

**ROLE OF SELF-HELP GROUPS IN INTEGRATED WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME IN AIZAWL DISTRICT: A STUDY OF
TLANGNUAM RURAL DEVELOPMENT BLOCK**

**M.Phil
DISSERTATION**

Submitted By:

Ms. ESTHER LALFAKMAWII

Department of Public Administration

Regn No: MZU/ M.Phil. /355 of 22.04.2016

In

Fullfillment for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Supervisor:

Prof. Lalrintluanga

Professor of Public Administration



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

2016


MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
TANHRIL, AIZAWL – 796004

Gram: MZU Ph:0389-2331612 Fax : 0389-2331606 website :
www.mzu.edn.in

Prof.Lalrintluanga
Professor,
Department of Public Administration

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Ms. Esther Lalfakmawii** has prepared a Dissertation under my Supervision on the topic *Role of Self-Help Groups in Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Aizawl District: A Study of Tlangnuam R.D Block* in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) in the Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, Aizawl.

This Dissertation has been the outcome of her original work and it does not form a part of any other dissertations submitted for the award of any other degrees.

She is duly permitted to submit her dissertation for examination.

Dated Aizawl,
the 15th December 2016

(Prof. LALRINTLUANGA)
Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere and deepest gratitude to my Supervisor, Prof. Lalrintluanga, Professor, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, for his kind supervision, motivation, immense knowledge and encouragement without which I could not have completed this work. It is a great honour to work under his supervision.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks and gratitude to the exceptional faculty members of the Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, for helping me in numerous ways to complete this work.

I am also grateful to Shri. Lalchuanawma Chawngthu, B.D.O, Tlangnuam Rural Development Block, Shri. Jedid Lalnundanga Keivom, Technical Expert, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, Shri. Sangthankhuma, Leader of Farmer SHGs at Sihphir village and Ms. Lalmuanpuii, Facilitator of SHGs at Tuirial village for their kind and endless help within their limitations.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to my parents for their love and prayers, endless support and encouragement.

Lastly, I am thankful and grateful to the merciful Lord for all the countless blessings bestowed upon me to successfully complete my research works leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil).

Dated Aizawl the _____

(ESTHER LALFAKMAWII)

DECLARATION

I, Esther Lalfakmawii, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Role of Self-Help Groups in Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Aizawl District: A Study of Tlangnuam R.D Block* is a record of work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Prof. Lalrintluanga**, Professor, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, Aizawl and this dissertation did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the dissertation has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Public Administration.

Dater: _____

(ESTHER LALFAKMAWII)

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background

Rural development has always been an important topic in any of the discussions pertaining to social and economic development of a country which is mainly concerned with the development of rural areas. Rural development aims at improving the standard of living, the quality of life and the livelihood of rural people by increasing employment opportunities, higher productivity, education, health, communication, clothing, shelter, higher income, etc.¹ Rural development is the process of improving the well-being and self-realisation of people living in the rural areas. According to the World Bank, “Rural Development must be clearly designed to increase production. It recognizes that improved food supplies and nutrition, together with basic services, such as health and education, not only directly improve the physical well-being and quality of life of the rural poor. But can also indirectly enhance their productivity and their ability to contribute to the national economy. It is a dynamic process of bringing change from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living by developing the social and economic infrastructure, cultural life, village planning, education, health, communication, etc.”²

India is a developing country and the second most populous country in the world. According to the 2011 census, India’s population has increases to 1.2 billion and about 2.7 million population of the country resides in the countryside, so about two third of the population still lives in rural areas. The North-Eastern part of India has different geographical areas and backward in socio-economic status. Some people lives in plains, slopes and mountainous region and most of the population lives in rural areas. The development of rural areas is to improve poverty and to gain themselves of what they want and need.³

¹ Bhose, Joel S.G.R., *NGOs and Rural Development – Theory and Practice*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2003, p-35.

² <http://www.agriinfo.in/> (as on 09.10.2016).

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India> (as on 09.10.2016).

Mizoram is one of the states in India, situated in the North-Eastern part of India. It is a mountainous region and became the 23rd state of India in February 20, 1987. According to 2011 census, it has the population of about 1,091,014 and covers an area of approximately 21,087 square kilometres. It shares international borders with Myanmar in the east and south and Bangladesh in the west.

Mizoram has the most variegated hilly terrain in the eastern part of India. The hills are steep and are separated by rivers which flow whether to the north or south creating deep gorges between the hill ranges. Mizoram has a pleasant climate and is a land of great natural beauty with an array of flora and fauna. It receives an annual rainfall more or less evenly distributed throughout the state. The average height of the hill is about 1000 meters. The highest peak in Mizoram is the Blue Mountain (Phawngpui) with a height of 2210 meters.⁴

Mizoram is a mountainous region and people are mostly depends on the shifting cultivation. It is bounded by Assam, Manipur and Tripura on the north and part of weatern side and Bangladesh on the west and Myanmar on the East. Agriculture is one of the main sources of income for the people. Most of the people living in the rural areas are backward in socio-economic, communications, standard of living, etc. The weaker sections of the society lived in a scattered place and still rely on fuel-wood for domestic purpose as well as for cattle fodder preparation.⁵

The Ministry of Rural Development implements a number of programmes in rural areas through the State Governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure habitant development, provision of basic minimum services etc. Some of the programmes being implemented by the department are Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MNREG), North-East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP), Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission (MzSRLM) etc.

Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) are to restore the ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover and water. The outcomes are prevention of

⁴ Records maintain by Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission, Annual Action Plan, 2012-2014.

⁵ Joshi, H.G, "*Mizoram Past and Present*", New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2005, p-4

soil run-off, regeneration of natural vegetation, rain water harvesting and recharging of the ground water table. This enables multi-cropping and the introduction of diverse agro-based activities, which help to provide sustainable livelihoods to the people residing in the watershed area. IWMP has introduced Self Help Groups (SHG) to improve the well-being of women or men and the community of the rural areas. The purpose of SHG is to empower women or men without the assistance from the government and non-government organizations.⁶

Self-Help Groups (SHG) is defined as a group consisting of people living in rural areas who share their experiences of life either directly or through family and friends. It is the process of eradicating poverty and helping the women or men to be self-reliant. Both men and women in rural areas are given a chance to join any of the SHGs for training and development, and become a prospective entrepreneur and skilled worker. SHG educates the women on how to improve their standard and quality of life.

In Mizoram, many programmes or schemes under the Department of Rural Development have introduced Self Help Groups (SHG) in most of the districts. But different programmes and projects have their own rules of taking up the working of SHG. In Mizoram, Self Help Groups usually consists of ten to twenty members hailing from certain locality with similar socio-economic background. Most of the members are selected from a poor family, widow, handicapped, backward classes and those who cannot earn their own living. The leaders are selected from members of the group. The members of the group must have mutual trust, co-operation and should perform in all activities of the programmes. SHG is mainly to help the women or men in rural areas increase their income by teaching them various skills and not to rely on the government or non-governmental organizations.

1.1. Review of Literature

For the development of rural areas and to empower women and men, Self-Help Groups plays an important role in helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural

⁶ <http://mizorural.nic.in/iwmp.html> (as on 10.10.2016)

development. Here are some of the books, journals and articles related to this field and were review as under:

B. Suguna (2006) in her book *Empowerment of Rural Women through Self Help Groups* lays emphasis on how to tackle poverty and enable the community to improve its quality of life is through social mobilization of poor, especially women into Self Help Groups. She also states that, ever since Independence, a number of innovative schemes have been launched for the upliftment of women in our country. She further states that the Government of India has taken a lot of initiatives to strengthen the institutional rural credit system and development programmes. She also narrates that the Government of India had adopted the approach of Self Help Groups (SHG) to uplift the rural poor women. The book also points out that the empowerment of women through Self Help Groups (SHG) would lead to giving benefits not only to the individual woman and women groups but also to the families and community as a whole through collective action for development. However, one of the main foci of this work is on the working and functions of Self Help Group (SHG).

Subhra Tripathi (2006) in her article “Rural Development through Self Help Promotion and Women Participation” published in ----- discusses the main objective of rural development programme and the working of rural development in India. The article highlights the working and functions of Self-Help Group with a focus on the purpose of Self-Help promotion and its objectives of the study. It tries to analyse women’s emancipation and empowerment through self and self-reliance that can be directly attributed to the economic growth and freedom.

S.N. Tripathy (2006), in her book *Women and Rural Development* discusses the issues and problems of rural women’s participation in the process of development. This book portrays and analyses the rural problems, role of women in Self-Help Groups, fisher women, tribal women, female literacy, etc. It emphasizes on the gender and social disparities in rural elementary education and health. It also focuses on the problems and remedies of rural women and glimpse on the economics of the rural areas. It also highlights the status, position and living conditions of women and the participation of women in the process of economic development in rural areas. The book states that women play a paramount role in the socio-economic destiny of the country. It also mentions that poor health and medical care and infrastructure are due

to backwardness of rural women. The book has highlighted the Annual Report of World Bank that 35 per cent of Indian households below the poverty line are headed by women, and thus, dependent exclusively on female income. It mainly focuses on the problems of rural women and their empowerment including their contributions for rural development of our country.

Shakuntala Devi (2006) *Environment and Rural Development* gives an analysis of the issues and problems caused by environment in the rural areas. It points out that the environmental considerations are vital to all the schemes of rural development. It attempts to highlight the factors like desertification, deforestation, soil erosion and global warming are all affecting the strategies and methods of rural development to a great extent. The author mentions that the mining operations in some areas have affected the lives of rural people very adversely. It also lays emphasis on the economic, political and social development policies and strategies of rural development that are closely linked to environment.

S.B. Verma, S.K. Jikola and K.J. Kushwah (2006) in their book *Rural Women Empowerment* portray the pattern of decision-making by rural women and their participation in farm and home activities besides other social economic pursuits. It focuses on the impact of agricultural production, stabilization of population policies, social reforms, and entrepreneurial activities and so on. It raises several issues and suggests way for removing general bias and empowerment of women for their effective participation in social, rural, political, population stabilization and in development. The book also points out the appropriate extension package to communicate improved farm and other sectors to rural women. It attempts to highlight the useful information on various aspects of women's role in farm, domestic activities, economic considerations education of attainment and adoption behaviour for advanced technologies and socio religious activities. The book also discusses the empowerment of women, child labour, preventive strategies and eradication and the employment generation through forest-based village industries.

Margareth Ledwith (2006) *Community Development-A Critical Approach* advocates a critical approach to community development that locates theory in practice, emphasizing its transformative rather than ameliorative potential. The book helps readers to gain an understanding of key community development theories;

develops practical skills alongside the ability to analyse and reflect; and situate local practice within a global context. The book is brought to life through a series of narrative case studies, drawn from the author's own experiences, which clearly illustrate how to apply ideas, models and analyses discussed.

The edited book of David R. Syiemlieh, Anuradha Dutta and Srinath Baruah (2006) *Challenges of Development in North-East Region* contains papers presented in the Seminar organized by the ICSSR North Eastern Regional Centre at Shillong. All the contributors of the papers focus on a single theme, that is, India's North East needs development. The twenty-three papers in this book are grouped in themes covering polity, society, tourism, economy, education and health. All the authors of the papers are persons who either live in the region or have had a long academic interest and experience in the region. Their articles, therefore, reflect much more sensitivity and details of the North-East focusing on the question of its development. This book calls for a wider readership cutting across the activists, policy-makers, researchers, development agencies, and those who are concerned with the future of the region.

R.K Sahoo and S.N Tripathy (2006)'s book *Self-Help Groups and Women Empowerment* contains the important research write-ups relating to problems of Self-Help Groups and Women Empowerment contributed by eminent researchers. In this book, the studies have been made basing upon both primary and secondary sources of data relating to effectiveness of Women Self-Help Groups in ameliorating their socio-economic backwardness. It assesses the impact of Women Self-Help Groups for the economic development of the weaker sections of the society in our country. In this book, many scholars have presented their well considered judicious views on various issues pertaining to development of the society.

B. Narayanaswamy, R.K Samanta and K. Narayana Gowda (2007) in their book *Self Help Groups- Key to Empowerment of Rural Women* mainly focus on the importance, working, functions and studies of Self Help Groups. The authors have stated that the national economic growth alone do not curtail the growth of mass poverty and the empowerment process of the rural people in social, economic, political and knowledge empowerment has not taken place as desired. It emphasizes on economic achievements by national policy-makers and a process of alarming

socio-economic polarization and the deepening of social cleavages in rural areas. The authors also discuss the developing programmes for the poor and the banishing or combating poverty through new approaches like Self-Help Groups. Their book mainly highlights Self-Help Groups which have gained recognition and acceptance as one of the new paradigms for combating poverty through socio-economic development of the poor, with special emphasis on social mobility and livelihood security.

U. Kalpagam and Jaya Arunachalam (2008), in this book, *Rural Women and Development in India*, discuss that the transformations in rural India have ushered in water and fodder scarcity that have undoubtedly increased the drudgery of rural women's life. Their book also states that the rural women also face greater livelihood insecurity on account of market forces and liberalization policies, and greater restrictions on access to resources such as land water, forests and village commons. It also mentions that women of the poorest classes of marginalized Dalit and tribal communities bear much of the brunt of insecurities on ground of Caste and class. They also face severe restrictions on mobility and myriad forms of violence. The authors also emphasize on the importance of greater participation of civil society organizations engaged in gender transformative approaches and participatory development. The book deals with issues of livelihood and food insecurity, efficacy of micro-credit and other kinds of interventions, and offers critical perspectives on the issues that challenge rural women's lives.

