CHAPTER-II

STATUS OF SELF-HELP GROUPS AND REVIEW

Section-1: Profile of India with special reference to Self Help Groups.

Section-2: Profile of Andhra Pradesh with special reference to Self Help Groups

Section-3: Review of Literature
In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to present a brief introduction to the research problem and method of present study. In this chapter an attempt is made to present a brief history of micro credit, the status of Self-Help Groups in India as well as in Andhra Pradesh state. Further this chapter also presents the review of literature for the present study.

Accordingly, this chapter has been divided into three sections. Section-I deals with the status of SHGs in India, with brief introduction to micro credit. Section-II deals with the profile of Andhra Pradesh with special reference to SHGs while Section-III presents the review of literature for the present study.

**SECTION-I**

**Profile of India with special reference to Self Help Groups**

In India, the origin of rural credit system dates back to pre-independence days when a wide network of cooperative societies were set up throughout the country to provide credit to the rural poor particularly, for the agricultural purposes. However, they were not effective in serving the credit needs of these poor agriculturalists due to various reasons, such as inefficient management, too much political interference, rigid rules and regulations, indifferent attitudes of the rich farmers, landlords and intrusiveness of the bureaucracy and so on. Because of the failure of the cooperative structure, the dependence of the farmers on the private money-lenders could not be reduced (Vani Mohan, 2004).
However, it needs to be pointed out that the earlier form of SHGs in India was the cooperative structure which aimed at meeting the credit needs of the poor farmers by promoting small savings and mutual Self-Help concept. In course of time the cooperative system became highly defective due to politicization and bureaucratization. They were dominated by the vested interests and completely neglected the interests of the poor farmers, particularly those belonging to the weaker sections. As a result, the cooperative spirit and Self-Help nature of these institutions were lost and the overdue position has become alarming. The failure and weaknesses of the cooperative system led to the launching of commercial banking in the rural areas of the country. Afterwards, several schemes were undertaken by the Government during various Plan periods under different strategies like the Community Development Programme (CDP), Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) etc., to provide credit to the poorer sections in the rural areas. However, all these strategies could not serve the credit needs of the poor effectively (Karmakar, 1999).

In the case of poor rural women the position was still more dismal. It is not surprising for a long time that there were no schemes at all to provide credit to these women in the country. In the words of Karmakar, the rural women, particularly, those belonging to the weaker sections had only limited access to resources to make them financially independent. They were not in a
position even to meet their barest minimum consumption needs on their own. They were completely deprived of access to the institutional credit. In this situation they were forced to depend upon the moneylenders for production as well as consumption needs (Karmakar, 1999).

This alarming situation entrapped them into a vicious circle of perpetual poverty and indebtedness. It is observed by the Report on the Human Development in South Asia (2000) that unequal opportunities for women are manifested in their limited access to credit. In South Asia numerous initiatives have been introduced to provide credit to women, but most of them are not successful. The overall experience in this field is not good. There is still a large unmet need for micro credit for women in this region. This report cited several reasons for this situation. The financial institutions like the banks have failed to take into account the special needs of poor rural women who are the group in need of several services. Many banks apply the same rules to these women as are applied to rich borrowers (Human Development Center, 2000).

In 1980s, the issue of provision of credit to the poor women was addressed to in several countries across the world. The UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) focused attention on increasing women's ability to earn income which is necessary for the elimination of household poverty and promotion of gender equality. This focus resulted in the realization that efforts should be made to improve the status of women and making greater choices available to them by providing them access to credit and also training in
micro enterprises (Samina Kamal, 1997). It is pointed out that this access improves their standard of living. It is also emphasized that providing opportunities of self-employment among the poor women would be the only option for their emancipation. Accordingly, a strategy for the identification of critical elements of a micro enterprise strategy for women has been evolved in different countries. This strategy envisaged among other things the importance of making credit available to women with higher level of participation of beneficiaries in all the credit operations. It is also emphasised that provision of credit facilities for women for setting up of small enterprises will increase their income which would result in the upward mobility and their access to social services which ultimately result in better living standards (Samina Kamal, 1997).

It is against this background that the concept of Self-Help Groups emerged in India during 1980s. Originally, the SHGs strategy was evolved by the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) which contemplated the process of social mobilization of the poor women through the means of Self-Help Groups for their collective empowerment at the grass-root level. The group formation helps the poor to closely interact with the Government machinery for the better access to public services and resources. It also acts as a pressure group to keep the administration more accountable to the institutional power of the socially mobilized poor. Thus the Self-Help Groups strategy consists of three components: Social mobilization, Capital formation and Capacity building of the poor which facilitate the removal of poverty.
among the women in order to enable them to overcome their vulnerable position (UNDP, 1998).

In India, like many other Asian Countries, women are almost invisible in the nation's economic system, even though they constitute more than one-third of the total labour force in the country. Further, they concentrated mostly on the informal and agricultural sectors and have almost no bargaining power regarding the conditions of work. The dismal position of women was addressed by several individuals and organisations both national and international. The Report on the Human Development in South Asia (Khadija Haq, 2000) which mainly focuses on the gender question emphatically argued that efforts to ensure economic equality must consider women's economic conditions and capabilities and the efforts to enhance women's role in economic activities require the contribution of legislation and initiation of the government. Further, political commitment is a starting point supported by an efficient implementing machinery. It is also suggested that committed action in several important areas is very much needed for improving the lot of women, particularly rural poor women. These areas include:

1. Legislative action to enhance women's economic opportunities in three fronts;
   a) abolition of discrimination in economic field;
   b) the initiation of protective legislation such as minimum quotas for women in public services; and
c) honoring international conventions established to protect the women labour rights.

2. Payment of minimum and equal wages for men and women.

3. Creation of more jobs for women which should be made a priority item in the political agenda.

4. Innovative efforts must be made to enable women to come out of gender segregated employment,

5. Providing women access to credit for micro enterprises to improve their income and to reduce poverty among them.

6. Revitalization of agricultural and non-agricultural economy in the rural areas for improving the economic opportunities for women.

7. The report also emphasized that unequal economic opportunities of women are manifested most clearly in their limited access to the credit in the country,

Important to mention here is that the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas Programme was launched in the year 1982 with the aim to enhance the status of women by forming SHGs with 10 to 20 members from the rural as well as urban areas. However in the year 1999 a new programme called Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was launched and merged several programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA), Million Wells Scheme (MWS) and DWCRA also.
Subsequently in the year 2000 Velugu programme was launched with a view to strengthening the existing DWCRA groups and forming new groups under Velugu. In the year 2005, SGSY programme and Velugu programme were merged into Indira Kranthi Patham programme which was launched on 21st March 2005. Since then all the Self-Help Groups formed under DWCRA subsequently under SGSY and Velugu, now under Indira Kranthi Patham have been strengthened to increase the status of women and empower them with the following objectives:

1. Promotion of Self-employment among rural women below the poverty line by providing them with skill training in vocations which are acceptable to them by encouraging productivity in their existing vocations and by introducing new activities hitherto not undertaken.

2. Organising the beneficiaries on the basis of group activity and promote economic and social self-reliance.

3. Generation of income for the rural poor by providing avenues for production of goods and services.

4. Promotion of production enhancing programmes in rural areas and

5. Provision of facilities to take care of the children of working women.

During 1980s, the failure of formal credit system in the country to meet the credit needs of poor women on account of several constraints led to the realization that provision of early, uninterrupted and sustainable credit to the poor women is the need of the hour. It was advocated that decollateralisation of loans, mitigation of wrong selection, regular and cost...
effective monitoring of the clients and prompt recovery of loans should constitute the basic principles upon which a suitable credit strategy be built up for effectively serving the credit needs of the women to promote their sustainable development backed up by empowerment. The different efforts in this direction resulted in the convergence of group lending strategy. The experience gained by the Grameena Bank of Bangladesh has played a vital role in the emergence of this unique credit strategy, particularly, for the poor women living in the rural areas. With the success of Bangladesh experiment, conferences held in the country under aegis of international organizations, ultimately led the group lending strategy to take a concrete step in the name of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

It is held that the concept of Self-Help Groups is an old concept as far as India is concerned. In the ancient period, the social organization in the country functioned on the basis of caste system, which prescribed clear cut functions for each caste group. During 1980s the Self-Help Groups movement resulted in the launching of a major strategy for promotion of informal credit to the poor women in the rural areas.

In fact, the Self-Help Group strategy in India originated mostly as a part of the Integrated Rural Development Programme strategy of 1970s. The SHGs in the country can be divided into two categories:

(i) groups that are primarily geared to deliver financial resources provided by the micro finance institutions to the individual borrowers; and
In India, the term SHG is often used to describe a wide range of financial and non-financial associations. It is a form of accumulating savings and credit promoted by the Government agencies, NGOs and banks. Accordingly, several SHGs are formed out of targeted groups, for handling programmes of thrift and credit or even more broad based activities. Further, some of the SHGs are sponsored by the NGOs as a part of the rural development programmes in operation across the country. There are also SHGs created by the banks and certain developmental agencies such as the DRDA and so on.

**The Important features of SHGs in India**

The important features of SHGs in India include:

1. The members of SHGs are engaged in certain common activities.
2. They are small in size with 10-15 members each.
3. The SHGs possess good knowledge about the strengths, weaknesses and also problems of their respective members.
4. They are transparent in their activities.
5. They adopt several methods to resolve their conflicts such as mutual consultations, discussions etc.
6. They operate common fund raised through savings and external borrowings.
7. The members have mutual trust and confidence
8. They use peer group pressures and group dynamics and such other methods for repayment of loans by their members.

9. They follow simple procedures in their operations and limited documentation.

10. The rates of interests on loans are decided by the groups themselves.

**Institutional Support to SHGs**

The major Governmental programme, which is promoting the SHGs in the country now is the Indira Kranthi Patham Programme. Under this programme funds are channeled to the SHGs along with various other schemes for the elimination of not only rural poverty but enhancing the status of women also.

The NGOs have been very active in promoting and helping the SHGs and other thrift and savings activities for the last 20 years. According to the available sources, there are about 2000 NGOs throughout the country which are involved in helping the SHGs through channelising funds to these groups.

According to the available information, the SHGs in India are financed by a number of public, private and international agencies. These institutions include the public financial agencies like the NABARD, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Rashtriya Mahila Bank (RMK), Housing and Finance Development Bank (HDFC) Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), Rashtriya Grameen Vikas Nidhi (RGVN) and French Women's World Banking (FWWB) and so on. NABARD is engaged in carrying out a variety of promotional activities and
support the functions as the apex bank for the agricultural and rural development. These functions are as follows;

1) Developing an overall policy framework to guide the activities of the SHGs.

2) Providing sensitization and training to the Groups.

3) Capacity building activities to help the SHGs.

4) Provision of financial support to the NGOs for helping the SHGs.

5) Provision of revolving fund to SHGs.

6) To conduct evaluation studies to estimate the impact of SHGs.

SIDBI set up a Foundation for Micro-Credit to provide financial assistance to the SHGs in the country. The Foundation also undertakes capacity building activities for the benefit of the SHGs.

The HUDCO and HDFCs are mainly involved in the provision of housing finance, particularly, to the weaker sections in both the rural and urban areas.

The RGVN is a non-profit organisation set up in 1990 to help the SHGs in the north-eastern region of the Country. It is sponsored by the biggest financial institutions in the country like the IDBI, ICICI, SIDBI.

The RMK was set up in 1993 by the Department of Women and Child Welfare, Government of India to provide loans to the NGOs for lending to the SHGs. The FWWS is another non-profit agency which was started in 1982 and affiliated to the Women's World Bank. It created revolving loan fund in 1989 to help the SHG working in various parts of the country.
The Status of Micro Finance and SHGs in India

Micro finance sector has covered a long journey from micro savings to micro credit and then to micro enterprises and now entered the field of micro insurance, micro remittance, micro pension and micro livelihood. This gradual and evolutionary growth process has given a great boost to the rural poor in India to reach reasonable economic, social and cultural empowerment, leading to better life of participating households. Financial institutions in the country have been playing a leading role in the micro finance programme for nearly two decades now. They have joined hands proactively with informal delivery channels to give micro finance sector the necessary momentum. During the current year too, micro finance has registered an impressive expansion at the grass root level (NABARD, 2008-2009).

The year 2008-09 is the third year that the data on progress in microfinance sector have been presented on the basis of returns furnished directly to NABARD by Commercial Banks (CBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks operating in the country. The data includes the information related to savings of Self Help Groups (SHGs) with banks as on 31 March 2009, loans disbursed by banks to SHGs during the year 2008-09 and outstanding loans of SHGs as on 31st March 2009. The data received from banks have been compiled Region-wise, State-wise and Agency-wise. The booklet also has the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) and exclusive women groups. In addition, the information related to bulk lending
under Bank' Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) - SHGs has also been compiled.

The banks operating presently in the formal financial system comprise of Public Sector Commercial Banks (27), Private Sector Commercial Banks (28), Regional Rural Banks (86), State Cooperative Banks (31) and District Central Cooperative Banks (371). It is observed that most of the banks participating in the process of microfinance have reported their progress under the programme.

NABARD has been instrumental in facilitating various activities under microfinance sector, involving all possible partners in the arena. It has been encouraging the voluntary agencies, bankers, socially spirited individuals, other formal and informal entities and also government functionaries to promote and nurture SHGs. The focus in this direction has been on training and capacity building of partners, promotional grant assistance to Self Help Promoting Institutions (SHPIs), Revolving Fund Assistance (RFA) to MFIs, equity capital support to MFIs to supplement their financial resources and provision of 100% refinance against bank loans provided by various banks for microfinance activities.

The Progress at all India level under micro finance savings of SHGS with banks is presented in Table: 2.1.
**Table 2.1**

**All India Level Progress Under Micro-Finance: Savings of SHGs With Bank-Wise Position as on 31 March 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Agency</th>
<th>No. of SHGs</th>
<th>Amount of Savings</th>
<th>No. of SHGs</th>
<th>Amount of Savings</th>
<th>No. of SHGs</th>
<th>Amount of Savings</th>
<th>No. of SHGs</th>
<th>Amount of Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Banks</td>
<td>3,49,500</td>
<td>2,77,298.34</td>
<td>6,16,025</td>
<td>2,84,393.32</td>
<td>13,36,229</td>
<td>77,454.74</td>
<td>48,63,921</td>
<td>1,56,338.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Rural Banks</td>
<td>16,28,588</td>
<td>9,31,422</td>
<td>78,287.80</td>
<td>1,40,247</td>
<td>15,05,581</td>
<td>15,54,561.82</td>
<td>61,21,147</td>
<td>5,54,561.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Banks</td>
<td>9,43,050</td>
<td>4,33,912</td>
<td>28,287.80</td>
<td>1,40,247</td>
<td>15,05,581</td>
<td>5,54,561.82</td>
<td>61,21,147</td>
<td>5,54,561.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35,49,500</td>
<td>2,77,298.34</td>
<td>6,16,025</td>
<td>2,84,393.32</td>
<td>13,36,229</td>
<td>77,454.74</td>
<td>48,63,921</td>
<td>1,56,338.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in the parentheses show percentages to the total.

Source: Status of Micro Finance in India, NABARD 2008-2009, p.1

Amount in Rs. lakh
Banks include Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Co-operative Banks. According to Table 2.1, the total number of SHGs with bank linkages are 61,21,147 units, out of which the SHGs under Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Co-operative Banks constitute 57.98 per cent, 26.60 per cent and 15.42 per cent respectively. With all the banks the amount of savings of SHGS is Rs.5,54,561.82 lakhs. This Self Help Groups includes groups under SGSY, women SHGs and other sponsored schemes. The women SHGs constitute 79.46 per cent of the total SHGs. The total women SHGs groups are Rs.48,63,921 lakh out of which the commercial banks, regional rural banks, co-operative banks constitute 58.48 per cent, 27.47 per cent, and 14.05 per cent respectively. Out of the total savings of the SHGs that is Rs.5,54,561.82 lakh, the savings of women SHGs is Rs.4,43,403.02 lakh which constitute 79.96 per cent. This shows the significance of bank linkages to women SHGs. The details can be seen from the Table 2.1.

The Progress at all India level under micro finance through bank loans to SHGS has been presented in Table 2.2. The banks include Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks. According to Table 2.2, 16,09,586 SHGs have received loans from the Banks. The loans taken from Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks constitute 62.42 per cent, 25.19 per cent and 12.39 per cent respectively. The total loan amount received by the SHGs is Rs. 12,25,351.39 lakh. These Self-Help Groups include groups under SGSY, women SHGs and other sponsored schemes.
### TABLE 2.2

**ALL INDIA LEVEL PROGRESS UNDER MICRO FINANCE BANK LOANS DISBURSED TO SHGs - AGENCY-WISE PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR 2008-09**

(Amount in Rs. lakh)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Agency</th>
<th>SHGs loans disbursed by Banks during the year 2008-09</th>
<th>Out of total-under SGSY &amp; other sponsored schemes</th>
<th>Out of total—Exclusive women SHGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of SHGS</td>
<td>Amount of Loan</td>
<td>No. of SHGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Commercial Banks</td>
<td>10,04,587</td>
<td>8,06,053.10 (65.78)</td>
<td>1,33,117 (50.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regional Rural Banks</td>
<td>4,05,569</td>
<td>3,19,349.01 (26.06)</td>
<td>81,662 (30.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cooperative Banks</td>
<td>1,99,430</td>
<td>99,949.28 (8.16)</td>
<td>49,874 (18.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,09,586</td>
<td>12,25,351.39 (100.00)</td>
<td>2,64,653 (100.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in the parentheses show percentages to the total.

