CHAPTER 6

BEST PRACTICES IN SHG INSTITUTIONS: A FEW CASE STUDIES

The following chapter gives an overview of the key concept of ‘best practices’. Secondly, in this section, an attempt is made to study the best practice in SHG institutions and the role of NGOs in poverty alleviation; the focus is on group discussion of the agencies based on development and finally a few cases of successful SHGs who belong to different castes/tribes and availed loans from the respective SHGs and from the Gramya Banks for undertaking income generating activities. By examining their family background and also the village base, it would be easy to identify the characteristics as to how these households have been able to escape poverty. Though a majority of women members have taken micro-credit from respective groups, however, few of them are successful. Thus, an effort is made to find out the factors which promote livelihood activities among certain households and social groups and reasons for which others are not able to come out of poverty. In order to understand a problem like poverty in the rural areas, perhaps one has to look into the various dimensions of poverty and the lifecycle the poor people goes through in different location and among major social groups.

The notion of ‘best practices’ has been derived from the political and administrative world of anti-poverty strategies. The concept has been used in social research from an interdisciplinary perspective to learn from successful experiments of reducing poverty, which can be transferred to different national and cultural settings. The evolution of the concept coincides with a decade of shifting paradigms in development theory on how to combat poverty in the 1990’s. The dominant philosophy of macro-economics and structural adjustment as major tools to eradicate poverty and social exclusion now incorporates the building of human capital to enhance the human factor and its potential in the construction of pro-poor communities.

Oyen (2002: 21) classifies a best practice as an intervention that reduces poverty, reduce it to a sizeable degree, prevent loss of gains and ensures that none of the formerly poor slips back into poverty as candidates for best practice. Further, he views that an intervention that

manages to reduce several kinds of poverty rather than just one component in the complex pattern of poverty production as a leading candidate for a best practice.  

Studies by Joshi, Moore, Miller and Cimadamoore et.al. emphasize the ‘participation’ as a crucial variable in the process of an intervention becoming a best practice. Thus, different kind of participations which in turn may lead yield different kinds of impact on the future of a best practice. Some of these are best practice cases that can provide important lessons and have tremendous potential for context based replication and up scaling. Careful documentation of best practice cases can provide guidelines for policy making and planning of new projects as well as their effective implementation (SAARC 2003: 36-38). However, caution must be exercised while analyzing issues of replicability of a ‘best practice’ case. The concept of best practice is a fairly recent inclusion in the development discourse and the literature does not provide an adequate explanation of when and how a best practice can be replicated and transferred to another place or region.

One of the transplanted best practices cited the most often is the case of the Grameen Bank. The Grameen Bank originated in 1989 in Bangladesh and provided a credit without collateral to poor women to initiate small-scale enterprises. The women guaranteed collectively for the loan and organized repayment between them. The scheme has tremendous success both in terms of new initiative slow administrative costs. The model has been implanted worldwide into so-called micro-credit schemes where by small loans are extended to poor people for entrepreneurial activities and to help them obtain ordinary bank loans. However, its success in terms of replication has been mixed. Critics view that the schemes have not become the expected cost-effective weapon for fighting poverty. It has been speculated that one reason is the curtailment of the ‘16 dogmas’ built into the original Grameen scheme. These dogmas provide a set of cultural instructions linked to the use of money (for instance the loan could not be used for bridal dowry). Although the same instructions would hardly be applicable within another cultural framework, the transfer of the best practice built into the Grameen scheme became incomplete. The lesson from Bangladesh stresses the fact that an understanding of the social context is important for the successful transfer of a best practice (Oyen 2002: 8-9). Thus, the ‘more limited and well-defined an intervention is and the less culture-bound it is, the more manageable a transfer is likely to be’ (ibid: 11).

In Indian context, Ralegan Siddhi qualifies as a best practice case of poverty reduction since it has not only reduced poverty, but has led to sizeable poverty reduction with the prevention of slippage or loss of gain. Such cases provide important lessons and have tremendous potential for context-based replication and scaling-up (Mehta et al. 4-5).

The SHGs operate under the umbrella of a microcredit institution. In other words, the microcredit institutions ensure that the understanding of SHGs are within an understanding of the total system. Though the disclaimers argue that a successful microfinance program may not appropriately be viewed as a “financial institution” activity alone. The importance of social relations and institutional features is stressed in Woolcock (1999). However, these may have the importance but it is also believed that that creating good financial institutions qua financial institutions does contribute to the success of such programs. Thus, SHGs and microcredit institutions can be solely perceived as financial institutions.246

A typical SHG consists of twelve to thirty members (Rutherford, 2000). The group is not merely a savings and loan association, but serves as an “affinity” group that provides a platform for a range of issues (such as watershed development, awareness building, and family planning - see Fernandez, 1994, for a comprehensive description of such SHGs). An SHG meets regularly (often weekly), and in these meetings, members contribute savings and take decisions on loans to members of the group. Group leadership is by rotation. The SHG may initially lend out of its own pool of funds and after gaining some experience with lending (and recovering loans), it may borrow from a microcredit institution for on-lending to members.

6.1 Anti-Poverty and Development Programmes in Kalahandi District: Role of the NGOs and SHPIs

Current debate, in social development approach, takes in to account the cognizance of 'structure-agency' dialectic and social changes, taking place in late-modern age, in the present world. Giddens’ Structuration theory coupled with concept of Life-politics and Putnam’s concept of social capital; certainly provide a clear theoretical framework for social development by resolving the ‘structure-agency’ dialectic. After the onset of globalizations and liberalizations in India and else where, there is a shift of discussion among the policy

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makers and academicians from 'empowerment to governance' and the role of the non-governmental organizations in this new environment. The Human Development Report 2002 has an inspiring message as its theme – Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World – leaves no room no doubt about the centrality of governance. The approach paper to the Tenth Five Year Plan announces, Reform of governance perhaps has to be one of the centrepieces of the Tenth Plan and then it goes on to spell out what it calls a programme for civil service renewal. It is not only about making the state personnel and government institutions perform and deliver what is expected from them under the policy; in addition the idea is to make governance the main preoccupation of everybody in both public and private spheres. In the context of poverty alleviation, the emphasis is about how to improve governance rather merely explaining the persistence of poverty such as faulty approaches (ibid.). In the new and changing environment, all organizations including the states as well as non-state have make adjustments with their role to challenge the market forces. Orissa government’s annual plan for 2003-04 states that: ‘State Government has taken several initiatives to improve governance and to monitor the implementation of RLTAP (Revised Long Term Action Plan) in the KBK (the undivided Kalahandi Bolangir Koraput) districts’ (Vol.1. p. 14 -24).

In recent years considerable academic and NGO writings have appeared promoting the centrality of the NGOs in the pursuit of Governance (R Mohanty and R Tandan 2002). In the context of the anti-poverty programmes, the NGOs have been playing a vital role in mobilizing the target groups for the rural development schemes including the Self Help Groups.

It is in this context, an attempt has been made here to assess the role of the NGOs as agencies of development in a remote location of Thuamul Rampur of Kalahandi district. Four NGOs which are working in the sample villages such as Antodaya, Gram Vikas, Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan (SVA) and Parivartan were selected for the study purpose. In the section, a detailed analysis has been provided regarding the nature of intervention of these NGOs in terms of promoting WSHGs, dealing with the situation of food insecurity and chronic hunger through the innovative approaches and the successful practices of generating income generating in the region.

6.1.1 Antodaya

In 1989, Antodaya was formed and registered as a non-profit organization as a result of a group of dedicated people who had previously committed themselves to interact with the inhabitants of Thuamul Rampur Block in Kalahandi. Antodaya was formed out of a land-rights movement and to bring change and development to the living standard of the tribals (as well as of other weaker sections) in the Thuamul Rampur, Junagarh and Kalampur Blocks of the Kalahandi district. It address the problems of high indebtedness, scanty and unequal land distribution, tribal land alienation, high rates of illiteracy, the regular occurrence of drought, issues related to migration, food scarcity, lack of essential health services and minimum education facilities. The main focus of Antodaya’s intervention in the area is to enhance the food security of the target community through consolidation of sustainable livelihood options and a key part of our approach is to consolidate our activities in the long-term by organizing them in a direction that is desired by our target communities. (Antodaya Annual Report 2007/08). The vision of Antodaya is to realize a society where there is no hunger, fear, injustice (Arising out of inertia) and diseases.

As the Mission Statement of Antodaya puts it:
Antodaya believes that its vision can be realized through Group Action, which leads to

- Emergence of strong Village Level Organization
- Critical analysis of situation
- Having access to development opportunities where they exist and asserting for it where they don’t.
- Encouraging the marginalized sections for their greater involvement in a development process, which is sustainable, socially acceptable, economically viable and technically feasible.
- Collaboration/building partnership with like-minded institutions, groups and individuals.

(http://www.interconnection.org/antodaya).

6.1.1.1 Interventions and Impact

Antodaya works for the sustainable development of the tribals and other deprived sections "Dalits" of the Kalahandi District in Orissa. The approach of work is integrated and based on the people's participation. With this approach, the Antodaya team undertake the programs such as rights over natural resources, economic development through sustainable agriculture, micro credit and women entrepreneurship, health services and disabilities, mother and child health, legal aid and advocacy, children as Ambassadors of Development and finally on drinking water.
6.1.1.2 Economic Development through Agriculture, Micro Credit and Women Entrepreneurship

The people's economy in this area revolves around agriculture and forest products. While they can manage themselves for five to six months per year, for the remainder of the year, they must rely on credit. The formal credit system, such as Banks, etc., was not able to fulfill the people needs; therefore the people went to moneylenders for loans with high interest rates (50% interest). After analyzing the situation with the villagers' participation, Antodaya organized the people, especially the women, to establish self-help groups (thrift and credit groups) in the village, link them with Banks and other financial institutions, organized training for the women on Brooms and Pulses processing, established market links for their produce, and assisted in land development and land based activities. ANTODAYA also helped the womens' groups establish "Public Distribution Outlets" of essential commodities and Grain Banks to help overcome the period of scarcity every year.