Sawalia Bihari Verma, Murali Krishna Sharma and Niraj Kumar Sharma (2008) in their book *Better Quality of Rural Life* mainly focus on the necessity of improving the quality of rural to improve the quality of life of the whole community. This book points out that community development shall result in betterment communication knowledge, health, livestock, income, employment in agro and agro-allied activities and so on. It also states that in order to make the rural mass prosperous, strong political will, good bureaucratic system, N.G.Os and mass as well as corporate sectors need participation in decision-making to identify the programmes, project and packages to uplift the condition of needy in rural areas. The book highlights the role of university in improving the quality of life, a new paradigm for rural development, approaches of voluntary action for rural development, Gandhian view of rural development, role of fisheries in rural development,

approaches for livestock development, role of district rural development agency and so on.

B. Datta Ray and Gurudas Das (2008) in their book *Dimensions of Rural Development in North-East India* discuss the topography, shaped, structure and the economy of the North-Eastern Region. Their book states that the development of the region is intimately associated with the question of rural development. The book takes a look at the development experiences of the various sectors of the rural economy of North Eastern Region. The authors point out that the rural-urban dualism may essentially be seen as the product of the failure of market mechanism. The book also analyses the issues like people's participation, rural industrialization, marketing, entrepreneurship, tourism, education, technology, cooperation, gender and poverty in the light of development experience of North Eastern Region.

The edited book of L.S.Gassah (2008) *Women Empowerment Movement in North-East India* is a collection of research articles contributed by different authors. To make it more topical and convenient for the readers, articles are divided under four parts. The articles in this book mainly focus on the problem of women empowerment and how far women academicians have contributed their knowledge, understanding and research findings on problems, issues and such other activities affecting women today. The book also states that the problems and issues of women have started right from the family level and also involved as well as affected the entire civil society in which women are not excluded. It also mentions that women education is an important instrument for bringing about changes both in attitude and perception towards women. This book has been brought out by the editor with a view to filling up some of the gaps to the already existing literature on women in general and their specific problems in particular from the North-Eastern perspectives.

Sulbha Khanna (2009) in his book *Participatory Approach to Development* deals with participatory issues in three major natural resource development programmes of Government of India namely: Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT), Joint Forest Management (JFM) and Integrated Watershed Development (IWD). This book makes an attempt to raise issues on the urgent need for genuine participation of people and the stakeholders for sustainable natural resource management system. It also tries to highlight the facts that how participatory policies are relevant to India's

overall development strategy of reducing poverty, protecting the environment, developing human resources and fostering farm sector growth. The book also tries to analyze, how practice and experience of participatory approach varies from the theory. Further, it makes an attempt to suggest how to bring people, government officials and NGOs together to make participation more meaningful and useful for management and conservation of natural resources for present and future generation. The book is based on actual field experience and has adopted a multidisciplinary approach to cater to the needs of planners implementing agencies, agriculture, and rural development professionals.

S.B Verma and Y.T Pawar (2009) in their book *Rural Empowerment—Through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)* discuss the poverty alleviation as being made through rural empowerment. The contents of the book are distributed into three parts. The *first* part of the book contains rural empowerment through self-help groups. It points out that Self-Help Groups are fast emerging as a powerful tool of socio-economic empowerment of the poor in the rural areas. It discusses the working and functioning of Self-Help Groups for rural empowerment. The *second* part of the book contains Non-Governmental Organisations and rural empowerment. It discusses the role of the NGOs, environment protection through NGOs and local community, contribution of NGOs on Implementing Population Policy, etc. The *third* part of the book contains the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and rural empowerment. It also discusses globalization and decentralisation; development and rural governance needs- vibrant Gram Sabha, Panchayati Raj Institutions; People's Participation in decentralized planning, Need for public participation and so on.

Vijay Kumar (2009) *Rural Development Participatory Human Management* discusses the need for participation of citizens for the development of rural areas and states that successful participatory activities rely on community interest and enthusiasm. The author describes the participatory techniques used in environmental education for raising environmental awareness amongst young people. The book also underlines that understanding of politics among the people is the starting point for the growing number of experiments and initiatives that create new spaces for citizens and affecting their lives. The book highlights the work of deliberative and inclusionary processes (DIPs) in 1990s which provides an overview of participatory methods and

approaches that seek to enhance deliberative democracy and citizen empowerment. It also portrays the growing crises between citizens and institutions around the world that affect the lives of the people. It also talks about corruption, lack of responsiveness to the needs of the poor and the absence of a sense of connection with elected representatives and bureaucrats. The author examines a wide range of contemporary participatory mechanisms and strategies that seek to bridge the gap between citizens and the State.

Komol Singha (2010) in his book *Rural Development in India-Retrospect and prospect* attempts to explore ways and means of rural development in India. The author provides empirical insights into the structure of rural India, presents a critical evaluation of past experiences of rural development in the country and tries to remodel future policies. It also discusses the issues and problems concerning population explosion, unemployment, poverty, migration, educational backwardness, infrastructure development, community participation and inter-district disparities in socio-economic development.

Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli (2014) in her book *Women Empowerment in North-East India* reveals that women population has occupied almost half of the total population in India as well as in North-East India. She highlights that Indian women were treated as equals of their counterpart in the rich and enlightened societies of the past. This book is a collection of 28 papers presented in the National Seminar organized by the Women Cell, Lakhimpur Commerce College. Some of the papers talk about some of the major issues relating to women community like Women empowerment through SHGs, Women participation in rural development, Women's role in economic development, Community rights and women, Women empowerment through education, etc.

Mathusami Kumaran (2014) in her article *Roles, Responsibilities and Trends of NGOs in Women Empowerment* published in _____ mainly discusses gender inequality that subjects women in various forms of male domination and discrimination. She also highlights that gender discrimination and women's rights have been systematic and deep-rooted problems with various dimensions like religious, cultural, economic, etc. across the country. She also emphatically states that, for women empowerment, NGOs are a natural fit in responding to the overall

issue of gender injustice that threatens to undermine the society at large. She also narrates that the Government has failed to protect women's rights or has been very slow in responding to the issues of violations against women right and, on the other hand, states that the non-governmental organisations (NGO) sector has made several inroads in promoting women's rights and women empowerment through a variety of strategies and development platforms.

Commendable though they are in their respective fields of study, none of the above literature under review has dealt with the role of Self-Help Groups in Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Mizoram, in general, and Aizawl district in particular. Hence, in order to fill the research gap the present researcher has taken up the present study.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Mizoram is one of the smallest States in India and is a developing State. In Mizoram, about 20% of population live below poverty line (BPL) with 35% rural poverty and about 60% of the working population of the State are annually deployed on agriculture. Most of the population live in the rural areas and lead a low standard of living due to economic backwardness. They practically need to be uplifted in their socio-economic status, education, skills, information, etc. In the meanwhile, in order to carry out socio-economic development programmes for the benefits of poor families, the Government of Mizoram highly depends on the development funds from the Central Government.

In rural areas of the State, most of the people depend on agriculture for their sustenance. In Mizoram, majority of agricultural labourers are women thereby forming the backbone of agricultural operations in the rural areas. So, Self-Help Groups are set up to empower women or men in earning their income and to alleviate their poverty. In order to improve the platforms for the participations of women and men to stand out and expressed their ideas and thoughts, Self Help Group (SHG) was introduced. To improve the social conditions of women and men in rural areas, SHG help them utilize their ideas and thought for the betterment of their socio-cultural activities. Many SHG programmes or a scheme previously introduced has not fully succeeded due to different circumstances. So, Integrated Watershed Management

Programmes (IWMP) has taken up to re-vitalize the effort and task needed in fulfilling the empowerment of women and men in rural areas. IWMP have been conducted an awareness campaigns, trainings and promote the working and functioning of SHG. The activities taken by IWMP are required to study from different aspects to measure its achievement.

1.3. Scope of the Study

The present study has mainly focused on the role of Self-Help Groups in implementing Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Hlimen and Sihphir localities. These two areas have been selected as the fields of study because they are the only areas under Tlangnuam R.D.Block in Aizawl Distinct where Integrated Watershed Management Programme mainly for women empowerment has been fully implemented by Self-Help Groups.

1.4. Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

- 1) to examine the reasons responsible for the evolution of Self-Help Groups
- 2) to study the working of Self-Help Groups in implementing Integrated Watershed Management Programmes in Tlangnuam Rural Development Block
- 3) to study the role and functions of Self-Help Groups and the issues and challenges faced by them.

1.5. Research Questions

The present study has answered the following research questions:

- 1) What are the main reasons responsible for the establishment of Self-Help Groups under Tlangnuam Rural Development Block in Aizawl District of Mizoram?

- 2) What are the possible measures for improving the working of Self-Help Groups?
- 3) What are the major problems and challenges faced by Self-Help Groups in achieving its goal in the area under study?

1.6. Methodology

The present study has been based on primary and secondary data. The Primary data have been collected from some of those men and women associated with SHGs in Tlangnuam R.D.Block, Aizawl District, with the help of questionnaire as well as structured and unstructured interviews. Besides, relevant original Documents and Records of the concerned officials of the Department of Rural Development of Mizoram have been consulted and used for the present study.

In addition, the Secondary data have been collected from the Journals, Pamphlets, Books and Handbooks which directly or indirectly deal with Self-Help Groups. Relevant Internet source materials have also been utilised for the present study.

1.7. Chapterisation

The present research work is divided into five chapters as follows:

The *first* chapter of the study is an introductory chapter which portrays rural development as the process of bringing about improvement in the living conditions of the people in the rural areas through various programmes, one of them being Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) implemented through Self Help Groups. This chapter also contain review of seventeen Books, brief statement of the problem, and objectives of the study, research questions, methodology and chapter-wise break-ups of the whole work.

The *second* chapter begins with the discussion on the Concept of the Self-Help Group (SHG) and then looks into the evolution SHGs in India before independence. It also examines the role of SHGs in alleviating poverty for the economic empowerment of women through the collective efforts of its members. It

also analyses the linkage between Banka and SHGs for making supplementary credit facilities to the poor women.

The *third* chapter deals with the working of Self Help Groups in Sihphir and Tuirial villages under R.D Block, Tlangnuam. It studies the formation, functions and role of SHGs for the implementation of IWMP in these two villages.

The *fourth* Chapter examines the role of Self-Help Groups and their leaders for the successful implementation of the IWMP for women empowerment. It has also analysed the issues and challenges faced by the Self-Help Groups in course of implementation of this programme in these two villages under Tlangnuam R.D Block.

The *fifth* chapter is the concluding chapter which has brought out the summary and findings of the entire research works. Some suggestions have been made for activating Self-Help Groups to play more proactive role in the implementation of Integrated Watershed Management Programme not only in Tlangnuam Rural Development Block of Aizawl District but also in other Rural Development Blocks spreading in other parts the State of Mizoram.

1.8 Conclusion

The first chapter portrays about the working of rural development in bringing about the improvement of people living in rural areas. It highlights the geographical conditions of India and Mizoram. It also highlights the conceptual studies of rural development and the programmes of IWMP. The introductory chapter also consists of review of seventeen Books, brief statement of the problem and objectives of the study, research questions, methodology and chapter-wise break-ups of the whole work.

CHAPTER – II

CONCEPT OF SELF-HELP GROUP AND ITS EVOLUTION

2.0 Introduction

Many studies have emphasized that rural development can be achieved only by making the rural poor especially the rural women folk, socially and economically viable through income generating activities with required financial assistance. Moreover, collective action and collective responsibility along with sustainable socio-economic improvement, upgrading the quality of life, increase in literacy, etc. are essential factors for development at grass roots level. For this, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are considered the best tools and so they are launched on the basis of micro-credit system. However, it is also important to study at a glance the origin, evolution and concept of SHGs. Hence, the concept of SHG and its evolution, as well as the characteristic features and functions of SHG are discussed in this chapter.¹

2.1 Conceptual Meaning of SHG:

The concept of Self-Help Group (SHG) serves the Principle ‘by the women, of the women and for the women.’ ‘All for all’ is the principle behind the concept of Self Help Groups (SHG). SHG is mainly concerned with the poor and supplement their emergent needs. SHG a mini voluntary agency for self-help at the micro level has been a focus on the weaker sections particularly women for their social defence. SHG has got great potential in creating awareness on day-to-day affairs, promoting in savings habit, developing self and community assets, increasing the income level, increasing the social power etc. The concept of SHG generates confidence, self-scrutiny and self-reliance.²

Self Help Group supplements a mutual help and is a powerful vehicle for the poor people in uplifting their socio-economic values. The weaker people need not only credit support to build up their livings but also need savings and services in

¹ www.shodganga.inflibnet.ac.in (as on 10.11.2016)

² Suguna.B,” *Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups*”, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House”, 2011, p.-6

every corner of their lives. The SHGs are small informal associations formed with the objective of enabling members to reap economic benefits out of mutual help, solidarity and group responsibility. SHG has been operated on the principle of mutual trust, co-operation and interdependence. The group members take collective decisions on all matters including those relations to terms of credit viz., purpose, size, interest rate and repayment period. They exercise close supervision on using of loans and exert peer and moral pressure on members to continue savings and repay loans promptly on time. In other words, self-help group can be referred to as a group of poor persons who own, directs, manage and control a small bank of their own. The greatest contribution of self-help group is their fight against deprivation and poverty that it empowers them by their increased critical self-awareness.³

Self-Help Groups are homogeneous informal groups of rural poor, voluntarily formed to save whatever amount they can conveniently save out of their earnings and mutually agree to contribute to a common fund of the Group to be lent to the members for meeting their production and credit needs. The members of SHGs have an impulse towards collective action for meeting their emergent economic needs without being dependent on outside help. The members pool their savings and re-lend it among themselves on a rotational economic sense but it is their sacrifice from present consumption for meeting their future contingency.⁴ Hence, the concept of SHG would enable the people, especially the rural poor, to comprehend their common need and to design the remedial measures accordingly.