The women SHGs constitute 85.40 per cent of the total SHGs. Out of the total women SHGs (13,74,579) the loans from commercial banks, regional rural banks, co-operative banks constitute 62.74 per cent, 25.85 per cent, and 11.41 per cent respectively. Of the total loans of the banks, the loans sanctioned exclusively for women SHGs amount to Rs.2,01,522.44 lakh which constitutes 85.91 per cent. This shows the significance of the role of banks to empower the women SHGs. The details can be seen from the Table 2.2.

All India level region-wise distribution of SHGs and their bank saving particulars are presented in Table 2.3. The table reveals that out of the total SHGs of 61,21,147 in all the six regions in the country, nearly 28,27,244 SHGs are in southern region only constituting 46.23 per cent of the groups. As many as 12,80,900 SHGs are in Andhra Pradesh. The number constitutes nearly 20.94 per cent of the total SHGs in the country. This indicates that the state is encouraging and facilitating the target groups to form into SHGs to save their own resources.

The total savings of all the SHGs in the country is around as 5,54,561.82 lakh. Out of which, the savings of the SHGs of Andhra Pradesh alone constitutes 21.49 per cent. More details can be seen from the table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Region/state</th>
<th>Commercial Banks</th>
<th>Regional Rural Banks</th>
<th>Co-operative Banks</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.of SHGs</td>
<td>Savings Amount</td>
<td>No.of SHGs</td>
<td>Savings Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Northern Region</td>
<td>1,69,317</td>
<td>14,688.04</td>
<td>79,448</td>
<td>4,520.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.77)</td>
<td>(5.29)</td>
<td>(4.87)</td>
<td>(2.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>North Eastern Region</td>
<td>93,354</td>
<td>4,453.75</td>
<td>1,25,305</td>
<td>5,216.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.63)</td>
<td>(1.63)</td>
<td>(7.69)</td>
<td>(2.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eastern Region</td>
<td>6,29,728</td>
<td>29,231.32</td>
<td>3,75,388</td>
<td>1,14,606.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(17.74)</td>
<td>(10.54)</td>
<td>(23.06)</td>
<td>(57.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Central Region</td>
<td>3,19,952</td>
<td>19,670.46</td>
<td>3,33,672</td>
<td>16,562.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(9.02)</td>
<td>(7.09)</td>
<td>(20.48)</td>
<td>(8.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Western Region</td>
<td>4,29,453</td>
<td>36,583.83</td>
<td>1,16,158</td>
<td>7,983.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(12.09)</td>
<td>(13.19)</td>
<td>(7.15)</td>
<td>(4.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>9,25,693</td>
<td>83,572.91</td>
<td>3,34,933</td>
<td>34,555.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(26.08)</td>
<td>(30.13)</td>
<td>(20.56)</td>
<td>(17.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>1,59,338</td>
<td>25,375.60</td>
<td>1,61,113</td>
<td>12,614.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.49)</td>
<td>(9.15)</td>
<td>(9.89)</td>
<td>(6.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>2,82,666</td>
<td>18,883.87</td>
<td>28,769</td>
<td>545.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.96)</td>
<td>(6.82)</td>
<td>(1.76)</td>
<td>(0.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>54,00,061</td>
<td>44,839.16</td>
<td>73,802</td>
<td>2,399.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(15.22)</td>
<td>(16.16)</td>
<td>(4.54)</td>
<td>(1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T.N &amp; pondicherry</td>
<td>19,07,703</td>
<td>1,72,671.54</td>
<td>5,98,617</td>
<td>50,085.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(53.75)</td>
<td>(62.26)</td>
<td>(36.75)</td>
<td>(25.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>35,49,509</td>
<td>2,77,298.94</td>
<td>16,28,588</td>
<td>1,98,975.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in the parentheses show percentages to the total.

In encouraging the SHGs, Government has given instructions to Banks to provide financial assistance to the SHGs in the country. Accordingly, commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, and co-operative Banks have extended their support by giving loans to the SHGs on repayment basis to strengthen the activities of SHGs. The details of the bank loans to the SHGs at all India level are presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 reveals that out of the total SHGs of 61,21,147, nearly 16,09,586 SHGs have received loans from the banks which constitutes nearly 26.29 percentage to the total groups in the country. As many as more than 66.00 per cent of the SHGs are from Southern Region only. Interestingly, the state of Andhra Pradesh has highest number of SHGs of 6,36,816 which have taken financial assistance from the banks. This constitutes roughly 39.51 per cent of the total groups in the country. The total loan amount sanctioned to the SHGs by the banks in the country is around Rs. 12,25,351.39 lakh, out of which, the loan amount of the SHGs from the banks in the A.P. State alone constitutes 44.95 per cent. The table offers more details in this regard.

From the above, it is clearly evident that the government is strengthening the SHGs not only by encouraging the habit of savings among the members of SHGs but by providing financial assistance to these groups to increase their income levels so as to empower the members of the SHGs. The commitment of the Govt. to empower women in Tenth and Eleventh Plans is summarised in the following pages.
### Table 2.4

**All India Level Progress Under Micro Finance - Bank Loan Disbursed During the Year Region-Wise / State-Wise Agency-Wise Position During 2008-09.**

(Amount in Rs. Lakh)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Region / State</th>
<th>Commercial Banks</th>
<th>Regional Rural Banks</th>
<th>Co-operative Banks</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of SHGs</td>
<td>Savings Amount</td>
<td>No. of SHGs</td>
<td>Savings Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Northern Region</td>
<td>18,074</td>
<td>15,854.98</td>
<td>11,440</td>
<td>7,632.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>North Eastern Region</td>
<td>16,288</td>
<td>11,347.11</td>
<td>17,518</td>
<td>10,931.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Easter Region</td>
<td>1,34,879</td>
<td>71,903.61</td>
<td>77,029</td>
<td>38,277.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Central Region</td>
<td>47,038</td>
<td>43,912.89</td>
<td>47,116</td>
<td>29,387.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Western Region</td>
<td>51,410</td>
<td>32,535.66</td>
<td>19,632</td>
<td>10,535.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Southern Region</td>
<td>51,410</td>
<td>32,535.66</td>
<td>19,632</td>
<td>10,535.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in the parentheses show percentages to the total.

Source: Status of Micro Finance in India, NABARD, 2008-2009, p.4
Government has initiated several programmes and policies for the betterment of women since the First Five Year Plan. However, momentum has been taken up only from the Sixth Plan and prominent importance has been given to women as well as children. Commitment of the 10th Plan and 11th Plan to empower women is much more significant. In the context of adopting human development as the ultimate goal of all our developmental efforts, empowerment of women and development of children gains priority on the country’s development agenda during Tenth plan (2002-2007). Women and Children together constitute 65.6 per cent of the country’s total population and account for 673.80 million (as projected) in 2001. The approach is to continue with the major strategy of ‘Empowering Women’ as the Agents of Social Change and Development.

The Strategy is to adopt a Sector-specific 3-Fold Strategy for empowering women, based on the prescriptions of the National Policy for Empowerment of Women. They include:

- Social Empowerment - to create an enabling environment through various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for development of women besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potentials.

- Economic Empowerment - to ensure provision of training, employment and income-generation activities with both ‘forward’ and
'backward' linkages with the ultimate objective of making all potential women economically independent and self-reliant; and

- Gender Justice - to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and thus, allow women to enjoy not only the de-jure but also the de-facto rights and fundamental freedom on par with men in all spheres, viz. political, economic, social, civil, cultural etc.

Women are significant contributors to the growing economy and children are assets of the future. Almost 50% of our population today comprises women while 42% is under the age of 18. For growth to be truly inclusive, we have to ensure their protection, wellbeing, development, participation and empowerment.

India has committed to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is a signatory to many international conventions, including Convention for Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Yet, at the start of the Eleventh Five Year Plan, (2007-2012) women and children continue to be victims of violence, neglect, and injustice. The Eleventh Plan will address these problems by looking at gender as a cross-cutting theme. It will recognize women's agency and the need for women's empowerment. At the same time it will ensure the survival, protection, and all-round development of children of all ages, communities and economic groups.

Due to the untiring efforts of the women's movement, the country amended and enacted women-related legislations during the Tenth Plan. The
Married Women's Property Act 1874, the Hindu Succession Act 1956 were amended and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) 2005 was passed. The Union Budget 2005-06, for the first time, included a separate statement highlighting the gender sensitivities of the budgetary allocation under 10 demands for grants. Gender Budgeting Cells were set up in 52 Central ministries/departments to review public expenditure, collect gender disaggregated data, and conduct gender-based impact analysis. Under Women Component Plan (WCP), efforts were made to ensure that not less than 30% of funds/benefits under various schemes of all ministries/departments were earmarked for women. The performance however has been far from satisfactory. The Mid Term Appraisal of Tenth Plan revealed that while 42.37% of the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) to the Department of Education flowed to women under WCP, only 5% of the GBS of Ministry of Labour (against 33.5% in the Ninth Plan) went to women in the first three years of the Tenth Plan. Several ministries and or departments that had earlier reported on the WCP in their sectoral budgets stopped doing so. Within the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), the financial allocation for women specific schemes during the Tenth Plan was Rs.1,246 crore. As a result of this modest allocation of resources and ineffective implementation of existing schemes, we have fallen far short of our Tenth Plan targets.

The challenges for gender equity and the roadmap for the Eleventh Five Year Plan can be clubbed under a five-fold agenda.
- Ensuring economic empowerment.
- Engineering social empowerment.
- Enabling political empowerment.
- Effective implementation of women-related legislations.
- Creating institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and strengthening delivery mechanisms.

The Eleventh Plan recognizes that women employed in the unorganized sector need social security covering issues of leave, wages, work conditions, pension, housing, childcare, health benefits, maternity benefits, safety and occupational health, and complaints committee for sexual harassment. While it is difficult to tackle some of these issues immediately due to the nature of unorganized enterprises, the Plan is expected to take steps to ensure safety, childcare facilities, toilets, etc, for women. The Plan ensures increased availability of micro-credit to women in the unorganized sector.

While strengthening SHG initiatives, policies and schemes the Eleventh Plan will simultaneously increase women’s awareness, bargaining power, literacy, health, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills. It will prioritize training, capacity-building inputs, and the creation of backward-forward linkages, which are essential to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities. Given the scale of the phenomenon, there is a need to review the SHG interventions and ground realities to determine how SHGs may better serve the interests of poor women, and suggest changes required in overall SHG policy frameworks. The Eleventh Plan recognizes the importance of this issue.
and proposes a HLC to conduct a review of SHG-related policies and programmes.

*Swayamsiddha*, is an integrated scheme for women’s empowerment through SHGs will be the major scheme to be implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) in the Eleventh Plan. Swayamsiddha Phase-II will be launched as a countrywide programme with larger coverage in States lagging behind in women development indices. The lessons learnt from Swayamsiddha Part -I and *Swashakti*, especially regarding capacity building of poor women through SHGs, promoting thrift and credit activities amongst the women themselves, emphasizing on participatory approach towards poverty alleviation, and addressing common problems and issues through the SHGs, will be incorporated in the universalized Swayamsiddha.

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP), a scheme for skill training of women, will be revamped during the Eleventh Plan based on evaluation results (under way) and will be integrated with Swayamsiddha to ensure adequate outlay for countrywide implementation as a CSS. The *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* will also be integrated with STEP and Swayamsiddha for credit linkages, but will be reviewed in the Eleventh Plan period before considering any further expansion.

A separate Women Empowerment and Livelihood Project assisted by United Nations’ International Fund for Agricultural Development will be implemented during the Eleventh Plan in four districts of UP and two districts of Bihar.
Various social empowerment schemes for women will be implemented during the Eleventh Plan. Condensed courses of education will be run to facilitate skill-development and vocational training of adult girls and women who could not join mainstream education system or were forced to dropout from formal schools. This will improve their social and economic status by making them employable. The Ministry will use mass media to run an Awareness Generation Project on issues relating to the status, rights, and problems of women. Through this project it will also try to ensure a balanced portrayal of women in newspapers, media channels, serials, films, etc.

The most important programme for women to be run by the Ministry of WCD during the Eleventh Plan is the provision of Maternity Benefits. The ICDS scheme have a component of conditional maternity benefits under which pregnant and lactating mothers will be entitled to cash incentives for three months before birth and three months after the birth of the child. This will encourage and enable mothers to avoid physically stressful activities, meet medical and nutrition supplementation expenses during the last trimester, and spend time with the child after birth. The benefits under the scheme will be conditional to the mother being registered with the Anganwadi, undergoing regular health check-up and immunization.

Ministry of WCD will continue to run its earlier schemes offering support services. Under a revised Working Women’s Hostel scheme, financial assistance will be provided to NGOs, co-operative bodies, and other agencies for construction renting of buildings for hostels to provide safe and affordable
accommodations to working women. The scheme of Swadhar homes for destitute women and women in difficult circumstance will continue, albeit with modifications. A women’s helpline foundation will also be set up. Under the Short-Stay Home Scheme, suitable accommodation with basic amenities and services like counselling, legal aid, medical facilities, vocational training, and rehabilitation will be provided for women and girls who are victims of marital conflict, crime, or homelessness.

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) will continue financing NGOs for implementation of various women and child-related schemes. But during the Plan, all the existing schemes of the CSWB will be reviewed and restructured in the light of current requirements. If necessary, some of them will also be merged with schemes of WCD.

Govt. has initiated all the above programmes to empower women especially through SHGs. As already mentioned that, Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of SHGs and the process of empowering women is the important objective of the state.
SECTION - II
PROFILE OF ANDHRA PRADESH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHGs

The profile of Andhra Pradesh is presented with reference to Topography & General features, Topographical Divisions Geographical divisions, climate, Agriculture, Industry and Minerals, Power, Transport along with Demographic profile. This section also presents the status of SHGs in Andhra Pradesh.

Topography & General Features:

The state of Andhra Pradesh was formed with Kurnool, as its capital on 1st October, 1953, but Andhra Pradesh was formed in November 1956 comprising the then Telugu speaking regions of Andhra, Telangana and the former state of Hyderabad. Geometrically, the State lies between the latitudes 12o 37 L North and longitudes 76o 46 land 840 46 L East. Geographically, it occupies the middle portion of the eastern half of the Indian peninsula with an area of 2,75,068 Sq.km which is 8.4% of the area of the country. The state has land boundaries with Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh on the North Maharashtra and Karnataka on the West; Tamil Nadu on the South and the Bay of Bengal on the East. Among all the States of India, Andhra Pradesh has the longest continuous coastline of 974 Km.

There are 23 districts covering 1,126 mandals in Andhra Pradesh out of which Anantapur district is the biggest in terms of area whereas Hyderabad is the smallest.
Based on physical, social and economic conditions, Andhra Pradesh can be divided into three regions - Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana.

1. Coastal Andhra Pradesh comprises of 9 districts viz., Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore. The area of Coastal Andhra region is 92,900 Sq. Km. This region has fertile deltas of the rivers Godavari, Krishna and Pennar. A major portion of food and commercial crops that are grown in Andhra Pradesh are from this region. Hence, the coastal Andhra is also known as the Granary of South India. The highest concentration of population is found in this region. There are many industries like Steel Plants, Oil Refinery, Ship building, Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels, Hindustan Zinc, Coromandel fertilizers etc., in the region.

2. Rayalaseema comprises four districts, viz., Chittoor, Kadapa, Kurnool and Anantapur. Rayalaseema region extends over an area of 67,400 Sq. Kms. The density of population is low as it is prone to frequent droughts and famines since ancient times. Economically and industrially this region is very backward compared to the other two regions. It comprises of rocky area and infertile soils with very little rainfall.

3. Telangana comprises 10 districts viz., Mahabubnagar, Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Medak, Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, and Nalgonda. This region extends to an area of 1,14,800
Sq.Km. Most of the area is covered with dry and barren land. Hence, upland crops are grown with the help of available tank water. However, this region is well-developed industrially.

**Topographical Divisions**

Topographically 35% of the area in the State lies below 150 metres altitude forming the coastal plains. About 15% lies between 150 and 300m and nearly 37% between 300 and 600m both forming the plateau surface comprising peneplained surfaces. About 13% of the area with an elevation above 600m is treated as hilly tract, in which 10% lies between 600 and 900m and the remaining at more than 900m above the sea level.

**Geographical Divisions**

Geographically, the State can be divided into 3 natural regions. The coastal plains lie between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal, stretching from Srikakulam district in North to Nellore district in South. The Eastern Ghats lie between the coastal plains and the western plateau, and begin from Khondomal – Simlipal hills of Orissa passing through Andhra Pradesh parallel to the East coast and in a South – West direction and merge with Western Ghats near Nilgiris of Tamil Nadu (Legris and Meher – Homji. 1982). The western plateau is an ancient plateau made of rocks of Archaean origin. This plateau region consists the whole of Telangana region, Anantapur and Kurnool district except Nallamalais.
Climate

The state has tropical monsoon type of climate, which is generally hot and humid. The climate of the state is classified as tropical rainy climate represented by all regions of the state except the southwestern portion where the climate is of Hot-steppe (Suvarna, R. Sugunakumari, C. Sudhakar, 2008).

Agriculture

Agriculture is the main occupation of about 62 per cent of the people in Andhra Pradesh. Rice is a major food crop and staple food of the State contributing about 77 per cent of the foodgrain production. Other important crops are groundnut, jowar, bajra, maize, ragi, small millets, pulses, castor, tobacco, cotton and sugarcane. Forests cover 23 per cent of the State's area. Important forest products are teak, eucalyptus, cashew, bamboo, softwood, etc.

