

Chapter – 3

Role of the State in Promoting SHGs and the Status of SHGs

3.1 Brief History of the development of SHGs in India:

India is one of the developing states, situated in South Asia. It has population of 1210.9 million people as per the 2011 census of India having 623.3 million male population representing 51.47% and the female population is 587.6 million representing 48.52 % of the total population. The sex ration counted per thousand per women population as per the 2011 census is 943. As per the census 2011 literate population constitute 73.0 percent of the total population aged seven and above in India. The male literate represents 80.9 percent and women literate is 64.6 percent. The census revealed that out of a total of 202,951,015 literate added in the 2001 to 2011 period females are 104,721,109 outnumbers males 98,229,906. The rural-urban divide of India as per the 2011 census is that 68.84 percent populations still in rural areas and 31.16 percent population are in urban India. The 29.8 percent of the total population in India are of Bellow Poverty Line populations. In India more than 50 percent population are bellow the age of 25 years and 65 percent of the total population are bellow 35 years groups. India is the world's second largest country after China. The 2011 census also conducted the Caste based census in India. The Schedule Caste population in India as per 2011 census is 16.6 percent and the Schedule Tribe Population is 8.6 percent of the total populations.

The origin and development of Self-Help-Groups is by the innovation of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh founded by social entrepreneur Prof. Mohammad Yunus in 1976³¹. In the year 1974 he conducted an experiment and provided 27 US dollars among 42 poor people. After getting positive result he started the process of Grameen Banks. The bank was promoted as a village credit society in the village named Jobra in 1976³². Later this Grameen Bank has got widespread success and it is followed by the other countries of the world. The success of the micro-credit strategy through Grameen Bank has changed the life of the poor women.

In India the development of SHGs and the institution of Micro-finance were initiated by the NGOs for the promotion of SHGs with a purpose of eradication poverty and to empower the poor through micro credit. Mentioned may made about the about the formation of such SHGs by the Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA) a NGOs in Karnataka in 1985 in the development of SHGs through micro finance. The NGOs were the only Micro finance institutions for the promotion of SHGs to empower the poor specially the women.

³¹ Sahu, Kabita K. (2011), Self-Help Groups and Economic Empowerment of Tribal Women. In Nayak and Sahu (Ed.), Self-Help Groups and micro-credit institution, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House. (pp 25-43).

³² Prabin K. Padhy, (2011), SHGs movement micro-finance programme under Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana. In Nayak and Sahu (Ed.), Self- Help Groups and Micro-Credit institution, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House. (pp 25-43).

3.2 Development of SHGs under NABARD:

The role taken by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) as a major boost towards the development of SHGs and eradication of poverty through the process of micro finance and micro credit.

The NABARD supported and funded an action research project on Saving and Credit management of Self-Help-Groups of MYARADA and undertook a survey of 43 NGOs spread over 11 states to study the functioning of the SHGs and the possibilities of collaboration in 1988-89³³. This development led to the circulation by the Reserve Bank of India in 1991 advising the commercial banks, regional rural banks and the cooperative to extend credit to the Self-help-groups³⁴. In the year 1994, under NABARD a pilot project on 500 Self-Help-Groups, the RBI working group reviewed the function of the NGOs and Self Help Groups and gave guidelines for achieve success. RBI revised the guideline in 1996 and advised that the banks' lending to the Self-help-groups should be considered as an additional segment under priority sector and integrates with the main stream credit operations. Since then Self-Help-Groups became a regular component of Indian financial system³⁵. In such circumstances under the NABARD approach SHGs linkage, the banks extend loans to the SHGs either directly or through NGOs. The

³³ Mohanty, R.K., (2003). Economic empowerment of women through Self help groups; The state of the art review on premises, practice and pitfalls. *Guru Nanak Journal of Sociology*, 34(1 & 2), 128.

³⁴ RBI Circular no (RPCD.No.Plan.BC.13/ PL-09.22/91/92) on 24 the July 1991.

³⁵ Ibid.