Food insecurity for five to six months per year also affects the health conditions and nutritional status of the people. In response to this problem, ANTODAYA has several focused initiatives to ascertain food security to the masses. These are:

- Mobilizing people to have access over land and homestead plots.
- Assisting people with credit linkage to acquire essential productive assets, such as plough bullock, agri-implements, transport vehicles, etc.
- Assisting people with the purchase of agri-inputs and horticulture plants.
- Assisting people in reclaiming their land and make it arable.
- Forming and assisting 98 Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to face distress (Lagani) and scarcity.
- Promoting village level organizations (VLOs) to manage Grain Banks in the village.
- Promoting the concept of second crop and composting.
- Promoting four VLOs to manage the Public Distribution System (PDS) outlets for 1410 families.
- Promoting processing units through Self-Help Groups to create employment.
- Linking the WSHG members with social security schemes of LIC of India.
- Promoting community managed watersheds for sustainability.
- Promoting Vikas Volunteer Vahini (VVV) (Farmers Club) to be the link between banks (Commercial and NABARD) and people.
- Organizing Social Education Centers and training to upgrade the skills of the people.
- Organizing Health Education and cattle check-up camps.
6.1.1.3 Fight for Right Price for the Hill Brooms-Story of Hill Broom Makers of Kalahandi

Poverty in acute form exists in the tribal dominated district of Kalahandi. Distress of labour, land and produce in addition to the harsh economic environment has led to the exploitation of the tribal inhabitants. Unforeseen and unplanned expenditure for religious and social functions left them in dire needs without any savings for a rainy day. The money-lender and middle man, known as Gauntia, Charni Kalantar (those who charge 25% interest per month) take away their agricultural and minor forest produce by giving nominal price and the tribals in some areas go almost without food for 4-5 months every year during the monsoons. Lack of education, communication facilities and lack of awareness exposes them to exploitation by money lenders, middlemen and businessmen. The main source of income is from cultivation and collection of minor forest produce. Antodaya, an NGO, helped in promotion of SHGs, whose members are engaged in this activity, formed 35 SHGs and started saving small amounts on a regular basis. Initially, the tribals who collect the hill-brooms used to sell to middlemen @ Rs.1/- per Kg. as against Rs.3/- per Kg offered by Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Orissa (TDCC) because of the presumable nexus between the middleman and the corporation staff. They did not have the right to process the raw-material and TDCC used to collect the hill-brooms and sell these to businessmen from outside the state who process them into broomsticks. The SHG members had to travel to Bhubaneswar, the state capital and place their case before the authorities and the public through street play & various other peaceful demonstrations. But finally it had a marginal effect. This led to increase(revision) in procurement price of raw material by TDCC, but the SHG members are yet to legally get the right to process the hill broom.

6.1.1.4 Jeeban Jyoti of Amjhola village, now a successful trader of Pulses

Amjhola is a village of Thumul Rampur situated in the remote location of Kalahandi district. Fourteen women of this village has formed Jeevan Jyoti SHG and running successfully since 13th November 2000 with proper guidance of Antodaya. They have been conducting NTFP business several times successfully. Based on this past experience and with the help of Antodaya, VDC, Meghanad Nanda of MART Bhubaneswar, the SHG members decided to conduct Jhudang business in a common meeting with above all facilitators on November 2006 at Amjhola.
On 11th and 12th November 2006 they purchased 1655.5 kg jhudang @ Rs.20 from local farmers with a capital of Rs. 56000 out of which Rs.40000 support from Gramya panthi (village fund) after fixing the selling price of Rs.27 per kg with Eco-Farm, Kesinga with a condition that the trader will lift the whole product from Saisuruni (main road 13 km distance from the village). To fix the selling price Kamli Dei (President) of Jeeban Jyoti WSHG have bargain with different traders of Bhawanipatna and Kesinga in which Antodaya, VDC and MART also helped them. The net profit of WSHG is Rs.11185 after selling the product and interested to repeat same business again. Again the WSHG has purchased 2315kg. of Jhurang from Khandual WSHG, Ushamaska and local farmers @ Rs.21 per kg. Khandual WSHG also gained Rs.450. Jeeban Jyoti WSHG has sold 2222 kg juudang again to same trader with same terms and condition @ Rs.28 after gradation of 2315 kg and gained Rs.11767. Now Jeeban Jyoti WSHG members were from middleman who takes maximum share of profit and have their self-confidence to conduct any other business. They also conduct nizer business. Jeeban Jyoti WSHG becomes an example for other WSHG.

6.1.1.5 Training on pickle making for Women SHG Members
Due to lack of market facility tribal people can not get any profit from NTFP like amla, tamarind, mango etc. but there is a market demand after processing of these NTFP. To develop their financial status Antodaya arranged pickle making for WSHG members in May 2006 at Dalguma. Resource person Mrs. Namita Das of Horticulture Dept. trained about essential ingredients and quantity, process and technique of preparation and storage of it. According to trainee it’s definitely support their financial status.

6.1.2 Gram Vikas
Gram Vikas, which literally means ‘village development’, is an organization that has been working since 1979, to bring about sustainable improvement in the quality of life of poor and marginalized rural communities- mostly in Orissa.

As the Mission Statement of Gram Vikas puts it:

*The Millennium Mission of Gram Vikas is to enable a critical mass of the poor and marginalised people in the hinterland of Orissa – adivasis, dalits, marine artisanal fisher people, small and marginal farmers, landless, women – to empower themselves to achieve a better quality of life. Environmental sustainability, Social and Gender Equity and Sustainability of Peoples’ self-governance institutions are core values that drive this mission.* (available at: http://www.gramvikas.org/).
6.1.2.1 Intervention and Impact

Gram Vikas has taken cluster of villages in certain areas of Thuamul Rampur and involved in various activities which range from water and sanitation facility to immunization and Balbadi (pre-school centres), formation of SHGs etc. Gram Vikas works closely with ITDA for various tribal development programmes. In order to promote gender equity and women’s empowerment, Gram Vikas supports the formation and strengthening of Self Help Groups. These groups can collectively make savings for starting income generating activities such as agriculture, livestock rearing, fish farming, horticulture, etc. A typical self-help group unites 10 to 15 members of the community, who commit to jointly make savings every month. As the fund grows, the members may borrow money from the fund. To support these self-help groups, Gram Vikas provides support and capacity building, including basic record keeping and financial training and supports groups to undertake income-generating activities. When the group gains the ability and confidence required, they are linked to local banks. By linking them to local banks they are able to access external funds and avail loans provided by government schemes.

Although self-help groups are not restricted to being exclusively for women, the majority of Self Help Groups are women’s groups. The groups provide a social space for women to discuss common concerns, in addition to wider issues. This space enables women to develop the confidence that they need to be able to speak out even when men are present. In a village council meeting, this allows women to play a greater role in the decision making process. Till now appreciatively 15,000 women from 1,239 Self-Help Groups have raised 3,100,000 Rupees as savings; and over 11,800,000 Rupees were accessed through bank loans (Annual Report 2008-09). Gram Vikas has formed self help groups in Madangaguda village which falls under Gunpur Gram Panchayat of Thuamul Rampur. Four self help groups were formed out of which 3 are women self help groups and the other one is comprised by male members (See Table 6.1).

The Rural Health and Environment Programme (RHEP) is an integrated rural development intervention being implemented by Gram Vikas in very backward and poor villages of Orissa. The mission of RHEP is to improve the quality of life of the rural communities in terms of both physical conditions of living as well as economic opportunities, to engineer a process of ‘reverse migration’ from urban centres to villages. Madangaguda village is basically a 100 per cent tribal dominated village. There are 42 ST household in the village. Out of 42 households, 37 households are below the poverty line. Under the Rural Health and Environment Programme, 42 toilets and bath rooms are constructed and a water tank has
been installed in the village which has the preserving capacity of 30,000 litre water (See Table. 6.1).

Table 6.1: Demographic Profile of Madangaguda Village

| Total families | 42 |
| Adivasi/ST | 42 |
| Domba/SC | 0 |
| General | 0 |
| Families under B.P.L | 37 |
| Nos. of Toilet and Bath room Construction | 42 |
| Capacity of Water Tank | 30,000 Litre |
| Self Help Groups | 1 Male, Female 3 |

Source: Field Observation

Though Madangaguda is a tribal inhabited village, it is more homogenous in character. Villagers have strong unity and their participation is very high in the Gram Sabha and village meetings. Villagers have elected one member from their community as Sarpanch for the Gram Gunpur Gram Panchayat for two times. Thus, there is more democratization in this village which led to the development of the village. Villagers are well motivated in terms of contributing to implement the schemes and programmes (either for development of infrastructures like water tank, housing, establishment of grain bank, community hall) meant for the development of their village (See Table 6.2). Observing the collective solidarity of the villagers, Gram Vikas NGO has taken several initiatives for the development of the village.

Table 6.2 Sectors of Intervention in Madangaguda Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities undertaken</th>
<th>Gram Vikas Grant</th>
<th>Peoples Contribution</th>
<th>Govt. Contribution</th>
<th>Total Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toilet and Bath room</td>
<td>124094</td>
<td>142800</td>
<td>40000</td>
<td>306894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Supply System</td>
<td>171573</td>
<td>117000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>288513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Hall</td>
<td>63,731</td>
<td>18000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing( Loan H.D.F.C)</td>
<td>734630</td>
<td>545370</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1280000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Bank</td>
<td>38500</td>
<td>14300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Villages are encouraged to undertake and develop community income generation activities like pisciculture in the village pond now freed from the pressures of catering to household
needs and free from pollution as well. Horticulture plantations, consisting of a mixed variety of timber, fuel, fodder and fruit trees are raised on village common lands and wastelands. Income from the ponds and plantations is used for paying electricity bills, repairs and maintenance of pumps and salaries of the pump operator, balwadi (crèche) teacher, facilitators for day school, etc.

Gram Vikas facilitated the villagers to construct bathing room with protected piped water supply in addition to a separate toilet. In most RHEP villages Gram Vikas has also supported families to construct better houses. The traditional houses are of about 100 sq ft, and prone to disasters. Gram Vikas assisted people build permanent disaster proof houses without any subsidy, with people contributing through labour and local materials about Rs.15,000 out of an estimated total cost of Rs.46,500 for a two-room house with a kitchen and veranda in an area of about 45 sq.m. The remaining Rs.31,500 is facilitated by Gram Vikas as a soft loan from housing finance companies. For the people, building and living in a permanent (disaster proof), spacious and comfortable home it is a matter of great pride and dignity. It also prompts them to think bigger, gives them the confidence to move ahead in life and finally come out of the cycle of poverty and backwardness.

The community is also supported in developing infrastructure like roads, drainage systems, community hall, grain bank, etc. Here as well the contribution by the people is clearly defined in the terms of local materials like stone, aggregate, bricks, unskilled labour, etc. The habitation approach leads to an improvement in living conditions and enhances their pride as well.