Self-Help Group as a concept has caught up with the momentum of women's development. It is considered as the most powerful means to strengthen the socio-economic development of women through integrated approach. It is also treated as a platform to provide opportunity to its members for overall development through group efforts.

The term "Self-Help Group" is derived from the word "Self-help" which is one of the most fascinating yet frustrating aspects of development. It is a dynamic

³ www.shodhganga.ac.in (as on 12.11.2016)

⁴ Tripathy, Om Prakash, 'Making Insurance Everybody's Business: The SHG Way', in S.B Verma and Y.T Pawar *Rural Empowerment-through SHGs,NGOs and PRIs*, New Delhi: Deep&Deep Publications 2007, p-49

process that transcends the narrow boundaries of any given aspects of development. Self-Help is a fundamental tenant of recent expounded strategies of basic needs and self-reliance.⁵ One of the significant features of “Self-Help” is to make people not to rely on the government or non-governmental organizations to improve the infrastructure facilities needed the village.⁶ The concept of ‘Self-Help’ could be introduced in an area where there is nobody to help the helpless mass.

According to the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), a Self-Help Group is a small economically homogeneous and affinity group of rural poor voluntarily coming together : to save small amounts regularly; to mutually agree to contribute to a common fund; to meet their emergency needs; to have collective decision making; to solve conflicts through collective leadership and mutual discussion; to provide collateral free loans with terms decided by the group at market driven rates. CASA (Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action) views SHGs as a tool for community organization (Bose 1997), an activity of socio-economic development and a strategy for women’s empowerment.⁷

Self-Help Groups (SHG) is both a means and a goal within the strategy of basic needs. It is a means with which to achieve goals of minimum requirement of private consumption i.e, adequate food, shelter and clothing ,community services i.e, safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and education. It is also identified as a tool, people should participate in making the decisions which effect them. As SHGs were initiated to combat the weakness in private credit formal financial institutions have been able to mobilize savings from the persons or groups who were normally expected to have savings and also recycle the same effectively.

SHGs are the pool resources amongst the member and thus meet the credit needs of the poor. SHGs have emerged from the felt needs of the people and they have evolved their own methods of working. SHGs help in creating a platform for

⁵ Suguna.B, ”Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups”, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2011, p-15

⁶ Suguna.B, ”Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups”, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House”, 2011, p-16.

⁷ https://www.nabard.org/pdf/SHG2_circular.PDF (as on 10.10.2016)

sharing of experience collective knowledge, building problem, solving and resource mobile satisfaction and other institutions. In SHG the autonomy of the women groups is never undermined and all decision making is entirely in their hands. This group helps women to build confidence in them as decision makers, planners and to work collectively in a democratic manner.⁸

2.2 Evolution of Self-Help Groups:

Self-Help Group (SHG) has been evolved from the brain child of Gramin Bank of Bangladesh which was founded by the economist, Prof. Mohammad Yunus of Chittagong University in the year 1975.⁹

The earliest group organized specifically as a SHG was formed in the early 1800s. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the settlement house movement began whereby a number of neighbourhoods helped newcomer to adjust to their environment. In 1931, a co-operative self help movement began in California and other states to combat the effects of unemployment during the Great Depression. Small citizen's groups started and developed into unemployment co-operative associations and their objective is to exchange labour of the members for fuel, fish, vegetables and other necessities, basing their activities on the philosophy of rehabilitation through self help. In the late 1930s, the SHG got extended to areas in which the emphasis was upon emotional and physical disabilities rather than social problems alone.

The Self-Help Group is not new to India and traditional Indian society functioned mainly on the basis of self help and mutual aid. The basis of the Self Help Groups exists prior to any interventions. In traditional Indian society, it was very common that sharing of labour, work force, animal power, equipments, etc. in mutual

⁸ Suguna.B, "*Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups*", New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House," 2011, p-15.

⁹ Narayanaswamy, B., Samanta, R.K., Gowda, K. Narayana,"*Self Help Groups- Key to Empowerment of Rural Women*", New Delhi: The Women Press, 2007, p-21

aid basis. Mahatma Gandhiji, the Father of our nation, highlighted the same concept and stressed the self help aspect in his Sevagram project during 1921.¹⁰

Self-Help Group is a small economically homogeneous and affinity group of rural poor which is voluntarily ready to contribute to a common fund to be lent to its members as per group decision, which works for group's solidarity, self-group, awareness, social and economic empowerment in the way of democratic functioning. The Self-Help Group movement became a silent revolution within a short span in the rural credit delivery system in many parts of the world. It has been documented that nearly 53 developing countries including India, have taken up this on a large scale. In 1997, World Micro Credit Summit at Washington converge the developed and the developing countries to tackle the serious problem of poverty by using micro credit as a tool to empower the poorest sections. A global movement has been launched to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families by the year 2005.¹¹

2.2.0 History of Self Help Groups in Post-Independent India

The source and year of the origin of the first Self-Help Group in the post independent India had become a contentious issue. Many writers traced the formation of SHG to the efforts of some non-governmental organizations. Even the Ninth Report of Second Administrative Reforms Commission wrote that the first organized initiative in the direction of forming SHGs was initiated in Gujarat in 1954 (Government of India, 2008). According to Aijay Tankha (2002), this Programme was initiated in 1992 by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Apex Bank for rural development in India. In fact, self-help groups have become a movement in India.

Aloysius Prakash Fernandez argued that SHGs were first organized by a voluntary organization, called Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency, in 1985 and the SHG-Bank Linkage Programme began in 1992. A Report prepared by the Orissa Regional Office of NABARD wrote that first official interest in informal

¹⁰ Narayanaswamy, B., Samanta, R.K., Gowda, K. Narayana, "*Self Help Groups- Key to Empowerment of Rural Women*", New Delhi: The Women Press, 2007, p-7.

¹¹ Suguna.B, "*Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups* ", New Delhi: Discovery PublishingHouse, 2011,p.14

group lending in India took shape during 1986-87 when NABARD supported and funded an action research project on 'Savings and Credit Management of Self-Help Groups' of (MYRADA). The Report also added that, in 1988-89, NABARD undertook a survey of 43 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) spreading over 11 States in India to study the functioning of SHGs and possibilities of collaboration between the Banks and SHGs in the mobilization of rural savings and improving the delivery of credit to the poor and SHGs became a regular component of the Indian financial system since 1996. However, a careful analysis of the available information proves that the Government of India was the first one to start SHGs. The first groups were started in 1982-83. After a gap of two years, MYRADA started forming self help groups. The elaboration on the formation of SHGs by Government of India needs a brief overview of the efforts of the Government of India to meet the financial needs of people working in unorganized sector scattered in lakhs of villages in the length and breadth of this vast country.

The independent India inherited an underdeveloped rural economy. High levels of indebtedness and inefficient public financial services posed a serious challenge to the development of the country. Ever since, the policy makers concentrated their efforts to search for a viable solution to this problem. The whole issue of credit crunch and lack of rural development has been attributed to lack of access to credit from both national and private formal financial institutions. Inaccessibility to finance means stagnation in production, resulting in increasing both individual and national poverty. Public and private banking net work which can provide the finance to small and medium entrepreneurs was not available in rural areas. The informal finance provided by money lenders, friends, relatives and chit funds was both costly and inadequate.

According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s findings, this costly informal credit accounted for 90 per cent in 1951 and for 70 per cent of rural indebtedness in 1971. Though 80 percent of the population lived in the rural areas and 40 per cent of Gross Domestic Product was contributed by agriculture, only nine per cent of the total credit went to agriculture in 1954 and it rose to an ignorable 19 percent. As no attempt was made to build an indigenous formal financial structure, the Union Government

took three related measures to solve this problem through nationalisation of 14 Private Banks in 1969.

A review made in 1975 revealed that the institutional expansion policy resulted in opening of 10,882 rural and semi-urban branches. Still the expansion did not match the credit requirement of rural poor. It was concluded that rural branches of large commercial banks, be they private or public, are not the right answer. Hence, the government introduced a new network of government owned Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in 1975 under the provisions of an Ordinance promulgated on the 26th September, 1975. The Regional Rural Bank Act, 1976 contributed for the expansion of RRBs. The purpose of these RRBs was to develop the rural economy and to create a supplementary channel to the Cooperative Credit Structure with a view to enlarge institutional credit for the rural and agricultural sector. The RRBs and cooperative banks to a large extent catered the needs of farmers, but not the needs of vast numbers of landless, migrant labourers and illiterate women.

In 1981, RBI carried out the All-India Debt and Investment Survey and published the results in 1983. According to this survey after years of massive branch expansion, policies of directing credit to the rural areas, massive self employment programmes, and ready availability of donors some 250 million of the rural poor had no access to formal finance, and 39 percent of rural indebtedness stemmed from informal sources. On the other hand, the rural cooperative banks, established to meet the credit needs of the rural population engaged in productive activities, could not meet the social obligation. Their failure to do so created more pressure on credit availability which was the most essential requirement of the time. To quote the impression of the Planning Commission: The Indian cooperative credit structure meant to empower the poor was not very successful as it was captured by a few powerful and because of excessive governmental interference and regulation. To solve this problem the Government has decided to start Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1978-79. The aim of this programme was to deal with the dimensions of rural poverty in the country. The programme covered small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers and landless labourers and rural craftsmen and artisans and virtually all the families of about five persons with an annual income level below 3500.

The main aim of IRDP was to raise the levels of the below poverty line families in the rural areas above the poverty line on a lasting basis by giving them income generating assets and access to credit and other inputs. To extend the same benefit to the women, women self help groups with bank linkage facility were started. This programme was called Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (hereafter DWCRA). The DWCRA programme was started in 1982, as a sub-scheme of IRDP and Indira Bishnoi and Vibha Singh. Initially this was started as a pilot project in 50 blocks of the country for those Women who were not in a position to take advantage of schemes under the IRD Programme. The programme has become so popular that within a short period of two years the number of groups rose to over 1900, benefiting about 30,000 women by 1983-85. By 1997 91,900 DWCRA groups were formed and 22,66,817 lakhs of women were enrolled as members. An amount of 190.72 crores was given as loan to these members.

This programme was started, as the name suggests with the basic motive of focusing attention on the women members of rural families whose income falls in the category of below poverty line. The aim of the programme was to provide them with opportunities of self-employment on a sustained basis. But unlike other programmes, this programme was not confined to economic objectives only. It aimed at empowering women by building self-confidence, participatory planning and decision making capacity. As stated in the Manual of DWCRA, DWCRA is not just a scheme for sewing machines and Revolving Fund. It is a development programme for women, to remove the causes of poverty and deprivation. It is programme to empower women, to bring out the hidden strengths and power of women.¹²

2.2.1 SHGs in Mizoram:

Mizoram occupies the southern part of the Northeast India. It is bounded by Assam, Manipur and Tripura on the north and part of western side and Bangladesh on the west and Myanmar on the East. Large part of the population lived in the rural areas and they are backward in socio-economic, literacy, livelihood, quality of life, etc. Most of the people are basically agriculturists. All their activities are with such agricultural operations. Women living in rural areas face problems in gender issues

¹² www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in (as on 10.11.2016)

and social relations and need to improve their levels of education, skills and information. The woman has no participation in decision making within and outside the family. Women need to empower in developing self-esteem, confidence, realize their potential and enhance their collective bargaining power.¹³

The State Government has taken some steps to eradicate poverty in weaker sections of the society and to uplift the women. Some departments have work to alleviate poverty in the rural areas. Many programmes and schemes have been implemented to improve the standard of living, socio-economic, quality of life, etc under such departments. The programmes or schemes which work for the departments to uplift the poorer people are Integrated Watershed Management Programmes, North-East Rural Livelihood Mission (NERLP), Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission (MzSRLM), National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), etc. Each programmes or scheme has taken up Self-Help Group (SHG) to empower women and to improve the livelihood of the rural areas.

Self-Help Groups has been practices by different programme or scheme about a year ago. It has been introduced to eradicate poverty and to empower the women living in the rural women. SHGs are homogenous groups which consist of 10-20 members. All the members are come from the same economic background. The functioning of SHGs is different as they are introduced by different programmes and schemes. In some of the programme, man is allowed to perform in the working of SHGs. The SHGs has its own rules and regulations to be followed by the members. Each group has its own leaders selected by the members. Meetings are hold once in a week and they share their problems and ideas about the working of SHGs. The record of every meeting is kept and maintain by the leader or one of the office bearers.¹⁴

Self-Help Groups are getting less amount of revolving fund from the authorities. Each group has bank account in the name of the group for savings the money. There are different forms of using the fund by each group. Most of the groups give out loans from the revolving fund among the members or non-members. Some

¹³ Joshi, H.G ,*"Mizoram Past and Present"*, New Delhi: Mittal Publications,2005, p-4

¹⁴ Records maintain by IWMP Tlangnuam R.D Block, Livelihood, production system & micro enterprises Guidelines.

groups practicing petty trade in increasing their savings. The members get loans from the groups to earn their own living with the permission or decision of the groups. The member has to give contributions of money every month to the groups. Some of the members activities are tailoring, farming, poultry trade, piggery, etc to increase their savings.

Self-Help Groups plays a vital role in helping the poorer people to earn their own living. SHGs play a major role in the poverty alleviation in rural areas. It helps in the development of socio-economic conditions. SHGs create employment among the poorer people. It enables women to contribute money in the households without getting money from the family. It enables the rural woman and men to access their own credits. SHGs reduce poverty and increase the income of the rural people and help them to build their own assets. SHGs create self-confidence, self-reliant and self-dependent among the members.