NABARD extended 100% Automatic refinance Facility at 6.5% per annum to all banks against their lending to the SHGs or through NGOs. The NABARD started with just 225 SHGs credit bank link in 1992-93 and this numbers has grown up to over 33,000 SHGs almost 5, 00,000 rural poor households. The NABARD planned to ensure credit linkages of at least one million groups covering almost one third of the country's poor populations by the year 2008³⁶. By the end of the year 2003-2004, the number of SHGs linkage was 1079091 and bank loan was of Rs. 3904.20 Crore and refinance was of Rs. 2118.15 Crore. During the year of 2004-05, NABARD provided refinance of Rs. 3085.91 Crore for supporting 161847 SHGs with Rs.6898.46 Crore as bank loan³⁷.

3.3 Development of SHGs under SGSY Scheme:

The process of poverty alleviation programs were started in India but the SHGs and bank linkage through the micro finance and micro credit get started rapidly with launched of governments' scheme Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) started in 1999. SGSY is a holistic programme initiated by the Government of India started from the April 1999 covering all the aspects of self employment like organization of rural poor into Self-Help-Groups, capacity building training, planning infrastructure development, financial support through microcredit, subsidy and marketing opportunities to the poor people. This program was merged with the then existing programs such as Self Employment Programmers, the Integrated Rural Development Programme, Training of Rural Youth for

³⁶ NABARD ANNUAL REPORT 2000-2001.

³⁷ NABARD ANNUAL REPORT 2004-05

Self Employment, Development of Women and Children of Rural Areas³⁸. In this programme, the SHGs and the individual Swarozgaries are trained through various stages of development and provided bank loan with government subsidy for their self employment. The motive was to give bank loan with subsidy and to increase the income of the poor families so that they can increase their income and uplift their quality of life. The main focus of this scheme was to assist the poor families above the poverty line by organizing them into SHGs and providing them income generating assets through a mix of credit from banks and subsidy from the government. The bank and the other financial institutions are directly associated in the implementation of the SGSY programme. This approach of organising SHGs helps the poor to build self-confidence through community action. The interaction in group meeting collective decision making enables them in identification and prioritization of their needs and resources. This process was expected to strengthen and socio-economic empowerment of the rural poor as well as improve their collective bargaining power. SGSY is being implemented by the DRDA with active involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), banks, the Line Department and NGOs.

‘A Report on Success and Failure of SHG’s in India Impediment and Paradigm of Success’ reported Planning Commission Government of India in 2008 by Voluntary

³⁸ ASRLM, Annual Action Plan 2013-14

operation and Community and Environment gives the following main feature of the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana(SGSY) are as the following³⁹:

- The SGSY aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor.
- SGSY emphasis on the cluster approach for establishing the micro-enterprises. For this, 4-5 Key Activities have to be identified in each block. The major share of the SGSY assistance has to be in activity clusters.
- The SGSY adopts a Project approach for each Key Activity. Project reports are to be prepared in respect of each of the identified Key Activities, etc.
- The existing infrastructure for the cluster of activities should be reviewed and gaps identified. Critical gaps in investment have to be made up under the SGSY, subject to a ceiling of 20% (25% in case of North Eastern States) of the total allocation made under SGSY for Fund.
- In the planning of the Key activities, care has to be taken to ensure that maximum numbers of Panchayats are covered without jeopardizing the quality of the Programme.
- The assisted families may be individuals or groups (Self-Help-Groups). The SGSY, however, favours the group approach.

³⁹ A Report on Success and Failure of SHG's in India Impediment and Paradigm of Success,' reported to the Planning Commission, Government of India in 2008 by Voluntary operation and Community and Environment.

- The Gram Sabha authenticates the list of Below Poverty Line families identified in the BPL census. Identification of individual families suitable for each Key Activity is to be made through a participatory process.
- The groups approach involves organizations of the poor into SHGs and their capacity building. Efforts have to be made to involve women members in each SHGs. besides, exclusive women groups are also to be formed. At the level of the block, at least half of the groups should be exclusively women groups. Group activities are given preference and progressively, majority of the funding should be for SHGs.
- The SGSY is a credit-cum-subsidy Programme. However, Credit is the Critical component of the SGSY, subsidy being a minor and enabling element. Accordingly the SGSY envisages greater involvement of the Banks. They are to be involved closely in the Planning and preparation of the Projects Reports, identification of activity clusters, infrastructure planning as well as capacity building and choice of activity of the SHGs, selection of individual Swarozgaris, pre-credit activities and post-credit monitoring including loan recovery.
- The SGSY seeks to promote multiple credits rather than a one-time credit injection. The credit requirements of the Swarozgaris need to be carefully assessed, the Swarozgaris are allowed and, in fact, encouraged to increase credit intake, over the years.