### 6.1.2.2 Livelihood Promotion

Limited employment opportunities and dwindling returns from local resources due to successive droughts are forcing the poor, especially the youth to migrate. To address this, Gram Vikas motivates the community to undertake land and water development measures. Water harvesting units and irrigation infrastructure are developed to ensure food security and generate surpluses for better incomes. We focus on the marginally unemployed, seasonally unemployed and totally unemployed poor in the livelihood interventions. One area of intervention is skill development - training men and women in masonry, stone cutting, wire bending, carpentry, etc. Equipped with these skills they command better employment opportunities, which in turn enhance their pride and dignity. We also promote village industries involving value addition to local agricultural and forest produce; brick making using energy efficient technology, etc.
Gram Vikas staff members establish contact in the village, identify key opinion leaders and work through them to initiate discussions among all the households. There are certain conditions that the community needs to agree to at the beginning of the process. These are:

- Full participation of all households in the village
- Creation of corpus fund with contribution from all families
- Developing of monitoring systems to ensure full usage of facilities

6.1.3 Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan (SVA)

Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan which means Campaign for Participatory Development is a voluntary organization registered under Society Registration Act (1860) in the year of 1995. It comprises of Community based grass root organizations, local voluntary organizations, SHGs, Youth Clubs, Mahila Mandals, Forest Protection and Management forums, Farmer's organizations etc. Also several social activists, campaign leaders are the constituting members of SVA.

As the Mission Statement of Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan puts it:
To establish a society where there will be no poverty and injustice and where the people play the role as subject in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their life, a society where people have constant access to decision making process and the power that affects their life (http://www.svaindia.org).

SVA functions all over the State of Orissa though the operational area/field is focused in Western part of Orissa constituting four districts namely Kalahandi, Nuapada, Baragarh, and Bolangir. The major activities of SVA in collaboration with its members organizations have been undertaking the following activities in several districts of Orissa.

- Training and Capacity Building of Community Based Organizations.
- Activities around Natural Resource Management
- Relief and Rehabilitation activities
- Advocacy Campaign and Public education on issues of Public Interest.

SVA seeks to develop greater gender equity by working towards its goals on poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. The two main objectives of SVA's policy on Gender are:
- To integrate gender and development/sustainable development approach in all its programmes, projects and policies and ensure gender equitable outcomes.
- To create a conducive environment within SVA for women and men to work on equal terms.
6.1.3.1 Intervention and Impact

A sizeable proportion of the population of Kalahandi, Bolangir, Nuapada and Baragarh districts lack access to institutional credit and savings. A lack of access to financial institutions also hinders them to engage in new business ventures. Microfinance serves as well as empowers them to assist in their economic development process. Over a period of time SVA has well been realized that saving and small loan for income generation has a tremendous potential for reduction of poverty in rural areas. But it also believes that unless some measures towards empowerment of poor is taken the result will be lopsided one. Again performing these activities in groups rather than by individuals has better chances for sustainability. SVA initiated the process of organizing poor women into SHGs and cooperatives with an idea of empowering them socially, economically and politically. SVA used SHGs as forum of women to discuss gender issues and organize for change. This programme provides a potentially large and organized grass root base for developing advocacy and lobbying strategies around gender as well as other issues. SVA has worked out on a framework for gender equity, human rights and sustainable livelihoods to facilitate through SHGs and cooperative. The framework is ready for implementation in subsequent years. To build up capacity SVA has been providing information, organizational and leadership skills and strategies to employ to SHGs and cooperatives. A status of SHGs promoted and supported by SVA has been given in table 6.3.

A total of 1016 SHGs have been promoted and 11376 families are being covered to get various services offered by SHGs. They have deposited a total amount of saving of Rs 4375710.00 in banks. Out of the total number of SHGs promoted by SVA 447 groups have already been linked to banks and have been able to mobilize an amount of Rs 7291900.00 to undertake various income generation activities. Most of the SHGs have been involved in income generation activities as well as community activities in their respective villages. In many villages, the women SHGs have taken up fish nursery raising as an income generation activity. Because of the micro credit activities undertaken by SHGs money lending has gone down and the general income level of the women have gone up.

To strengthen capacity of SHGs and cooperatives, during the year 2006-07 SVA organized a total of 142 number of programmes on various themes over 242 programme days. Membership Mobilisation, Leadership Development, Promotion and Management, Financial Management and skill up-gradation are the main themes around which training programmes of SVA for members of SHGs and cooperatives have been designed. In these programmes male counterpart of member of women SHGs and members of male SHGs also participated.
Out of the 2669 participants 2108 were female and only 561 were male. Many of the trainings were residential and internal members of SVA, external members and hired consultants were resource persons in these training programmes. Training for SHGs was very extensive during the year. Social mobilization have been significant in many villages because of these SHGs and presently they have taken up many more issues like health, education, governance etc. both at village as well as upper level.

6.1.3.2 Entrepreneurship Development and Income Generation

Micro-enterprises contribute significantly to economic growth, social stability and equity. The sector is one of the most important vehicles through which low-income people can escape from poverty. With limited skills and education to compete for formal sector jobs, these men and women find economic opportunities in micro-enterprise as business owners and employees. People of poor and marginalized section in these districts are diverse and micro-enterprises for them come in number of types, and their businesses in many sizes. This diverse group requires a variety of support to grow and improve. Many of these men and women are poor and have limited access to financial services. But they do not lack potential and are the heart of the region's economy. Women-owned businesses make up one of the fastest growing segments of micro-enterprise. The work women do outside the home is usually in addition to the care they provide for their families, which limits their business opportunities. Moreover, they often face even greater obstacles than their male counterpart in getting credit from formal sources. Increased income in the hands of women is usually invested in health, education and housing for their families. As micro-entrepreneurs, women not only make a huge contribution to national income, but they also create reliable social safety nets for their families and communities.

As strengthening of rural livelihood has been a focused area for SVA, developing entrepreneurial abilities of the poor and marginalized and identifying suitable income generation activities for them has always been a top priority. SVA has already identified various trades both in farm and non-farm sector those have been suitable and feasible to local people and is in a process of identifying few more for promotion. To take up various income generation activities as internal funds of SHGs are not adequate SVA supported them to link with financial Institutions as well as other institutions. SHGs have been successful in mobilizing funds to take up various income generation programmes and are managing number of units successfully. For effective management of enterprises SVA has organized a number of skill development programmes as well as technical trainings for them during the
year 2006-07. A total of 195 number of programmes organized by SVA during the year and those were participated by 2725 men and 1708 women.

The Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan is actively involved in promoting SHGs and linking them to the nearest banks in KBK regions (Nuapada, Balangir, Kalahandi). So far 1016 SHGs have been promoted in the KBK region, out of which 191 SHGs are formed which covers 2395 households households in Kalahandi district (See Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Status of SHGs Promoted/Supported by SVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total No. of SHGs promoted/Supported</th>
<th>Total No. of Household Covered</th>
<th>Total Amount of Saving(in Rs)</th>
<th>Total No. of SHGs linked with Bank</th>
<th>Amount Mobilized from Bank(in Rs)</th>
<th>Total amount of loan disbursed(in Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nuapada</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>3579</td>
<td>1961203</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3634160</td>
<td>5496600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bargarh</td>
<td>331</td>
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Source: http://www.svaindia.org/livelihood.html

A total of 34 women self-help groups (SHGs) of Kerpai Panchayat formed by Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan(SVA), have now resorted to several income including trading of Mahula, broom hill generating activities processing, Kandula dal processing along with other works. Earlier, any contract works in Kerpai panchayat were done by 2/3 professional village contractors. However, two women SHGs of Kachalekha village such as Maa Bhagawati and Nilamadhav had protested against it. Later, these two SHGs had convened Palli Sabha meetings at their respective villages after coming to know that the said contractors trying to persuade the concerned authorities are to award the contracts in their favour. However, all the villagers and SHG members present at the meeting unanimously decided in favour of the SHGs to take charge of construction of concrete roads in the village. Later the road was constructed by the two SHGs. The money-lenders have taken full advantage of the deteriorating health services in Kerpai panchayat. Instances are galore on the bankruptcy of several poor tribals and non-tribals who have failed to retrieve their mortgaged land after being unable to pay the money that they had taken on loans. Keeping this in view, the women SHGs of Kerpai panchayat have taken up special measures to put an end to these disquieting trends.
6.1.4 Parivartan

The area of operation of Parivartan NGO is in Thuamul Rampur which is basically inhabited by the Kandha tribes. Parivartan focuses on tribal development. When Parivartan intervened in these villages the main challenge before the village community was food insecurity during agricultural lean period. Firstly, Parivartan tried to strengthen the existing Village Development Committee (VDCs) running by the male members and formed the Mahila Mandal at the village level and the women self help groups started saving through 'muthi chaula'. Latter on they save interns of cash which ranges from Rs.5 to 10 per month. All these SHGs were linked to the nearest bank at Gunpur. All the groups were federated to a cooperative called as 'Banabasi Self Help Cooperative' under Orissa Self Help Cooperative Act, 2000. Latter on DRDA selected the SGSY groups from these SHGs by different level of gradation and assisted these groups to undertake income generating activities by providing Dal processing machines, working capital and capacity building training to these groups.

Parivartan NGO organized SHG members to protest against the mada bhati (wine shop) and issues of alcoholism in the Gunpur through Banabasi Mahila Samabaya at the block level women's organization. Parivartan under National Child Labour Project (NCLS) is also running schools for child labourers. Along with Mid Day Meals, Parivartan also provides Rs. 100 as stipend which attracts the children to study. After 3 years of their study children's get the stipend and it helps them for enrolment in higher schools. In the forest region of Thuamul Rampur suffering from endemic malaria is a common disease, households spend more than Rs, 2,000 for treatment, few SHGs who take loan from bank are not able to repay the loans. Therefore, Parivartan has initiated the Janashree Bima Yojana and SHG members deposit Rs. 100 per annum, family members in case diseases are insured Rs. 20,000 for medical expenditure so that the family members are not in debt trap. Parivartan played a major role in processing and market linkage to these groups for selling hill brooms and other forest produces. Parivartan has promoted grain banks in some of the villages which is running by SHGs and launched a number of employment generation schemes.

6.2 Perception of the Facilitators based on Focused Group Discussion

This section focuses on the perception and grassroots experience of the facilitators SHGs role within the promoting institution and the role of the Gramya Bank in terms of linkage and credit disbursement and in the gradual process the growth of the Women's federation and Grain Bank as a new mechanism evolved to meet the challenge of food insecurity in the region.
i) Jayanta Upadhaya, Project Coordinator, SGSY Department, DRDA, Bhawanipatna

Mr. Upadhaya reported that two programmes such as SGSY and NREGS are implemented through the DRDAs. He is involvement in implementing SGSY which meant for self employment programmes in the district.