Industry and Minerals

There are several major industries in operation around Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam. They manufacture machine tools, synthetic drugs, pharmaceuticals, heavy electrical machinery, fertilizers, electronic equipments, aeronautical parts, cement and cement products, chemicals, asbestos, glass and watches. Andhra Pradesh has the largest deposits of quality chrysolite asbestos in the country. Other important minerals found in the state are copper ore, manganese, mica, coal and limestone. The Singareni Coal Mines supply coal to the entire South India.
**Power:** Important power projects in the State are: Nagarjuna Sagar and Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy Sagar (Srisailam Hydel Project), Upper Sileru, Lower Sileru, Tungabhadra Hydel Projects and Nellore, Ramagundam, Kothagudem, Vijayawada and Muddanur thermal power projects. The Srisailam Hydro Electric project (Right Bank) with an installed capacity of 770 MW (Mega Watt) and the Srisailam Left Bank HES Capacity of 900 MW and the Nagarjuna Sagar Complex with 960 MW are the principal sources of hydel generation. Vijayawada Thermal power station with an installed capacity of 1,260 MW and Kothagudem Thermal power station with an installed capacity of 1,200 MW are the main source of thermal power. The 1,000 MW coal-based Simhadri Thermal power station aims at supplying the entire energy generated to the State. Installed capacity of the state as on May 2007 is 11,668.5 M.W. For massive capacity addition of 7513 MW, 14 new projects are programmed by AP GENCO during XI Plan (2012).

**Transport:**

**Roads:** National Highways passing through Andhra Pradesh constitute 4,674 km. There are 62,110 km of the state roads including 9212 km of state highways and 1,24,143 km of Panchayathi Raj Roads in the State as on March 2007.

**Railways:** Of the railways route covering 5,107 km in Andhra Pradesh, 4,633 km is broad-gauge, 637 km is metre-gauge and 37 km is narrow gauge.

**Aviation:** Important airports in the state are located at Hyderabad, Tirupathi and Visakhapatnam. International flights are operated from Hyderabad.
**Ports** : Visakhapatnam is a major port in the State. Minor ports are located at Kakinada, Machilipatnam, Bheemunipatnam, Krishnapatnam, Vadarevu and Kalingapatnam.

**Tourist Center**: Charminar, Salarjung Museum, Golconda Fort in Hyderabad, Thousand pillar Temple and Fort in Warangal, Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Yadagirigutta, Budda stupa at Nagarjuna Konda and Nagarjuna Sagar, Sri Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala-Tirupathi, Sri Mallikarjunaswamy Temple at Srisailam, Kanakadurga Temple at Vijayawada, Sri Satyanarayanaswamy Temple at Annavaram, Sri Varaha Narasimha Swami Temple at Simhachalam, Sri Sita Rama Temple at Bhadrachalam, Araku Valley, Horsley Hills, Nelapattu, etc., are the major tourist attractions in Andhra Pradesh. Thirty-three life-size statues of eminent Telugu personalities of the state were erected on Tank-bund of Hussainsagar lake in Hyderabad. A giant statue of Lord Buddha of a height of about 60 feet has been erected on the Gibraltar Rock in the Hussainsagar lake which separates Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities (Government of India, 2008).

**Demographic Profile**

The profile of Andhra Pradesh has been presented in Table 2.5. The table reveals that, according to the 2001 census, there are as many as 1,70,04,305 households in the states spread over 3 regions and 23 district of the State. The state has a total population of 7,62,10,007 of which the male and female constitute 50.55 per cent and 49.45 per cent respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>3,85,27,413</td>
<td>37,682,594</td>
<td>1,70,04,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.55)</td>
<td>(49.45)</td>
<td>(50.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>2,79,37,204</td>
<td>2,74,63,863</td>
<td>5,54,01,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.43)</td>
<td>(49.57)</td>
<td>(72.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Population – Rural</td>
<td>1,05,90,209</td>
<td>1,02,18,731</td>
<td>2,08,08,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.89)</td>
<td>(49.11)</td>
<td>(27.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Population (0-6 Years)</td>
<td>51,87,321</td>
<td>49,84,536</td>
<td>1,01,71,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.99)</td>
<td>(49.01)</td>
<td>(13.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S.C. Population</td>
<td>62,28,011</td>
<td>61,11,485</td>
<td>1,23,39,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.47)</td>
<td>(49.53)</td>
<td>(16.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>S.T. Population</td>
<td>25,48,295</td>
<td>24,75,809</td>
<td>50,24,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(50.73)</td>
<td>(49.27)</td>
<td>(6.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No. of Literates</td>
<td>2,34,44,788</td>
<td>1,64,89,535</td>
<td>3,99,34,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(58.71)</td>
<td>(41.29)</td>
<td>(52.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No. of Illiterates</td>
<td>1,50,82,625</td>
<td>21,193,059</td>
<td>3,62,75,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(41.57)</td>
<td>(58.43)</td>
<td>(47.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Total workers</td>
<td>2,16,62,192</td>
<td>1,32,31,667</td>
<td>3,48,93,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(62.08)</td>
<td>(37.92)</td>
<td>(45.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Main workers</td>
<td>1,94,55,492</td>
<td>95,85,381</td>
<td>2,90,40,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(66.99)</td>
<td>(33.01)</td>
<td>(38.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Marginal workers</td>
<td>22,06,700</td>
<td>36,46,286</td>
<td>58,25,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(37.71)</td>
<td>(62.29)</td>
<td>(7.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Non-workers</td>
<td>16,865,221</td>
<td>2,44,50,927</td>
<td>4,13,16,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(68.97)</td>
<td>(59.18)</td>
<td>(54.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>52,01,564</td>
<td>26,57,970</td>
<td>78,59,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(40.82)</td>
<td>(33.82)</td>
<td>(10.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Agricultural Labourers</td>
<td>64,53,741</td>
<td>73,78,411</td>
<td>1,38,32,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(46.65)</td>
<td>(53.35)</td>
<td>(18.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Workers in Household Industries</td>
<td>7,10,222</td>
<td>9,31,883</td>
<td>16,42,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(43.25)</td>
<td>(56.75)</td>
<td>(2.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Other workers</td>
<td>92,96,665</td>
<td>22,63,403</td>
<td>1,15,60,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(80.43)</td>
<td>(19.57)</td>
<td>(15.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Household size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sex ratio ( Female per 1000 Males)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sex ratio ( 0-6 Years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sex ratio ( SC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sex ratio ( ST)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Census of India, 2001
The rural population comprises 72.69 per cent to the total population of the state. S.C. and S.T. population in the state constitute 16.19 per cent and 6.59 per cent respectively. The number of literates in the State is 3,99,34,323 which constitutes 52.40 per cent of the total population. Among literates there is glaring difference between male and female literates. Among the total literates the male and female literates constitute 58.71 per cent and 41.29 per cent respectively, which shows the backwardness among the total population of the State. The workers constitute 45.78 per cent among the worker again male and female workers constitute 62.08 per cent and 37.92 per cent respectively, which again shows less female participation in the State.

Size of the household is 4.48 in the States. The sex ratio of the State is 978 females per 1000 males. More details however can be seen from Table 2.5 However according to 2011 Census, the State has a total population of 8,46,65,533 out of which men and women constitute 50.21 per cent and 49.79 per cent respectively. Decadal growth rate (1991-2001) is found to be 14.59 against 11.10 for the decade 2001-2011. The sex ratio is found to be 992 females per thousand males. The density of population is 308 per sq.km. The total literates in the State are 5,14,38,510 who constitute 67.66 per cent. Among the literates, the male and female percentage is 55.92 and 44.08 respectively.
Thrift and Credit Groups in Andhra Pradesh (SHGs)

Most micro finance programmes implemented by voluntary sector in India adopt group approach for lending. Several promotional agencies in the government sector have promoted and inspired formation of diverse kinds of thrift and credit groups to channelise the various State sponsored poverty alleviation and social development programmes. These groups vary widely in terms of their membership, size, decision making processes, methods of group action, etc. The salient features of these groups and their relevance in the State of Andhra Pradesh are briefly presented hereunder.

The recommendation of various expert committees led to set up guidelines for the development of women. As a result of a new direction for the integration of women's programmes into the mainstream of rural development, Development of Women and Child Rural Areas (DWCRA) emerged as a sub-scheme of IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme). IRDP has an anti-poverty focus for the eradication of rural poverty, among the families living below the poverty line. The cut-off line of poverty is indicated by an annual income of Rs.7200.00. IRDP provides facilities in terms of institutional loans and subsidies and other asset building programmes of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP).

Women have participated in large numbers in NREP and RLEGP, demonstrating women's need and urge for wage employment. The scheme of TRYSEM stipulated that one-third of the beneficiaries should be girls. This
quota has been far exceeded, but it has not created corresponding self-employment opportunities for the trained women. Coverage of poor women under IRDP has been quite negligible. In spite of clear directives for priority to be given to women headed households, coverage in this regard has also been only marginal. This necessitated special efforts to accelerated the process of women’s integration in the rural development strategies for which the DWCRA scheme was designed. DWCRA was not visualized as a separate exercise within the IRDP strategies. The challenges before the functionaries are how to achieve integration if the two programmes keeping the special needs of women in focus.

DWCRA was designed as an innovative scheme to be implemented initially on a pilot basin in 50 districts. While IRDP has only an economic objective of eradication of poverty of the rural poor, DWCRA aims at both economic and social uplift of the poor women. It is a scheme of direct intervention in women’s poverty with the ultimate objective of creating self-reliant and self-sustaining groups of poor rural women. It also visualises the involvement of the members of the target group from the very beginning stages of identification of problems, planning resources, and monitoring.

The First step in the implementation of the scheme is identification of poor women of the families living below the poverty line, fulfilling the criteria for IRDP benefits and to know their occupational base and socio-economic constraints. The poor income earning status of women in these families may be due to lack of credit, low productivity of labour which may
be related to inadequate skills and efficiencies, lack of assets etc. Moreover, women are trapped in the poverty cycle. Demands on their time and energy, both within and outside the home, work without respite, repeated pregnancies, inadequate food, lack of rest and relaxation, poor sanitation, inadequate medical care, illiteracy, lack of information, make their position more vulnerable. This has an adverse effect on the quality and availability of their labour, resulting in low economic productivity. These in turn affect their social and health status and opportunities for employment and employability.

The needs and problems of the women, therefore, are to be assessed to activate them to be involved in meeting their needs and the solution of their problems. It starts with the process of group formation in an informal way, facilitating interaction, deciding and prioritizing projects to solve their problems collectively, which they may not be in a position to tackle individually.

In promoting income generating activities under DWCRA, women are to be treated as IRDP beneficiaries with the same terms and conditions applicable. Women's assetlessness should not be treated as a handicap in their way of getting loans. Moreover, no collateral is required for loans up to Rs.5,000. Particular problems for women in this regard are lack of information about the sources and modalities of acquiring those facilities, problems of locating suitable economic projects and above all, lack of self-reliance. DWCRA seeks to address these problems by providing information and training to the participants, organising them into groups to develop their
collective strength, and capacity to articulate their needs, mobility and by strengthening the infrastructure, for enhanced and close interaction with the development agencies.

Promotion of employment opportunities for women can be sought in several ways. It is necessary to identify first the sectors where women's employment is either low or on the decline and the reasons for that. It may be possible to revive those by putting some additional inputs of credit, training and creating marketing avenues. Employment opportunities for women can be expanded by modernisation of traditional occupations for women such as spinning and weaving, match-making, coir, agriculture, animal husbandry and fishery etc. Simultaneously women may be trained to acquire new skills for alternative employment. The scope for more earning for women can also be possible through strict implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act and by improving the exploitative conditions in which, women have to work.

To promote employment opportunities for women, it is necessary to expand and diversify education and training facilities for them. Skills development training, including entrepreneurial skills, can be linked with TRYSEM. Some have also come forward to help in the development of entrepreneurship amongst women. Training and employment opportunities can also be availed of from KVIC, Handicraft Boards etc. Training is to be linked with the projects undertaken after assessing the resources, credit and market availability. Bankable economic projects should be prepared only after assessing the availability of raw materials, marketing, training facilities etc.
Provisions of social inputs in DWCRA is visualised as support to women, who are often constrained due to their multiple responsibilities and lack of appropriate technology. Besides enhancing their efficiency, it would also reduce their stress and strain. Small children are usually neglected while the mothers work or are left behind at home under the care of a young daughter or even by themselves, unprotected and uncared for. Under such situations, women cannot derive the full benefits from economic activities and in most such cases, the economic gains are outweighed by the social losses.

DWCRA is to assist the poor rural women in making use of services available from related ongoing programmes run by other Government and non-Government agencies. For example, working mothers need crèche services which may be made available by the scheme of crèches run by the Central Social Welfare Board, through its State branches. Lack of literacy is a constraint to the progress of women. This may be made available through the State run Adult Education Programme or the Literacy Mission. Some money is available under the DWCRA scheme itself for child care activities, but this not enough. For organising effective services for children, expectant and nursing mothers, the development functionaries operating at the grassroots level can help the DWCRA groups to get in touch with the nearby Anganwadi Centres operating in the village. Services related to immunization, the supplementary nutrition, health check-up, referral services, and pre-school education are delivered through these centres. The Advisory Committee for DWCRA has also suggested that in case of starting new ICDS centres,
preference could be given to the areas where DWCRA has been initiated. Similarly an established Anganwadi centre can be selected as a nucleus for organising DWCRA activities. This will go a long way in reinforcing the social input in DWCRA and economic inputs in ICDS centres. Besides, the supply of water, fuel, fodder and housing are some of the crucial concerns for women. The water supply programme of the Technology Mission on Rural Water Supply can address this issue from the women's perspective. Fuel and fodder problems can be mitigated through a well-planned social forestry programme. Construction of houses under rural housing programmes can also keep the women's need in view and this programme may also get the priority in case of DWCRA group. Women need to be informed about these facilities and through their collective efforts and the back up support of the DRDA and the block, it may be possible to make these services available through convergence to the DWCRA groups.

Like IRDP, DWCRA is also a programme being implemented by the District Rural Development Agency. To facilitate the implementation of the scheme, one post of Assistant Project Officer (Women) has been sanctioned to be part of the DRDA team. One additional post of Gram Sevika has also been sanctioned at the block level so that 3 Gram Sevikas (2 in the normal block pattern) can take charge of 10 groups each of the stipulated number of 30 per block.

The APO, three Gram Sevikas and the Mukhya Sevika of the block are to form a team to help in the implementation of DWCRA by conducting
preliminary surveys of the area, establishing contacts with the rural women in identifying their constraints and needs. The team will be responsible for necessary monitoring and follow up. The APO is to help in establishing contacts with different agencies, in mobilization of resources and training facilities, marketing of the products of the DWCRA groups and also to look after the day-to-day administration of the scheme within the DRDA. It should not, however, mean a separate exercise for the women's programme by the women functionaries within the DRDA. Implementation of DWCRA is the overall responsibility of the entire DRDA team headed by the Project Officer or Project Director. The success of DWCRA will depend largely on the understanding and appreciation of the entire DRDA team about the scheme having a complementary role in the success of the poverty eradication programme. Effectiveness of DWCRA also depends on how effective the team of APO, MS and Gram Sevika is.

Monitoring and Evaluation are integral components of any programme and so also of DWCRA. Monitoring is an on-going process systematically reflecting on the previous work to make improvements. Monthly meetings of all the functionaries can be effectively utilised to accomplish this regularly (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas - Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and UNICEF). The programme needs to be constantly monitored for mutual interaction, understanding of the problems and their solutions, jointly by the DWCRA functionaries and the women. Evaluation of the programme at regular intervals is necessary to assess how
far the programme has achieved its objectives, for identification of the inherent problems or the problems which have emerged during implementation, to correct the course and keep the direction clear.

There is now a general acceptance that the NGOs can play a vital role in the implementation of any development programme particularly in those programmes having a participatory development approach.

The scheme of DWCRA was formulated drawing largely on the experience of some NGOs dealing with poor women's problems and issues particularly in the employment sector. The scheme has therefore a natural bias towards the positive contribution of NGOs in the implementation of the scheme. Assistance of selected NGOs with necessary expertise was sought in training the functionaries, preparation of block plans, monitoring and evaluation of the programme to demonstrate the ways and effectiveness of the participatory approach in all these areas. Part of the DWCRA fund had also been allocated to CAPART to implement the scheme with the collaborator of the voluntary sector.

The role of the voluntary sector is expected to be complementary, to improve the qualitative aspect of the programme and its implementation through collaborative efforts. Association of good voluntary agencies working in the area has the potential of enriching the implementation of the scheme.
Salient Features

The salient features of the scheme are:

(i) it is exclusively meant for women members of rural households, and to provide them avenues of income generation according to their skills, aptitudes, and local conditions.

(ii) for better inter communication amongst women, group approach is adopted. The envisages formation of groups of women within the age group of 18-65 years from April 1991 onwards, each DWCRA group consists of 10-15 women.

(iii) training skills to members are imparted under TRYSEM,

(iv) each group is given a one-time grant. The amount of grant was Rs.15,000 but has since been raised to Rs.25,000. The grant serves as a Revolving Fund to be used for marketing, child care activities, and purchase of raw materials.

(v) the group members, apart from deriving benefits under DWCRA, are also entitled to loan and subsidy facilities under IRDP scheme,

(vi) provision exists for opening multi-purpose community centre for the groups to carry on their economic and related activities. The UNICEF provides each centre with supplies and equipment worth Rs.50,000.

(vii) each group selects one of its members as 'Group organiser' whose main function is to help in (a) selection of an economic activity,
procurement of raw materials, (c) marketing of finished products, and (d) operation of bank account of the Revolving Fund,

(viii) for extending the benefits of the scheme to more women in rural areas, voluntary organisations are given financial assistance to implement projects for providing income-generation opportunities to rural women, and

(ix) supportive services like mother and child care, immunisation, provision for working conveniences, adult education etc., are provided to rural women to improve their efficiency and reduce drudgery.