- The SGSY seeks to lay emphasis on skill development through well-designed training courses. Those, who have been sanctioned loans, are to be assessed and given necessary training. The design, duration of training and the training curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of the identified Key Activities. DRDA are allowed to set apart up to 10% of the SGSY allocation on training. This may be maintained as SGSY Training Fund.
- The SGSY attempts to ensure up gradation of technology in the identified activity cluster. The technology intervention seeks to add value to the local resources, including processing of the locality available material from natural and other resources for local and non-local market.
- The SGSY provide for promotion of marketing of the goods produced by the SGSY Swarzgaris, which involves provision of market intelligence, development of markets and consultancy services, as well as institutional arrangement for marketing of the goods including exports.
- The SGSY is implemented by the DRDAs through the Panchayat Samitis. The process of planning, implementation and monitoring integrate the Banks and other financial institution, the PRIs, NGOs as well as Technical Institution in the District.
- 15% of the funds under the SGSY are set apart at the national level to try to new initiatives for self-employment of the rural poor through 'Special Projects', in conjunction with other Departments or Semi-Government/International

Organizations, which includes initiatives to be taken in individual District or across the Districts.

The target of the SGSY programme was to the families from the Below Poverty Line (BPL) in rural areas. And within the target group, special focus was given to the vulnerable sections of the society maintaining 50% benefits to the SCs/STs, 40% reserved for women and 3% for disable persons. Since the inception of the SGSY 20 lakh self-help-groups have been formed covering BPL 250 lakh Swarozgaries. 152 lakh Swarozgaris assisted with bank credit and subsidy. The credit mobilization at 1999-0 was Rs. 1100.00 Crore and it was Rs. 4450.00 in the financial year 2009-10. The investment per capita per beneficiary was Rs. 17000 in 1999 and increased up to Rs. 31800 in 2009. In this scheme 2.31 lakh beneficiaries have given various skilled development training and 1.75 lakh people were make placement. The SGSY Scheme was cease to exist from the 31st December 2011 due to introduction of new Scheme National Rural Livelihood Mission.

3.4 SHGs under the DAY-NRLM:

At present the SHGs are under the management of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission started from 2011. A systematic review of SGSY brings to notice about certain short comings like vast regional variations in mobilization of the rural poor; insufficient capacity building of the beneficiaries; insufficient investment for building community institutions; and weak linkage with banks leading to

low credit mobilization and low repeat financing. Several States have not been able to fully utilize the funds received under SGSY⁴⁰. Absence of aggregate institution of the poor, such as the SHGs federations, precluded the poor from accessing higher order support services for productivity enhancement, marketing linkage, risk management, etc⁴¹. Several evaluation studies have shown that SGSY scheme has been relatively successful in alleviating rural poverty wherever systematic mobilization of the poor into SHGs and their capacity building and skill development has been taken up in a process-intensive manner.

Out of the total estimated of 7.0 Crore rural BPL household, 4.5 Crore household are still need to be organized into SHGs. Even the existing SHGs need further strengthening and greater financial support. It was in this background, government has approved the restructuring the SGSY as the National Rural Livelihood Mission, to be implemented in a mission mode across the country. The NRLM's mandate is to reach out all the BPL families plus all the poor families and link them to sustainable livelihood opportunities and nurture them till they come out of poverty and decent quality life. This programme NRLM was renamed as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) from 2015. At present the progress of NRLM is optimal. The numbers of States and Union Territories transited to NRLM is 30. The total 557 district has been identified as intensive district by the states. At present 3,195 blocks has been covered for

⁴⁰ ASRLM, Annual Action Plan, 2013-14 pp(4)

⁴¹ ASRLM, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2013-14, PP(4)

the implementation of NRLM. The 2, 59,468 villages covering 323 lakh house-hold and 32.3lakh SHGs are promoted under the NRLM. The 7, 88,394 SHGs are benefited with Revolving Fund amount of 1, 04,045.5 lakh. The 4, 52,479 SHGs are availed to Community Investment Fund amounting 2, 39,488.2 lakh rupees. The bank credit mobilization to the SHGs is 56,197.8 lakh rupees. The total numbers of Village Organization (VO) promoted under NRLM is 1, 47,232⁴².