State Initiated Groups

DRDA has been implementing the programme through forming self help groups, promoting and nurturing them and providing capacity building to these groups. Mr. Upadhaya reported that the SGSY has been implemented in the district since 1999 and the DRDA has been implementing this programme successfully as regards target achievement such as physical and financial is concerned. However, he felt that as regards the result in the field is concerned it is not coming up to that extent due to two reasons firstly, the monetary mechanism is not strengthened and the capacity building of the people also needs to be enhanced. DRDA has also involved the NGOs to go for the capacity building in these regions of Kalahandi. DRDA is involved in selecting some active SHGs through grading exercises and providing financial assistances of Rs. 10,000 – 20,000 just after six months of their completion. Then DRDA suggests the bankers to extend financial supports so that there will be SHG bank linkages. Those groups after getting support from DRDAs and banks they again take up some activities may be involved in distributing the money among the members either for consumption or production purpose and collecting it with interest rate decided by the group members and this exercise continues at least for one year. After a gap of one and half years, DRDA selects some of the groups out of the assisted groups for micro-enterprises promotion.

Major Achievements

Mr. Upadhaya replied that SGSY groups are involved in dal processing and banana cultivation etc. DRDA has also helped some SHGs in running PDS i.e., women members are purchasing kerosene and selling them in their respective Gram panchayat; similarly others are involved in Mid Day Meal programmes. While differentiating the differential performance of DRDA assisted SGSY groups and SHGs formed and supervised by NGOs, Mr. Upadhaya opined that the SHGs covered or promoted by NGOs are supposed to better looked after or quality SHGs, because they are attentively hammering one aspect that is the capacity building of the members. So far as the coverage of SHGs by NGOs are concerned NGOs have to cover the same area again and again, however, in the case of SGSY assisted groups, the target and
the coverage of SHGs in every year is more than 200 to 300 SHGs with the same staff strength. So it becomes difficult for DRDA to monitor and supervise the assisted SHGs.

Mr. Upadhaya viewed that by nature SHG has to be democratic but it can not be guided by any institutions or organizations. Further, he said that the success of SHGs can not be assessed on the basis of income generation, asset creation. The capacity building process is very much important which takes time. SHGs in the district can succeed with close monitoring and supervision. Lastly, Mr. Upadhaya felt that SHG is one of the modes to bring social changes rather economic upliftment. Poverty alleviation is not the end result of women’s empowerment.

ii) Dhruba Charan Mishra, Advanced Officer, Utkal Gramya Bank, Controlling Office, Bhawanipatna

Though Mr. D.C. Mishra is not directly handling the SHG portfolio still out of his 25 years of experience of serving as branch manager at various branches in Kalahandi, he shared his field experiences of the SHG movements in the district.

Successful SHGs in the region

While Mr. Mishra was at Nandul branch, in Junagarh block, he has formed about 100 numbers of SHGs out of which 98 groups were provided bank linkage. From the grass root, he has the experience of what is SHG and about the economic condition of the poor and village women in Kalahandi district. He recognized the potential of the SHG movements in promoting development in the region. As Mr. Mishra puts it ‘It is extremely happy to know that when the male persons in the district are not capable of doing the achievement towards their individual development as well as the social and economic development of the district and their condition, their housewives making the SHGs; they are capable tremendously in achieving that’. He referred to one group called Raanapada WSHG near Nandul village in Junagarh block consisting of 19 members who have miracle in the SHG movement, initially they have just started with Rs.50 as donation, now they are running with Rs. 5 lakh of business and still they are maintaining their tempo in the SHG movement. Initially the Raanapada group started the fishery business; during the first year of their activity the group earned Rs. 35,000 as profit. Mr. Mishra is very much optimistic that through the SHG movement and taking the active participation of the SHG members anything can be achieved.
NABARDs SHG-Bank Linkage Programme

While comparing the Grameen Bank model and NABARD’s innovative SHG-Bank linkage programme he viewed that SHG is basically the system and practices borrowed Grameen Bank model Bangladesh which was actually the banking system, but not the SHG movement. In the Indian context it is not actually the banking system, it is an effort to promote overall socio-economic development of the groups. The Grameen Bank activities in Bangladesh is only limited with disbursing loans and mobilizing deposits. In Indian case it is found that the range of membership is minimum of 10 members and maximum 20, it is because beyond 20 it needs to be registered and below 10 a group can be formed but it would be a negligible and may not serve the purpose. The SHG which has 10 to 15 members is an ideal model.

Formations, Functions and Credit aspects of SHGs

While explaining the formations and functions of SHGs, Mr. Mishra viewed that when the SHG is formed, firstly it has to be non-formal where village women who meet and discuss about the family conditions and think how they can improve it. Groups are formed on the basis of same socio-economic condition preferably on the basis of same caste. If there is a large gap among the group members there is a possibility of overruling by a lady with more financial power to dominate others. If a group is formed after the group discussion, then the issues/challenges that the community confronts in their day to day life are written in a paper which is called the ‘resolution’ and after this resolution, members open a saving passbook in any financial institutions. Now-a-days, off course, the Regional Rural Bankers are more closer to the rural poor serving in those areas they always prefer to open their accounts with the RRBS. He mentioned that ‘Kalahandi Anchalika Gramya Bank’ latter on evolved as ‘Utkal Gramya Bank’ has secured first position in terms of opening SBI accounts and providing linkages to these SHG groups in the state. While reflecting about the structure and formation of these SHGs, Mr. Mishra viewed that SHGs donot need any official status like registration and all other formalities. They are formed and at least for the fist six months the members save collectively and internally lend among themselves. After six months they are linked to the nearest bank. As per the banks criteria, after examining the savings of the respective SHGs, the bank provides small loans to the SHGs. The maximum limit of the Gramya Bank which can extend 1:4 times loans based on the SHG saving. After the SHGs repay their loans, credit linkage increases over a period. When SHGs take loan directly from Gramya Bank, bank charges 8.5 per cent interest per annum, but if the SHG takes loan through NGO which is called ‘on-lending financing’ then they charge 10 per cent interest.
rate. As per Mr. Mishra’s statement Antodaya NGO which is working in Thumul Rampur, charges very low interest rate compared to other NGOs. However, he opined that direct bank linkage is always preferable in case of extending loan to SHGs.

**SGSY assisted Groups in Kalahandi**

Mr. Mishra shared his experience about the SGSY groups formed in the region. As per Govt. of Orissa and India direction, SGSY groups were formed out of the functional SHGS and after passing through first, second and third gradation, the SHG groups were eligible for SGSY loan through SGSY scheme. Mr. Mishra revealed that the well performing SHGs who were earlier working in these groups after they were selected for SGSY loans they failed/were defaulted because of subsidy model. Till their loan was not subsidized the groups were working very well and their recovery rate was 98 per cent. The moment subsidy infused to them, the groups totally collapsed. It is not only in the case of RRBs, it is the common feature of SBI and all other banks. Therefore, Mr. Mishra suggested that for any organization subsidy should not be infused to SHGs. However, he felt that the groups should be provided loans with lesser rate of interest like Utkal Gramya Bank which provides loans at a minimum rate i.e., 8.5 per cent.

**Grain Banks in the Region**

Mr. Mishra reported that in Nakrundi Gram Panchayat, there is a grain bank where SHG members deposit in terms of grains rather in cash and the members lend crops among the members during summer. This is the first Grain Bank in Orissa; NABARD has highly appreciated the new innovation of Grain Bank in this region. Grain bank in this scenario serves a hedge against starvation and food insecurity. This area is not accessible one need to go through Rayagada district.

**Role of the Gramya Banks and NGOs in Imparting Training to SHGs**

Similarly, Antodaya NGO with the support extended by Utkal Gramya Bank has helped the tribals in processing the hill brooms, Kendu leaves etc. Earlier the tribals were selling raw hill brooms, Kendu leaves in a distress rate, training has been imparted to the SHGs, now they make hill brooms and making leaf plates. Similarly, Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan NGO in Kerpai Gram Panchayat has also provided training and machines installed in these villages through DRDA. They sale it directly to ORMAS, and need not to be bothered about the market in such a remote location in Kalahandi. Market linkage is provided through ORMAS for creation of an integrated network for marketing of rural products in Thumul Rampur of
Kalahandi district and elsewhere in Orissa. Though the NGOs operating in this region do not have the right in collecting and purchasing NTFPs, they play the role of facilitator for the SHGs and are providing the infrastructure for this. Lastly, Mr. Mishra viewed that only SHG based activities alone can not remove poverty but it could add to their income. The main reasons for the failure of certain SHGs is because the consumption need of the SHG members are not fulfilled. This is where the SHG members instead of investing their loan money in productive purpose spend it for fulfilling their basic needs. In a remote and underdeveloped block like Thuamul Rampur where there is no electricity, very poor infrastructure facility, attention needs to be paid to improve the infrastructure facility in the region.

iii) Benupani Sona, Branch Manager Utkal Gramya Bank Gunpur Branch sponsored by State Bank of India

Role of SHPI’s in SHG formation and Bank Linkage

Benupani Sona, the Branch Manager of Utkal Gramya bank Gunpur, after joining the branch he observed the Women Self Help Groups those who have been formed and have opened their account in the bank in the forest region of Thuamul Rampur. He viewed that various NGOs have also paid attention in mobilizing the rural poor to get united and join the groups; ICDS Government Department through Anganwadi have also formed groups and the bank has also formed the groups and provided directions and linked these groups to the bank. The Watershed Department have also formed groups and taken initiative to collect monthly savings and deposit at the Bank and have tried to enhance the economic condition of the women through the income generating activities.

Mr. Sona viewed that many WSHGs have developed in terms of undertaking income generating activities; however in few groups due to ignorance they have failed due to some reasons. The main reasons for the failure of some SHGs are such as the groups should have regular meetings in every month, members should save regularly and deposit at the bank, they should maintain their record of the status of payment of the loan and savings of group members properly in the SHG register. While his monthly visit to these village and these WSHGS to assess the progress of the groups, he used to give stress on these aspects to these groups.

Role of the NGOs

Mr. Sona reported that there are four NGOs such as Gram Vikas, Antodaya, Parivartan and Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan which is working in Thuamul Rampur block. Major assistance has been provided by Antodaya, Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan and Gram Vikas. Parivartan NGO has also assisted in forming groups and has deposited the SHG savings in the bank, their
representative have been in the field to monitor. Mr. Sona revealed that due to lack of supervision and withdrawal of their support, few groups formed by Parivartan have faced difficulty in terms of depositing their monthly savings. These groups deposit their saving in late because their income source is depended upon the NTFPs. The villagers save in their SHG account in the bank after collecting and selling NTFPs. However, many SHGs withdraw money from their account in every six month for raising their income by purchasing NTFPs from the villagers and to sale it to the traders, for which they are not able to deposit money in their account per month regularly. Mr. Sona reported that many groups who collect members saving regularly and are able to deposit their monthly savings succeed very well. Seeing their saving history the BDO and Collector has funded these groups and many SHGs have also availed SGSY loans through DRDA.

iv) Sunil Kumar Patel, President of Parivartan NGO
Mr. Patel shared his views that Parivartan NGO is working in Thuamul Rampur which is basically inhibited by the tribal groups.