1. Self-Managed Thrift and Credit Groups: SHGs

(a) **Self Help Groups**: SHGs are small, economically homogenous and affinity groups of rural poor, not exceeding 20, voluntarily formed to save and mutually agree to contribute to a common fund to be lent to its members as per group decision. These groups are usually formed by Governmental or Non-Governmental organisations with emphasis on both thrift and credit activities. All financial decisions are taken by the groups through a consensual approach.

(b) **DWCRA Groups**: Groups with maximum membership of 15 women were formed by the Department of Rural Development under the erstwhile "Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas" (DWCRA) Programme of IRDP. Here again thrift was used as an entry point to weave women groups. Based on the thrift record, Government
through District Rural Development Agencies release maximum Revolving Fund Assistance (RFA) matching grant of Rs.15,000 per group for enabling women groups to take up income generating activities. Even though IRDP and DWCRA have since been subsumed under SGSY since 1999, the SHGs formed by DRDAs in the State continue to be stated as DWCRA groups. At present, DWCRA groups and SHGs are synonymous in the state. Under the programme, banks also extend credit facilities to such groups for meeting their fund requirements.

(c) Podupulakshmi Groups: Podupulakshmi Groups are DWCRA groups functioning on the lines of SHGs. Thrift is an entry point activity for these groups which is put to rotation among the group members as micro loans based on the priorities decided by the group members. DRDAs have been extending matching grant assistance to such groups based on their thrift, credit and repayment records. The matching grant received from the Government is completely funded with the groups' corpus. Banks have also been extending loans to the groups, enhancing overall fund base to enable internal lending of higher order for meeting both consumption and production credit requirements of the members.

(d) Avval Committees: Avval Committees are women thrift and credit groups formed in tribal areas of Adilabad District under the aegis of Integrated Tribal Development Agency. These groups have rudimentary elements of SHGs. Sri Saraswati Grameena Bank took the
initiative of restructuring and strengthening these groups on the lines of SHGs by extending need based financial assistance to the groups while introducing the self-management concepts in the field of thrift and credit activities.

2. Self-Managed Networks

(a) **Mutually Aided Cooperatives Societies (MACS):** Government of Andhra Pradesh has in 1995 enacted the Andhra Pradesh Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act. The Act provided for voluntary formation of cooperatives as accountable, competitive, self-reliant business enterprises based on thrift, self-help and mutual aid. They are owned, managed and controlled by members for their economic and social betterment. Several coalitions and networks of women SHGs have institutionalized themselves under the new enactment. Under these MACS, the members continue to be with the groups they belong to, to ensure collective responsibility, endorsing loan transactions, providing moral security for repayment of loans and participation of all members in every activity of the society. At times groups are federated at village level in the form of Mahila Mandals Village Organisations which act as intermediaries between Mandal Level MACS and members, by collecting recommending loan applications from individual members to MACS, monitoring loans & facilitating default management. However, in some places village organisations are also
registers as MACS, providing financial services to the members through SHGs.

(b) **Women Groups of Working Women's Forum:** Women groups of membership not exceeding ten members have been formed by the Chennai based voluntary agency in a few parts of Andhra Pradesh. These groups are given intensive training to advocate and manage social, political and economic issues pertaining to rural women. The women members are extended small loans for taking up household industrial activities backed by personal surety of the leader concerned, while the leader's loan itself is guaranteed by the forum's organiser sponsoring the group. Under the system, the leader based on her organising potential can graduate to the organiser level for promoting several such groups. The groups formed by the Working Women's Forum are federate as India Cooperative Network of Women, which is a cooperative owned and manage by member women.

3. Externally Managed Thrift and Credit Groups

(a) **Grameen Groups:** These groups are formed by Grameen Bank mode (Bangladesh) replicating agencies. Under this system, five persons are formed into group with thrift as entry point. The groups are given intensive training in credit management and group management. They are put through a Group Recognition Test before they become eligible to access credit. The credit terms like quantum of loan, interest rate, repayment period etc. are determined by the credit agencies. The
loaning to members is done on staggered basis 2-2-1, with the leader of the groups getting the loan last. Each loan is secured by personal surety of two other members of the group. However, the group is empowered to prioritise the persons to be covered in the initial loaning.

(b) **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) Groups**: Though there is no such nomenclature as RMK groups, they are essentially those groups promoted by NGOs which have accessed assistance from Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, an organisation set up by Government of India for assisting women in taking up income generating activities. The RMK has formulated a set of schemes for NGOs for on-lending to SHGs. The schemes delineate the type of activities eligible for finance, quantum of finance, interest rates and repayment terms. In practice, credit is directly extended to individual women in group mode on the recommendation of group leaders.

4. **Activity Management Groups**

(a) **Anganwadi Groups**: Anganwadi groups are women groups formed by Department of Women and Child Welfare at habitation level for implementing their health, nutrition and literacy programmes for rural women. These women are encouraged to take up income generating activities for which loans are extended for setting up individual or group enterprises.

(b) **Joint Forest Management (JFM) Groups**: The village community in notified forest areas are formed into Vana Samarakshana Samithis
(VSS) or Joint Forest Management Groups to protect and conserve forest wealth. Group action being core to the concept in Joint Forest Management, Government of Andhra Pradesh has chosen SHG route for social mobilisation under the programme. Further, the village community is expected to forsake part of their income from forest based activities and instead take up alternative income generating activities. Inculcation of thrift and credit habit in such groups will go a long way in sustaining their income levels.

(c) **Watershed groups:** The farmers in micro watershed area are formed into groups for implementing technology package for watershed development with intervention of facilitating agency, normally an NGO while on-farm development activities are funded through grant support, these groups have also been availing loans from formal credit agencies under the various Government sponsored programmes for raising crops, animal husbandry, non-farm activities etc. Some of such groups have also been formed with thrift as entry point activity.

(d) **CJFS Groups:** There are more than 2400 Cooperative Joint Farming Societies (CJFSs) in the State. Co-operative farming society is deemed as a voluntary organization based on the principle and ideals of self-help and mutual help in the agricultural community. The members pool their agricultural land (allotted to them by the government), resources and their manual labour to cultivate jointly to facilitate a more rational use of the land to increase agricultural production and income. With a
view to reviving these cooperatives, the state government has taken initiative to form SHGs from among the members of these societies, by inculcating the virtues of savings and internal lending among them and finally facilitating their linkage with banks for access to institutional credit. So far, a few hundred SHGs have been formed under these societies.

Status of SHGs: As per available statistics, there are more than 10.00 lakh SHGs promoted by various agencies and under various programmes in the State. Despite this huge social mobilisation in the state over the past two decades, it has been observed that some Poorest of the Poor (PoP) families, in varying numbers, are still outside the purview of micro credit in the districts. The state government has launched Andhra Pradesh Rural Poverty Reduction Programme (APRPRP) in all the districts of the state to bring all such families within the fold of the SHGs. The need of the hour is to strengthen the existing groups through imaginative capacity building measures and initiatives and to ensure that new groups, wherever formed are not curved out of the older groups to take short term benefits.

The growth and development of SHGs in the State with reference to SCs, STs and B.Cs has been presented in Table 2.6. Table 2.6 reveals that there are as many as 10,56,418 SHGs in Andhra Pradesh State spread over in 22 districts. Out of the total SHGs in the State, 3,95,144 SHGs are linked with banks which constitutes 37.40 percentage to the total SHGs in the State, 3,95,144 SHGs are linked with banks which constitutes 37.40 per cent to the
total SHGs in the State. As much as Rs.6,351.54 crores has been distributed as loans to these SHGs on repayment basis. These loans have been distributed to SHGs of SCs, STs and B.Cs. However, out of the total SHGs nearly 56.85 per cent of the SHGs who have taken loans belong to backward caste category. More details can be seen from Table 2.6.

The State of Andhra Pradesh has been divided into 22 districts. Table 2.7 presents the details of the districts have the higher and lower number of SHGs with special emphasis on Anantapur district. The table also provide details of number of groups, the groups with bank linkage, loan distribution to the groups by SC, ST and Backward Caste categories.

Table 2.7 reveals that the highest number of SHGs are in East Godavari district which constitutes nearly 7.87 per cent to the total groups in the State. The lowest number of SHGs are in Rangareddy district which constitutes only 3.02 per cent of the total groups in the State. However, Anantapur district has 53,533 SHGs which constitutes nearly 5.06 per cent to the total SHGs in the State .There are 3,95,144 SHGs in the State which have been linked to the banks. The East Godavari district stands first in the State’s which constitutes nearly 7.34 per cent of the groups. Rangareddy district with 2.92 per cent of the groups with bank linkage is lowest district in the State. However, in Anantapur district 5.17 per cent of the SHGs are linked to banks. More details can be seen from Table 2.7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Total No. of SHGs</th>
<th>No of SHGs Linked</th>
<th>Loan Disbursed (Rs.Crores)</th>
<th>Social Category and their Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SC No of SHGs Loan amount (Rs.Crores) ST No of SHGs Loan amount (Rs.Crores) BC No of SHGs Loan amount (Rs.Crores)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>153.19 2.324 30.13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Adilabad</td>
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<td>12,391</td>
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<td>20,467</td>
<td>293.90</td>
<td>2.376 32.75</td>
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<td>23,960</td>
<td>520.95</td>
<td>4,867 101.80</td>
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<td>East Godavari</td>
<td>83,164</td>
<td>29,022</td>
<td>507.92</td>
<td>5,394 90.57</td>
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<td>Guntur</td>
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<td>22,985</td>
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<td>5,923 109.78</td>
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<td>16,802</td>
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<td>4,814 61.28</td>
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<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
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<td>176.97</td>
<td>2,002 30.40</td>
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<td>23,026</td>
<td>422.60</td>
<td>4,747 82.53</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,56,418</td>
<td>3,95,144</td>
<td>6351.54</td>
<td>69,352 1103.15</td>
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Source: District Rural Development Agency, Anantapur
# TABLE 2.7

DISTRICT-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SHGs & CATEGORY-WISE ACHIEVEMENTS-WISE SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANANTAPUR DISTRICT
(FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2009-2010) AS ON 27.12.2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Total No of SHGs</th>
<th>No of SHGs Linked</th>
<th>Loan amount Disbursed (Rs. Crores)</th>
<th>Social Category and their Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No of SHGs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No of SHGs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>No of SHGs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>83,164</td>
<td>29,022</td>
<td>Eastgodavari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7.87)</td>
<td>(7.34)</td>
<td>19.05</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eastgodavari</td>
<td>Chittoor</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>31,954</td>
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<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.02)</td>
<td>(2.92)</td>
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<td>Anantapur</td>
<td>53,533</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5.06)</td>
<td>(5.17)</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>10,56,418</td>
<td>3,95,144</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Rural Development Agency, Anantapur
The district-wise details of SHGs and its achievement by economic categories in the state have been presented in Table 2.8. There are four categories namely poorest of the poor, poor, above poverty line and non-poor groups. Accordingly, Table 2.8 reveals that poorest of the poor and poor together constitutes nearly 94.78 per cent of the groups in the State which have received loans from banks. The details can be seen from Table 2.8.

Table 2.9 presents the category-wise distribution of SHGs with highest and lowest percentage of SHGs in the respective districts as well as the district of Anantapur, where the present study is taken up. The details, however, can be seen from Table 2.9.
## TABLE 2.8
DISTRICT-WISE SHG'S ACHIEVEMENT BY ECONOMICAL CATEGORY IN THE STATE
(FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2009-2010) AS ON 27.12.2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Total No. of SHGs</th>
<th>No. of SHGs Linked</th>
<th>Loan amount Disbursed (Rs. Crores)</th>
<th>Economic Category and their Achievement</th>
<th>Economic Category and their Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poorest of the poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No of SHGs</td>
<td>Loan amount (Rs. Crores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above poverty line</td>
<td>Non-poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No of SHGs</td>
<td>Loan amount (Rs. Crores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adilabad</td>
<td>33,177</td>
<td>12,391</td>
<td>153.19</td>
<td>4,738</td>
<td>54.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Anantapur</td>
<td>53,533</td>
<td>20,467</td>
<td>293.90</td>
<td>5,156</td>
<td>66.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chittoor</td>
<td>58,183</td>
<td>23,960</td>
<td>520.95</td>
<td>9,280</td>
<td>185.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East Godavari</td>
<td>83,164</td>
<td>29,022</td>
<td>507.92</td>
<td>6,813</td>
<td>107.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kadapa</td>
<td>33,672</td>
<td>13,902</td>
<td>215.03</td>
<td>4,872</td>
<td>71.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Karimnagar</td>
<td>51,801</td>
<td>20,484</td>
<td>386.82</td>
<td>5,965</td>
<td>106.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Khammam</td>
<td>48,701</td>
<td>18,009</td>
<td>239.80</td>
<td>4,896</td>
<td>61.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>55,215</td>
<td>22,985</td>
<td>434.67</td>
<td>7,221</td>
<td>126.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kurnool</td>
<td>44,528</td>
<td>16,802</td>
<td>244.95</td>
<td>8,027</td>
<td>112.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mahabubnagar</td>
<td>47,800</td>
<td>13,868</td>
<td>189.90</td>
<td>7,123</td>
<td>94.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Medak</td>
<td>38,843</td>
<td>12,865</td>
<td>199.67</td>
<td>6,676</td>
<td>98.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nalgonda</td>
<td>61,060</td>
<td>17,854</td>
<td>175.85</td>
<td>10,449</td>
<td>97.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nellore</td>
<td>37,131</td>
<td>14,007</td>
<td>204.17</td>
<td>4,638</td>
<td>64.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nizamabad</td>
<td>36,288</td>
<td>14,006</td>
<td>229.78</td>
<td>5,038</td>
<td>77.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Prakasam</td>
<td>52,651</td>
<td>20,639</td>
<td>283.07</td>
<td>7,075</td>
<td>90.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>31,954</td>
<td>11,528</td>
<td>176.97</td>
<td>3,782</td>
<td>54.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sriakalur</td>
<td>40,987</td>
<td>17,297</td>
<td>286.35</td>
<td>9,432</td>
<td>150.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Visakhapattan</td>
<td>43,747</td>
<td>15,476</td>
<td>263.65</td>
<td>5,168</td>
<td>74.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Vizianagaram</td>
<td>34,129</td>
<td>14,873</td>
<td>289.73</td>
<td>5,465</td>
<td>102.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Warangal</td>
<td>52,047</td>
<td>20,156</td>
<td>285.27</td>
<td>5,462</td>
<td>74.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>West Godavari</td>
<td>60,979</td>
<td>23,026</td>
<td>422.60</td>
<td>5,841</td>
<td>93.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 10,56,418 | 3,95,144 | 6351.54 | 1,38,816 | 2054.99 | 2,35,715 | 3890.02 | 3,750 | 68.38 | 16,863 | 338.14

**Source**: District Rural Development Agency, Anantapur
## TABLE 2.9

THE DETAILS OF HIGHEST, LOWEST AND ANANTAPUR DISTRICT, PARTICULARS OF SHG's IN THE STATE BY ECONOMICAL CATEGORY IN PERCENTAGES (FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2009-2010) AS ON 27.12.2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No of SHGs</th>
<th>Loan amount Disbursed (Rs. Crores)</th>
<th>Economic Category and their Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No of SHGs</td>
<td>Linked</td>
<td>No of SHGs</td>
<td>Loan amount (Rs. Crores)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>83,164</td>
<td>29,022</td>
<td>520.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East godavari</td>
<td>(7.87)</td>
<td>East godavari</td>
<td>(7.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>31,954</td>
<td>11,528</td>
<td>153.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>(3.02)</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>(2.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anantapur</td>
<td>53,533</td>
<td>20,467</td>
<td>293.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>(5.06)</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>(5.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>10,56,418</td>
<td>3,95,144</td>
<td>6,351.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: District Rural Development Agency, Anantapur
SECTION - III
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers, social scientists and others have made several studies to explore problems encountered by women and to assess the status of women, participation of women in development process with special emphasis on the functioning of DWCRA and Self Help Groups. There are studies with reference to empowerment of women through DWCRA and Self-Help Groups also. Review of such kind of studies will help the researchers in identifying the factors responsible for success as well a failure of Self-Help Groups. Such kind of review will guide the researchers to raise the issues which are relevant for the purpose of present study. Following are some of the findings of the studies.

National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) in its (1985) evaluation study covering Bihar, Manipur, Rajasthan and Tamilnadu found that a large per cent of DWCRA beneficiaries were engaged in agriculture and allied sector. In DWCRA, individual preference for choice of schemes was not given due weightage. This calls for careful identification of women’s schemes to be given to them.

Rama Majundar (1988) observed that the task force after analyzing the present situation regarding women’s development programmes suggested that the key components of all training programmes for development administrators should be as follows: The understanding to key concepts of the goals underlying development policies of the country. Articulating the
multiple roles of the administrators such as informant, coordinator, promoter, mobiliser, linkage builder, educator, monitor etc., examining their perceptions and biases regarding women through a process of dialogue and exposure to realities. Broadening the possibilities for women’s’ involvement in various types of development activities by questioning the established framework.

Veenakumari (1988) in her article “Socio-economic status of women in India,” has stated that the orientation of a society as a whole regarding the desirability that women should play an equal part in the country’s development was taken as a very important pre-condition for advancement not only of women but the country as a whole. The importance attached to development of women can be gauged from the fact that it is included as one of the agenda items of the world conference on Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development held in 1979. It formed part of the declaration of principles and programmes of action adopted by the Conference. The principle relating to workers emphasis that women should participate and contribute on equal basis with men in the social, economic and political process of rural development and share fully in improved conditions of life in rural areas.