3.4.1 Mission, Principles and Values of NRLM:

The mission of NRLM is “To reduce poverty by enabling the poor households to access gainful self-employment opportunities, resulting in an appreciable improvement in their livelihood on a sustainable basis, through strong grassroots institutions of the poor.”⁴³

The NRLM follows the following guiding principles for the implementations of the NRLM programmes⁴⁴:

- Poor have a strong desire to come out of poverty, and they have innate capabilities to do so.
- Social mobilization and building strong institutions of the poor is critical for unleashing the innate capabilities of the poor.

⁴² www.nrlm.gov.in

⁴³ NRLM Framework for Implementations, Ministry of Rural Development, Gov. India.221210

⁴⁴ NRLM Framework for Implementations, Ministry of Rural Development, Gov. India.221210, pp-(8-12)

- An external dedicated and sensitive support structure is required to induce the social mobilization, institution building and empowerment process.
- Facilitating knowledge dissemination, skill building, access to credit, access to marketing, and access to livelihoods services underpins this upward mobility.

3.4.2 The NRLMs' Values:

The following are the core values which guide all the activities under the NRLM as per the NRLM framework of implementation plan, 2010:

- Inclusions of the poorest and meaningful role to the poorest in all the processes.
- Transparency and accountability of all the processes and institutions.
- Ownership and key role of the poor and their institutions in all stages- planning, implementations and monitoring.
- Community self-reliance and self-dependence.

3.4.3 Key Feature of the NRLM:

The key features of the NRLM as per the NRLM framework for implementation plan 2010 are as follows:

1. Universal Social Mobilization: NRLM would ensure that at least one member from each identified rural poor household, preferably woman, is brought under the SHGs network in a time bound manner. Subsequently both men and women would be organized by the NRLM for addressing livelihoods issues i.e. farmers organizations,

milk producers' cooperatives, weavers associations, etc. All these institutions are inclusive in nature and no poor would be left out of them. NRLM would like to ensure adequate coverage of vulnerable sections of the society such as 50% of the beneficiaries are SC/STs, 15% are minorities and 3% are persons with disability, while keeping in view the ultimate target of 100% coverage of BPL families.

2. Promotion of the institution of poor:

Strong institutions of the poor such as SHGs and their village level and higher level federations are necessary to provide space, voice and resources for the poor and for reducing their dependence on external agencies.

3. Training, Capacity building and skill building:

NRLM would like to ensure that the poor are provided with the requisite skills for: managing their institutions, linking up with markets, managing their existing livelihoods, enhancing their credit absorption capacity and credit worthiness etc. For this NRLM would adopt a multi-pronged approach for continuous capacity building of the targeted families, SHGs, their federations, government functionaries, bankers, NGOs, and other key stakeholders. For more effective the NRLM would like to extensively use the ICT.

4. Revolving fund and Capital Subsidy: Subsidy would be available in the form of revolving fund and capital subsidy. The revolving fund would be provided to the SHGs (where more 70% members are from BPL households) as an incentive to inculcate the habit of thrift and accumulate their own funds towards meeting their credit needs

in the long-run and immediate consumption in the short run. Subsidy would be corpus and used for the meeting the members' credit needs directly and as catalytic capital for leveraging repeat bank finance. This capital subsidy would be given directly to the SHGs or would be routed SHGs through the federation.

5. Universal Financial Inclusion: NRLM would work toward achieving universal financial inclusion, beyond basic banking services to all the poor households, SHGs and their federations. NRLM would work on both demand and supply side of the Financial Inclusion. On the demand side, it would promote financial literacy among the poor and provides catalytic capital to the SHGs and their federations. On the Supply side, it would coordinate with the financial sector and encourage use of Information, Communication & Technology (ICT) based financial technologies, business correspondents and community facilitator likes 'Bank Mitras'.
6. Provision of Interest Subsidy: The NRLM would make subsidy on interest rate above 7% per annum for all eligible SHGs, who have availed loan from mainstream financial institution, based on prompt loan repayment and provided that the SHGs maintained at least 70% membership from the BPL households.
7. Livelihoods: NRLM would look at the entire portfolio of livelihood of each poor households and works towards the stabilizing and enhancing the existing livelihood and subsequently diversifying their livelihood.
8. Infrastructure creation and Marketing support: NRLM seek to ensure that the infrastructure needs for the major livelihoods activities of the poor are met with. It

would also provide support for the marketing to the institutions of the poor. The range of activities of the marketing support includes market research, market intelligence, technology extension, developing backward and forward linkage, building livelihoods collectives and supporting their business plans. 20% of the state's programme outlay where 25% in case of North Eastern States and Sikkim) would be reserved for this purpose.