(a) Method of Formation of SHGs:

SHG is a group of rural people who have volunteered to organize themselves into a group for eradication of poverty of the members. They agree to save regularly and convert their savings into a common fund. The members of the group agree to use this common fund and such other funds that they may receive as a group through a common management. Some of the group formations are as follows:¹⁵

- (i) A SHG may consist of 10 to 20 persons except in case of minor irrigation, and in case of disabled persons, this number may be a minimum of five.
- (ii) All members of the group should belong to families below poverty line. The group shall not consist of more than one member from the same family. A person should be a member of more than one group,
- (iii) The group should devise a code of conduct to bind itself. This should be in the form of regular meetings, functioning in a democratic manner

¹⁵ Das R.C and Panigrahi Pradeep Kumad ,”Some issue and aspects of SHG Formation in India”, in R.K Sahoo and S.N.Tripathy *Self-Help Group and women empowerment*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication, 2006, p-140&141

allowing free exchange of views, participation by the members in the decision making process.

- (iv) The group should be able to draw up an agenda for each meeting and take up discussions as per agenda.
- (v) The members should build their corpus fund through regular savings. The members of the group themselves should decide the quantum of savings and to collect the minimum voluntary saving amount from all the members regularly. The savings so collected will be the group corpus fund.
- (vi) The group fund should be used advance loans to the members. The members in the group should develop financial management norms covering the loans sanction procedure, repayment schedule and interest rates, through participatory approach.
- (vii) The group should operate a group account so as to deposit the balance amounts left with the groups after disbursing loans to its members.
- (viii) The group should maintain simple basic records, such as minute book, attendance register, cash book, bank pass book and individual pass book.

(b) Objectives of SHGs:

Formation of SHGs may not be enough; they should work with the objectives, which help to achieve collective empowerment. The SHGs are formed for organising women to make collective efforts to achieve the following objectives:¹⁶

- (i) To calculate the habit of saving and banking habit among the rural women
- (ii) To build up trust and confidence between the rural women and the bankers.

¹⁶ Suguna.B,” *Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups*”, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2011, p-17

- (iii) To develop group activity so that various welfare and developmental programmes can be in a better way with the participation of these women groups.
- (iv) To achieve women and child welfare programme goals by actively involving these women groups in small family norms, etc.

(c) Features of SHGs:

Following are the important characteristics of self help groups:¹⁷

- (1) They usually create a common fund by contributing their small savings on a regular basis.
- (2) The groups evolve a flexible system of operations often with the help of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and manage their common pooled resource in a democratic manner.
- (3) Groups consider loan requests in periodical meetings, with competing claims on limited resources being settled by consensus regarding greater needs.
- (4) Loaning is mainly on the basis of mutual need and trust with minimum documentation and without any tangible security.
- (5) The amounts loaned are small, frequent and for short duration.
- (6) Rates of interest vary from group to group depending upon the purpose of loans and are often higher than those of banks but lower than those of moneylenders.
- (7) At periodical meetings, besides collecting money, emerging rural, social and economic issues are discussed.
- (8) Defaulters are rare due to group pressure and intimate knowledge of the end use of the credit as also the borrower's economic resources.

¹⁷ www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in (as on 10.10.2016)

(d) Functions of SHGs:

Self-Help Groups are generally informal groups where the members raise savings in a routine and systematic manner. Generally the Self Help Groups have members not exceeding twenty. Each group selects its own leader called 'animator'. There is provision that the leader will summon two to three meetings in a month. The members of SHGs save Rs.20 or 100/ and more in a month. The group recycles the money to the needy members for various purposes with low rate of interest. As the repayment is quite assured and the rotation of money is vary fat, the saving amount increases faster due to the accumulation of income from saving habits. This type of economic activity paves the path of socioeconomic empowerment of the women. It gives self confidence to the members that they can stand on their own. After the stabilization of financial position of the SHGs, it renders credit facility to its members, apart from that, the groups also receive financial assistance from various financial institutions, lender of the project for rural development.¹⁸The benefits of SHGs are as follows:¹⁹

- A via-media for development of savings habit among the poor.
- An access to large quantum of resources
- A window of better technology/skill up gradation
- Availability of emergent, consumption/production credit at the door step.
- Access to various promotional assistance and
- Assurance of freedom, quality, self reliance and empowerment.

(e) Norms of SHGs:

Any self help group will have certain norms: help to function properly for sustainability of SHGs. It is mandatory for any SHG to have certain byelaws pertaining to-

- Objectives of the group

¹⁸ Rama Ch. Sahoo,"Self Help Groups in Financing the Poor: Problems and Prospects", in R.K. Sahoo and S.N.Tripathy *Self-Help Group and women empowerment*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication, 2006, p-90

¹⁹ Suguna.B,"*Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups*", New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House", 2011, p-18

- Meetings – time, periodicity
- Savings- amount, periodicity, rate of interest
- Credit - procedure for sanction, ceiling amount, purposes, rate of interest to be charged, repayment period.
- Fines - defaulters in attending meetings, savings and credit repayment
- Leadership - election or nomination of leaders, rotation of leaders etc.
- Personal / Social improvement - minimum literacy to be achieved, social work to be done, convergence of facilities etc.

The norms are further elaborated as follows.

(f) Meetings:-

The group decides the periodicity of the meetings and regular monitoring, attendance of the meeting, punctuality of the members, disciplinary action on errant members etc. Generally, each group meets at least once in a month at a fixed time, some groups meet twice a month to transact their business. The meeting place may be the house of a leader, a common place, etc. Absentee member are liable for fine, which becomes the part of corpus funds of the group.

(g) Maintenance of registers:-

Each SHG maintain certain basic register for effective monitoring, accountability and transparency. The registers of SHGs include minute book, attendance register, ledger book, cash book, bank pass book etc. These registers are suggested by promoter (banker, NGO), which may vary from place to place. The details of meetings, proceedings, attendance, member wise savings and credit, bank transactions etc. are verifiable from these registers. The registers are maintained by a book keeper (President/treasurer/literate members), who is paid monthly honorarium for maintaining these registers.

(h) Pattern of leadership:-

Each group shall have leaders, who represent the group matters in various platforms. The nomenclature of leaders varies from region to region and state to state. The leaders are elected from the members on rotation. Leaders aid to democratic

function of the group. The purpose of rotation is to see that the leadership qualities are developed among the members of the group. However, the experience in Andhra Pradesh indicates that the rotation of leadership apparently take place on the prescribed manner. The same leaders continue to hold the office and or influence the leadership.

(i) Awareness of group:-

The group will create awareness among the members and empowerment of members take place. The members will have to know the purpose of group formation, activities and operations, savings, credits etc. The members are expected to participate actively in the group discussion and decision making process. SHG helps to work as a cohesive group and will have transparency in the transactions.

(j) Group activities:-

Savings and credit are the two important dimensions of SHG movement. Regularity in savings and method of dealing with defaulters are the important features of savings. The credit function of SHGs is judged by decision making process adopted credit requirement and quantum of loans sanctioned, system of monitoring credit repayment pattern etc. The group has to monitor their performance regularly.

(k) Revolving of fund:-

The SHGs to become eligible for sanction of revolving fund, community investment fund etc. they need to pass through certain stages.²⁰

2.3 Need for and Importance of SHGs:

India is a developing country and most of the people are living in scattered places. Large population of people depends on agriculture and lives in rural areas. Many a government programme has been implemented, but no considerable progress of development has been witnessed and some development programme has not success to alleviate poverty to a large extent. Thus, there are inequalities between the rich and poor people in the country. All the rich and poor are under the control of a

²⁰ www.shodhganga.ac.in (as on 12.10.2016)

minor proportion of people, enjoying a large portion of benefits and thus have become powerful. But the majority of the societies have been deprived of the basic and minimum benefits and thus the poor enjoying poverty which has been precarious. Thus the downtrodden and the weaker section of the society have been denied the equality of opportunities. The weaker sections of the society are dared not to speak their own rights and opportunities and they remain silent spectators in the process of development against the inequalities in enjoying the rights and opportunities. So, it is felt necessary that the silent suffering has to be changed which can be done only through mass mobilization and people's participation. It is in this background that the need for organizing rural poor, especially women into Self Help Groups assumes importance.

Self Help Groups are necessary to overcome exploitation, create confidence for the socio-economic, self-reliant of rural poor, particularly among women who are mostly invisible in the social structure. These groups enable them to come together for common aims, objective and gain strength from each other to deal with exploitation, which that are facing in several forms. A group becomes the basis for action and change. It also helps buildings of relationship for mutual trust between the promoting organization and the rural poor through constant contact and genuine efforts.²¹ Self Help Groups plays an important role in differentiating between consumer credit and production credit, analyzing the credit system and changes its implication and economy, culture and social position of the target groups, providing easy access to credit and facilitating group and organization for effective control, ensuring repayment schedules, gestation period, extension, writing of bad debts, and assisting group members in getting access to the formal credit institutions. Thus, self help group disburses small credit to the rural women for the purpose of making them enterprising women and encourage them to enter into entrepreneurial activities. Credit needs of the rural and urban poor women are fulfilled totally through the SHGs. SHGs enhance quality of status of women as participation, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life.

²¹ Singh Om Raj, "Role of NGOs in fostering SHGs", in S.B.Verma and Y.T.Pawar *Rural Empowerment: through SHGs, NGOs and PRIs*, New Delhi: Deep&Deep Publications, 2009, p.73

The rural poor are in-capacitated due to various reasons such as; most of them are socially backward, illiterate, with low motivation and poor socio-economic base. Individually, a poor is not weak in socio-economic term but also lacks access to the knowledge and information and communications, which are the most important components of today's development process. However, in a group, they are empowered to overcome many of these weaknesses, hence there are needs for SHGs which is specific terms are as under:-²²

- To mobilize the resources of the individual members for their collective economic development.
- To uplift the living conditions of the poor.
- To create a habit of savings, utilization of local resources.
- To mobilize individual skills for group's interest.
- To create awareness about right.
- To assist the members financial at the time of need.
- Entrepreneurship development.
- To identify problems, analyzing and finding solutions in the groups.
- To act as a media for socio-economic development of village.
- To develop linkage with institution of NGOs.
- To organize training for skill development.
- To help in recovery of loans.
- To gain mutual understanding, develop trust and self-confidence.
- To build up teamwork.
- To develop leadership qualities.
- To use it as an effective delivery channel for rural credit.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter is named as a concept and its evolution of Self-Help Groups. This chapter started with the conceptual meaning of SHGs, evolution of SHGs and the history of SHG in Post Independent India. This chapter also discussed the working and

²² www.shodhganga.ac.in (as on 12.10.2016)

functioning of SHGs in Mizoram. This chapter also highlights the functions, features and formations of SHGs. It also mentions the need and importance of SHGs.

CHAPTER-III

WORKING OF SELF-HELP-GROUPS IN R.D BLOCK TLANGNUAM

3.0 Introduction

As mentioned in the preceding Chapters, the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, has implemented a number of programmes or schemes to alleviate poverty. One of such schemes implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development is Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) with which several steps are taken to uplift the livelihood of the poorer people. The IWMP is being implemented since 2008 under the common guidelines with the focusing priority on livelihood activities for landless household. Nine percent of the total project cost has been assigned to support the livelihood activities for landless households. This component aims to maximize the utilization of potential generated by watershed activities and creation of sustainable livelihoods through enhancement of incomes for households within the watershed area. This will facilitate inclusiveness through enhanced livelihood opportunities for the poor through investment into assets, improvements in productivity and income, and access of the poor to common resources and benefits and augment the livelihood strategy at household level.

Livelihood planning is carried through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to alleviate poverty and to develop the standard of people. The IWMP of SHG not only focuses on the upliftment of women but also on men in rural areas. Some of the livelihood plannings by IWMP are as follows:

(a) Livelihood Planning of IWMP:

- (1) The agency selected for implementing the watershed programmes will also be responsible to implement the livelihood component of IWMP.
- (2) An awareness drive should be undertaken at village level of communication and sensitization of the target beneficiaries.

- (3) A “Livelihood Action Plan” (LAP) will be a prerequisite for availing the funds under the livelihood component.
- (4) The LAP should be prepared during the preparatory phase by the Project Implementing Agency (PIA) in consultation with WDT, WC and the members of SHGs, SC/ST, women, and landless households.
- (5) To promote convergence, the PIA should work in close association with other employment generating programmes such MGNREGS, NRLM, etc.
- (6) The livelihood action plan should analyse socio-economic conditions and existing livelihood capitals of the watershed village during the situation analysis by means of PRA and focus group discussion in order to facilitate collection of information to feed into the livelihood action planning process. Livelihood action plan should contain schedule of activities, interventions, number of SHGs to be assisted and expected outcome.
- (7) A copy of the livelihood action plan should also be made available to concerned SHGs and Village members.
- (8) The plan may be reviewed by the PIA, if need be, and revised in consultation with the stakeholders.¹

(b) Funding for Major Livelihood activities:

- (1) The funding for major livelihood activities will enable the enterprising SHGs/SHG federations (with at least 5 enterprising SHGs) to avail a composite loan for undertaking major livelihood activities or to expand/upscale activities as recommended by the WC and approved by Watershed Cell-cum-Data Centre (WCDC) in consultation with line departments and bank.

¹ Records maintain by IWMP Tlangnuam R.D Block, Livelihood, production system & micro enterprises Guidelines.