Gautam, and Singh (1990) who studied the impact of DWCRA scheme in Himachal Pradesh found that the scheme extended several opportunities to the economically as well as social backward class of society by enabling them to organize themselves in suitable groups.

Dhillion and Hansara (1991) suggested a few measures to make the DWCRA programme effective. According to them, women extension
functionaries at the block level should be involved in the selection of beneficiaries and appropriate training should be imparted to the group members.

Pranab Mukherjee (1992) dwelt on the disproportionately greater constraints women face in gaining access to development opportunity. He strongly supported reforms necessary for changing the traditional value of both men and women, a task in which women’s organizations and the media could play a significant role.

Premkumar and Rahul Kumar (1992) carried out a study in Gulbarga district of Karnataka. They found that all the beneficiaries who had been living below the poverty line prior to the implementation of DWCRA scheme had crossed over it; their employment status had improved substantially and they were satisfied with the working of the scheme.

Rajakutty and Pritha Sarkar (1994) found in their enquiry in North 24 parganas, Barasat, West Bengal, that even though considerable progress had been made both in physical and financial target achievement, factors like lack of orientation in the concept and inadequate training of functionaries and beneficiaries led to many distortions at the field level. The scheme often did not cover the poor. Collective action through group approach that is the pivotal approach of DWCRA, was missing. However, they identified several success stories also. Discussions with grass-root functionaries revealed that factors such as lack of understanding, target chasing and political influence distorted programme implementation.
None of the programme staff including the APOs were oriented towards or trained in the DWCRA concept when the scheme was introduced. In consequence, groups were formed haphazardly and no proper guidance was forthcoming. Training in DWCRA for functionaries was very important, but was missed out. However, later many of these defects were rectified as a result of which the programme paid better dividends.

Systematic planning, (training, pre-group-formation foundation) steady progress towards target fulfillment and frequent interaction with the group are essential ingredients for successful implementation of the DWCRA scheme. Awareness and orientation of panchayat members towards DWCRA may help to keep away political interference to a substantial extent. Imaginative and committed role of DWCRA staff, particularly the Assistant Project Officer (APO), Women Development is a crucial factor.

Sundaram and Singh (1995) who assessed the DWCRA programme on modalities of operation in Girwa panchayat of Udayapur district have pointed out the problems faced by the units and the beneficiaries. The main problems identified were the poor physical layout of the workplace, non-availability of transport facilities, lack of skill in business and trade, burden of interest payment and delayed receipt of sales proceeds of goods sold.

Puhazhendi (1995) studied 19 SHGs and five bank branches in Karnataka and Tamilnadu and concluded that the intermediation of SHGs reduced the time spent by bank personnel in identification of borrowers, documentation, follow up and recoveries effecting 40 per cent reduction in the
transaction cost of bank, as compared to direct lending to individual borrowers. Transaction cost of borrowers was reduced by 85 per cent.

Suvarna Rani (1995) has expressed the hope that several schemes including DWCRA are being introduced over the past decade exclusively for rural women facilities their participation and yield good results.

Indian Bank (1995) had conducted a similar study in Tamil Nadu, covering 45 branches of their bank and 101 SHGs. The study examined only the transaction costs of the branch under different models for credit delivered for medium term loans upto Rs.25,000. It concluded that lending to SHGs, through NGO’s minimised the transaction costs to a greater extent.

The National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD, 1995) conducted an evaluation of DWCRA in Guragon district of Haryana. The purpose of the exercise was documentation of the successful DWCRA cases for drawing lessons for (future) implementation. Its specific objectives were to examine the socio-economic factors that facilitated successful implementation of the income-generating activities and to identify the various problems faced in implementation by DWCRA units.

The major findings of the study are women from the younger age groups (below 30 years) were more suitable for any self-employment non-traditional activity. The selection of group members from the same caste and locality made the group more cohesive. Institutional finance and revolving funds were the major factors motivating women to joining the programme. Skills training and initial support from the field functionaries made women
more confident to take up non-traditional, group economic activities. Income accruing from the scheme improved the standard of living of the group members. Assured income from the scheme enabled regular repayment of bank loans. The mutual understanding and cooperation among members provided the strength that contributed to success and effective and dynamic leadership was one of the crucial factors for long-term sustenance of the group.

The study concluded that homogeneity of the group in terms of location, caste and occupation leads to cohesiveness which, in turn, contributes to success. Ensuring regular income from the economic activity is the prime motivating factor for sustainability of the group. Systematic planning for skill training, uninterrupted raw material supply, efficient quality control and marketing, and adequate support from officials were the key factors for effective management of the programme.

Galab et. al, (1997) on the contrary, there are some DWCRA groups, in the drought-prone and the backward district, viz., Anantapur, which are not undertaking any economic activity either individually or collectively, but utilising the financial assistance as interest free loan among themselves.

Shridharan, Damyanty (1997), the SHGs brings out the supremacy of women in moulding the community in right perspective and explore the initiative of women in taking up entrepreneurial ventures. "Women's contribution to national development is crucial". The process of economic development would be incomplete and lopsided unless women are fully
involved in it "Emancipation of women is an essential pre-requisite for economic development and social progress of the nation" The SHGs to take active part in the socio economic progress of the nation and make them sensitised, self-made and self-disciplined. The SHGs inculcate a great confidence in the minds of rural women to succeed in their day-to-day life.

Chandra, (1997) feels "gender discrimination is a universal phenomenon. Both inside and outside the house, women are excluded from position of power. They are denied the opportunities to participate in decision-making process. The primary challenge facing women today is to increase their participation and become actively involved in decision".

Hemalatha Prasad (1997) in her study revealed that the intermediate objective of social enhancement through group dynamics and the bringing of rural women into the mainstream of credit delivery seems to have been achieved with reasonable success. In Andhra Pradesh a case study on “Thrift Society and Grain Bank for Economic Empowerment Tribal Women” was conducted at Vampiliguda village, Srikakulam district. The main objective of this study was to improve the household food Security and to promote sustainable self-reliance amongst the participant groups. The study observed that the making of women’s societies responsible for construction of school buildings, check dams and satellite nurseries resulted in the capacity build-up of the women concern. The long-term objective of inculcating saving habit and building up food security have, however not been achieved.
Samina Kamal, (1997) in 1980s, the Governments, NGOs and Donors directed their efforts to improve the status of women by making several economic services available to them. This is done to ensure the women to earn additional income by providing them access to credit, it is held that the access to credit results in an improved standard of living. Thus a new dimension was added to the women welfare interventions all over the world. As a result, there is increased emphasis on financing women's income generation activities. Accordingly, certain international donor agencies stalled increasing their assistance to the recipient countries to undertake income generating programmes for women by farming into groups with a focus on the marketing and commercial viability of the programmes.

Samina Kamal (1997) conducted a number of studies that have been carried out in various South Asian Countries to evaluate the programmes of institutional credit designed for the rural women in these countries. Apart from other things, these studies found that there are several constraints on the women's access to the institutional and formal credit. A major study conducted in Bangladesh on this aspect in 1990s noticed three main factors that restrict the women's access to the institutional credit in this country. They are collateral requirements of the formal financial institutions lending only for traditional activities complicated procedures in the administration of credit. Studies carried out in this area in India also listed out several barriers in the outreach of credit to the rural poor women. Some of the important barriers are the banks give priority to the business activities over the poor women in
carrying out their lending activities. The procedures imposed by the banks and other lending agencies are too complicated and rigid. The structures of the lending institutions prevent direct linkages with the clientele, particularly women. The banks and other agencies lack extension approach in planning, identification of feasible economic activities, skill training for women etc. There is an urban bias on the part of various banks and other financing agencies. There is no beneficiary participation in the banks’ credit operations. The banks generally hesitate to lend to a large number of people due to the high operational costs. Poor women are not able to approach the formal lending agencies like banks due backwardness, low literacy, socio-religious taboos and so on. Samina Kamal, (1997),

Samina Kamal (1997) the enormous amount of research carried out in different countries on women issues reveal that they are denied several services and opportunities that would improve their economic conditions and enable them to become financially independent. They are denied credit facilities by the public agencies in view of the fad they have no economic assets or properties to mortgage and hence they are forced to depend upon the private sources to meet their credit needs. This has driven them into the vicious trap, which ultimately led them to a condition of perpetual indebtedness and consequent poverty.

It was lately recognized that the provision of credit facilities to women is an essential condition for their economic betterment which is the only means for their emancipation. This realization prompted the planners and
policy makers in various countries to evolve strategies to provide women easy access to the credit facilities for different purposes as a part of their women welfare interventions.

As reflected by a women studies expert, the policies and interventions pursued for provision of credit to women are not only well targeted but also carefully designed to meet their specific needs, together with the programmes for successful delivery of social services to provide an enabling environment for their sustainable development.

Kanchanya (1998) in his study on the development of women through DWCRA programme conducted in upland, delta and agency regions of West Godavari district in the year 1997-98 found: lack of adequate staff and proper coordination of the staff located in the administrative hierarchy is constraining the performance of the programme; the size of the DWCRA Groups, composition of the group and institutional arrangement for maintaining the group activity and the support mechanism provided by the programme implementation authority are the determinants of the success of the programme; the heterogeneous groups could also perform better, as against the popular evidence that only the homogeneous groups perform well, provided appropriate implementing authority are ensured; and the programme has contributed positively for the members of the groups in terms of diversifying themselves from their traditional economic activities and increasing their income levels which ultimately resulted in the increase of intake of nutritious food levels.
Gopalakrishnan (1998) indicates the SHG women showed positive change towards child care, environment, sanitation, drinking water, public speaking and child education. Most of the women shown interest in sending their girl child to school and also involved in prohibiting arrack sales in their area. It indicates the involvement by the women in the overall development of their area.

Puhazhendi V., (1999) mentions that the self-help groups is the beginning of a major process of empowering women and to provide increased access to resources and control over factors contributing to women empowerment particularly in the areas of health, education, information, self-development, skills, employment and income generating opportunities. The self-help group to save and contribute to a common fund from which small loans are provided to the needy in the group. These SHGs have become appropriate community based organizations that hold key for participatory development, with an element of alternative rural credit delivery system.

Rogaly et al, (1999) pointed out in the Micro-Credit Summit sponsored by the World Bank and other International Organisations in February 1997, the participants discussed certain important issues relating to micro-credit. They emphasized that micro-credit by itself is not sufficient for achieving the development of the poor and hence the national and international institutions should prepare proper plans of micro-credit. It was also held that the focus should be shifted from micro-credit to micro-finance and then to micro enterprise of development. Further, it was argued that beneficiary
participation in the management of micro-credit programmes is a must for the success of these programmes.

Karmakar (1999) suggested some special proposals to strengths the SHGs. Institutional capacity should be built up to reach the very poor in the developing countries by strengthening the existing institutions and also by preparing new practitioners through training programmes. Measures should be taken to reach the very poor in the industrial countries which are in transition. The media should be involved in the campaign for popularizing micro-credit. The summit has launched a global campaign for eliminating extreme poverty through the provision of micro-credit for self-employment and business to 100 million of world’s poorest families, especially women.

Dodkey M.D., (1999) in his study mentions that SHG strategy provides women a chance for educative programme, awareness creation on issues such as drinking water and sanitation, family planning, literacy.

Girija and Satish (1999) in their study on impact of SHG lending on the profitability of branches where the SHG lending constituted more than five per cent of the loan portfolio. They concluded that lending to SHGs and NGOs carried the least cost when compared with other models of lending. Lending through SHGs reduced the cost by 85 per cent and through a federation, reduced the costs by 95 per cent as compared to direct lending. The default risk was negligible in the case of lending to SHG and NGO federation.
Gurumoorthy (2000) reports that empowering women contributes to social development. Economic progress in any country whether developed or underdeveloped could be achieved through social development. Self-Help Groups enhance equality of status of women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life.

Gangaiah.C (2000) conducted a study in Andhra Pradesh, and highlighted that SHGs are also involved in the awareness generation on prenatal and post-natal stages, safe drinking water, family planning, pulse polio and maternity benefits scheme.

The study under review was a case study on "Environment of women through NGOs-The SEWA Bank experience." This study was done by Suman Jain (2000). The study observed that the bank (SEWA) (Self Employed Women’s Association) had been providing banking services to the poor, illiterate, self-employment women and been a viable financial venture. The case study revealed that there were 67,113 women depositors with a working capital of Rs.1916.72 lakhs in 1966. It further observed that the banks helped the women to acquire skills to make new products and identify work opportunities. It is also found that the repayment rate had been excellent, which was between 93 and 96 per cent due to close monitoring by the bank, the link between the group leaders and borrowers and constant communication between the bank and village group. The conclusion was that from the women’s point, their involvement in and ownership of a successful
institution enhance their collective strength and empowerment that came with organization. From a wider perspective member-owned or controlled micro-credit institution could help to strengthen the country’s democratic system.

Kallur. M.S and Biradar, A.A. (2000) in their micro level study aimed to examine the role of non-governmental voluntary organization in promoting the micro-credit institution and to comment on their sustainability in the years to come. The study was based on secondary data. The study has thrown light on the origin and the nature of micro-credit organization and its superiority over macro ones in catering to the needs of formers. It also revealed that as a result of continuous efforts of NABARD, 225 groups linked together as on 31st March 1998 and had increased to 14,317 covering 30 commercial banks, 101 RRBs (Regional Rural Banks), 17 co-operative banks, 260 NGOs in 19 States and to Union Territories involving banks a loan of Rs.21.38 crore. The study also discussed the role of micro-credit organization with particular reference to the Indo–Swiss project and their sustainability and concluded that the NGOs have succeeded in promoting SHGs.

. Mohan (2000) in his research paper has emphasized the role of thrift and micro credit activities in women empowerment. The paper further reveals that through participatory approach the women could share their problems. The researcher of the view that NGOs have adequate capabilities and infrastructure to organize the training programmes and may also stand guarantee to the loans accessed from the formal banking institutions. Moreover NGOs could facilitate resource mobilization for the benefit of the
women. Even in facilitating the micro credit the role of NGOs needs no emphasis. It only means that micro credit programme will show fruitful results if the SHGs are supported by reputed NGOs.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), (2000) conducted a study on the impact of Micro Finance (MF) on the living standards of SHGs members. The study aimed to find out how far the SHG bank linkage programme had lightened the burden of life for the average member of an SHG and to analysis the betterment of household by gaining access to micro finance. The study covered 560 SHG member households from 223 SHGs spread over in 11 States. It showed positive results. There were perceptible and wholesome changes in the living standards of the SHG members, in terms of ownership of assets, increase in savings and borrowing capacity, income generating activities and income levels. The study revealed that almost all the members developed saving habits in the post-SHG situation as against 23 per cent of households who had this habit earlier and the average borrowings per year household increased from Rs.4,282 to 8,341. The study concluded that the involvement in the group significantly contributed in improving the self-confidence of the members. The feelings of self-worth and communication with others improved after association with the SHGs and the members were relatively more assertive in confronting social evils and problem situation. As a result, there was a fall in the incidence of family violence.
Manimekalai, N (2000) in her study on “NGOs intervention through Micro Credit for Self Help Women Group in rural Tamil Nadu” had attempted to analyse the working of the SEVAI (Society of Education village Action and Improvement) in empowering women and the rural poor through micro credit. The objectives of the study were to find out the characteristics and working of the micro institution namely, Villuthukal. This was a bank established for the benefit of SHGs to assist them by extending micro credit and to highlight the strategies adopted to mobilize the women to form Self Help Groups. The data was based on primary and secondary data. The secondary data were collected from the record of SEVAI and the primary data were collected from 70 women who were the members and who had availed credit from the bank. The analysis of the study revealed that the women in rural areas were really longing for supplementary income and the intervention through micro credit, by both government, and non-government organization, would be a boon to them. The study also proved that, after the micro credit and intervention of SEVAI, the education of the children had been better cared for and the women –beneficiary households were able to manage the budget without deficit. The study concluded with the suggestion that micro-credit strategies could be followed by other institutions working for the upliftment of women and proved that micro credit would be instrumental in realizing the proposed objective.

Namboodiri N.V. and Shiyani. R.L. (2001) in their study examined the impact of SHGs linkage with Banks in promotion of thrift and purveying
credit to the weaker sections belonging to the rural areas. The study revealed that majority of the SHGs are women based and exhibited homogeneity in their economic and social status. The study results have relevant the fact that the SHGs promoted by NGOs have shown better results in terms of savings, credit etc. The analysis has shown that due to predominance of consumption loans scope for undertaking income generating activities has been reduced. The formation of SHGs has led to women participation in development activities.

Dadhich, C.L. (2001) conducted a case study of Oriental Bank Grameen Project at Dehradun district in Uttarpradesh, for assessing the benefit of the project and economic viability. Out of a total 450 SHGs covered by the project, 447 were women groups and only 3 were men SHGs. The main findings of the study revealed that a large number of women had taken up subsidiary occupation and consequently their family incomes had substantially increased. An analysis of figures relating to income and expenditure of a specialized micro credit branch revealed that the branch had become a profit centre right in the second year of its operation. The recovery of the loans was more than 100 per cent of the demand. The study also revealed that the borrowers under Oriental Bank Grameeen Project had both the advantages of fine rate of interest, as well as hassle-free credit, whereas their counterparts elsewhere were paying exorbitant rates of interests.