9. Skill and Placement Projects: The NRLM would work for scaling up the existing skill and placement through partnership modes with public, private, non-governmental organization. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) would be one of the leading partners in this effort. 15% of the central allocation under NRLM earmarked for purpose.
10. Rural Self Employment Training institute (RSETIs): NRLM encouraged public sector banks to set up RSETIs I all district of the country. It would transform the unemployed youth in the district into confident self-employed entrepreneurs through the need based experiential learning programme.
11. Partnership with NGOs and CSOs: The NRLM would proactively seek partnerships with NGOs and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
12. Linkage with PRIs: The NRLM would like to link the institution of the poor with Panchayat Raj Institutions particularly at the level of Village Panchayat for mutual beneficial. Where there are no Pnchayat, the linkage would be with traditional local village institutions.

13. Technical Support: NRLM would provide technical assistance to the states and all other partners for creating and strengthening their institutional capacities for its effective implementations. It would build national knowledge management and learning forums/systems.
14. Monitoring and Learning: NRLM would monitor its results, processes and activities through web-enabled comprehensive MIS, regular meetings of the Performance Review Committee, visits by senior colleagues, Local, District, State and National Monitoring Groups and the mechanism of Review and Planning Missions.
15. Funding Pattern: NRLM is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and the financing of the programme would be shared between the centre and the state in the ratio of 75:25(90:10 in case of North Eastern States including Sikkim; Completely from the centre in case of UTs).
16. Phased Implementation: The implementation would be in a phase manner. At the beginning NRLM would choose blocks as intensive blocks take initiative for universal and intense social mobilization and financial inclusions, livelihoods activities. The NRLM set the target to reach out the entire district and blocks by the end of the 12th Five-Year Plan.
17. Transition to NRLM: all the states/UTs would have to transit to NRLM within a period of one year from the date of commencement of formal launched of NRLM. Further funding under SGSY ceases thereafter.

18. Agenda before NRLM: NRLM has set out with an agenda to reach out, mobilize and support 7.0 Crore BPL households across 600 districts, 6000 blocks, 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, in 6.0 lakh villages in the Country into their self-managed SHGs and their federal institutions and livelihoods collectivism. NRLMs' long term dedicated sensitive support would be with them and extend facilitation support in all efforts to get out of poverty. In addition, the poor would be facilitated to achieve increased access to their rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and better social indicators of empowerment.

3.5 Status of SHGs in Assam:

Assam is one of the North-Eastern states of India having Geographical areas of 78, 438 sq. km. representing 2.4 percent of India's total land. The state has 33 districts where three areas are under the Six Schedule administration namely Bodoland Territorial Areas District, Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao.

3.51. Demographic Profile of Assam:

The Assam state has population of 31,269,272 as per the 2011 census. The male population constitutes 52% while the female population is 48%. The sex ratio of Assam is 954 whereas the all India sex ratio is 940. Assam is having 87.10 percent of rural population which is higher than the national average of 72.8 percent as per 2001 census. The total Rural Female population is 87.56 percent against 86.10 percent of male rural populations. The total ST population is 12.41 percent which is higher than the national

average of 8.20 percent. The combined ST and SC population is 19.26 percent. The total literacy rate in the state is 73.18 percent which is lower than the all India rate of 74.04 percent in 2011. The female literacy rate is 67.27 is lower compared to the male literacy rate of 78.81 percent in the state and the national female literacy rate of 65.46 percent. According to the Tendulkar Committee Report the poverty head count Report in Assam is 34.4% where the rural poverty was 36.4% and urban poverty was 21.8%.