Major Challenges in Thuamul Rampur
When Parivartan started its intervention in this region, the major problem in this area was food insecurity. During agricultural lean period particularly in the month of June to September when all the public department works closes villagers suffer from food scarcity.

Role of Parivartan
Parivartan started interacting with the tribals to know about the major possible intervention that could be taken to cope-up with the situation. Parivartan explored that during this lean period mainly the tribal's donot get wage employment or food grains to maintain their livelihood. They borrow money from the local money lender and purchase rice etc. Parivartan tried to strengthen the existing Village Development Committee running by the male members and formed the Mahila Mandal at the village level and the women self help groups started saving through 'muthi chaula'. Though this area is suitable for pulses, there was deficit of rice, members could not save rice. Thus, the SHG members decided to save Rs. 5 per month and started internal lending among members for consumption purpose. Appreciating such effective innovation, Parivartan encouraged villagers to develop the saving habit. The SHG members who were earlier running the grain bank in terms of saving rice latter on they managed it in kind. When they had some income in the month of October and Novembers through wage labour, they started savings in their group account. During the harvesting period, Parivartan helped the villagers in collection and sell of Kandul, hill broom, and non-timber forest produce such as amala, bahada, honey and sal seed collected in the
month of April. Whatever amount the group members earned they saved it in their group account at the nearest bank at Gunpur. Latter on support was extended to these groups and all the groups were federated to a cooperative and they have named it 'Banabasi Self Help Cooperative' under Orissa Self Help Cooperative Act, 2000 which is self governed, member owned and member governed. Mr. Patel reported, Parivartan has federated around 84 SHGs to these cooperatives where members save their money and take loan if required. Earlier the villagers use to take loan from the local money lenders during rainy season and repay the loan through Kandul, hill brooms in a distress rate. While taking loan the villagers generally mortgage the Kandul and sell it in a predetermined price which was much lower than the market price. With the help of cooperative, this system of lending from the local money lender was collapsed. The group members take loan from cooperatives at the rate of 18 per cent interest rate on declining balance rather on flat interest rate. The dependency on money lender was broken down and the members stored Kandul etc. with them during the month of February to April and sell it when the price of this increases. Earlier they were selling Kandul at Rs. 8 per k.g, now they are selling it at Rs.15-20 per k.g. Thus, the bargaining power of the villagers has increased over the years. Earlier, the middle man comes to their village to purchase the hill brooms at a very cheaper rate at Rs. 2 per Muthi (one hill broom consists of one muthi hill broom which is near about 200 grams). With the support from DRDA training and support was provided to these groups to bind hill brooms and sell it at the market at Rs. 15 per hill broom. Mr. Patel viewed that though these are small intervention, however this has positive impact on the economic lives of the villagers.

SGSY assisted Groups
To observe the successful practices of the SHGs, DRDA was interest to finance these groups, and DRDA linked it through SGSY schemes. Under this scheme Dal processing machines, working capital and capacity building training was provided to these groups. After processing the Dal they supply it to the ICDS Government department. The ICDS department collecting Dal (Kandul) generally supplies these to the Anganwadi Centres. About 30 SHGS were linked to SGSY groups and are successful in undertaking income generating activities. Once the women members got united in to a group their capacity building enhanced, their collective decision making power, organizational strength and the bargaining power increased to a significant extent. To manage such institutions, Parivartan extended its support for 3 years and now SHG members have appointed one staff to manage it. Mr. Patel is of the view that collective and organizational strength which enhanced through SHGs is an effective instrument in poverty alleviation. However, he agreed that the single dimension of saving and
credit alone can not help in alleviating poverty. The mission, vision and targets of the groups have to be clear. In an area like Thuamul Rampur, merely forming SHGs and leave them without lateral linkages may not be successful. Merely forming SHG and linking it to the banks may be effective in urban areas where women are literate, capable, more active, the awareness level is high, women are more organized and they have more infrastructure facility, but the region like Thuamul Rampur which is poor in all development indicators, SHGs need more supervision and guidance. Thus, Mr. Patel felt that between the SHGs and the bank, there is urgency for a financial and social intermediary and lateral linkages are essential either in the form of cooperative or federation to share the cost and experience.

WSHG’s Protest Against Alcoholism

In past few years the SHGs have not only undertaken income generating activities, they have also fought against the social problems like alcoholism etc. in their villages. There were three wine shops (mada bhati) nearby the road side at Kermanji, Gunpur, and Amthaguda. Those who establish wine shop in this area have taken license from the district administration and they always prefer to set up their shops in the area which is accessible to all and better sell. However, it has an adverse impact on the rural youth who become addicted to it and women are often harassed on their way to home. The Women SHGs with the Sarpanch collectively protested against these wine shops (mada bhati) at the collectoriate, Bhawanipatna. After the public objection, the collector asked these shops to take away the shops to distant places. Though these wine shops were shifted to distant places, but there is always tussle between them and SHG members demand to the district administration not to encourage mada bhati in their gram panchayat.

Micro Credit Needs of the Villagers

Mr. Patel viewed that consumption loan taken by SHG members is not unproductive. If the villager’s donot take loan from cooperatives they will take loan from the local money lenders at a higher rate of interest which ranges from 60 to 120 per cent. The tribals have the social obligation during marriage, the Kandhas used to have to community feast during marriage. During the festive occasions like Pausa Parab they purchase new cloth, shoes for all the family members; for three to four days they worship their deity in the temple by offering animal sacrifice and serve wine during Tokimara Parab. The Kandhas have the perception that if they do such activities, then they feel that they are paying respect to their ancestors.

Mr. Patel reported that as Thuamul Rampur comes under Karlapat Wild Life Sanctuary, if any project has been sanctioned for sheep and goat rearing, the major objection comes from
the forest department by saying that the livestocks will destroy the plants in the forest area. Secondly, there is no livestock inspector in these villages to take care the livestock; the veterinary hospital is at Bhawanipatna which is 40 kms far away from Thuamul Rampur. Bankers are also not interested to push the villagers in providing loan for such activity because for livestock insurance there is the need of a Livestock Inspector (LI) who has to be in regular touch and the government has not appointed LI for these villages so far. Thus, government’s encouragement for livestock rearing is almost negligible.

Mr. Patel reported that the trend of migration is very low from these villages because the Kandhas have strong attachment to their land, livestock and forest and they hesitate to migrate to distant place. However, he observed that trend of migration among the younger generation is on the rise in terms of searching wage employment and higher education.

While highlighting the educational status of villagers, Mr. Patel said that in a forest region of Thuamul Rampur, schools are generally situated more than two kms distance in the neighbouring villages, parents send their children till 11 to 12 years and above this they hesitate to send their girl children to distant schools. Till 5th class, the enrolment of girls in the school has increased after the Education Guarantee Schemes (EGS) intervention.

**Major Intervention of Parivartan in Education and Health Sector**

Parivartan under National Child Labour Project (NCLS) is also running schools for children’s those who have not enrolled in school till 8 years of age or if they have attained school latter on dropped out from school and are engaged by somebody as labourer in others household or involved in their own household work. The enrolment ratio of the children in NCL School has increased over the years. Parivartan provides Mid Day Meals to the children like in Government schools but it also provides Rs. 100 as stipend which attracts the children to study. After 3 years of their study children’s get the stipend and it helps them for enrolment in higher schools rather depending on their parents for this. Mr. Patel revealed that teacher’s absenteeism is the major reason for children’s not studying in this region. Teachers generally donot stay in these villages. As the distance between the schools is more than 2 kms. in the forest area, parents hesitate to send their girls to schools.

Mr. Patel admitted that NGOs can make these small interventions, however it has the limitations. The government has to play a major role in enhancing the infrastructure such as schools, teachers, road, and health facility in this remote and underdeveloped region of Kalahandi. Further, he viewed that in a the forest region of Thuamul Rampur suffering from
endemic malaria is a common disease, households spend more than Rs. 2,000 for treatment, few SHGs who take loan from bank are not able to repay the loans. Therefore, Parivartan has initiated the Janashree Bima Yojana and SHG members deposit Rs. 100, family members are insured in case diseases like malaria etc. Rs. 20,000 for medical treatment so that they donot fall in debt trap.

Parivartan’s Support in Market Linkage to SHGs

Mr. Patel opined that NGOs like Parivartan plays a major role in providing market linkage for the agricultural produce. When Parivartan started imparting training to the SHG members for processing the NTFPs, initially the finishing of the products were not that much qualitative. Earlier the villagers were less efficient, now they have developed their efficiency for binding hill brooms and there is more demand for these forest produces like hill brooms. Mr. Patel reported that in recent year when the villagers became aware about the necessity and market value of hill brooms it is not available. Earlier through forest clearing the villagers get the hill brooms. With the depletion of the forest resources their base is also shrinking. Under such circumstances, agricultural produce is not increasing, forest is already depleted. Earlier 3 to 4 panchayats in Thuamul Rampur were together earning near about 10 to 20 lakh rupees for selling hill brooms and other NTFPs, now hardly they get one truck hill brooms per annum. Mr. Patel revealed that forest protection is not done properly because the timber mafias are illegally vacating the forest resources by the help of the villagers. They give Rs.100 as wage payment to the villagers per cutting one tree. Secondly, the forest department has also connection with the timber mafias.

v) Dillip Das, Chairman of Antodaya

Mr. Das shared his experience as the Chairman of Antodaya NGO and the contribution of the organization in promoting socio-economic development in Thuamul Rampur.

Initial Condition of the Villagers in Thuamul Rampur

Antodaya intervened in Thuamul Rampur in the nineties when this region was one of the remote locations of Kalahandi district where there was no road connectivity. No effort was made for land development by the district administration by that time. The priority of the organization was to fight for the land rights for the tribals. The main resources of the tribals are land and forest. Due to influence of the outsiders in the region, the tribal’s resources were siphoned off in various ways. While explaining the cause of land alienation among the tribals, he reported that that in Thuamul Rampur there were a number of wine shops (mada
bhati) and it was the main source of exploitation. Tribals mortgaged their lands to get wine and they were exploited in various ways. During festive occasions for purchasing new clothes and meeting consumption needs Kandha’s borrow from the money lender by mortgaging their land. Others who do not have assets like land etc. take loan from local money lenders through standing crops. Thus, the standing crop was pledged and they were exploited various ways as the tribals do not have any sources of returning the loan. If somebody borrows in terms of grain, for one quintal rice one has to pay 2 quintal rice during the harvesting period which is double of the food grains one has borrowed from the money mahajan, similarly and for other grains has to pay 1:5 of the total amount borrowed. Villagers were exploited in various ways such as losing their land, livestocks and jewelries etc. So the villagers were scared about the loans.