Madheswaran, S and Dharmadhikary Amaita’s (2001) study on “Empowering Rural Women through SHGs” was to examine the SHGs
mechanism of the micro-credit scheme as an effective and financially viable tool in channelizing credit to the rural poor. In this study an attempt had been made to analyse the impact of SHGs in providing credit to rural women to help them to uplift their economic status. The analysis was based on a survey of three villages of Pune district, conducted during 1999, where the Maharashtra Rural Credit Programme was being implemented. The study revealed that the Maharashtra Rural Credit Programme was successful to some extent in its objective due to a combination of factors such as: (i) SHG-Bank linkage; (ii) credit being made available for consumption purposes; (iii) easy and periodic availability of credit due to rotation of savings; (iv) active participation of the NGOs. The study further revealed that peer monitoring could be used as a channel to provide credit at a low transaction cost and frequently to reduce rural poverty. The study concluded that micro credit should be used to meet the current demands of the rural women and this should lead to gradual improvement in the quality of their life and would enable them to identify activities for economic betterment.

Choudhury, R.C. and his team (2001) conducted a study to document the experience of SHGs in promoting micro enterprises through micro-credit interventions and the efficacy of Self-Help Promoting Institutions (SHPI). The study analysed the core issue of poverty reduction and efficacy of SHG route for micro enterprise promotion. The main objective of the study was to analyse the operating system in SHGs, to explore the effectiveness of SHGs
in identifying the micro enterprises and to suggest appropriate policy intervention for effective performance of SHGs. The study was carried out in selected clusters spread over regions in the states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The study covered 76 SHGs, 450 members and 135 micro entrepreneurs from five regions. It was observed that group enterprise on a big scale would involve greater risks but would yield better returns to the entrepreneurs. The study brought the fact that, out of three SHPIs namely, NGOs banks and government, NGOs were better equipped for capacity building of SHG were still in a state of flux and their sustainable development depended on a number of factors which were internal and external to the organization.

Namboodiri, N.V. and Shiyani R.L. (2001) conducted a study to find out the basic features and financial operations of SHGs promoted by both SHPI and NGOs served by the panchmahals Vadodara Grameen Bank (PVGB). A sample of five branches of PVGB were selected, out of which three are located in Dahod district and two in Panchmahals district of Gujarat State. The main findings that emerged from this study were that, while the percentage of women groups promoted by SHPI was 52 per cent, it was as high as 84 per cent for those promoted by the NGOs. The percentage of SHGs linked by the SHPI was 65 per cent and that of NGO was 42 per cent. The average amount advanced to SHGs varied from Rs.7,000 to Rs.30,000 for those promoted by the NGOs. The SHG that were promoted by the NGOs had
a better saving performance compared to that of SHGI, in terms of amount saved per SHGs as well as in terms of credit saving ratio. The SHGs promoted by the SHPI was superior to that of NGOs.

Satis, P (2001) in his study made an attempt to answer the following questions (i) Are there a large number of pre-existing groups in the rural areas and if so can they evolve into suitable SHGs? (ii) Are the really poor accepted as members of SHGs formation? (iii) What are the process in SHG formation? (iv) Do the SHGs face resistance at the time of their formation, if so how is the resistance being overcome? This study covered groups formed by the NGOs and banks. The number of groups formed by the NGOs and banks were five and four respectively in Karnataka, four and nil in Maharashtra and seven and two in Uttar Pradesh. These groups were selected for the study. The secondary data and material were collected over the period 1997 to 2000 at the Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD, Lucknow).

The study revealed that several SHGs included very poor members and the process of SHG formation had to be systematic whether it was formed by a bank or an NGO. It also observed that most of the SHGs had faced initial resistance in their efforts. The study concluded that the NGOs had faced initial resistance in their efforts. The study concluded that the NGOs were more suited for forming and nurturing the SHGs.

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2001) emphasized the most recent approach to empower women is the organizational approach adopted both by government and non-government machinery. The organizational approach for
empowering rural poor women was emphasized to increase the absorptive
capacity of the poor, provide them social strength for articulation and
improved access to development inputs and services.

The SHG is an exclusive organization of women as direct stakeholders
and also democratically organised and managed. The women have valuable
common stakes in the SHG, which promoted or voluntarily organised in the
communities. Such common stake in the 'groups significantly have effect on
their effective participation and also decision-making of their groups.

Suguna B (2001) says, “there is continued inequality and vulnerability
of women in all sectors - economic, social, political, education, health care,
nutrition and legal.” As women are oppressed in all spheres of life, they need
to be empowered in all walks of life. Active participation in social, economic
and political spheres would help in enhancing process of decision-making
empowerment and it will also give women the desired self-respect and social
dignity and these of course, are the pre requisites of empowerment.
Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to
greater participation to greater decision-making power and control, and
transformation action'.

Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups would lead to
benefits not only to the individual women and women groups but also for the
family and community as a whole through collective action for development.
Empowering is not just for meeting their economic needs but also through
more holistic social development.
Sarkar A.N. (2001) says that majority of the economically weaker section came into SHG that resulted in increase of the value of assets owned, employment, average income of the members and come out of vicious circle of poverty. The SHG strategy has made positive impact on the empowerment of women in terms of increasing their economic capacity.

Snehlata Tandon, (2001) further, observed that they are enable to access more information on development and welfare programmes implemented for women development. Self-help group focus on change and change-oriented skills, to help women to achieve insight, empowerment, and finding a new way of life. This strategy has made the rural women to discover their strength, self-confidence, social and economic abilities and capacity.

Kokila K. (2001) observed that the SHG consists of women from homogeneous occupational background even from neighbourhood, which helps them mutually trust each other. This has facilitated the women to learn to work collectively towards a set agenda and work in a democratic manner. The members not only required to voluntarily form the SHG, but also come from same socio-economic and culture situation to maintain the mutual cooperation among the members. The SHG functions with the principle of "contribute according to your ability" and take according to your needs". It indicates that individuals are motivated to work by using their ability and generate surplus to save (and also to repay loan) with SHG.
Agarwal, Deepti (2001), observed that women need to be viewed not as beneficiaries but as active participants in the process of development and change. Women are critical actors in the process of moving their families out of poverty. Empowerment of women can be effectively achieved if poor women could organize into groups for community participation as well as for assertion of their rights in various services related to their economic and social well-being. Micro credit and SHGs are also key elements for the empowerment of the rural women and help them to improve their living conditions and acquire small capital assets.

Samar K. Datta and Raman. M (2001), conducted an empirical study covering 355 SHG members of 30 randomly selected women SHGs from 8 clusters in the Tirupathi area of Andhra Pradesh. The study results show that in all three-fifths of the members belongs to backward classes, 6 per cent to schedule castes category and the remaining represents the other castes. As nearly one-third of the SHG members have no formal education, the authors felt that absence of formal education does not come in the way of working of SHGs. Further, it was found that there was no homogeneity as for as occupation is concerned. The data and income distribution reveals that nearly two-thirds of the SHG members have income of less than Rs. 500 per month each. The empirical data has also shown that SHG members know each other even before they could become the members of SHGs, which resulted in timely repayment by the member. Moreover they help each other even in case of repayment. Due to close proximity members could convene SHG meetings
at any time of their convenience. Through the empirical study it was found that credit is being extended to SHG members for various purposes viz. Consumption, repayment of old debts, business, other loans and as a result, the dependence of SHG have control over members. All this clearly shows that SHGs have shown positive impact, which led in realizing the primary objectives for which SHGs have been formed. Similar exercises needs to be carried-out periodically to examine the functioning of SHGs.

The National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM, 2001) studied SHG in four districts of Maharastra promoted under Maharastra Rural Credit Project (MRCP). The study observed that 69 per cent of the groups were of the size 11-20, 50 per cent of the members were illiterate. The study further observed that 55 per cent of the office bearers had at least a secondary level of education. The study revealed that the average savings of the SHGs in MRCP was Rs. 24 per month per member. The study also found that the average amount of savings mobilized amounted to Rs. 10,658 per group and that the SHGs and MRCP had started lending their own thrift capital from the eighth month of the formation.

Gohilavani, S (2002) examined the need for empowering women which has been emphasized by the women’s conference held at the International levels were held at Mexico 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, Beijing 1995. All these conferences have highlighted the need for empowering the women so as to address the women problems with reference to inequality, violence, access to women welfare services. Mobilisation of
women to carry out team work in a participatory manner may pave the way for commanding equal status to women leading to their empowerment individually and the group empowerment at a later stage. The author was of the view that thrift and credit activities will in a way facilitate the women empowerment. Further, the author of the view that empowerment can be brought-out only when changes are brought-out in social institutions viz., family, marriage, religion, economy, education, polity etc. He concludes that empowerment of women can be achieved only when a series of efforts are made and changes in the institutions have to be brought-in.

Sudharani, K, Umadevi D and Surendra G. (2002) had undertaken a study to evaluate the social status of women in house management, leadership qualities, health and sanitation and economic status after participation in the Self Help Groups. The findings of the study revealed that, in all the four aspects there was positive correlation between the women’s educational status and empowerment. The study observed that the participation in SHGs enhanced the empowerment of women in those four aspects. Self-confidence among the women increased. Their decision-making power also increased during the period of participation.

Vyjayanthi.K.N. (2002) in her research paper has analyzed awareness levels of women after joining the SHGs. The study also focussed on the impact of SHGs on individual and group empowerment. The study results have shown positive changes. The resource base of the SHGs has been strengthened which led to self-reliance. The women members have benefited
through savings and acquired management skills as the SHGs have allowed women to plan and execute their ideas. Moreover the women have come into contact with the government department and the financial institutions. The SHGs also have facilitated the women in acquiring leadership skills leading to community skills and self-development programmes.

Shetty. S.L. (2002), while summarizing the working and impact of rural self-help groups has stated that micro finance institutions have improved the asset base and also visualized the change on the levels of the living of the beneficiaries. Further, the women participation has also improved in thrift and credit operations. Moreover the author stressed the need for micro level field studies to examine the working of SHGs.

Chinnammai. S., (2002) Organizing women into SHGs marks the beginning of a major process of empowering Women. The institutions thus developed will provide a permanent forum for articulating their needs and contributing to development. Deliberate strategies will be initiated to provide equal access to women particularly in the areas of health, education, information, lifelong learning for social development, vocational skills, employment and income generating opportunities, lend property including that through inheritance, resources, credit, etc., for this purpose.

In an innovative study conducted by A.P Mahila Abhivruddhi society (APMAS), (2002), found that only 16 per cent of the 291 SHGs studied, can only be ranked as good based on the impressions of the investigators on maintenance of books, meetings, internal lending, leadership, bank linkage
and overall functioning of the SHGs. 49% of them were ranked average and 35% were ranked as poor. In all the three districts studied Adilabad, Cuddapah and Vizag, 78% the groups were found to saving regularly.

A comparative study was conducted by Rao V.M. (2002), on SHG member’s involvement and their perception about SHGs. For this purpose 120 members belonging to 23 SHGs spread over in 6 districts of 2 states have been selected. The study reveals that majority of the women have joined the SHGs from low income groups but have a strong willingness to improve their economic status. Against this background the sample SHG members in Andhra Pradesh have obtained credit mostly for meeting consumption purposes, while the finance available by the sample SHG members of Karnataka was for meeting the expenditure of social functions and purchase of agriculture inputs. It only means that the SHG members have borrowed mostly for unproductive purposes. Further, the study indicated that certain SHGs have already involved in creating social awareness among the members.

Lalitha, N and Nagarajan B.S. (2002) conducted a critical study on the functioning of the self-help groups (SHGs) in selected district of Tamilnadu. The study was undertaken to document the efforts of NGOs in promoting SHGs. The objectives of the study were to trace the structure and modalities of Self Help Groups, study the functioning of the SHGs, examine the role of SHG in promoting empowerment of women, investigate the group dynamics of SHGs, identify the factors which contributed to the success failure of the
groups and study the income generating programmes promoted by SHGs. The study was based on multistage sampling technique. It had been carried out in three districts. NGOs who had organized SHGs for more than four years were identified. Out of the 14 institutions, nine NGOs were selected and two SHGs from each NGO were selected on the basis of non-proportionate random sampling method. The study highlighted the facts that SHGs were people’s institutions and with their support, the women could march towards empowerment and that the groups could promote individual and groups ventures of income generating activities under the guidance of NGOs. The study also revealed that effective leadership, group cohesiveness, savings, regular meetings, peer-group pressure, linkage with other institutions and effective supervision by the NGOs were the factors which contributed to the success of the groups.

Kumaran K.P. (2002) has studied the structure and function of SHGs in terms of saving, delivery of credit and recovery of loan and also examined the role of self-help group promoting agencies. For the purpose of the field study 90 members belonging to 15 SHGs of Pune district were randomly selected. Based on the empirical study the author has found that monthly meetings were regularly conducted by the SHGs. Further, members’ participation in the meeting was found to be very high. During the monthly meetings the members have discussed mainly economic issues viz. savings, credit loan recovery and income generating activities. Credit was utilized mainly for consumption purposes. It was found that the lone repayment was
regular in case of those SHGs promoted by NGOs. From the study results it was also clear that the micro enterprises set up by the members of the SHGs promoted by the D.R.D.A. However social issues have not been given due attention by the members.

Pandian and Eswaran's (2002) study also relates to the issues of empowerment of women through the Micro-Credit schemes.

All these studies maintained that the economic empowerment of women was attained by providing those financial services and access to several different locally available resources. These groups were able to meet the credit needs of women beneficiaries for different purposes without depending on the male members of their families. It is also observed by these studies that the economic position of women has improved rapidly from bread makers to bread earners and their outlook on various economic issues is also changing. They reported that the loans extended to the members of Self-Help Groups have benefited them to increasing economic empowerment. The additional income generated by the Self-Help Groups activities boosted their morale and elevated their economic position. Further, these studies demonstrated that the membership in the SHGs helped these women to improve their capacity for greater involvement in the economic activity which ultimately improved their living conditions. These studies revealed that the DWCRA programme made significant contribution by way of providing financial assistance and imparting various skills among rural women.
Parithavachy and others (2002) to assess the impact of micro credit on the Sell-Help Groups in Madurai District of Tamilnadu while Mohanan (2003) work analyzed the system of Micro-Finance through the Self-Help Groups in the same State.

All these studies reported that the Micro-Finance Programmes implemented in different parts of the Country enabled the rural poor to take up different ventures by availing the credit provided to them independently without the help of outside agencies. These studies revealed that the institution of Micro Credit relieved the group members from the clutches of private money-lenders. These studies also reflected that the Self-Help Groups have emerged as an alternative strategy of institutional credit. These studies observed that the women were benefited under the Micro-Credit system by improving their socio economic conditions. Some of these studies examined the Micro-Finance models pursued in Bangladesh which had a tremendous impact on the rural poor of that country. These similes remarked that these models can be successfully adopted in India to attain the economic uplift of the rural poor. They also emphasized that reaching the unreached had become a reality through the Self-Help movement.

Vijayanthi (2002) conducted a study on the extent of participation of members of SHGs in the decision making process in the study area. These studies brought to light the level of awareness among the women which has increased regarding several emerging issues in their life, including the environmental sanitation. These studies showed that decision-making power
relating to family affairs, education of the children, housing needs or personal affairs has increased among the group members. They also revealed that there was a lot of difference in the conditions of the women after joining the SHGs. These women are also actively participating in the domestic affairs. Besides, women's participation is high in the meetings held with different officials.

Further, these studies also noticed that the group members learnt several new skills through which they increased their problem solving capacity, both individually and collectively. These studies disclosed that the Self-Help Groups are actively participating in several community activities as they have attained leadership qualifies and skills. These studies also observed that there was improvement in the literacy level and change in the occupational pattern and maternal mortality rate among the members of the Self-Help Groups as they have acquired knowledge on various social aspects.


The findings of the above studies suggest that the DWCRA programme is largely successful in helping the socially deprived and poor women in overcoming their financial problems. They remarked that the DWCRA programme is a boon for the poor rural women in several respects. It was found in these studies that the training imparted under the DWCRA enabled the women beneficiaries to become financially sound and socially benefited. It was found that it could help the women by generating additional income
and also in undertaking child care activities. These women were able to earn not only for maintaining themselves but also they are contributing for the fulfillment of the needs of their families. These studies further showed that the majority of the beneficiaries of DWCRA crossed the poverty line. Most of them gained economic independence and were able to spend more on their basic needs such as food, clothing and children's health. Thus the programme brought about a remarkable change in their consumption pattern. They were able to acquire more facilities than the past. Thus this is a remarkable impact of the DWCRA Programme on different aspects such as employment generation, poverty reduction, family planning and so on in respect of the group members. It was also revealed by these studies that there are higher savings by the members of DWCRA which are contributing for their economic upliftment. But these studies also pinpointed several lapses in the implementation of DWCRA Programme and also the problems faced by the DWCRA groups, As pointed out by these studies improper selection of group activities, non-availability of raw materials, lack of local demand and marketing facilities, indifference of the bureaucracy, lack of proper guidance are some of the important lapses of the DWCRA programme. These studies also observed that the financial requirements of the DWCRA Groups are not fulfilled to the fullest extent because of insufficient loans sanctioned under the revolving fund, while some groups were denied the schemes they opted for. It was also found by these studies that there was no proper institutional mechanism at the grassroots level either to monitor or to give necessary
guidance from time to time in order to make the DWCRA groups more successful. There are number of other studies which analyzed the functioning of Thrift and Self-Help Groups and their role in the economic transformation of rural women.

Bharathi Panda and Sagarik Mohanty (2003) in their paper highlighted the need for formation of Self Help Groups in order to extend easy finance to the women belonging to poorer sections of the society. The authors were of the view that the women, with specific reference to rural women, do not have control over different resources and as such they have little or no decision making power. To overcome this malady Self-Help approach is advocated to empower the rural women. Further, the authors have also examined SHG-Bank linkage programme in India, highlighting how the linkage will felicitate in obtaining the necessary financial support, which may influence the living conditions of the SHG members.