3.5.2 Status of SHGs before the introduction of NRLM in Assam:

The development of SHGs and Bank linkage started little late in the state of Assam. After the introduction of the SGSY scheme the momentum of SHGs and Bank linkage started from 2001-2001 years. Till the end of the year 2009-2010 total of 2,08,212 SHGs were formed in the state of Assam and of which 1,35,123 members were women SHGs and 65,360 numbers eligible SHGs has taken up economic activities with the bank loan and subsidy. Apart from this, 11,455 individuals Swarajgar received bank loan and subsidy for taking up sustainable income generating activities for their livelihood⁴⁵. The SGSY was implemented by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) with active involvement of Panchayati Raj, Banks, the line Department and NGOs.

3.5.3 Introduction of NRLM in Assam:

The Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission Society was registered on 11/11/11 under the Registration of Societies Act XXI of 1860. It is designed as State Rural Livelihood

⁴⁵ Annul Action Plan (ASRLM),2012-2013

Mission by state cabinet for rolling out NRLM in the state. The goal of the ASRLM is to provide sustainable livelihood to the poor for achieving a quality of life by social mobilizing covering entire poor people and the vulnerable sections of the society.

The ASRLM seek to reach out all the blocks of the districts by 2019 and bring all the poor and vulnerable people under the SHGs. As per the annual action plan of Assam NRLM it target is to cover 7 districts and 42 blocks in the first year, and by the end of the 4th year all the district will be covered and approximately 60% of all the blocks of the state, remaining blocks will be covered by the end of 7th year. The criteria for the selection of the resource block would based on; higher percentage of SC/ST, Rural BPL households and low level of rural female literacy, presence and potential of SHGs in these blocks/villages, geographical and regional invariance, existing support structure and Existence of village level Animators.

3.5.4 Present Status SHGs under ASRLM in Assam:

The ASRLM since its inception created 55,775 fresh SHGs, revived 30,159 SHGs and covered pre -NRLM SHGs numbering 17,231 SHGs adding to the total of 1,01, 165 women SHGs. The total population engaged in SHGs is 1,041,921 covering SC population of 108977, ST population of 220781, OBC population of 223724 and others population of 487539. Till now Revolving Fund is disbursed to the eligible SHGs of 6415.45 lakh rupees in the State. The total 2692.25 lakh amount of rupees is released for the different SHGs as a Community Investment Funds in Assam. So far different capacity

building training is conducted by the ASRLM. The total 133 numbers of Capacity Training Programme are successfully conducted by the State.

3.6 Status of SHGs in Chirang District:

The Chirang is one of the districts located in the lower Assam areas. It is one of the four district of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) under the Gov. of Assam, created vide notification No.GAG (B).137/2002/Pt/117dtd.30/10/2003 within Assam under Clause 6 of the Article 332 by the 90th Amendment Act, 2003 of the Constitution of India under the provision of Sixth Schedule. The district has been functioning with effect from 04th June, 2004. It was carved out the districts of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Barpeta. The Kajalgaon is the district Headquarter⁴⁶.

3.6.1 Demographic Profile of the District:

The Chirang district comprises of total geographical area of 1468.42 Sq Km. as per the census 2011 the total population of the district is 4,82,162 where male population 2,44,860 (50.78%) and female population is 2,37,302(48.21%). The total rural population in the district 4, 46,825(92.67%) and urban population are 33,337(6.91%) persons. The density of the population is 251/sq.km which is much lower than the Assam and the all India's population densities. The Sex Ration of this district is 969 and having literacy of 63.35 where male literacy rate is 59.56% and the female literacy rate is 48.05 %.

⁴⁶ Chirang.gov.in/view/profile

3.6.2 Promotion of SHGs in Chirang District:

The Chirang is one of the eight intensive districts chosen by the ASRLM where the NRLP program is going on. There are two Blocks under the management of NRLM in the Chirang district which are Boro Bazar and Sidli Block. Since its inception the total numbers of SHGs in the Chirang district which are under the NRLM programme is 3,996 where 2,507 are newly created, 1449 are revived and 40 SHGs are existed pre NRLM. As per the community wise compositions in the SHGs are as SC comprises 2878 members, STs comprises of 23,572 members, OBC comprises of 6,674 members and other community members are 11, 074. In the Chirang district 159 numbers of 1st level federations or Village Organization are formed where 1876 SHGs are involved under it. The Revolving Fund is given to the 2,639 numbers of SHGs and the amount of 380.55 lakh rupees are released by the NRLM. The Community Investment Fund is released to the 301 numbers of SHGs and the amount is 150.50 lakh rupees.