- (2) For such activities, a composite loan (Grant-in-Aid and Bank Loan) can be availed depending upon the type of activity. The grant – in – aid will be 50% of the cost of the activity or Rs. 2.00 lakh whichever is less. However, grant in aid shall not exceed 30% of the livelihood component (i.e 9% of the total project cost) of the project.
- (3) State Level Nodal Agency (SLNA) may issue detailed modalities for payment of grant-in-aid for funding major livelihood activities.²

In the light of Livelihood Planning of IWMP, this chapter will discuss the working of SHGs Tlangnuam Rural Development (R.D) Block as follows:

3.1 Self-Help-Groups in Tlangnuam R.D Block:

The working principles of SHG are based on group solidarity, self-group, self-management, self-reliant awareness and social and economic empowerment. As in other parts of the country, the goal of SHGs in Tlangnuam Rural Development (RD) Block are alleviation of poverty, women empowerment, creating leadership abilities among poor people, increasing literacy rate, improving the standard of people especially living in rural areas, etc. Self-Help-Groups in these areas are mostly divided into number of groups. Each Self Help Group functioning within the jurisdiction of the RD Block performs functions which might not be necessarily same with those functions performed by other SHGs functioning in other villages situated within the same RD Block. ³The field survey for the present study on *Role of Self-Help Groups in Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Aizawl District: A Study of Tlangnuam R.D Block* was conducted among the members of SHGs in two villages of Tlangnuam Rural Development Block, namely Sihphir and Tuirial.

(a) Name and Identity of Individual SHG:

² Records maintain by IWMP Tlangnuam R.D Block, Livelihood, production system & micro enterprises Guidelines.

³ Records maintain by IWMP Tlangnuam R.D Block, Livelihood, production system & micro enterprises Guidelines.

Self-Help Groups are homogenous groups and each group is normally formed with a group of 5-20 persons of at least 18 years of age. ⁴Within the jurisdiction of Tlangnuam RD. Block, 8 (eight) SHGs are identified as active SHGs. Each SHG has been formed with 10 members coming from poor economic background. As per the Guidelines, every SHG has been instructed to have a unique name for building its distinct identity. Accordingly, each of the SHGs under study has its own name with a separate identity. Following are the names of SHGs under study: Farmer SHG, Women SHG, Women Tailoring SHG, Nu Valai SHG, Zozam SHG, Marthi SHG, Estheri SHG and Lili SHG. In each of the two villages where these SHGs are functioning, the authorities have appointed the facilitator to guide and help members of the Group in their problems and identify their solutions.

Table No.3.1 : Names of SHGs and their Individual Identities:⁵

Project	Sl. No	Name of SHG	Women / men / mixed Group	No. of members
IWMP AIZAWL-III & BDO TLANGNUAM	1.	Farmer SHG	Mixed	15
	2.	Women SHG	Women	10
	3.	Women Tailoring SHG	Women	10
	4.	Nu Valai SHG	Women	10
	5.	Zozam SHG	Women	10
	6.	Marthi SHG	Women	10
	7.	Estheri SHG	Women	10
	8.	Lili SHG	Women	10
			Total	85

The above table also shows that, while SHGs are supposed to be formed by women, Farmer SHG is having male members. In Mizoram, Self-Help Groups under IWMP focus not only on women but also on men. A man has also taken parts in developing the livelihood of rural areas. This shows that each group has different activities for earning the money such as petty trade, poultry trade, tailoring, piggery, etc. However, it is pertinent to note that, with the exception of the Farmer SHG, all other SHGs actively functioning in the two villages are formed exclusively with women. What has been found in course of carrying out the field survey is that all the

⁴ Records maintain by IWMP Tlangnuam R.D Block, Livelihood, production system & micro enterprises Guidelines.

⁵ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

members forming these SHGs come from a poor economic background. Every member of the SHG should be aware of the rights and obligations of membership. While every member has to accept the goals, objectives, vision, norms and rules of the Group. The member is under the obligation to act with diligence in discharge of Group responsibilities and to discharge debt liability contracted by the Group. Every member has the right to withdraw from membership under genuine circumstances.

(b) SHG Leadership Pattern and Responsibility:

Unlike what is being practised by SHGs in other States of India, leadership of SHGs under study is not on rotation basis. Members of each SHG have to select their Group leader from among themselves. ⁶The leader of the Group plays a vital role in the working and functioning of SHG. The leader has to be educated enough to read and write, collect the savings and maintain the records of it in registers. All the organizing, implementing and coordinating programmes of SHGs are planned by their respective leaders. Each leader of the Group is responsible to resolve any conflict and dispute arising between or among the group members. The leader of the Group is also responsible to conduct Group meetings and facilitate Group decisions. She/he is to maintain all the records and keep all accounts of his/her Group. The opening and maintenance of Bank Account on behalf of the Group is in the hand of the leader.⁷

(c) Activities of SHGs:

SHG can undertake any permissible activity jointly as a Group or the Group may decide to support individual(s) for the activities under the protection of the SHG. Every member of the Group has the right to determine the goals, objectives and visions of his/her trade and participate in every activity of the Group, Hence, SHGs have taken different forms of trade to earn their living. Each group has works in

⁶ Interview with Mrs.Lalmuanpuii, facilitator SHGs Tuirial regarding the leadership pattern on 18th August 2016.

⁷ Suguna.B, *“Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2011,p-23.

different forms according to their own needs.⁸ The following table shows the main activities of SHGs and the combination of their membership:

Table No.3.2 : Main Activities of individual SHGs:⁹

Project	Sl. No	Name of SHG	Activities of SHG Members	No. of members
IWMP AIZAWL-III & BDO TLANGNUAM	1.	Farmer SHG	Farming	15
	2.	Women SHG	Piggery	10
	3.	Women Tailoring SHG	Tailoring	10
	4.	Nu Valai SHG	Petty Trade	10
	5.	Zozam SHG	Petty Trade	10
	6.	Marthi SHG	Poultry	10
	7.	Estheri SHG	Petty Trade	10
	8.	Lili SHG	Petty Trade	10

An analysis of the above figures in the table shows that, out of the eight SHGs, four SHGs engage themselves in farming, piggery, tailoring and poultry activities respectively. Meanwhile, the other four SHGs engage themselves in petty trade activity.

Each Self Help Group holds a group meeting at least once every month to discuss the activities of the Group. The meetings are conducted at a decided place, date and time and are mostly held at the house of each member. Attendance is taken in every meeting and this enables members to effectively participation in the meeting. The Group members actively participate in their monthly meetings where they share their experiences, ideas, thoughts, information about facilities connected with their activities and encourage each other. Thus, SHGs enhance the quality of status of women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic and social realms of life.¹⁰ Besides, activities like review of previous meeting, loans and some social issues are pursued and this makes the meeting effective. Every minute of meetings has to be recorded in the register. Each member of a group has a right to scrutinize group's records and inspect properly. But non-members are not allowed to attend the meetings.

⁸ Interview with Mr. Sangthankhuma and Mrs. Lalmuanpuui, Leader of Farmer SHG in Sihphir and facilitator of SHG in Tuirial , regarding the activities of SHGs.

⁹ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

¹⁰ Tripathy, Dr. S.N , 'Rural Finance and SHG', in R.K Sahoo and S.N. Tripathy *Self-Help Group and women empowerment*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications 2006, pp.29&30

(d) Financial Support to SHGs:

In response to the application of SHG for financial assistance, the IWMP has given the revolving funds to 5(five) groups from Sihphir and 3 (three) groups from Tuiriial. According to the funding procedures, each SHG should make an application for financial assistance and submit it to the Watershed Committee (WC) for approval. Then, the WC will consider such application and pass the Resolution regarding its approval of financial assistance to SHGs based on merit of the case. The representatives of the applicant SHGs may also be allowed to be present in such meetings of the WC. The Resolution so passed by the WC will clearly rank the approved cases, based on priorities and preferences, so that the support may be extended to all the eligible SHGs in order of ranking. After their proposed activities have been approved by the WC in its meeting and if such approval is included in the Resolution, the amount of Rs.25,000/- is given to all the members of SHGs as the revolving Fund under the IWMP.¹¹ The funds so given to the members SHGs are regulated and controlled by the members themselves. It is noteworthy that, while giving funds to SHGs under the IWMP, top priority is given to women SHGs.

In case of individual financial support under the SHGs, the individuals will be accountable to the SHG for finances or performance. The financial support to enterprising individuals who prepare and submit their viable livelihood proposals to WC may be considered by WCDC based on the Recommendation of WC. The plan has to be approved by the WCDC before extending financial support. Thus, support to individuals should not exceed a maximum of 10% of funds under the livelihood component.¹²

(e) Mode of Distribution of Funds to Members of SHG:

Every member of SHGs has the power to access to funds given to the Group for release to its members as loans. After opening a Joint Bank Account for their SHG members by the respective SHGs, the payment of the money will be made to the

¹¹ As per the replies given to the researcher by all the members of SHGs through Interview during 18th and 19th August 2016.

¹² Records maintain by IWMP Tlangnuam R.D Block, Livelihood, production system & micro enterprises Guidelines.

beneficiaries by cheques. Under normal practice, the funds will be given to women beneficiaries, especially female heads of households who come from poor socio-economic background or as identified under the wealth ranking conducted by PRA. The SHG is responsible to ensure that the selected member of SHG does not have more than one member from a household. Each member of SHG is allowed to use the amount for a combined activity or shall provide the above amount to the concerned members as individual loan against a specific activity for improving income. Every loan given to the members is issued in the presence of other members of the group. From the revolving funds, loans are distributed among the members for starting their trade and to increase their savings¹³.

(f) Maintenance of Accounts:

Self-Help-Groups efficiently maintain their records and securely keep Accounts. Self-awareness is created among the groups on issues relating to record keeping. The Groups are responsible for the safety of keeping records. Every group member has been trained to recognize the structure of the Account Books. The Group is encouraged to discuss the nature and contents of the Records. Every member of the Group is ensured that Account Books are updated while the meeting is in progress. The Group member is able to read and write in maintaining the records.¹⁴

(g) Bank Linkages:

The objective of linkage programmes is to evolve supplementary strategy for meeting the credit needs of the poor women and disadvantaged groups. Therefore, Banks as credit institutions are expected to supplement the loans received by SHGs from IWMP and this responsiveness of credit institutions would build up mutual trust and confidence between the Bankers and the rural women living within the jurisdiction of Tlangnuam R.D. Block. With the exception of Farmer SHG having

¹³ Suguna.B, *“Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups”, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House”,2011,p-23*

¹⁴ Suguna.B, *“Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups”, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House”,2011,p-34*

linkages with MRB and SBI, all other SHGs build linkages with MRB only¹⁵. The following table shows Bank Linkages of SHGs at Sihphir village and Tuirial village.

Table No.3.3: Table showing Bank linkages of SHGs:¹⁶

Project	Sl. No	Name of SHG	Activities of SHG Members	No. of members	Bank Linkages
IWMP AIZAWL-III & BDO TLANGNUAM	1.	Farmer SHG	Farming	15	MRB/SBI
	2.	Women SHG	Piggery	10	MRB
	3.	Women Tailoring SHG	Tailoring	10	MRB
	4.	Nu Valai SHG	Petty Trade	10	MRB
	5.	Zozam SHG	Petty Trade	10	MRB
	6.	Marthi SHG	Poultry	10	MRB
	7.	Estheri SHG	Petty Trade	10	MRB
	8.	Lili SHG	Petty Trade	10	MRB

Based on their Banks Linkages, members of 7 (seven) Self-Help Groups have opened their Accounts in Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB) whereas only the members of Farmer SHG have opened their Accounts both in the Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB) and the State Bank of India (SBI) for depositing their savings out of the revolving funds they received under IWMP. While it is the expectation of members of SHGs and non-members of SHGs that loans should be given to them by the Banks based on the decisions of their respective Groups and the WC, none of the respondents received such loans from the Banks. Unfortunately, the loans they have received from IWMP have not been supplemented by the Banks with which they build Linkages.

(h) Savings of the Members:

Each member of SHG has to return the money received as loan on monthly basis and that could be reinvested in the same or other SHGs as per the Resolution passed by the WC in its meeting. The amount and number of monthly instalments are decided by the members of SHG based on the type of activity, capacity of the group and their savings. Normally, the amount of money has to be returned within a

¹⁵ Interview with Mr. Sangthankhuma and Mrs. Lalmuanpuii, Leader of Farmer SHG in Sihphir and facilitator of SHG in Tuirial, regarding the activities of SHGs.

¹⁶ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

maximum period of 18 months. The members have contributed an amount of 100, 50 or 20 rupees every month for savings.¹⁷

Table No.3.3 : Savings of individual Members of SHGs:¹⁸

Project	Sl. No	Name of SHG	Activities of SHG Members	No. of members	Monthly Savings	Annual Savings
IWMP AIZAWL-III & BDO TLANGNUA M	1.	Farmer SHG(Mixed)	Farming	15	Rs.100/-	Rs.1500/-
	2.	Women SHG (W)	Piggery	10	Rs. 50/-	Rs. 500/-
	3.	Women Tailoring SHG(W)	Tailoring	10	Rs.100/-	Rs.1000/-
	4.	Nu Valai SHG(W)	Petty Trade	10	Rs. 50/-	Rs. 500/-
	5.	Zozam SHG(W)	Petty Trade	10	Rs. 50/-	Rs. 500/-
	6.	Marthi SHG(W)	Poultry	10	Rs. 20/-	Rs. 200/-
	7.	Estheri SHG(W)	Petty Trade	10	Rs. 20/-	Rs. 200/-
	8.	Lili SHG(W)	Petty Trade	10	Rs. 20/-	Rs. 200/-

An analysis of the above figures in the table shows that members of each SHG can make monthly savings ranging from Rs.20/- to Rs.100/-. Out of the members of SHGs under study, those engaged in farming and tailoring activities could make higher amounts of savings for improving their purchasing powers. While the Annual Savings of Women Tailoring SHG is Rs.1,000/-, the Annual Savings of Farmer SHGs is Rs.1500/-. In this way, women members of SHGs have been enhancing their savings for improving the quality of their economic status as participants.