**Role of Antodaya in Social Mobilization and SHG Formation**

Under such circumstances, Antodaya took the initiative to form SHGs, develop saving habits among the tribal, in building assets and to make the villagers bankable. Though the villagers were in the state of barter economy in initial periods it was very difficult to develop the saving habits among the tribals who had no experience of saving in terms of hard cash. During 1991-92, when Antodaya formed SHGs, the members could not save money monthly basis. As the villagers were causal wage labour and their crops were pledged near the money lender they could not save money, initially there was gap of saving for four to six months. Antodaya started creating saving habits among the groups with Rs. 2 to 5 per months in different groups. The alternative way of saving was also developed by the organization, SHG members were encouraged to save monthly after the harvesting period they save with late charge and others who could not save in terms of cash, save in terms of mustard, imili; the groups kept this and sale when the price of these items was high at the market and the profit was deposited in the group account. In this way the groups were stabilized and latter on the SHGs were linked to bank and got loan through it. Mr. Das viewed that compared to other loans, the regularity of repayment of loans availed through SHGs from bank is little high. However, the recovery rate of SHG loans is very high it is about 90 per cent. Thus, the dependency of the tribals on mahajan (local money lenders) for availing loans from declined after the women members joined SHGs. Latter on, with the active support of Antodaya, grain banks were constituted and the SHGs were linked to it.
Grain Bank in Thuamul Rampur

Grain bank as a concept has been traced from the “Kutumba panthi” means collective village fund. Earlier people store/save food grains to give in terms of obligatory exploitation if Revenue Inspector (R.I), Forest officer or Police visits their village. This fund was in the hands of some influential persons in the village, thus there was mismanagement and conflict among the villagers. Under the active guidance of Antodaya, SHGs have established grain banks as a hedge against starvation deaths in most tribal villages of Thuamul Rampur block. Women self help group are managing this. If somebody has taken grain loan, she/he has to pay 25 per cent interest, for instance per 1 kg rice/mandia she has to repay 1250 gram. There is also flexibility in repayment, if the members are not able to pay the food grain they have borrowed, they can give hill brooms, or imli(sour) in return. SHG members keep it and sell these when the price of these items in market is higher and members share the profit among themselves. In the mean while, government sponsored schemes like ITDA also tried to form one grain bank by taking each 100 tribal families so that it would disburse 66 quintile rice and mandia to the members. But in a hilly region like Thuamul Rampur, it was difficult to find 100 tribal families in one village, so they include 4 to 5 village to form one central grain bank, latter on this led to conflict and misunderstanding among the members. Even after decentralizing the grain bank, the ITDA scheme was not that much successful. Under the NABARD’s innovative scheme in the nineties, three central go downs were established in Kerpai Gram Panchayat in 17 villages in consisting of 310 tribal families. Earlier banks didn’t consider the grains as saving, whatever cash the SHG had in the bank it was estimated as the saving of the respective SHGs. But through this project grain has been monetized, by calculating the total savings the SHGs in terms of cash and grain, the bank provides loan to the groups. This Scheme is running very well at present. Thus, this was a major break through of illegal money lending of the mahajans (Sahukars) in the region.

Provision of Refinancing by NABARD

While reflecting on the refinance of NABARD and bank loan for the SHGs, Mr. Das viewed that each and every SHG finance made by the national banks, commercial bank, RRBs or Cooperative banks, is refinanced by NABARD to the banks who have provided loan to SHGs. NABARD refinances 95 per cent of the loan amount which has been provided by the banks to SHGs. NABARD charges 6 per cent interest to these bank and the banks charges 10 per cent to the SHGs. So the banks do not have any loss in financing the SHGs and there is no chance for back debt for the banks those who have financed. Though NABARD does not
have any provision to refinance directly to the SHGs, it provides loan to the SHGs through the banks.

**NTFP Processing and Market Linkage to SHGs**

Mr. Das also highlighted on the faulty forest policies of the State government. He viewed that earlier some traders were provided license to purchase non-timber forest produce otherwise the responsibility was given to the TDCC. TDCC used to fix the rate of the non-timber produce; the price fixed for hill brooms was Rs. 3. 90 per k.g. Those agents who were appointed by TDCC to collect the hill brooms, they also exploited the villagers by collecting hill brooms at Rs. 2.5 to 3 per k.g. Villagers did not have the right to process the NTFPs and were not permitted to sale in the open market. There was a protest against the faulty policy during 1991-2000 and Antodaya played a major role in this issue. In March 2000 the policy for processing NTFPs changed by the government of Orissa, this has been decentralized and the Panchayats has been empowered to give license for processing the NTFPs. Presently SHGs taking license from the Panchayats are processing the NTFPs and selling at the market. Now days, the SHG members are processing the hill brooms and selling it at the market at Rs. 8 to 15 per hill broom. Under ITDA Tribal Welfare Department project, Antodaya has also provided market linkage to the SHGs. SHGs directly bargain with the traders, and the role of middle man has declined. Traders come to these villages to purchase NTFPs. The SHGs or SHG federation who purchase the NTFPs from the villagers and sale it to the traders. In this process, SHG members got the assured price and assured market and got the benefit from the traders. SHG members purchase Jhurang (pulse) from the villagers at Rs. 21 and sold it to the traders at Rs.28 per k.g., thus they got Rs. 7 as benefit per k.g. Earlier the NFTFPs which was pledged and controlled by the money lenders, now the SHGs have the purchasing power to retain the these items from the villagers and sale it to the traders who come from the markets like Kalyansingh Pur, Bhawanipatna Ambadula, Kantabanjhi and Kesinga. Mr. Das reported that those SHGs and women members who have access to banks and market get the benefit form this activity.

**Rate of Interest Charged by the MFI's**

Mr. Das revealed that few NGOs who are working in this region are also playing the role of middle man and making profits through microcredit activities. As he clarifies, bank linkage is of two types i.e., either bank directly provides loan to SHGs or Bank provides loan to the microfinance institutes or NGOs and latter on NGOs provides loan to the SHGs. It is in this
context; few NGOs keep people in ignorant about system of direct lending of bank to the SHGs and compel the SHGs to take loan from the NGOs instead of taking loan from banks. For instance while refinancing NABARD gets 6.5 per cent interest by lending to Gramya bank, and banks keep 8.5 per cent interest while lending to NGOs; finally NGOs charge 2.5 per cent interest on loans to the SHGs. However, few NGOs like Antodaya do not charge any interest rate from the SHGs; they just cooperate the SHGs to get the loan from the bank and asks the SHGs to return the money to the bank directly. Antodaya does not charge any service charge for helping the SHGs to get loan from the SHGs. Mr. Das revealed that however, there are many organizations that charges high rate of interest while providing loan to the SHGs which keeps the members in debt trap. This is what Mr. Das calls 'legalization of money lending', earlier it was the money lenders, and now the micro-finance institutions like non-governmental organization who are exploiting people in the name of non-profit organizations. Hence, Mr. Das felt that there should be a legal barrier to what extent the NGOs can charge interest from SHGs. Mr. Das viewed that that micro-finance based self-help group activities is certainly a tool for alleviating poverty. However, such activities at present are only limited to micro-credit. Micro-finance does not only mean credit rather it includes a wide range of activities such as saving, credit, insurance, micro-enterprise and the emerging needs of the target groups.

**Status of NREGS Implementation in Kalahandi**

While highlighting on the kind of NREGS activities in the region Mr. Das viewed that there is some lacuna from district administration and Government side, i.e., wage employment will be provided if villagers demand, however villagers are not that much conscious they would demand work. In certain cases if villagers are not demanding jobs, they are not getting 100 days wage employment. The larger goal of NREGS was regular employment generation and asset creation. Asset creation aspects of NREGS was to improve the communication facility in the village, plantation, building the water bodies and land development, Mr. Das revealed that NREGS work is only limited to road construction instead of focusing on the other development aspects of the villagers in the region.

**vi) Krupasindhu Tarai, Programme Coordinator, Antodaya**

Krupasindhu Tarai as the programme coordinator of Antodaya has been involved in the organizational activities. He is actively involved to solve the issues and problems relating poor village women in Thuamul Rampur. He is actively involved in generating the livelihoods of the poor and village women.
Major Intervention by Antodaya

Antodaya is working in 6 Gram Panchayats under Thuamul Rampur which is a tribal dominated block. At the village level with the cooperation of villagers, Antodaya has prepared the micro level plan and initiative has been undertaken to promote development in the community. The plan has been prepared to explore the problems in the village. Major emphasis is given on the development of women. Earlier the tribal women were exploited in terms of selling non-timber forest produce, traders who comes through TDCC to purchase the NTFPs, seeing the simplicity of the tribal women the traders exploits the women by taking the NTFPs such as hill broom at a lower rate than the price fixed by TDCC. With the support of Antodaya, tribal women from Nakrundi, Gunpur, Kaniguma and Karlapat gram panchayat get united and protest against the exploitation of the traders and the faulty policy of NTFP processing and to get the real prices of their non timber forest produce. Latter on women members formed the Banashree Mahila Sangathan and registered it and through the Sangathan they sell and purchase the NTFPs in a reasonable price. Banashree Mahila Sangathan has played a major role in forming SHGs in all villages. The main purpose behind forming the SHGs were to enable the village women to solve their community problems and in the process empowering them rather confining the SHG activity to only credit and savings.

Role of Banashree Mahila Sangathan

The role of women SHG members and the Banashre Mahila Sangathan is significant in implementing both the governmental and nongovernmental development programmes in these villages. Antodaya has been actively involved in implementing the development programmes based on the village level plan. To implement these development programmes properly in every village the SHGs, Village Development Committee has been constituted and whatever development intervention has been taken place so far it is through the active participation of the villagers. Working with the active support of the villagers, women members inspires him and the members of the organization to work with the village community. Mr. Tarai felt that, whatever community issues and problems have been identified, if it could be fulfilled then organization would fulfill its mission.