3.7 Status of SHGs in the Sidli Block:

The Chirang District has two development blocks under the management of NRLM where Sidli is taken as areas of studies by the researcher. The Chirang district is under the Six Schedule administration and therefore there is no Panchayat administration. Instead of the Panchayat administration the BTAD has adopted Village Council Development Administration work like the Gaon Panchayats. There are 28 VCDC in the Sidli Block covering 236 revenue villages of the District. The total population under the Sidli Block is

2, 21,822 where Male population is 1, 12,981 representing 50.93% and Female population of 1, 08,841 representing 49.06% of the total populations. The total SC people under the Sidli Block is 3% of the total population, ST people represented by 47.28% of the total populations, the minority is of 14.14% of the total populations and the remaining populations are from the others representing 35.53% of the total populations. In the Sidli Block the total numbers of the households is 44,759 where 20,536 households are Bellow Poverty Line Households.

Table No:-3.1

Profile of the Sidli Block

Number of VCDC	28
No. revenue villages	236
Total Populations	2,21,822 (M: 112981, F: 108841)
SC	6729
ST	1,04,890
Minority	31,379
Others	78,824
Number of Households	44,759
Total BPL Households	20, 536

Sources: Reported by BMMU, Sidli Block

3.7.1 Formation of the SHGs under the Sidli Block:

The criteria for the formation of the SHGs are to maintain certain guideline as per the norms of the ASNRLM. The SHGs members at least 70% should be from the BPL family and identified and approved by the Panchayats as poor people⁴⁷. Since Chirang District is categorized as intensive district by the ASRLM all the existing SHGs would come under the guidance and management of the NRLM. Therefore the SHGs under SGSY would be revived/strengthen. Since the target of the NRLM is to bring all the BPL under the SHGs for the poverty alleviation and to quality of life to the poor the SHGs are formed in the Sidli block too as a phase manners. In the starting years 2012-2013 the total newly created SHGs are 66 and revived numbers of SHGs are of 419. In the second working year 250 SHGs are newly created and 290 SHGs are revived. In the third working year the total newly created SHGs is 216 and the revived SHGs is 102. In the fourth working year the total numbers of the newly created SHGs is 341 and the revived SHGs is 37. In the final phase 2016-2017 year the newly created SHGs are 450 and the revived SHGs are 47. In this Sidli Block there are no such SHGs which are working since long time and categorized as pre-NRLM SHGs. Thus the present active SHGs in the Sidli block is 3996 where 1323 are newly formed and the 895 are revived SHGs.

⁴⁷ Guidance notes for SHGs Validation...by NRLM.

Table No: - 3.2

SHGs formation by the Sidli Block

SHGS FORMATION	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	Total
NO. of NEW SHGS FORMED	66	250	216	341	450	1323
NO. OF OLD SHGS REVIVED/ STRENGHT	419	290	102	37	47	895
TOTALS	485	540	318	378	497	2218

SOURCES: www.nrlm.gov.in(till July 18, 2017)

3.7.2 Formation of VO by the Sidli Block:

The Village Organization is formed for collective action, greater solidarity, bargaining power, economies of scale and larger linkage. The respective states would determine the level of federations. The primary federation or VO at the village or Panchayat (VCDC in BTAD) level constitutes 10-20 SHGs under each federation (5-20 SHGs for the tribal areas of tiny populated areas. The responsibilities of these federations are (1). To bring all left out poor into the SHG fold; (2). Providing support service like training, book keeping, etc. to the SHGs; (3). To provide higher order financial and livelihood services and (4). To facilitate access to public service and entitlements. In the Sidli Block there are 80 first level federations or VOs are formed covering 820 numbers of SHGs since its inception.

3.7.3 Capacity Building programme undertaken by the Sidli Block:

The role of the Block Mission Management Unit is to give training to the SHGs members for different kind activities for the smooth functioning of the SHGs to meet its objective. In the Sidli Block several capacity building training are conducted by the BMMU.