3.2 Conclusion

Self-Help-Groups under study are accessing credit to members of poor households on sustainable basis. Loans are given to the members of the group and even non-members for various purposes without insistence on collateral but are available at cost. Loans given to the members are usually extended according to the nature of need of particular member. Each group has a system of giving differential priorities to several purposes for taking loaning decisions. All the decisions are usually taken at the meetings after due consideration to opinion of all members.

¹⁷ Interview with Sangthankhuma and Lalmanpuui, Leader of Farmer SHG in Sihphir and facilitator of SHG in Tuirial , regarding the activities of SHGs.

¹⁸ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

Some of the important functions performed by each of the SHGs under study are:¹⁹

- (i) It enables members to become self-reliant and self-dependent.
- (ii) It provides for members for discussing their social and economic problems.
- (iii) It enhancing the social status of members by virtue of their being members of the group.
- (iv) It develops and encourages the decision making capacity of members.
- (v) It creates a spirit of mutual help and cooperation among members.
- (vi) It builds strength and confidence among the members for solving their problems.
- (vii) It provides organizational strength to members.
- (viii) It provides literacy and develops the standard of living
- (ix) It promotes different types of skills training among the members.

¹⁹ Interviews with members of Self-Help-Groups in the two villages on 9th and 10th August 2016.

CHAPTER-IV

ROLE OF SELF-HELP GROUP: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

4.0. Background

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as self-governed, peer controlled, informal groups of people with the same socio-economic background have common purpose- uplift of the living conditions of their members. In other words, SHGs are usually informal groups whose members have a common perception of need and importance towards collective action. SHG as a programme lays emphasis on activity clusters based on the resources and the occupational skills of the people in the society.¹ SHGs promote savings among their members and use the pooled resources to meet the emergent needs of their members, including their consumption needs. The number of members in SHGs normally ranges from 10 to 20. It is expected that there should be true democratic culture in which all the members of the group must participate in the decision-making process by taking part in the debate and discussion concerning their welfare. Though the cohesiveness among the members could be increased due to homogeneity of the groups in terms of education, occupation, income distribution, SHGs, in the long term, depend on the loyalty of their members and the adequacy of the Group to meet the growing needs of the members. SHGs are to develop saving capability of the poorest sections of the society which, in turn, reduce their dependence on financial institutions thereby developing self-reliance. Some of the pivotal roles played by the SHGs are:²

- (a) Creating economic self-reliance of rural poor by meeting consumption and production credit needs as and when they arise. They will prevent exploitation of the poorer sections from non-institutional credit sources.

¹ Misra, Neha. "Self-Help Group (SHG) of India: Meaning, Need and Objectives," article published in <http://www.ijhss.com> (as on 10.11.2016)

² Ritu Jain, R.K Kushwaha, A.K Srivastava, "Socio Economic Impact through Self-Help Groups", in S.B.Verma and Y.T.Pawar *Rural Development through SHGs, NGOs and PRIs*, New Delhi:Deep&Deep Publications, 2009, p-31 & 32

- (b) Develop of group dynamics, building leadership quality to realize their potentiality and self-belief.
- (c) Assisting the members to complete the formalities and documentation required to obtain credit from bank.
- (d) Helping Banks in recovery of credit by motivating members for prompt repayment of loans.
- (e) Procurement of high cost inputs that could not be bought individually.
- (f) Training of members in the use of extension services and Government support.
- (g) Building common infrastructure for the benefit of its members.

SHGs have volunteered to organize themselves into a group for eradication of poverty of the members. The members of the Group have a small amount of savings, which are deposited in a common fund to meet member's emergency needs and to provide free loans decided by the group. SHGs have been recognized as a useful tool for helping the poor and work as an alternative mechanism to meet the urgent needs of poor. SHG plays as a media for development of savings habit among the women and enhances the equality of women, as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in the democratic, economic, social and cultural spheres of life.³

Self-Help Group plays an important role in enabling women to grow their savings and to access to low cost financial services with a process of self management and self-reliant. It is a small organization and is established for the improvement of rural women. The members of the SHG save and contribute to a common fund and small loans are lent to the needy members as per the decision of the group. The self help group is one of the platforms for women where they can share their feelings, problems, grievances and miseries. It provides a good deal of psychological solace and act as a friends and counsellors.

³ Tripathy, Dr. S.N , 'Rural Finance and SHG', in R.K Sahoo and S.N. Tripathy *Self-Help Group and women empowerment*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications 2006, pp.29&30

Self Help Groups play an effective role for promoting women empowerment and the development of the weaker society. It is not only an efficient tool to promote women but also as a means of alleviating poverty of the most marginalized sections of the population. Since man has enjoyed superiority over woman and women has no power of decision making with and without the family. The Government has made efforts in removing various biases against womenfolk. So, the Government of India has provided for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under different programmes and schemes. Self-Help Groups help women in the contributions of empowerment of well-being, economic independence through self-employment and entrepreneurial development has been provided among the women. SHG is one of the instruments which helps to promote rural development and helps in capacity of rural woman.⁴

The Self-Help Groups play a vital role in the empowerment of women in the society. SHG acts as a source of income, employment and encouragement for women becoming self independent person in the society. It raised the position of women folk in the weaker section of the society. It is also an instrument for economic empowerment of women. SHG create empowerment promoting conditions for women to move from the positions of marginalization within household decision making process and exclusion within community to a vibrant individual with more enthusiasm and eager to take part in decision making body of the locality.⁵

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) help women in many activities. As they have their own Saving Accounts in the Banks, their incomes also increase and this increase in their incomes helps them to take up different economic activities. Hence, SHGs help to improve the socio-economic standard of women. SHGs also strengthen women's self-esteem and self-worth in the sense of awareness of social and political issues leading to increased mobility and reduced traditional seclusion of women. SHGs enable women to contribute to the household economy, increasing their intra-

⁴ Likha Eichir, Tasi Kaye, "Role of SHGs in Empowering Tribal Women in Papum Pare District of Arunachal Pradesh", in Sangeeta Borthkur Tamuli, *Women Empowerment in North-East India*, New Delhi: EBH Publishers, 2014, p-46

⁵ Likha Eichir, Tasi Kaye, "Role of SHGs in Empowering Tribal Women in Papum Pare District of Arunachal Pradesh, *Women Empowerment in North-East India*, New Delhi: EBH Publishers, 2014, p.49

household bargaining power. Thus, SHGs have transferred the real economic power in the hands of women and have considerably reduced their dependence on men.⁶

The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) act as an instrument of socio- economic empowerment of women in the society. It helps to promotes small savings among its members. The savings are kept with a bank in their account. It helps the women in developing their standard of living and helps them to support the education of their children and even health care facility. SHGs help the women in self-employment and with their savings they could purchase some goods of their household items. SHGs have a strong contribution on the economic lives of the women and have considerably reduced their dependence on men. It acts as a catalyst for economic development of women.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are a viable organized setup to disburse micro credit to the rural woman for the purpose of making them develop and encouraging them to enter into entrepreneurial activities. Self Help Groups eradicate the poverty through increase in income and help the poor to build assets and reduce their vulnerability. It enables the household to that access to spend more in education. It also empowered women by enhancing their contribution to household income. SHGs increase the value of women and giving them better control over decisions that affect their lives. The SHG play an effective role in empowering women and train them to take active part in the socio-economic progress and make them self-reliant, self-made and self-disciplined.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are proved to be very fruitful for empowerment of women. Formation of group promotes saving habit among women and builds confidence in them that they could stand on their own feet. These are viable organisations set up to channelize micro credit to the rural women and promote their participation in rural development. The women SHGs have successfully demonstrated

⁶ S.Kri, Ms Likha Eichir, Tasi Kaye,” Role of SHGs in Empowering Tribal Women in Papum Pare District of Arunachal Pradesh”, in Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli *Women Empowerment in North-East India*, New Delhi:EBH Publishers, 2014, p-50

how to mobilise and manage thrift, appraise credit needs, maintain a vital link and promotional agencies.⁷

4.1 Role of Self-Help Groups in Tlangnuam RD Block

In the light of the role played by SHGs in other parts of the country, the researcher administered questionnaire to the members of SHGs in Sihphir village and Tuirial village where Tlangnuam RD Block has been implementing IWMP. Questionnaire was administered to them with a view to finding out their perception about the role of SHGs within the areas under study. However, let us first look into the educational background of members of SHGs to whom questionnaire was administered.

(a) Improvement of the Economic Status of Their Families by SHG Members:

As stated in the previous chapter, 85 members of SHGs in Sihphir and Tuirial villages have received revolving Funds at the rate of Rs.25,000/- under IWMP. Thought the Banks have failed to give loans to SHG members as a supplement to their revolving Funds, the recipients of assistance under IWMP have been investing their revolving Funds for the uplift of their respective families. Let us now look into the positive role of SHGs for the improvement of the economic status of their families as perceived by their members in Sihphir and Tuirial village under Tlangnuam RD Block.

Table No.4.2 : Positive Impact of Revolving Funds under IWMP for the Economic Empowerment of the Families of SHG Members⁸

Sl. no.	Name of SHG	No. of Mem bers	Do revolving Funds, Poverty alleviation and Employment Programmes through SHG improve the economic status of the Families SHG members?			Total
			Agree	Not Agree	No response	

⁷ Das Kumas Sudhansu, "Women SHGs-A Boon to Rural Credit Delivery System", in R.K.Sahoo and S.N.Tripathy *Self Help Groups and Women Empowerment*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2006, p- 84

⁸ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

1.	Farmer SHG	15	15	-	-	15
2.	Women SHG	10	8	-	2	10
3.	Women Tailoring SHG	10	10	-	-	10
4.	Estheri SHG	10	10	-	-	10
5.	Lili SHG	10	7	-	3	10
6.	Marthi SHG	10	6	-	4	10

As shown in the above table 4.2, questionnaires were administered to the members of all Self-Help Groups in Sihphir and Tuirial villages. However, since only the members of 6 have SHGs have received revolving funds under IWMP, the researcher could receive responses only from the members of those SHGs. When asked whether SHGs play a positive role or not, 15 members of Farmer SHGs agree that SHG play a significant role for the improvement of the economic status of their families through the investment of Rs.2,5000/- received by them as a revolving Funds. Accordingly, most of the members of other SHGs agree that SHG practically play a positive role for the economic development of their respective families. However, it should also be mention that 2 members from Women SHG, 3 members of Lili SHG and 4 members of Marthi SHG have not express their ideas about the role played by SHG for their economic development or otherwise.

While the perception of the SHG members with regards to the contribution of revolving Funds is positive, the researcher has found that the perception of SHG members in connection with imparting of trainings on Rules and Regulations, Awareness Campaign and loans facilities is negative.

Table No.4.3 : Perception of Members of SHG about the need for Training⁹

Sl. no.	Name of SHG	No. of Members	Training on Rules and Regulations, Awareness campaign, Loan Facility			Total
			Agree	Not Agree	No response	
1.	Farmer SHG	15	2	13	-	15
2.	Women SHG	10	-	10	-	10
3.	Women Tailoring SHG	10	-	8	2	10
4.	Estheri SHG	10	-	10	-	10
5.	Lili SHG	10	-	10	-	10
6.	Marthi SHG	10	-	10	-	10

⁹ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

According to the above table number 4.3, 61 members of all SHGs do not agree that training on Rules and Regulations and Awareness campaign is not up to the mark as the concerned authorities have failed to conduct this kind of trainings practically need by members of SHGs. Likewise, the perception of members of SHGs regarding Loan Facilities is much below expectation. Though all the members have open their bank accounts in the entire bank with which they build linkages, all the banks do not give Loan Facilities to them for supplementing their revolving Funds received under IWMP. Further, it pertinent to note that only 2 members of Farmer SHG agree that training Rules and Regulations and Awareness campaign is good while 2 members of Women Tailoring SHG do not response questionnaire administered to them.

In the light of analysis of table number 4.2, it has been found that, with the help of investment of revolving Funds received under IWMP, SHGs have been playing a positive role for the economic development of their members in general and women members in particular. On the other hand, an analysis of the above table number 4.3 has crystallised that SHG cannot play a positive role as expected due to the failure of the concerned authorities to impart trainings on Rules and Regulations, launching of Awareness campaign and giving of Loans to SHG members for supplementing from revolving Funds they have received under IWMP. However, it can be construed that from the economic point of view SHGs play a commendable role for the raising of standard of living of SHG members in Sihphir and Tuirial villages under Tlangnuam R.D Block of Aizawl District.

(b) Educational Background of Members of SHGs in Sihphir and Tuirial villages:

With the help of questionnaire, the researcher has collected the following data about the educational background of members of SHGs in the two villages of Sihphir and Tuirial villages under Tlangnuam RD Block.

