Microfinance and the poverty of financial services: A Perspective from Indian experience." *South Asia Economic Journal* 4, no. 2 (2003): 301-318.
- [14] Jakimow, Tanya, and Patrick Kilby. "Empowering women: A critique of the blueprint for self-help groups in India." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 375-400.
- [15] Panda, R. "Micro Initiatives, Macro Solutions: Potential of Women's Self Help Groups and their Federations in Advocating and Advancing Their Own Rights, A Case study from Orissa in India', Dhanupali." *Global Network for Women's Advocacy and Civil Society*, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/par07/par07.pdf> access 30, no. 7 (2005).
- [16] Sharma, Namita, and Prakash Ch Deogharia. "SHGs and bank linkage in Jharkhand." *Jharkhand Journal of Social Development*, 2 (1) (2009): 63-79.
- [17] Kullu, Nilima Rose. "MICRO CREDIT AND SELF HELP GROUPS: A STUDY OF RANCHI DISTRICT OF JHARKHAND."
- [18] Sreeramulu, G. *Empowerment of Women through Self Help Groups*. Gyan Books, 2006.
- [19] Sharma, Namita, and Prakash Ch Deogharia. "SHGs and bank linkage in Jharkhand." *Jharkhand Journal of Social Development*, 2 (1) (2009): 63-79.
- [20] Aruna, M., and Ms Rema Jyothirmayi. "The role of microfinance in women empowerment: A study on the SHG bank linkage program in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)." *Indian Journal of Commerce & Management Studies* ISSN 2229 (2011): 5674.
- [21] Arora, Manpreet, and Swati Singh. "Impact Assessment of Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme on Women Empowerment in the State of Himachal Pradesh, India." (2018).
- [22] Bhattacharjee, Sharmistha. "Self Help Groups an Empowerment and Financial Model for Women in Nadia District, West Bengal." *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 24, no. 1 (2016).
- [23] Akoijam, Sunildro LS. "Rural credit: a source of sustainable livelihood of rural India." *International journal of social economics* (2013).
- [24] Basu, Priya, and Pradeep Srivastava. "Exploring possibilities: microfinance and rural credit access for the poor in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2005): 1747-1756.
- [25] Basu, Jyotish Prakash. "Microfinance and Women Empowerment An Empirical Study with special reference to West Bengal." Mumbai, India: Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (2006).
- [26] Das, Sanjay Kanti, and Amalesh Bhowal. "Self Help Groups-An Empowerment Model or Financial Model: Perceptions of Stakeholders." *European Journal Of Business And Management* 5, no. 29 (2013): 170-190.
- [27] Puhazhendi, V., and K. J. S. Satyassi. "Microcredit for rural people: An impact study." Mumbai: NABARD (2000).
- [28] Bansal, Hema. "SGH-bank linkage program in India: An overview." *Journal of Microfinance/ESR Review* 5, no. 1 (2003): 3.
- [29] Pathak, Prachi. "Women Empowerment and Self Help Groups in India." *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* 8, no. 5 (2018): 15-20.
- [30] Bhattacharjee, S. "Self Help Groups: A Step towards Encouraging Entrepreneurship among Women in Bengal." *International Journal of Retailing and Marketing (A Bi-Annual refereed Journal of Radiant Institute of Management and Technology)* (2010): 38-42.
- [31] Bateman, Milford. "The rise and fall of Muhammad Yunus and the microcredit model." (2014).
- [32] Sengupta, Rajdeep, and Craig P. Aubuchon. "The microfinance revolution: An overview." *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review* 90, no. January/February 2008 (2008).