6.3 Focus Group Discussion with the Village Community

The village information schedule was prepared to address few questions on poverty, occupational classification of the villagers, benefit the villagers have got from different government schemes, educational and health status of the villagers and the role of NGOs respective villages under study. Focus group discussion was carried out throughout the
survey among the women self help group members as well as the male members, elderly persons, rural youths, the teachers and Gram Pradhan etc. who were present during the field visit in six villages under three Gram Panchayats such as Kerpai, Gunpur and Nakrundi of Thuamul Rampur. The primary objective of having a dialogue among the villagers were to become aware about the issues and challenges in these villages and how do they overcome these. Secondly, villagers were asked to identify the poor and further attempt was made to know whether any of those who are poor were able to move out of the poverty line or vice versa.

Villagers identified poor and poverty in terms of those households who donot have agricultural land, no livestock, lack of wage labour (kuli bruti), not having sufficient food throughout the year, no bank savings, not able to provide education to their children, do not have money to provide health care and no electricity. Villagers consider a person as rich if she/he provides loan and food grains during the lean period i.e., in rainy season (June, July & August), have livestock, land, source of regular income and harvest good crops etc. However, villagers reported that there few households in the village who are rich in terms of possessing valuable assets. All the households (except Madangguda) live in their Kachcha houses whereas villagers in Madangguda reside in semi-pucca houses as special attention has been paid to this village by Gram Vikas NGO with support from district administration. Majority of the households are engaged in cultivation and shifting cultivation (Dunger Chas), others depends on wage labour. However, villagers reported that the women members after joining SHGs have started some petty business such as selling hill brooms and forest produces etc. Majority of the households from the sample villages were below poverty line. Around 58.7 per cent households are BPL card holders, and 17.5 percent households have AAY cards and 23.8 per cent households are not having ration card. Often conflict between two brothers and husbands and wife occurs as the male members of the households consume alcohol and fight with each other. However, at the village level there no conflict among the villagers. SHG members have collectively protested against the wine shops (mada bhati) nearby the road side at Kermanji, Gunpur, and Amthaguda. Food insecurity persists during rainy seasons; villagers have established grain banks where they store food grains during the harvesting period. Presently, the SHG members are running the grain banks. Villagers borrow grain from the grain bank through SHG members and return grains with low interest when they harvest crops. All the villagers reported that due to heavy rain, in bali char (sand and stones falls from the top of hills and covers the agricultural land) their crops are being destroyed. In recent years, under the schemes like watershed development projects and OTELP, villagers have developed their
agricultural land such as stone bonding, goly floga (adi bandha) etc. All the villages are situated in remote location and there is no electricity connection. Few villagers reported that they have got solar lantern under ITDA and villages like Kachalekha and Madangaguda they have installed solar street light. However, all the households use kerosene for lighting purposes.

Earlier parents hesitate to send their children to distant schools. After the schools are established under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) parents have started sending their children to school. The health status of the villagers is very poor. Thuamul Rampur block of Kalahandi district is a malaria endemic zone. Immense poverty coupled with lack of knowledge on basics of health and sanitation is the root cause of ill health existing in the area. Villagers reported that government infrastructures like PHC, additional PHC, and ANM centres exist in the area but are far off. Most of the villages remain inaccessible in the monsoons and lack of trained persons to look after immediate treatment during any ailment leave no other options to the people but to return to religious healers. This leads to more morbidity, compelling the people to take loans at a very exploitative rate of interest for treatment. Antodaya initiated a scheme entitled as “Swasthyashree Yojana and is being managed by Banashree Mahila Sangathan, a block level people’s organization. Similarly, other organizations also have initiated the health insurance scheme in the respective villages and villagers have been insured by paying Rs. 100 per annum.

In Kirkicha and Turibhejiguda village Antodaya NGO has organized health camps through OTELP scheme and provided training to women members for binding hill brooms through Banashree Mahila Sangathan. In Kerpai gram Panchayat, villagers reported the Sahabhagi Vikas Abhiyan with support from DRDA has imparted training and provided Kandul processing machine and training for binding hill brooms. In Madangaguda village Gram Vikas NGO under Rural Health & Environment programme has established grain banks and constructed semi-pucca houses, tap water system and toilets for every households. Similarly, in Ranpur village, Parivartan NGO has formed the SHGs and linked it to Banabasi Mahila Samabaya and provided market linkage for processing and selling NTFPs.

Though absolute poverty in these sample villages has declined, however food insecurity persists and the main reasons for this as reported by the villagers are such the depletion of the forest resources, crop failures, crop failure due to sands cover agricultural land, lack of regular wage payment and ban of shifting cultivation by the government etc. Villagers reported that in recent years, they are getting wage employment through OTELP, Watershed Project and NREGS which has been implemented in the district etc. However,
number of man-days of employment under various schemes are not enough for the tribals to meet their basic needs. Villagers in Kerpai Gram Panchayat were quite happy in terms of the support provided by Sahabbagi Vikas NGO through DRDA; it has established goat sheds for livestock rearing, supported SHGs of Kerpai in vegetable and oil seed cultivation and imparted training and the Kandul processing machine provided to the SHG members. Earlier contractors used to take contract for constructing the village roads, in recent years SHG members are given the charge to construct pucca road through NREGS in Kerpai gram panchayat.

6.4 Case Study of Successful Members of WSHG

Case Study 1

Pata Dei, a tribal girl of Turibhejiguda village under most backward Nakrundi Gram Panchayat of most deprived Thuamul Rampur Block. She is not married till date and working for the upliftrnent of her own community. In the year 1994 at a tender age of 16 years, Pata Dei, the modest tribal girl joined the movement of their rights over collecting, processing and marketing of Non-timber forest produces run by her elders in Banashree Mahila Sangathan. She was not literate when Antyodaya started intervening in their village. Later on she joined the Social Education Centre (Non-formal education centre) run by Antyodaya in their village. Slowly, but with commitment Pata Dei took the leadership among women not only in their village, but also at area level for ascertaining their rights over NTFP processing and marketing. After 8 long years of fighting with the faulty policy of Government the women won the battle and the rights of processing and marketing of NTFPs are now with them.

Meanwhile during 1997 Pata Dei respecting the request of her elders in Banashree Mahila Sangathan, contested the Gram Panchayat election and won as the Sarpanch of Nakrundi GP. During her tenure as Sarpanch of Nakrundi GP she had encouraged her fellow women members of Banashree Mahila Sangathan to procure and process a number of NTFPs (mainly hill brooms, Amla, Mahua etc) by issuing license from Gram Panchayat. She also encouraged two of the SHGs of the Gram Panchayat to run PDS outlets.

Contribution for SHG promotion: Though Pata Dei joined Banashree Mahila Sangathan as a teen-aged member; gradually she became an active member of Maa Dokribudhi WSHG of her village and promoted so many SHGs in the nearby villages. She got the training on Kandul Dal processing and also Hill brooms processing and now she acts as a facilitator for other SHGs of the area to train them in the trade. She also promoted community shops run by
SHGs in 4 villages of the area. As a Sarpanch (from 1997 to 2001) Pata Dei encouraged her fellow members to procure NTFPs and run PDS centre.

**Contribution to Social reforms:** As an active member of Banashree Mahila Sangathan, Pata Dei is instrumental in so many social reforms in their village as well as in the area for example:

She organized her group members to ban illicit liquor brewing as well as vending in the area. She encouraged the girls in her village to go to school and as a result 13 girls from her village are going to school presently. Through the SHG they have succeeded in eradicating the exploitation of moneylenders (Sahukars). Apart from SHG, they have formed one Village development revolving fund out of collection from the wages and from Antyodaya support where there is an amount of Rs. 1,11,810/- (One lakh eleven thousand eight hundred ten) got revolved at present.

They have a grain bank in their village to support the needy families at the time of distress. Now after OTELP started the work in her area, Patta Dei became the village volunteer and encouraged people to work for their own resource development. Recently she got the opportunity to become the GRAM SATHI under NREGA. To make herself more capable she learnt to ride a bicycle which she purchased out of her wage money and oversees the work under NREGA and encourages social audits in every village.

**Case Study 2**

Chawla Dei, wife of Laxman Majhi is 45 years old. She belongs to the Kandh tribe and is an inhabitant of Madangunda village of Thuamul Rampur. She comes from the BPL family. The above case is a nuclear family living in a house without children. She has four acres of land out of which two acres is irrigated through stream water. She has two cows and two buffaloes. This household possess one motor cycle, two solar lanterns and 1.5 bhar gold. Both the husband and wife are engaged in cultivation of crops and vegetable. Her husband is a wage labour. Though Chawla Dei is semi-literate, she has contributed lot for the development of her own and neighbouring village during her tenure as Sarpanch. She was the Sarpanch of the Gun Pur Gram Panchayat (from 1997 to 2005) for 10 years.

**Role in promoting development activities in the Village**

After Chawla Dei became the Sarpanch of Gunpur gram panchayat, she constituted the village committee and conduct meeting with the villagers to understand the main problems of her neighbours. There was no primary school in her village. She approached the government officials and with the help of the coordinators of Gram Vikas NGO established the
Anandamaya Primary School under EGS for the village children. With the active support of Chawla Dei, the AWC Centre is also established in the village for institutional care for the children’s.

The main problem before the villagers were that there was no proper source of drinking water; villagers were using the stream water for drinking purpose. Most of the villagers had Kachcha houses. Realizing the needs of the villagers, Chawla Dei discussed about this with the Gram Vikas NGO staffs. Under the Rural Health and Environment Programme, community water tank, sanitary toilets and bathroom, drainage, semi pucca houses were constructed in the year 2002. With the active support of Gram Vikas NGO, semi-pucca houses were constructed with soft housing loan from H.D.F.C. Chawla Dei encouraged the villagers to go for horticulture plantations, consisting of a mixed variety of timber, fuel, fodder and fruit trees on village common lands and wastelands. Chawla Dei proudly said that her village is self sufficient; there is no such case of starvation death in her village. She reported that all the villagers including her have worked under NREGS, OTELP for constructing concrete road for the village. Few households in her village are provided with solar lanterns through ITDA.

**Contribution for mobilizing villagers to Set up SHGs**

Chawla Dei is a member of Budha Raja SHG, which was formed in 2002 by Gram Vikas Coordinator in the village. Four self help groups were formed out of which 3 are women self help groups and the other one is comprised by male members. At the block level women’s organization has been formed and it is named as Banabasi Anchalika Mahila Cooperative. Before joining the SHG, she was the member of Mahila Mandal existing in the village. Chawla Dei along with the Gram Vikas coordinator motivated the villagers to join the SHG and establish a grain bank in her village. SHG members store their extra food grains and lend among themselves during agricultural lean period. ITDA has provided 60 quintal rice, 20 quintal mandia for the villagers. She used to collect Rs 10 per member every month and deposit at Utkal Gramya bank, Gunpur. Various developmental activities such as constructing water canal, road etc has been organised by her. Chawla Dei is very much active in the SHGs activities such as freely and frankly speaking in the SHGs meeting, imparting training for the members. She used to assemble the villagers for conducting public meetings. Her participation at the SHGs level is high in terms of taking leadership position, writing minutes of SHGs meetings, keeping the
accounts of the SHGs and depositing the thrift collected from the members at the nearest bank. She plays a vital role in conflict resolution which rises among the villagers for land livestock matters. She has not taken loan from the SHG account so far. She is very much active in conducting and attaining gram sabha/ward convention and involving SHG members in it.