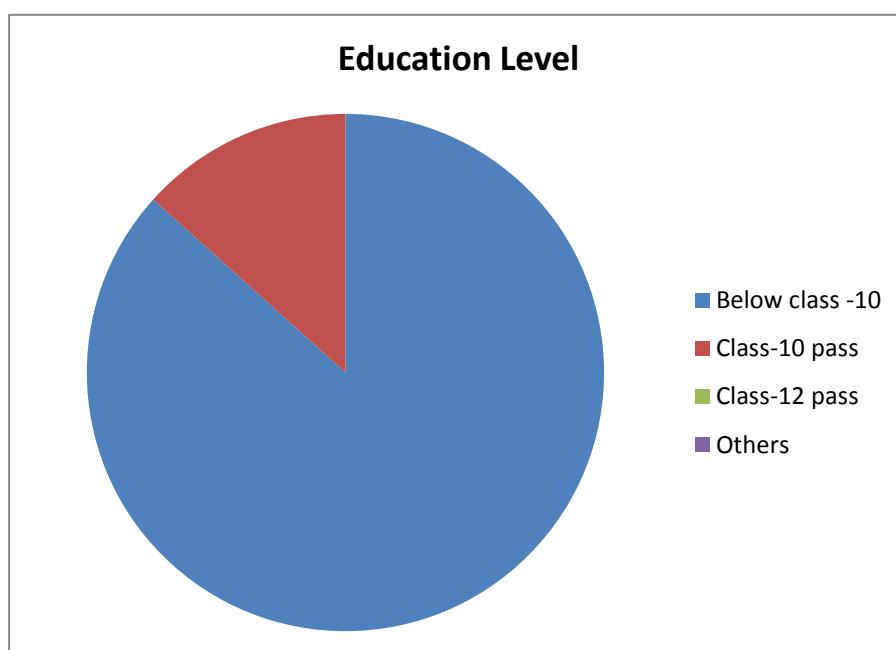
Table No.4.1: Showing the Educational Background of Members of SHGs¹⁰

Sl.no.	Educational Standard	Number of Members	Percentage
1.	Class XII passed	12	18.46

¹⁰ Data collected through Questionnaire administered to the members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Sihphir and Tuirial Localities of Tlangnuam R.D Block during 18th and 19th August 2016.

2.	Class X passed	10	15.38
3.	Below Class X	10	15.38
4.	Literates	33	50.78
	Total	65	100

After analysing the data in the above table, it has been found that out of the total number of members of SHGs, that is, 65, only 12 of them passed Class XII, 10 of them passed Class X, another 10 of them passed below Class X and the rest, 33 of them are literates. It is, therefore, clear that majority of SHGs members are not educated and hence need proper guidance with regards to the implementation of IWMP. The concerned authorities should conduct an educational programme at least once a month to uplift SHGs members educationally. The authorities should give importance about giving training among the members about the work of SHGs. The following chart demonstrates the educational attainment of each member.



4.1. Issues and Challenges of SHG in Tlangnuam R.D Block:

SHGs are instrumental for the development of rural areas but are also facing numerous problems. These problems include marketing, finance, quality product, infrastructure and facilitator's support and so on. SHG are important tools of alleviating poverty and have achieved tremendous progress in bringing about social

and economic upliftment among the rural areas. However, despite the spread and success of SHGs, the members suffer from various drawbacks and not many have successfully come above the poverty line. The SHG faces some issues in different ways. Here are some of the positive issues of Self-Help Group:

1. **Loans:**

Loans can play an important role for the improvement of livelihood of men and women. With the exception of members of two Groups in Tuirial village, all other members of Self-Help Groups have received a small sum of Rs.25, 000/-each as revolving funds under IWMP and the Banks are expected to supplement the funds received by members of SHGs under IWMP. But, all the members of SHGs have not received any loan from the Banks where they safely keep their savings by opening their Accounts.¹¹

2. **Self-confidence:**

As women occupy a lower status in the society, they need to be uplifted in every sphere of their life.¹² The women in Mizoram also able to stand out and express their own ideas and thought within and outside the family with the functioning of SHGs in rural areas. So, Self-Help Group can play a vital role for the uplift of women and building of self-confidence, self-reliance and self-management.

3. **Mutual Relationships:**

Self-Help Group is a mutual group, mutual aid and homogenous group of women who provide mutual support for each other. They share their own thoughts, ideas and problem to one another and this mutuality made the women to heal their problems.¹³

4. **Economic and social empowerment of SHG:**

¹¹ As per the replies given to the researcher by all the members of SHGs through Interview during 9th August 2016.

¹² <https://www.Iosrjournals.org> (as on 12.11.2016)

¹³ Interview with Mrs.Lalmuankimi, Facilitator of SHGs in Tuirial, regarding the mutual relationships of members SHGs on 9th August 2016.

Women's economic empowerment, which entails that women have the authority to make their own decisions regarding use of their resources, leads to prosperity for families and communities. With the help of SHGS they can earn money and can become economically and financially strong. Social empowerment reinforces the ability to participate economically and politically, which in turn reinforces women's standing in society. This can be possible only with the help of SHGs.¹⁴ Likewise, as shown in the above tables, with the help of SHGs, the members can earn their own living without depending on their family. It makes them self-reliant and become economically and financially strong. They can buy their own needs and household's necessities which make them lead a happy life. Through SHGs they are socially empowered as they become educated and gain knowledge about their rights.

5. Saving and financial system:

One of the primary benefits of participation in a SHG is the opportunity to save regularly, access formal savings institutions and participate in the management of these savings.¹⁵ With the help of SHGs, women are able to know how to access credit and managed their own financial system. They know how to save their own money, have their own bank account and make deposits in their accounts.

6. To alleviate poverty:

As shown from the above table 4.2, SHGs play a pivotal role in alleviating poverty. With the help of SHGs, they engaged in some work to earn their living and become self-reliant, self-dependent and self-management. It would mean alleviate poverty slowly.¹⁶

7. To increase employment:

¹⁴ <https://www.researchpublish.com> (as on 12.11.2016)

¹⁵ <https://www.losjournals.org> (as on 12.11.2016)

¹⁶ Records maintain by the International Journal of Management and Commerce Impact of SHGs in socio and economic development of Assam: A study of Dhemaji District.

SHGs help the member in increasing employment. Since, most of the members have chosen piggery trade, poultry trade, petty trade or tailoring and this lead them to self-employment and it uplift their standard of living.

As shown from the above table 4.3, the role of Self-Help Groups are not efficient and there are also some negative issues under the following:

1. Ignorance of Members:

Even though the authorities take measures for creating awareness among the group members about the beneficial of the schemes among the members, still some of the members are unaware of the schemes offered to them. Since, most of the members are uneducated, they didn't give importance about the schemes and this makes them ignorant about the scheme.¹⁷

2. Inadequate Training:

This is one of the major problems among Self Help Groups. Due to improper training the SHG beneficiaries are not able to produce quality products. The faculty could not give a proper training among the member of the groups. The faculty has to teach them the management of their accounts, quality of product and other technique knowledge.¹⁸

3. Ignorant of Rules and Regulations:

Most of the members did not known about the rules and regulations abide by the SHG. From the above table 4.3, it can be noted that only few respondents are known and followed the rules and regulations. The reason due to the neglecting of rules and regulations is lack of communication skills and illiteracy.¹⁹

¹⁷ Interview with Mrs.Lalmuankimi, Facilitator of SHGs in Tuirial, regarding the mutual relationships of members SHGs on 9th August 2016.

¹⁸ As per the replies given to the researcher by all the members of SHGs through Interview during 9th August 2016.

¹⁹ As per the replies given to the researcher by all the members of SHGs through Interview during 10th August 2016.

4. **Insufficient of Funds:**

Most of the respondents are not satisfied by the funds sanctioned to SHG. The respondents need more money in order to start their own trade and to increase the money in their savings.²⁰

5. **Inadequate Financial Assistance:**

Finance is the backbone of any economic venture. It involves both demand and supply related problems. It is observed that financial institutions are not providing adequate finance to the SHG. It is found that in Self-Help Groups, the financial assistance provided by the concerned departments is not adequate to meet their actual requirements. The financial authorities are not giving enough subsidies to meet even the capital of cost requirements.²¹

6. **Inadequate support from the higher authorities:**

The department officers play an important role for the illiterate members as they don't know how to maintain records, cash book, etc. The group members needed an assistance and support from the higher authorities. However, the higher authorities are not co-operative with the SHGs. This will affect the objectives of the programme.²²

7. **Inadequate awareness campaign:**

Self-Help Group members are mostly illiterate and lack in communication skills. So, the members need proper awareness campaign about the working and functions of Self-Help Group. According to the figure, it is shown that the higher

²⁰ Interview with Mr. Sangthankhuma and Mrs. Lalmuanpuii, Leader of Farmer SHG in Sihphir and facilitator of SHG in Tuirial , regarding the funds of SHGs.

²¹ Interview with Mr. Sangthankhuma and Mrs. Lalmuanpuii, Leader of Farmer SHG in Sihphir and facilitator of SHG in Tuirial , regarding the financial assistance of SHGs.

²² As per the replies given to the researcher by all the members of SHGs through questionnaire during 18th and 19th August 2016.

authorities did not give proper awareness campaign among the members. Neglecting of Self Help Groups create down-grading of development in rural areas.²³

As explain from the above impacts, it shown that the finance support given by the concerned authorities did not bring much solution to the complex problem of poverty. Many members of the group have suffered from poor management and poor financial system. One of the root causes of the problem is lack of education and skills among the members. Self Help Groups are under such rules and regulations of different entities and this also makes formation and functioning of SHG difficult. The funds giving to Self Help Groups are not sufficient enough for self-management and to earn their living.

Though, there are some negative issues of Self Help Groups (SHGs), many positive issues are found in the role of Self Help Groups. SHGs brought the poorer people a trade to increase their savings. It helps in the development of educational system, health, sanitation, medical facilities and the quality of life. SHGs also promoted democratic culture and provided women with opportunities to imbibe norms of behaviour that are based on mutual respect.

²³ As per the replies given to the researcher by all the members of SHGs through questionnaire during 18th and 19th August 2016.

CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Rural development has always been an important subject in various academic and official discussions pertaining to social and economic development of the country which is committed to the development of people living in the rural areas. Rural development aims at improvement of the standard of living, the quality of life and the livelihood of rural people by increasing employment opportunities and productivity, and providing other basic services, such as education, health, communication, clothing, etc. Accordingly, the Ministry of Rural Development has a number of rural development programmes implemented through the State Governments. One of these programmes is Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) for the restoration of ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover and water. IWMP has been implemented by Self Help Groups (SHG) with the objective of improving the well-being of women or men and the community of the rural areas. Self Help Group usually consists of ten to twenty members hailing from certain locality with similar socio-economic background. Most of its members are selected from a poor family, widow, handicapped, backward classes and those who cannot earn their own living. In fact, the purpose of SHG is to empower women or men without the assistance from the Government and Non-government Organizations (NGOs).

5.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) to examine the reasons responsible for the evolution of Self-Help Groups
- 2) to study the working of Self-Help Groups in implementing Integrated Watershed Management Programmes in Tlangnuam Rural Development Block

- 3) to study the role and functions of Self-Help Groups and the issues and challenges faced by them.

5.3 Scope of the Study

The present study has mainly focused on the role of Self-Help Groups in implementing Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) in Sihphir and Tuirial localities. These two areas have been selected as the fields of study because they are the only areas in Tlangnuam R.D.Block where Integrated Watershed Management Programme has been fully implemented by Self-Help Groups.

5.4 Research Questions

The present study has answered the following research questions:

- 1) What are the main reasons responsible for the establishment of Self-Help Groups under Tlangnuam Rural Development Block in Aizawl District of Mizoram?
- 2) What are the possible measures for improving the working of Self-Help Groups?
- 3) What are the major problems and challenges faced by Self-Help Groups in achieving its goal in the area under study?

5.5 Methods of Data Collection

The present study has been based on primary and secondary data. The Primary data have been collected from some of those men and women directly associated with SHGs in Tlangnuam R.D.Block, Aizawl District, through questionnaire as well as structured and unstructured interviews. Relevant original Documents and Records of the concerned officials of the Department of Rural Development of Mizoram have also been consulted.

In addition, the Secondary data have been collected from the Journals, Pamphlets, Books and Handbooks which directly or indirectly deal with Self-Help Groups. Relevant Internet source materials have also been utilised for the present study.

5.6 Chapterization

The whole work is divided into five chapters:

The *first* chapter of the study is an introductory chapter which portrays rural development as the process of bringing about improvement in the living conditions of the people in the rural areas through various programmes, one of them being Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) implemented through Self Help Groups. This chapter also contain review of seventeen Books, brief statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, methodology and chapter-wise break-ups of the whole work.

The *second* chapter begins with the discussion on the concept of the Self Help Group (SHG) and then investigates the evolution SHGs India before independence. It also analyses the Bank linkage of SHGs. It also examines the role played by SHGs in alleviating poverty and women empowerment which have been done through the collective efforts of its members.

The *third* chapter deals with the working of Self Help Groups in Sihphir and Tuirial villages under R.D Block, Tlangnuam. It studies the formation, functions and role of SHGs for the implementation of IWMP in these two villages.

The *fourth* Chapter examines the role of Self Help Groups and their leaders as facilitators for the successful implementation of the programme for women empowerment. It has also analysed the issues and challenges faced by the Self Help Groups under study in course of implementation of IWMP in these two villages under R.D Block, Tlangnuam.

6.6 Major Findings and Suggestions

In Mizoram, majority of the populations live in rural areas and need improvement in their standard of living, quality of life, livelihood, and so on. Keeping these in view, the Ministry of Rural Development have introduced various rural development programmes or schemes for the benefits of the people living in the rural areas. However, some of these rural development programmes or schemes require the participation of the people themselves for their development. Accordingly, by way of

facilitating the involvement of women in the process of implementation of IWMP for their development, Self-Help Group has been recommended and introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Even in Mizoram, SHGs have been formed for the implementation of IWMP. The present research is an attempt toward the study of the role and working of SHG for the implementation of Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) for improving the standard of living, quality of life, livelihood of women through socio-economic empowerment in Sihphir and Tuirial villages under Tlangnuam Rural Development Block in Aizawl District.