Ramakrishna and Krishnamurthy (2003) examined the impact of SHGs on the social and economic empowerment of the sample households and studied the role of SHGs in obtaining formal credit and found that the SHGs had a positive impact on women beneficiaries. The study results also showed positive impact on the economic conditions of the beneficiaries. Further, the living standards of the beneficiaries in terms of food intake, children education, health status, and financial independence have also been improved.

Usharamkumar (2004) made an attempt to analyze the importance of education in empowering the women. The author has found that the
percentage of girl enrolment in high school has increased leading to reduce the gap between the girls and boys in the enrolment. The author has argued that education serves as powerful agent in empowering the women. The author has established the fact that literacy-linked women development programmes paved the way for formation of SHGs. In the light of empirical results the author concludes that education enabled women in participating the development programmes.

Adeole, Ayanwale and Taiwo Alini (2004), have examined the impact of micro-credit on poverty alleviation and in reducing gender disparities. The study results shows that the monitoring and evaluation by the NGO ensured a very high repayment rate. NGO efforts have also resulted in higher savings, after joining the NGO. The analysis has also revealed that both men and women could obtain higher incomes when compare to the situation prior to availing the micro-credit. Further, the NGO namely FADU (Farmers development Union) has provided women easy access to farm finance. One important conclusion that emerged from the study was that the micro-credit has enabled the beneficiaries to cross the poverty line.

Vasudevarao.D (2004) in his study has examined the impact of the SHGs/DWCRA on the status and the quality of the poor women in the rural areas and also examined the extent of women participation in the group activities. The study results showed that nearly 95 per cent of the members attended the group meetings regularly Four-Fifths of the SHG members have actively participated in the proceedings of the SHG meetings. A noteworthy
factor is that there is a positive relationship between saving and repayment. The study has also revealed higher levels of awareness on issues directly related to social development. Attitudinal change has also been brought among the members of SHGs. The formation of SHGs have led to financial linkages with NABARD, Bank and such other financial institutions. It only means that Self-Help Groups have a positive effect on tribals.

Rao, V.M., (2004) in his research paper made an attempt to examine the working of SHGs in the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh. The study results show that two-third of the respondents were participating in the group activities. Saving was said to be the reason for joining the SHGs. About two-thirds of the respondents have availed the loans after joining the SHGs. Further, it was revealed that nearly two-thirds of the borrowings have been used for productive purposes. The study results show positive result in Girijan areas where exploitation and backwardness of the people is more. The efforts of NGOs, Government departments and social workers have facilitated the effective functioning of SHGs in the study area.

Amal Mandals (2005), research paper examines the importance of SHGs in poverty alleviation as the groups are organized on the basis of self-help and mutual help. The author was of the view that the earlier anti-poverty programmes prior to SGSY have mainly followed individual approach and have not given serious through on the need for sustainable income generation. In the light of the past experiences the author believed the group approach based on Self Help and mutual help may facilitate the sustainable
development of women. The author was of the view that the group approach is only the way to meet the financial needs through thrift and inter-loaning on rotation basis and in taking up income generating activities. If SHGs are guided by external agencies the results will be encouraging.

Gangaiah C, Nagaraja B, Vasudevulu Naidu C (2006) reports that “Impact of SHGs on income and Employment: A case study” the functional analysis of the study of SHGs undertaken in Karkambadi village reveals the following findings: The number of SHGs is substantially increasing in Karkambadi village. These groups are mobilizing thrift deposits and receiving timely matching and revolving funds to generate employment activities to earn their livelihood. The rural women have successfully demonstrated how to mobilize and managed thrift, appraise credit needs and enforce financial discipline. This micro-level study of SHGs reveals that these groups generated awareness among rural women about Government development programmes. The social outlook of the women has undergone a beneficial change and some degree of transformation of social outlook is found. On Social development, the women need further exposure. The changes that have occurred between "before" and "after" stages are encouraging, but not adequate. There was a sense of equality of status of women as participants, decision makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social spheres of life and sensitized the women members to take active part in socio-economic progress of rural areas. The rate of illiteracy can be further reduced through existing programmes. Formal education with focus on critical issues,
needed for functional literacy should be imparted to the women groups so that they can manage their group affairs independently. Periodical training at regular intervals to group members on self-management issues is to be necessarily imparted with the help of experienced resource persons. Change of leadership is a must for sharing the responsibilities by all members and generate leadership qualities in each member. Anti-child labour measures should be made an integral part of these Self-Help efforts.

Gupta, M.L, Namita Gupta, (2006) conducted a study “Economic Empowerment of women Through SHGs.” After one more cycle, these SHGs will have generated sufficient money and developed required expertise that they will be working independently. Two SHGs involved in the stitching work (Shakti and Pragati) are trying to get contract of stitching uniforms for hospitals and various other institutions. Prema SHG has sold its Murabba and Pickles successfully till now. Talks are having talks with the authorities to allot them a permanent space. They have now started Tiffin system and trying to expand their enterprise in larger area. Implementing agency has adopted Dhanas village for furthering the scheme of micro credit through SHGs. Chandigarh Police and other administrative offices are also participating in the project to pursue reforms and to create awareness in Dhanas.”

Sheela Dr.J. and Jayamala Dr.M, (2008) mentioned in their study on “Role of self-help groups women in value based emancipation” that the government encouraged women to form SHG especially women in rural areas. This is mainly to improve the status of women living below the poverty
level. In the study it was evident that most of the SHG women have been involved only in the micro credit savings. They were not properly facilitated through conducting periodical meetings, training programmes and awareness camps for their improvement. Their active participation in economic activities was very much limited due to the lack of adequate approach by the NGOs. Though the women have formed groups they have poor decision making capacity for their self-development. Following suggestions are made for the development of SHG members. Regular saving habit must be encouraged by NGOs. NGOs must assess the needs of the inhabitants of the community through effective communications with SHG members. Efforts must be taken to know the specific social and economic environment of the SHG covering their living conditions, resources available, skills, market, attitudes of the people, work culture, saving habits and their relation with outside world. There must be a platform to discuss the problems with other SHG group members. SHGs should help their members to learn to function as collectives, enable them to secure skills in coordination, communication and meaningful discussion in common issues.

Rajapriya M, (2008) in her study on “Empowerment of Women Through Self Help Groups” the self-help groups in the study area are taking the lead and playing an important and pivotal role in social transformation, welfare activities and infrastructure building and they have served the cause of women empowerment, social solidarity and socio economic betterment of the poor.
Sivamurugan C, (2008) submitted a report on the “Impact of Self Help Groups on income, savings, assets and occupational pattern in Tamil Nadu.” The major findings of the study reveal that 75 per cent of the members belong to the age group 20-40 years. 62 per cent of members are Hindus and only 34 per cent of members are Christians. It is also interesting to note that Muslims are living in the study district in considerable numbers, but their participation in SHGs is 4 per cent only. 92 per cent of members of the SHGs are literates. Nobody from the forward community becomes a member in the SHGs, 52 per cent of the members are from families with 4-6 members. The families with largest size class have contributed only small percentage of members. 75 per cent of the members are married. The formation of SHGs has improved the socio economic conditions of the member households in study area to some extent.

The evidence supports that SHGs have enabled the households to increase the household income of the members marginally. The annual income of the member households before joining the SHGs was only Rs.7500. It increased to Rs.7650 after the household joined the SHGs.

The impact of the formation of SHG is seen in the savings pattern of the member households. It was observed that there was a significant increase in the annual average savings. After joining the SHGs 65 per cent members developed saving habit. Of the households after joining the SHGs, 65 per cent of the households did not have saving habit at all before joining the SHGs. After joining the SHGs these 65 per cent members developed their saving
habit. Annual average savings of the households in the study area is to the extent of Rs.5000. Nearly 55 per cent of the members join SHGs because of the availability of loans at low rate of interest. Major portion of expenditure nearly 70 per cent is spent by member households on food items. The other items like the expenditure on cloth, rent, medicine, education, loan repayment, festival, wedding and others constitute 6.65, 10.9, 0.8, 5.22, 2.23, 2.2, 1.74 and 0.5 per cent respectively. 95 per cent of the members had developed a habit of borrowing through banks. Dependence of member households on moneylenders has reduced from 47 per cent to 1.5 per cent after joining SHGs. As for as reasons for borrowing through SHG is concerned, 38 per cent of the member households borrow for repaying the old debt, 23 per cent of the member households borrow to invest, 13 per cent of members borrow for consumption purposes. About 12 per cent and 8 per cent people borrow the amount to meet marriage expenses and promote the financial status respectively. About 6 per cent member borrow the money for education purposes.

Banking habits of members of SHGs have improved from 29 per cent to 96 per cent on becoming members of SHGs. Using banks as a source of savings have increased from 52 per cent to 82 per cent after becoming members of SHGs. The assets of the households have not increased after the households joined the SHGs. This means that the SHGs did not have any impact on the assets held by the households. SHGs are involved in different types of occupations. As many as 37 per cent members are mat weavers. For
18 per cent members beedi rolling has been a major occupation. All other members are involved in occupations like petty business (8.57 per cent) cow rearing (8.57 per cent) casual work (5 per cent) and others (21.86 per cent). 60 per cent of the members perceived that SHGs have helped them enjoy equal status in their families in taking household decisions. The available information on the perception of the members about the achievements of SHGs on equal status in family decision making, social awareness, development of communication skills and leadership skills reveal the following interesting facts. 56 per cent members have admitted that they significantly improved their social awareness because of their association with the SHGs. SHGs have helped develop the communication skill and leadership skill to some extent. This has been the opinion of about 50 to 55 per cent of the members of SHGs. To sum up, the formations of SHGs have improved their economic conditions marginally. However, it has got a significant impact on their personal life in their families in particular and in their social awareness and social outlook in general.

Kamalakannan. Dr. K 2008) conducted study reveals that the “Micro Finance Through Self Help Groups” the raising of the standard of living of the masses is one of the objectives of planning in India. Micro finance helps the rural poor to improve their standard of living and fulfil their credit needs. The SHGs are an important media through which banks are disbursing micro credit. The number of SHGs linked to banks aggregated to 16,18,456 as on 31st March 2005 of which 90 per cent were exclusively women groups. SHGs
play a major role in empowerment of women. Micro finance increases the productivity of self-employment in the informal sector of the economy. It is not just a financing system, but a tool for social change, especially for women. Micro finance for the poor and women has received extensive recognition as a strategy for poverty reduction and for economic empowerment.

Tangirala H.S. K, (2008) conducted a study on "SHGs is a tool of Economic Development of Cooperatives and its members." The study has found that the cooperatives are playing a tremendous role in the economic development of its members and in alleviation of poverty in the country. In the advent of the SHGs, the cooperatives have got another tool in its toolbox to quicken the process of developing the members financially.

In India, the thrift cooperatives and their federations are incorporated under the Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (MACS) Act 1995, a new law enacted in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Similar laws have since been enacted in six other states. The MACS is not enough for the member economic development, even the societies with the old act too should start the SHGs with their members to augment the economic development.

For the purpose of economic development, the co-operatives have to form the SHGs with the help of the members, increase their competencies and capabilities. The support, advice and coaching is required from the cooperatives through formal or informal network, to the SHGs to get the business from all the local people. The activities might be deposit
mobilisation, recovery management in case of credit cooperatives, procurement and sale activities in case of manufacture-based cooperatives. However, even the related diversification of the activities are justified, provided the needs of the members fulfilled and the ultimate goal of poverty alleviation take place.

Amarjeet Kour, (2008) conducted in “SHGs and Rural Development” in the present research it is found that respondents were not motivated properly for poverty alleviation and Rural Development through SHGs. It is also found that the concept of SHGs is very successful in many parts of India like Hyderabad, Tamil Nadu etc. where people, government and NGOs have come forward with true motivation and interest. From the findings it is found that about 84.4% respondents have made the use of bank loan in household activities and other personal needs instead of some productive activities.

Ramachandran Dr.T. and Balakrishnan S, (2008) conducted a study “The Impact of SHGs on Women’s Empowerment.” The study observed that the SHGs have the power to create a socio-economic revolution in the rural areas of our country. SHGs have not only produced tangible assets and improved living conditions of the members, but also helped in changing much of their social outlook and attitudes. In the study area, SHGs have served the cause of women empowerment, social solidarity and socio-economic betterment of the poor.

Sivachithappa Dr. K, (2008) conducted a study on “Success Story of Poverty Alleviation Through SHGs.” A number of important results have
emerged out of the study. These results are in contrast to the findings of a number of earlier studies. Some of the disagreements of this study with the earlier studies are: the income impact of the extreme poor is lower, the poorest borrowers may tend to have lower levels of asset accumulation, borrowers taking more number of loans generate more income, larger organizations have larger outreach, and formal schooling is an essential criterion for exerting better effect of SHG on income generation.

It can be concluded from the results of the present study that SHG based micro-finance and bank linkage programme has better outreach and positive impact on poverty. However, there is a need to improve the process of empowerment through proper policy initiatives.

Tanmoyee Banerjee Chatterjee (2009) study on "Economic Impact of Self Help Groups – A Case Study” the SGSY programme has supplied production loan to the members of SHGs. The loans have been supplied through the Nationalised Commercial Banks in the name of the Self-Help Group. The loans are treated as joint liability of the members of the group. In case of North 24 Parganas it has been observed that in most of the cases the woman of the family has joined in the Self-Help Groups. It has also been observed that among 300 group members interviewed (of whom 290 are females) 42 per cent were unemployed in pre-group joining stage. After joining group they became employed and this has changed their family income category. So the inequality of the distribution of the family income had reduced for the group of people who had joined SHGs. It has been further
observed that from low-income group more people have shifted to high-income levels. This has reduced the inequality in the distribution of family monthly income.

Secondly, the comparison of the pre-group and post-group level of the average monthly income and expenditures of the 300 group members at the constant prices had shown some interesting results. Here it is observed that the increase in average family income at constant price is significant and the family average consumption expenditure and food expenditure at constant prices had reduced significantly during this period. However, the post-group joining monthly average family health related expenditure has decreased significantly at the constant price. Alternatively the monthly family saving has increased after joining of Self-Help Group. This result is very obvious as the Self-Help Groups promote the saving habit among the group members. The fall in average family health related expenditure signifies that the economic empowerment of women must have created an awareness among them, which is reflected in better hygienic habits and more optimal allocation of food expenditure among the family members. In this context we have compared the pre-group and post-group joining consumption function of these 300 families. It is found that the consumption function of pre-group level is significantly different from that of post-group joining consumption function and marginal propensity to consume out of income has decreased after joining SHGs. This is in line with the increase in average family savings. Basically
after joining SHG, members have to save compulsorily a part of their income. This has decreased the marginal propensity to consume out of family income.

The comparison of the monthly family income and consumption expenditure of group members with a group of individuals who had not joined any SHGs within the survey period has showed that there has been a significant increase in the average monthly family income and consumption expenditure at current prices of the group members who are gainfully employed after joining the group.

Next it is obtained that family health related expenditure is significantly lower for group members than that of the non-group members. And group-forming authorities have significant impact on reducing the medical expenditure of the group members.

Finally, the most interesting result of this survey is that the rate of school dropout has significantly lowered in the families of group members than the families who do not belong to Self-Help Groups. It has been also observed that in the families of non-SHG members employment of woman family member has not reduced the school dropout, rather a family is more likely to have a school dropout if the woman member is working. But in case of group members there is no school dropout observed in the data. It has been observed in the survey that the members have to undertake different paper works to run the group activities in groups created under SGSY programme. This has created an awareness regarding the necessity of education among the
group members, which has reduced the school dropout rate in the families of group members

Thus, so far the survey results showed that there has been some positive impact of SGSY programme as a poverty alleviation programme. And it has helped to reduce the phenomenon of school dropout which will lead to a better society in the future. Finally from our study it appears that provision of employment in rural areas may not solve the social problems like school dropout of children, improvement of family health or welfare. The programmes that provide employment or supply income generating assets must be accompanied by awareness campaigns that raise the awareness regarding better health habits, necessity of child education to bring overall development of the society.

Raghavan V.P, (2009) reports that the “Micro-Credit And Empowerment” The State Poverty Eradication Mission-Kudumbashree-launched by the Government of Kerala State in India is a massive poverty eradication programme in contemporary history. Kudumbashree became the lifeline to many of the poor women in the State of Kerala. It assumed the status of helpline to many. It is a massive anti-poverty programme of the Government of Kerala aiming at eradicating poverty and salvage the destitutes from the wretches of extreme deprivation. The formation of 1,65,840 SHGs of the women from 33, 45, 509 risk families, covering urban, rural and tribal areas of the State helps develop 2,42,489 poor women into vibrant micro-entrepreneurs. As a result, the poor women of the State have
become active participants in the planning and implementation process of various ant-poverty programmes. By participating in various income generating-cum-developmental activities, the morale and confidence of women became very high. Capacity of the poor women of the State in several areas has gone up considerably. Status of women in families and community has also improved. *Kudumbashree* has gained national and international acclaim as an idea and workable model of participatory development for eradicating poverty.

It has proved without any doubt that women empowerment is the best strategy for poverty eradication. Women who were regarded as voiceless and powerless started identifying their inner power, their strength, opportunities for growth, and their role in reshaping their own destiny. The process of empowerment becomes the beacon light to their children, their families and to the society at large. It opens a new vistas in development history. A new paradigm of participatory economics has been found emerging in "God's Own Country." *Kudumbashree* presents a unique model of participatory development which can very well be emulated by other developing countries. The strategy of participation and empowerment adopted in *Kudumbashree* mission ensure sustainable livelihoods to a number of poor women the positive outcome, which a policy planner can always be enthused with.