Table No:-3.3

Capacity Building programme in Sidli Block:

Sl.No	Name of the Training	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	Total
1.	3 Days SHG Management & Gender	0	102	0	499	601
2	5 Days Master Book Keepers Training	0	6	24	18	48
3	CRP training	0	16	16	0	32
4	SHG Book Keeper	0	135	890	419	1444
5	3 Days VO Book Keepers Training	0	0	35	20	55
6	3 Days VO formation Training to SHGs	0	0	260	171	431
7	MCP trainers training	0	0	0	5	5
8.	MCP training.	0	10	160	185	355

Sources: Reported by BMMU, Sidli Block.

Among these training total 601 participants took part in 3 Days SHG management & Gender awareness training since its inception to the year 2015-16. The total participants in the 5 Days master Book keepers training was attended by 48 participants. The Community Resources Person training was provided to the 32 participants. In the SHG Book Keepers training was attended by the 1444 numbers of participants. In the 3 Days VO Book keepers training the total participant was 55 members. In the 3 Days VO formation training was attended by the 431 participant SHGs members. In the Micro Credit Planning Trainers training 5 participants was attended. In the MCP training conducted by the BMMU from the year 2012 to 2016 the total participant was 355.

3.7.4 Fund release to the SHGs in the Sidli Block:

The ASRLM adopted certain criteria for the released of fund to the SHGs. The following are the guideline adopted by the ASRLM:-

- The women SHG should be from the poorest of the poor and poor household as its members.
- The SHGs must follow Panchasutra for at least 3-4 months (15 weeks). Panchasutra includes: a. The member's attendance at the groups meeting should be at least 90% and above. (b). Members are in regular saving as per the agreed norms. (c)There is a regular internal lending of saving to the members for their small needs.(d) These loans are regularly recovered, and maintaining at least 95%

of recovery at SHGs level.(e) A trained Book keeper must be engaged by the groups and books are written in the same groups meetings

- The group has to open a Saving Bank (SB) Account in any branch.
- All the members should have to receive three days members level training on SHG concept, group management and Panchasutra.
- A commitment from the groups that the revolving would be utilize for the internal lending to the members along with savings.
- After the provision of revolving fund also, the groups agreed to continue Panchasutra, good management and financial norms in its meetings.

The Sidli block has release RFs to the 1381 numbers of SHGs amounting Rs. 1, 96, 35,000 since its inception to the year 2017. In the Sidli block the amount of the RFs is Rs.15, 000.

The ASRLM also adopted criteria to be eligible for the Community Investment Funds (CIF) to the SHGs. The CIF are released if the following conditions are fulfilled by the SHGs as per the guideline of ASRLM;

1. The SHGs should be of women from poor and poorest of the poor households that has been following Panchasutra at least for the last 6 months.
2. It should have regular internal lending saving and revolving fund to the members by small loan for the last 6 months.

3. It should have developed participatory micro credit plan, dully followed the seven step process.
4. It should give a commitment even after the CIF loan through MCP process; the members of the groups run the management duly adopting the Panchasutra and good management and financial norms.

In the Sidli block the total numbers of the SHGs who have already received CIF is 204 till the year 2015-16⁴⁸. The total amount released by the Sidli Block to the SHGs is Rs.40,50,000.00 till April 2017.

The ASRLM has taking active role for the development and promotion of SHGs in the entire India with the objective to help the rural poor people so that these people can move forward and could achieve a decent and a dignified quality life in near future by giving opportunities to them to organize themselves into a self help groups. The government has taken different measure for the engagement of the rural poor into different livelihood activities. In this context the Sidli block under the Chirang district of Assam is not lacking behind. The BMMU of Sidli block has taken for the engagement of the rural poor in the SHGs so that these poor and marginalized people could live a quality of life.

The above discussion summarized the status of SHGs in India, Assam, Chirang and Sidli Block of Chirang District and the promotion of SHGs in different periods of time through different scheme or programmes introduced by the government. In the present

⁴⁸ As Reported by, BMMU, Sidli Block.

scenario the state are seen to be taking active role for the promotion of SHGs to the rural poor households and vulnerable section of the such as SCs, STs, OBCs and Physically Challenge person to bring them above the poverty line and to engaged them in a sustainable livelihood in a sustainable manner. The following chapter 4 will try to understand about the women empowerment through SHGs in the Sidli Block of the Chirang District, Assam.