Following are the main findings of the work with reference to each research question and the corresponding suggestions for improvement of the working of SHGs in Aizawl District:

1) As answers to the research question of “What are the main reasons responsible for the establishment of Self-Help Groups under Tlangnuam Rural Development Block in Aizawl District of Mizoram?,” it has been found from the answers given by the respondents that the socio-economic conditions of women and men, living in the rural areas, are not well developed and that women are restricted to a reproductive role and denied access to resources which are likely to enhance their socio-economic contributions to the society in future. Though illiteracy rates are low but poor living conditions are found among the rural people in general and rural women in particular. Lack of confidence, self-reliance and self-management are also found among the weaker sections of the society in the two areas under study.

It is, therefore, suggested that the Government should make serious efforts to explore more action-oriented programmes for the uplift of the rural poor especially women through their participation in the process of implementation of the programmes.

2) This is for answering the second research question of “What are the possible measures for improving the working of Self-Help Groups?” It has been found from replies given by the respondents that the working of Self Help Groups needs to be improved in the following ways:

(i) ***Revolving Fund:***

The revolving fund given to SHGs by the IWMP is not sufficient and regular. Hence, it is suggested that the revolving fund should be increased and regularity of funding should also be maintained. Release of fund should be made at least every quarter of a year.

(ii) ***Training:***

The authorities should provide regular training at least twice a year among the members. They should give efforts for providing adequate training to the members in order to start new ventures of their own.

(iii) ***Awareness Campaign:***

Most of the SHGs member are illiterate and lack of knowledge, so the authorities of IWMP should hold regular awareness campaign about the working and functions of SHGs among the poorer people.

(iv) ***Insufficient Loans:***

The financial system plays an important role in SHGs. Since, the revolving fund given to the SHGs are not sufficient enough in earning their own living. Accessibility of loans from Government bank should be permitted among the SHGs members in order to improve the working of SHGs.

(v) ***Regularity of authorities:***

Since, most of the member in the groups are illiterate and lack in communication, etc. The members are needed to be motivated to improve the working of SHGs. So, the authorities should visit the SHGs in rural areas in order to have self-confidence, self-reliant and self-management.

(vi) ***Regularity in Meetings:***

Meetings play an important role in the working of SHGs. Meetings are where the members get to share their ideas, thoughts, problems and be able to develop their group strength by interactions. But most of the members did not attend regularly. This makes difficulty in the efficient working of SHGs.

(vii) ***People's Participation:***

There is a great need of people's participation for the greater success of SHGs and it leads to an effective working of SHGs.

3) One of the most important research questions is "What are the major problems faced by Self-Help Groups in achieving its goal in the area under study? It has been found that there are major problems faced by Self Help Groups in achieving its goals in Sihphir and Tuirial villages. The answer to this question is as follows:

(i) ***Problems with raw materials:***

The IWMP has been funding the Self-Help Groups in small amount of money but they did not purchase any raw materials. So, it is useless for the member to buy raw materials without getting any discount or credit facilities so they could not enjoy the benefits of large scale purchase.

(ii) ***Lack of Stability:***

It is found that there is no stability in the groups as most of the members are married women; they are not in a position to associate with the group due to the shift of their place of residence. Moreover, it is found that there is no unity among the members.

(iii) ***Low Return of investment:***

The return on investment is not many as expected due to inefficient management, high cost of production, absence of quality consciousness, etc

(iv) ***Problem of infrastructure:***

This is one of the common problems found in rural areas, but members are not very aware of it. Due to lack of infrastructures like roads, cold storage, regulated market, etc. whatever output produces is not brought to the market. The activities like agriculture, commercial farming, livestock, etc are facing severe problem for which they have to go for distress sale.

(v) ***Problems of loans:***

This is one of the main problems faced by the SHGs. The government bank did not allow accessing any loans to the members of SHGs. If the government give out some loans to SHGs, it will be easier for the member to start up their livelihood.

(vi) ***Problems in awareness:***

Awareness campaigns have never been organised by the concerned authorities for the benefits of members of the SHGs. This causes a major problem in the efficient functioning of the SHGs.

(vii) ***Problems in literacy:***

There used to be a problem in record keeping, since most of the members are illiterate and lack of knowledge, communications, health, etc. So, the authorities should conduct an education programme among the members which lead the working of SHGs effectively and efficiently.

(viii) ***Lack of trainings:***

The authorities are lacking in conducting training among the members. Since, the members are not well educated, they should be given necessary training and guidance for the successful works of the groups.

It has been found that Self-Help Groups have been introduced to eradicate poverty and to uplift women in rural areas. The administration and functioning of SHGs are under the guidance and control of Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). SHGs have been taking different steps for the welfare of the rural people by implementing important programmes for the alleviation of their poverty. It has also been found that SHGs have been playing an important role the social-economic development their members thereby enabling them to go for savings. Through this study, it is possible to make sure that SHGs do not only increase income of their members but also empower them to engage themselves in various economic activities independently.

This work is the first attempt to study the *Role of Self-Help Groups in Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Aizawl District: A study of Tlangnuam Rural Development Block*. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be useful for further research and for promotion of Self Help Group in Mizoram.

ABBREVIATIONS

CASA	:	Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
DIPs	:	Deliberative and Inclusionary Processes
DWCRA	:	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
ICSSR	:	Indian Council of Social Science Research
IMT	:	Irrigation Management Transfer
IRDP	:	Integrated Rural Development Project
IWD	:	Integrated Watershed Development
IWMP	:	Integrated Watershed Management Programme
LAP	:	Livelihood Action Plan
MNREG	:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee
MRB	:	Mizoram Rural Bank
MzSRLM	:	Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission
NABARD	:	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NERLP	:	North-East Rural Livelihood Project
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
NRLM	:	National Rural Livelihood Mission
NULM	:	National Urban Livelihood Mission
PIA	:	Project Implementing Agency
PRI	:	Panchayati Raj Institution
RD	:	Rural Development
RRB	:	Regional Rural Bank
SBI	:	State Bank of India
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
SHGs	:	Self-Help Groups
SLNA	:	State Level Nodal Agency
ST	:	Scheduled Tribe
WC	:	Watershed Committee
WCDC	:	Watershed Cell-cum-Data Centre
WDT	:	Water Development Team

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEMBERS OF SELF-HELP GROUPS AT SIHPHIR VILLAGE AND TUIRIAL VILLAGE

Response from the members of SHGs:

I. Particular of the Respondents:

II. Questionnaires administered to Members of SHGs:

3. Does the Village Council play a fruitful role in the uplift of your village?
 - (a) Yes ()
 - (b) No ()
 - (c) No Idea ()
4. Does the Village Council and the people of your village work in unity?
 - (a) Yes ()
 - (b) No ()
 - (c) No idea ()
5. Does the Government take measures for the uplift of your village?
 - (i) Yes ()
 - (ii) No ()
 - (iii) No idea ()
6. Do you know the works of IWMP in your village?
 - (a) Yes ()
 - (b) No ()
 - (c) No idea ()
7. Does Self-Help Group function in your village?
 - (a) Yes ()
 - (b) No ()
 - (c) No idea ()
8. Does the awareness campaign of SHGs take place in your village?
 - (a) Yes ()

- (b) Sometimes ()
- (b) No ()
9. If ‘Yes,’ do the concerned officials regularly organise the awareness campaign
- (a) Regular ()
- (b) Occasionally ()
- (c) Irregular ()
10. Do you get a revolving fund for SHGs from IWMP?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) No ()
- (c) No idea ()
11. If ‘Yes,’ does SHGs use the revolving fund in a useful way?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) No ()
- (c) No idea ()
12. Does SHGs uplift the economic status of your family?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) To some extent ()
- (c) No ()
13. Does SHGs uplift the socio-economic conditions of your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) To some extent ()
- (c) No ()
14. If “yes” please give reasons for making such achievements?
- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____
15. Does SHGs in your village face any problem?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) No ()
- (c) No Idea ()
16. If ‘yes’ please give reason for facing such problems?

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____
17. How do you spend the revolving fund of SHGs? (Example: petty trade, piggery trade, etc)
- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____
18. Suggest measures for the improvement of SHGs in your village?
- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____
19. Has Skill Development Training ever been organised by the concerned authorities for members of SHG in your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) Occasionally ()
- (c) No ()
20. If “Yes,” for which trade they organised Skill Development Training?
- (a) Tailoring ()
- (b) Black-Smithy ()
- (c) Farming ()
- (d) Any other _____
21. Do the youths make use of SHG for earning their livelihood?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) No ()
- (c) No idea ()
22. Is there any progress in the working of IWMP in your village?
- (a) Yes ()

- (b) No ()
- (c) No idea ()
23. Do the officials of the department visit your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) Sometimes ()
- (c) Never ()
24. Does the authority give regular training regarding the functions of IWMP in your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) Occasionally ()
- (c) No ()
25. Do the people of the village appreciate the works of SHGs in your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) No ()
- (c) No idea ()
26. Does IWMP suit the mindset of the people of your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) No ()
- (c) No idea ()
28. Does IWMP face problem in your village?
- (a) Yes ()
- (b) Sometimes ()
- (c) No ()
29. If 'Yes' please give for such reasons?
- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
30. Give three points which you feel are necessary for the upliftment of your village.
- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
31. If you still have some points to mention, please mention below:

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

“Thank you for your kind answers and gives time to response”

Glossary

Aizawl	:	Capital of Mizoram State
Sihphir	:	Name of a big village within Tlangnuam Rural Development Block
Tuirial	:	Name of a small village within Tlangnuam Rural Development Block Development Block Development
Tlangnuam	:	Name of Locality in the outskirts of Aizawl where the Office of Rural Development Block is located

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary Sources of Data:

(a) Interview with officials of R.D, IWMP, facilitators and member of SHGs

Jedid Lalnundanga Keivom, Technical Expert (Livelihood), IWMP, Mizoram on 9th June and 12th August 2016.

Lalchhuanawma Chawngthu, Block Development Officer, Tlangnuam R.D Block, Mizoram on 21st July 2016.

Lalmuanpuii, Facilitator, IWMP, Tuirial, Mizoram on 9th and 18th August 2016.

Sangthankhuma, Leader of Farmer SHGs, Sihphir, Mizoram on 10th and 19th August, 2016.

II. Secondary Sources of Data

(A) Books and Unpublished Documents:

Bhose, Joel S.G.R. (2003), *NGOs and Rural Development – Theory and Practice*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Desai, Vasant (1988), *Rural Development Vol. III – Organisation and Management*, New Delhi: Himalaya Publishing House.

Devi, Shakuntala (2006), *Environment and Rural Development*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons Publications.

Gassah, L.S. (2008), *Women Empowerment Movement in North-East India*, New Delhi: Omsons Publications.

Joshi, H.G (2005), *Mizoram Past and Present*, New Delhi: Mittal Publications.

Jatav, B.L. (2000), *Planning for Integrated Rural Development Programme*, New Delhi: Radha Publications.

Khanna, Sulbha (2009), *Participatory Approach to Development*, New Delhi: Mittal Publications.

Kalpagam, U. and Arunachalam, Jaya (2008), *Rural Women and Development in India*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

- Ledwith, Margareth (2006), *Community Development – A Critical Approach*, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Narayanaswamy, B., Samanta, R.K., Gowda, K. Narayana (2007), *Self Help Groups- Key to Empowerment of Rural Women*, New Delhi: The Women Press.
- Ray, B. Datta and Das, Gurudas (2008), *Dimensions of Rural Development in North-East India*, New Delhi: Akansa Publications.
- Rao, C. Narasimha (2005), *Rural Development in India*, New Delhi: Serials Publications.
- Singh, Katar (2013), *Rural Development – Principles, Policies and Management*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Singha, Komol (2010), *Rural Development in India – Retrospect and prospect*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd.
- Syiemlieh, David R., Dutta, Anuradha and Baruah, Srinath (2006) *Challenges of Development in North-East Region*, New Delhi: Regency Publications.
- Sridhara, Shakunthala, Nagachaitanya, B., Chakravarthy, A.K., Nagamani, M.K., Prabhakara, Shetty T.K. (2009), *Women in Agriculture and Rural Development*, New Delhi: New India Publishing Agency.
- Sahoo, R.K., Tripathy S.N. (2006), *Self-Help Groups and Women Empowerment*, New Delhi: Anmol Publications.
- Suguna, B. (2011), *Empowerment of women through Self Help Groups*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- Tamuli, Borthakur Sangeeta (2014), *Women Empowerment in North-East India*, New Delhi: EBH Publishers.
- Tripathy, S.N. (2006), *Women and Rural Development*, New Delhi: Sonali Publications.
- Verma, S.B., Jilka, S.K., Kushwah, K.J. (2006), *Rural Women Empowerment*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt.Ltd.
- Verma, S.B, Pawar Y.T (2009), *Rural Employment –through Self-Help Groups, Non-Government Organisations and Panchayati Raj Institutions*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Verma, Sawalia Bihari, Sharma, Murali Krishna and Sharma, Niraj Kumar (2008), *Better Quality of Life*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons Publications

(B) Articles:

Kumaran, Mathusami., 'Roles, Responsibilities and Trends of NGOs in Women Empowerment', *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, New Delhi: IIPA, Vol. LX No. 3, July-September 2014, p.p-588-597.

Tripathi,Subhra., 'Rural Development through Self Help Promotion', *Women and Rural Development*, New Delhi: Sonali Publications 2006, p.p-106-111.

(C) INTERNET MATERIALS:

<http://mizorural.nic.in/>

<http://drd.nic.in/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rural_development

<http://dolrc.nic.in/>

<http://www.agriinfo.in/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizoram>

<http://mizorural.nic.in/iwmp.html>

www.shodganga.inflibnet.ac.in

https://www.nabard.org/pdf/SHG2_circular.PDF

<https://www.Iosrjournals.org>

<https://www.researchpublish.com>