Case study -3
Tel Dei Majhi, a resident of Kerpai village, is 40 years old and mother of four children, two sons and two daughters. She is illiterate and is engaged in the shifting cultivation with her husband. She is a tribal woman who belongs to BPL family. The family members depend on wage labour as they have small land holding. She has one acre of land out of which 0.5 acres are irrigated through stream water. She lives in her own Kachha house. She possess 1.5 bhari gold of jewellery. Both the husband and wife got the employment under the govt. schemes such as NREGs and OTELP and their income increased by Rs 500 from this. She is the member of Maa Sarala SHG. The block level organization of the SHG is Banashree Mahila Sangh. This SHG was formed by the NGO Sahabhai Vikas. She reported that the SHG meeting takes place once in a month, its loan beneficiary decided by the whole group. She has taken consumption loan from SHG account. She viewed that her family members aswell as children’s in her neibourhood have started taking interest in study after joining SHG and their health condition has been improve as SHG members stress on how to keep their environment neat and clean in every meeting. She actively participates in the SHG meeting. She has saved Rs 45000 in the Post office in her husband name. She has saved RS 1000 thrift in the SHG account. She has repaid the loan and opined that non loanee women are happier than loanee women because they donot have any burden to repay the loans.

Case Study- 4
Sarada Naik is 40 years, belongs to SC, and is an inhabitant of Kachalekha village of Thuamul Rampur. Her husband was a marginal wage labour cum agricultural labourer. Earlier they had one acre of land which has been mortaged for health care. She used to help her husband in agricultural activities. The family owns a semi pucca house. The agricultural yield as reported by her, seems to be low because of possessing no land. They faced several problems like scarcity of food for 3 to 5 months and also there is a scarcity of water. She has availed loan from SHG account for cattle business. The household income has increased through wage employment schemes like NREGs and OTELP; they have earned Rs. 900. The
socio-economic status of the household improved significantly, due to the additional income and employment generated by livestock business. The respondent has paid repaid half amount of the loan and the rest she will pay later. Sarada Naik is a President of Maa-Bhagwati SHG which was formed in 2003 by Shahbhagi Vikas Abhiyan NGO working in the village. The name of the cluster is Banashree Mahila Sangha. Despite the bad health condition she used to participate actively in the meeting. As she was facing ulcer problem since last four years, she took loan for her treatment. Her expenditure on health is Rs 500 per annum.

Though she had spent so much money towards her treatment at hospitals at Kashipur and Rayagada, there was no sign of her recovery. As her condition began to deteriorate further, the doctors had advised her to get herself admitted to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. Since, Sharada had not enough money to meet the treatment costs, she had decided to arrange the money by selling off her only pair of oxen and the remaining gold ornaments and get the rest by incurring loan from the money-lender. Under this situation, she was advised by all her colleagues to take Rs 6000 a loan from the SHG fund to which she obliged. She took loan Rs. 6500 with 24% of interest per annum from the SHG fund. This novel initiative of the SHG has become an example of the entire panchayat.

Case Study-5
Sapur Majhi, 40 years old belonging to Kandha tribe, is an agricultural labourer in Kerpai village of Thuamul Rampur. It is a nuclear family without children living in a semi pucca house. She was a small farmer having 3 acres of land. Her family faced food scarcity for 3-5 months due to the scanty of rainfall. Normally, peddy and kating are grown in her field. The income earned from agriculture is Rs. 6000 per annum, thus it was not enough to make a living. She has purchased two sheep from her income. Sapur Majhi is a Secretary of Maa Sarala SHG, formed by Shahbhagi Vikas Abhiyan NGO in the village. The name of the cluster is Banashree Mahila Sangha. Before joining SHG she was a member of Mahila Mandal. She got the employment under the govt. scheme of NREGs and OTELP and their income increased by Rs 4000. She reported that the SHG meeting takes place once in a month, the whole group jointly decide among themselves for distribution of loan for its members. She is very much active in the SHGs activities such as freely and frankly speaking in the SHGs meeting, imparting training for the members. She has saved RS 1000 thrift in the SHG account. She has taken loan of Rs 9500 for vegetable & oil seed cultivation, and construction of goat-shed. Out of this, she has repaid half of the amount. Sapur Dei has
bought two pair of oxen at Rs. 6000 with the SHG loan. Taking the above cases into consideration, there is no doubt that the steps taken by these women SHGs would inspire the women folks in future.

**Case Study - 6**
Ajnabati Bag, a resident of Kachlekha village of Kerpai Gram Panchayat, aged about 35 years, belongs to Domba caste. She had a large family consisting of seven members. Her husband purchased one acre of land and owned a semi pucca house. The main occupation of the family is cultivation and wage labour is the secondary occupation. Though the respondent and her husband are illiterate, they made all efforts to educate their three sons and one daughter. Their children were studying in primary and secondary school respectively. She had three goat and one ox. She had 5 gram of jewellery. Her family income is Rs. 7413 monthly. She took loan of Rs 30,500 through SHG account for purchasing a ploughing machine. She has not repaid the loan so far. Ajnabati Bag is a treasurer of Bhagawati Self Help Group, which was formed in 2003 by Shabbhagi Vikas Abhiyan NGO in the village. The name of the cluster is Banashree Mahila Sangha. She is the beneficiary of SHG loan for admitting her children in school as well as purchased ploughing machine.

**Case Study - 7**
Linang Dei Majhi, 48 years old is the resident of Ranpur village of Thuamul Rampur. She belongs to the Kandha tribe. She has only one son. Her son is married and is the principal wage earner of the family. The main occupation of the family is cultivation. The family owned 4 acres of irrigated land. She reported that they get adequate food throughout the year. The family owned a pair of two pod, one buffalo and one hen. The monthly income of the household is Rs.3700. The household has been benefitted by Rs. 2000 from NREGA and Watershed government scheme. Linang Dei Majhi is a member of Maa Dokari SHG which was formed in 2002 by Paribartan NGO in the village. The name of the cluster is Banavasi Anchalik Mahila Co-operative. After becoming the member of Maa Dokri SHG, she got the loan of Rs 8000 out of which she has paid Rs. 6500. She has spent the loan money for purchasing a pair of ox for cultivation as well as transportation purpose. The respondent purchased 4ani gold out of the income from SHG activities.
**Case Study - 8**
Saraswati Naik, 35 years old belongs to SC. She is the resident of Ranpur village. The total number of family members is six. Though the family is from below poverty line, they have not got the ration card so far. All the members of the family were literate up to 5th class. Her children were studying in primary, secondary and high school respectively. Her husband was running a petty shop in the village. The household owned 80 decimal land and had a semi-pucca house. The major crops grown in their field are such as peddy and Amla. The household earns Rs. 6000 by selling the extra food grains. She is the member of Maa Dokri SHG. She took Rs 30,000 for petty business from moneylender at the rate of 60% interest per annum. This was mainly a agriculture-cum business family. They have ten cow, eleven goat and two hen. From the income of her SHG activities, she has purchased 10 gram gold.

**Case study - 9**
Suna Dei Majhi is 70 years old, lives with her son and grand children in the village called Ranpur. She belongs to Kandha tribe and is pursuing her traditional occupation of agriculture. She revealed that her income is not sufficient to meet their family needs. The monthly income of the household is Rs 1788. This is a female headed household. The household owned 4 acres of land in which 2 acres are irrigated and the rest is dry land. The family members depend on agriculture and have two ox and one hen. After the formation of SHG, she is engaged in livestock rearing. Her son is a wage labour and involved in NTFP Collection. Suna Dei Majhi, is a member of Maa Dokari Self Help Group, which was formed in 2002 by Paribartan NGO in the village. The name of the cluster is Banavasi Anchalike Mahila Cooperative. She has saved Rs 12,771 in SHG account. Her living condition has been improved after the SHG formation in her village. She got loan of Rs 6000 from SHG account out of which she returned Rs 1800. She has purchased ox with the loan money.

**Case Study - 10**
Dashnei Dei Majhi is the resident of Ranpur village. She is illiterate. She has three children, two daughters and one son. Her husband is a farmer and earns Rs. 3500 per month. She is a President of Maa Dokari SHG which was formed by Paribartan NGO in the village in 2002. After joining the SHG, she took loan from SHG account of Rs. 7000 out of which she has paid Rs. 6000. She owns 2 acre of irrigated land. She invested the loan amount in purchasing two bullocks, two goat and two hen. She is engaged in rearing livestock and goes to collect NTFPs. The average income of the household from NTFP collection is Rs. 100 per month.
Her family members have earned Rs. 1050 per month from the government schemes such as NREGS and watershed.

6.5 Summary
The study shows that micro-finance based self-help group activities is certainly a tool for alleviating poverty. SHG Bank linkage programme empowered the rural women with dignity, identification, social recognition and respect. Saving habit is created among the poor and they are considered as bankables. However, micro-finance activities at present is only limited to credit. Micro-finance does not only mean credit rather it includes a wide range of activities such as saving, credit, insurance, micro-enterprise and the emerging needs of the target groups. Secondly, the target groups i.e. the hard core poor who need higher priority in the process of financial inclusion are no more to be found there. Those who have access to the market are getting the benefit out of such income generating activities. It is also noted that personal variables such as marriage, and occupation, health aspects have an influence in their decision to make loans available for others. In most of the cases, the credit is used for consumption purpose for which they are unable to repay the loan. Respondents from the scheduled caste are upwardly mobile and progressive in using the credit for starting petty business and having better access to market as compared to the adivasi’ women. In the process of linking the SHGs to bank and providing credit to the SHGs, microfinance institutions particularly the NGOs plays a vital role. Lastly, by forming SHG and linking it to the banks may be effective in the urban areas, where the literacy rate is higher it can be applied to the coastal and educationally advanced region. Financial and social intermediary and lateral linkages are essential either in the form of cooperative or federation to share the cost and experience. This is where the SHGs are clustered with the cooperatives under the Orissa Self-Help Cooperatives Act, 2001.