Vanitha Dr. B, (2010) mentions in her study on “Micro credit and women’s Empowerment with special Reference to SGSY” this study has revealed that there are indications of positive interventions in the women
empowerment process due to the implementation of SGSY in Coimbatore District. From the stage of mere passive beneficiaries of welfare benefit, women are tending towards the stage of taking appropriate action to close gender gaps and inequalities. It has been found that there have been improvements in the financial position, income control and skill levels besides access to savings and credit.

Experiences over the years have shown that simply putting financial resources in the hands of poor women is not enough to bring about empowerment and improved welfare. Microfinance programs like SGSY when properly designed can make an important contribution to women's empowerment. By adopting a holistic approach that takes into account cultural, economic and political factors affecting empowerment, the schemes like SGSY can ensure that women are more deeply and consistently empowered. Apart from the revolving fund and economic assistance extended to the SHGs, there should be more emphasis on other elements of empowerment such as leadership, self-management, and entrepreneurship in order to inch towards the overall empowerment of women.

Somesh G, Yattin Korachar and Vaikunthe L.D. (2010) conducted a study “Women Empowerment: Role of SHGs and NGO’s” Provision of financial services and easy access is important for the development of poor women. While savings provide self-insurance and self-assurance to them, credit helps to maintain house hold activities production at times when their income has a temporary setback. It is evident from the study of Haveri
District that SHGs have been playing a vital role in the Empowerment of Women. This is an important institution for improving the life of women on various social and economic components. Many SHG women are using the financial resources availed to fund investments in asset creation or other inputs that yield relatively higher returns. The number of women inclined towards SHG is increasing which implies that women are aspiring for equality and self-respect. Haveri District is one of the important district in Karnataka that has been in the frontline as far as SHG is concerned. Number of SHG members are being trained for undertaking various productive activities like making agarbathi, candle etc., which makes them economically independent. This SHG have been an important role in empowering women in Haveri District.

Laxminarayanan Ramnathan’s (2011) study on “Socio-Economic Impact of SHG-Bank Linkage on Members : An Assessment” shows that women as a group are consistently better in promptness and reliability of repayment. Targeting women in these 'mainstream' programmes has been a very effective method of ensuring that the benefits of increased income accrue to the general welfare of the family, and particularly to the children. At the same time, women themselves benefit from the higher status they achieve when they are able to get new income. The members reported a positive influence on confidence level in dealing with people and institutions, an increase in awareness of health and hygiene, a generally positive attitude from their spouses and a larger average share in the family income. Thus SHG-
Bank Linkages are a benchmark in women's empowerment and socio-economic development of women at the village level.

Talekar S.D and Biradar M.B (2011) conducted a study on “Micro Credit Management by Women’s Self Help Groups.” A total of 30 women from the urban and 30 women from the rural areas were selected for the study. Hindu religion predominated both in the urban and rural areas under the study. The majority of the group members belonged to the age group of 31-40 years both in the urban and rural areas. Regarding educational status, 3.33 per cent women from rural areas were illiterate.

All the members stated that they formed into group mainly to initiate income generation activities and asset creation efforts. When interrogated on the reasons for joining the SHGs, urge to save and accumulate money, as well as, easy access to loans were highlighted. The quantum saved was greater in the urban areas than in the rural areas. The monthly savings ranged from Rs.30 to Rs.50 per head. The majority of the groups both in urban and in rural reached 100 per cent level of savings, was highly remarkable. A majority of the urban SHGs (45 per cent) had given above Rs.30000 as credit to its members and the rural groups (60 per cent) had lent credit to its members ranging between Rs.1000-20000.

SHGs are necessary to overcome exploitation, create confidence for economic self-reliance among the poor, particularly to women who are mostly invisible in the social structure The SHGs become the basis 'for action and change' and build a relationship of mutual trust between the promoting
organization and the rural poor through constant contact and genuine efforts. Credit delivery through thrift and credit groups (SHGs) emerges as an alternative to the existing system of credit disbursement by the banks. SHGs have been found to help inculcate among their member's sound habits of thrift, saving and banking.

Venkateshamurthy S, and Dinesh G.M. (2011) study on “SHGs and Empowerment of Women: A Study” established that women are very important segment in development at local to global levels. Economic independence and education of women will go a long way in attaining self-reliance for women. Real change will come when women are treated on par with men and given equal opportunities. When that happens, India will be able to harness its women power and emerge as a respected nation. In this regard the SHGs in the study area are taking the lead and playing an important and pivotal role in social transformation, welfare activities and infrastructure building and they have served the cause of women empowerment, social solidarity and socio-economic betterment of the poor. Therefore, there is a need for massive support from the state, civil society groups, NGOs and the international community in this regard.

It was reported by these studies that the women leaders gained a lot of experience in handling various problems through their interaction with the other groups. The relations between men and women in the village and also between the women and the government officials improved as a result of these groups. These studies have also identified the correlation between the
human resource development and the empowerment of women. Further, these studies suggest that there is considerable decline in the rate of domestic violence after the spread of the concepts of Self Help Groups through-out the country.

Selvamani, P and Celine Rani, A (2010) conducted a study on "Rural Women Through Dairy Cooperatives : Emerging Issues" dairy cooperatives can 'empower women with access to all empowering facilities such as member education, awareness programmes and orientation training of all kinds. By capacitating women in planning, polity and decision making process, dairy cooperatives pave the way for their long term development in rural areas. Nevertheless, women must avail the opportunities and empower themselves for their sustainable development in family, society, and socio-economic organizations. After attaining development, women could make independent decisions and to operate their own management system and carry out all career activities without any hindrance. To conclude, rural women empowerment through dairy cooperatives has been considered both as an end and as a means of women's growth and development in the long run.

Seilan A, (2010) has studied "Graduating Self-Help Groups in to Micro –Enterprises and Women Empowerment " the role of small enterprise in poverty alleviation has been recognised as vital, and promotion of small and micro-enterprises for women has been recognised as the key to augmenting family welfare. The micro-enterprise concept when coordinated with the SHG lending system, those people who have been deprived of credit
could have their fair share of credit. Micro-credit is not merely a financial business, but is a strategy or tool for empowerment of poor particularly the women. Micro-credit which has provided the rural poor access to finance without the burden of collateral through SHGs has empowered the women folk economically and socially. Though the credit provided is micro in nature, it has produced macro changes in the lives of the women who received it.

Nagabhushana Rao, E, Geetanjali, K (2011) conducted study reveals that the “Performance of SHGs in Srikakulam District” the performance of SHGs, by and large, is very much encouraging and satisfactory for the reason that they have accomplished the purpose for which they are established. However, there is a mixed opinion about the dominance of group leaders over members of SHG, but they are not coming on the way for the growth and development of members. One of the most interesting observation of the study is that the problems emerged through SHGs are being sorted out internally, thereby showing their commitment towards the organization and their leadership qualities. Another healthy observation is that the organization is strong and yielding positive results since they are utilizing the funds mostly for the purpose of income generating activities rather than consumption purpose.

There is no dispute to state that Self Help Groups deserves all-round support from all quarters both in terms of financial, administrative and legal to emerge themselves as strong and healthy institutions for the comprehensive development of the rural areas.
Thammi Raju D, Deepa, M. (2011) study on “Capacity Building of Women Self Help Groups in Dairying- An Analysis “the knowledge level and training needs are the building blocks of capacity building for women self-help groups. The overall training programme/curriculum shall include modules on breeding, feeding, management, health care and marketing.

The capacity building of members of WSHGs as para veterinary workers on the above modules is very much essential to undertake minor veterinary services at their villages in the light of shortage of staff and moderate availability of veterinary services. The rural women and their participation in dairying are well recognised. Further, there is a need to fill the gaps in order to bring improvement in the livelihoods of WSHGs. The strategies shall consider the training needs, preferences of women self-help groups for enhancement of skills in dairy farming practices, training need assessment, measurement of knowledge levels, selection of appropriate and preferred teaching methods, place of training, duration, season are the important criteria for consideration of capacity building. Proper mix of these criteria will ultimately reflect in the improved adoption of practices.

Hema P, (2011) in her study “A study on the Socio- economic conditions of SHG cattle rearers at Musiri Taluk “the government of Tamil Nadu has aimed at increasing the milk production to cope with increasing demand for that a new scheme called "Peraringnar Anna Centenary Dairy Scheme for Rural Women " (PAC DSRW) is being implemented. Under this scheme 10,000 cross bred milch animals have to be provided to women
SHGS in 200 villages at a cost of Rs.22 crores for a period of 2 years through Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk producers Federation Limited.

The economic viability of livestock, farming depends upon the feed and fodder cost which accounts for 65 -70% of the production cost. To bring down the fodder cost the establishment of community feed and fodder banks with the help of 'SHGs is being encouraged. The cultivation of perennial high yielding fodder grass varieties like Cumbu - Napier, CO3, CO4, Kolukkattai grass, Para grass and Guinea grass etc., are being encouraged. Cultivation of cowpea, stylo santhus and aumbuxlapier grass in coconut fields as inter crop is also being encouraged.

Reji E.M, (2011) in her study “Micro finance and women Empowerment : Evidence from field study” the foregoing discussion revealed that micro-financing through the Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) enables empowerment of its members. It places a lot of emphasis in developing savings habit among the members. Apart from providing savings and credit to its members, NHGs were instrumental in bringing desired social change among the members. The ability to contribute to household income, as a result of the credit access and increased income from income generating activities helped the members to get respect in their family and community as well. This acceptance in turn helped them to gain confidence, play increased role in household decision-making, gain control over resources, ability to freely interact with members of the group as well as outsiders and ability to deal with adversities, and involvement in community activities. The group
activities are found to be helpful in developing a greater sense of solidarity, closeness and will to shoulder responsibilities among the group members, which is a true reflection of empowerment as a result of participation in group activities.

Jabir Ali (2011) mentioned in their study on “Government Initiative for Promoting Micro – enterprises in Rural India : A Case of SGSY in Uttarpradesh” the approach of group based initiatives in various developmental programmes across developing countries has generated enormous enthusiasm among government and nongovernment organisations (NGOs) for achieving their goals. These initiatives have been proved significantly successful in creating social capital for betterment of the society at large. The idea of attempting poverty reduction through the provision of uncollateralised loans-cum-subsidy to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for establishing micro-enterprises has gained momentum in the recent decade.

Analysis of the scheme indicates that the ongoing practices in developing micro-enterprises through SHGs lay much emphasis on provision of credit and subsidy and less attention on enhancing human and economic capital among the group enterprises such as provision of business development services, entrepreneurial training and skill upgradation, technology acquisition and transfer and expansion of market access and marketing assistance. The study makes an in-depth analysis into these aspects, which need to be addressed for developing successful micro-enterprises at the
grassroots level by involving poor families for rendering the community efforts viable, successful and sustainable.

Josily Samuel, Kunnal L.B, Ashalatha K.V (2011) study on “Impact of Microfinance on the Upliftment of Rural Women- An Economic Analysis” there is a need to initiate, encourage and establish SHGs in all villages for the betterment of poor particularly the women folk. The training for skill up gradation of the members is essential to successfully run the SHGs. Skill development of women will enable them to take up microenterprises and there by contribute more to their family income. The training programmes should be organised in nearby places that would be convenient to the members.

Gangi Reddy Y, Madhuri N.V, (2011) has recommended “Self Help Groups (SHG) Movement in Tamil Nadu Empowerment of Rural Women” flexible approach in the formation of SHGs in terms of amount of savings, change in leadership, meetings, internal lendings, rate of interest, penalty for delayed savings and loan repayment lead to internal democracy followed by empowerment process.

Emphasis on capacity building training on the lines of Mathi with a set of modules for all the primary stakeholders including SHG members, representatives of SHGs, community coordinators, NGO’s and field functionaries of respective government departments on regular basis.

All these studies made it clear that the Self-Help Groups enhanced the quality of life of rural women. They have also increased the role of women
decision makers in the economic, social and cultural spheres of life. The Self-Help Groups also provide the means of survival for the poor women through mobilizing social capital for long term sustainability. These Groups have created lot of awareness among their members about health, education, environment and legal rights. Leadership qualities developed and communication skills also improved, further, the availability of information has led to confidence building among these women. It improved their ability to handle complex issues.

They found that the SHGs also helped their members to have a high degree of motivation and determination to succeed in their attempts. These studies also revealed that the saving habit developed among the groups have paved the way for empowerment. These research studies further highlighted that the Self-Help Groups hold their meetings regularly. All the members have been saving to a great extent regularly. They are also maintaining the records covering their group meetings, member-wise savings, loans given from common fund and recoveries etc.

These studies also showed that the loan recovery rate is very high. The SHGs provide various types of loans such as business loans, consumption loans, and so on to the members for meeting their credit needs for productive purposes and thus they have considerable impact on the rural women.

These studies also disclosed that the saving habit followed by economic independence enabled the beneficiaries of the Self-Help Groups to acquire several assets and to be free from debts.
These studies, further observed that the SHGs also enable their women members to take up several activities such as brewing of liquor, helping the old, the widows, maintaining group unity and fighting against social evils such as casteism and dowry etc. These groups also enable them to acquire skills in the area of conflict management, ensure their active participation in the gram Sabhas and increase their ability to address poverty. They also suggested that the SHGs are instrumental in enhancing the ability of their members to mould the community in the right perspective and to take initiative in starting entrepreneurial ventures on their own.

All the above studies clearly indicate the impact of SHGs on the status of women on the positives lines. Homogeneity of the groups, homogeneity of the activity, group unity group savings, loans to the needy members at lower interest decisions making, improvement in nutrition health, education to the childrens are all the positive factors for the success of many of the DWCRA groups as well as other SHGs.

However there are a few studies which projected discouraging facts with reference to DWCRA and other SHGs. Following are some of the studies.

Punjab State Institute of Public Administration (PSIPA) Chandigarh has undertaken an evaluation study and concluded that the failures of DWCRA in Punjab were due to non-release of matching financial allocations by the State Government during 1983-84 and 1984-85, official red-tapism and dominance of while women group in Mahila Mandals of Punjab, enthusiastic
official machinery and lack of involvement of Voluntary agencies are also responsible for poor performance of DWCRA programme.

The Government of India sponsored four evaluation studies by four institutions. These institutions have conducted studies on DWCRA programme with limited geographical coverage; the conclusions differ from one another. Some other important studies are discussed below.

The Centre for Regional Ecological and Science studies in Development Alternatives (CRESSIDA) had undertaken a study of DWCRA in Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal (1985) the main findings of the study are as follows.

The performance of Sikkim in the field of DWCRA is not very impressive in the qualitative terms but quantitatively the progress in the state has been much better than in the neighbouring states of Tripura and West Bengal.

The slow progress in Tripura has been attributed to inadequate ground work at the policy and implementation levels.

In West Bengal, the scheme has made little progress in Bankura. However the study team report has appreciated the approach of West Bengal Government in the implementation of the programme. The schemes selected were those for which capital investment is low.

A study by Shah and Kanchen Benerjee (1991) on the status of rural women (of Kharagpur block in Midnapur district of West Bengal) showed
that in relation to education, economic condition, community participation and social involvement, women occupy quite a low status.

Fisher, Thomas and M.S. Sriram (2002), was of the opinion that in the context of male dominated rural societies, it is not surprising to note that prior to the 1990s, there were hardly any credit schemes for the rural women in several countries, both developed and developing it is only after the launching of feminist movements throughout the world and the spread of women-oriented studies during 1960s which highlighted the deprivation and struggle for survival among women that the concept of credit for women was born. There has been a growing realization all over the globe that rural women are discriminated against in all walks of life despite their substantial contribution to the household economy and in turn to the nation's economy.

Archana Saxena’s study (2002) concerns with the share of women in the healthcare services. All these studies found that the Indian women are subjected to suppression by men in all the spheres of social, economic and political life. There is rampant inequality and gender discrimination in the Indian society. Women are discriminated in all the stages of their life. These studies, further maintained that the women in India face several problems right from their childhood. They are given less food, even a reduced share of mother's milk, less education and less respect. Discrimination against the women is severe in all the fields, while the occurrence of infanticide, child mortality, maternal deaths, anemia and malnutrition are rampant due to
inadequate and inaccessible health services, Exploitation of women is common at all levels.

The States of Parithavachy and others (2002) Mohanan (2003) maintained by these studies that even though the rural women possess enough entrepreneurial potentialities due to poor financial position they are unable to exploit them to achieve development. These studies pointed out that the regional rural banks, co-operative institutions and commercial banks have failed to meet the credit needs of the rural women, whereas the Self-Help Groups have succeeded in this respect.

These studies also highlight the fact that the lower status of women in the society is mainly due to their poverty and economic dependence. Even though, they play an important role in the family, their contribution is often ignored.

They are never allowed to participate in several affairs of the society on account of the traditional value system. The rural women are affected more than the urban women under the influence of these traditions and customs. Because of this, they are denied opportunities for participating in the process of development.

Further, these studies emphatically observe that there is a great deal of harassment of women in the house as well as in the society. They report that the domestic violence is suffered by more than two-thirds of the women in the country on a regular basis in the form of psychological or physical abuse. Wife beatings and dowry deaths are a common phenomenon in several states.
In the above studies, it is pointed out that the participation of women in the decision-making process at house and community levels is very negligible. The women are marginalized in the community activities and also in the political process at all levels. In the absence of adequate skills, literacy, knowledge, lack of alternative job opportunities and training facilities, the women are unable to compete with the men in securing jobs, both in the government service and private sector.