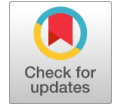


# An Analysis of the Implementation, Outcomes, and Challenges of NABARD's Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme in Assam, India

Abu Shafique Ahmed, Sudip Chakraborty



**Abstract:** *Self Help Groups (SHGs) have become a powerful tool for reducing poverty and empowering women worldwide. (Parida & Sinha, 2010 [1]) The connection of these groups to formal banking institutions, an initiative led by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in India, has significantly enhanced their socio-economic impact. Assam, which is a state with a variety of socio-economic challenges, is playing a crucial role in promoting financial inclusion and grassroots development. This study examines the status of NABARD's SHG Bank Linkage Programme in Assam, examining its implementation, outcomes, and challenges. Focusing on Assam, with its unique socio-cultural dynamics and developmental disparities, this research seeks to provide insights that can inform tailored policy interventions and program improvements.*

**Keywords:** Microfinance, Self Help Group, Poverty.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since independence, the Indian government has initiated several programs to alleviate poverty. Efforts such as the Lead Bank Scheme, the creation of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), and bank nationalization were designed to incorporate economically and socially vulnerable groups into the formal banking sector. These initiatives aimed to liberate disadvantaged communities from the grip of moneylenders and simplify loan access. However, many of these efforts have not been very successful in reducing poverty or including underprivileged groups in the formal banking system. Over time, the banking sector has grown in size and complexity. Despite improvements in financial viability, profitability, and competitiveness, there are concerns that banks have not adequately provided basic services to a large portion of the population, especially the poor (Rajendran & Raya, 2011 [2]). By the late 1980s, the Indian financial sector was mostly driven by supply and targets, resulting in high default rates and corruption. Bankers often doubted the creditworthiness of the poor, and suitable insurance options were limited, with savings products being inflexible and poorly structured.

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In 1991, 40% of rural borrowing came from informal sources, with the poorest heavily relying on these sources. (Sinha & Navin, 2021 [3]) The formal banking sector struggled with the high costs of servicing many small borrowers, lacking client information, collateral, inflexibility, and a preference for urban and affluent clients. These challenges prevented the sector from helping poor borrowers, who often resorted to moneylenders and informal operators for high-interest loans.

The Self Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Programme, initiated by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), is a key initiative for advancing financial inclusion and rural empowerment in India. The program aims to provide marginalized communities, particularly in rural areas, with access to financial services through SHGs. These groups function as microfinance institutions, offering credit and other financial services to their members. In Assam, a state with a large rural population and various socio-economic challenges, evaluating the status and effectiveness of NABARD's SHG Bank Linkage Programme is crucial. (Das & Guha, 2019 [4])

## A. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of NABARD's SHG Bank Linkage Programme in Assam

This involves assessing the extent to which the program has succeeded in providing financial services to rural communities, fostering entrepreneurship, and reducing poverty.

- Identification of challenges SHGs face in accessing financial services: There may be various barriers hindering SHGs in Assam from effectively accessing and utilizing financial services provided through the linkage program.
- Analysis of the impact of the SHG Bank Linkage Programme on socio-economic development: It is essential to investigate the socio-economic impact of the program on participating SHGs and the communities they serve. This includes examining changes in income levels, employment opportunities, women's empowerment, and overall community development.
- Assessment of the role of stakeholders in successfully implementing the program: Stakeholders such as NABARD, banks, government agencies, NGOs, and SHG members play pivotal roles in the implementation and sustainability of the SHG Bank Linkage Programme. Analyzing their contributions and collaboration is necessary to identify areas for improvement. Exploration of policy recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the program:



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Based on the findings, recommendations need to be formulated to address the identified challenges and boost the impact of the SHG Bank Linkage Programme in Assam. This may include policy interventions, capacity-building initiatives, and regulatory reforms.

## A. Objectives of the Study

This study has been concentrated within the state of Assam with the following desired objectives:

- i. To study the status of the SHG-Bank Linkage Programme in the state of Assam
- ii. To ascertain and compare the amount of non-performing assets (NPA) against the bank loan outstanding towards SHGs.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Chakraborty & Dey (2013) [5]:** The impact of entrepreneurship development through microfinance has proved very successful. It can rightly be pointed out that the pilot project of NABARD's SHG-Bank Linkage program not only promoted financial aid but also promoted entrepreneurial skills for the members of SHG, which facilitated the SHG members in utilizing the financial aid efficiently received. This step ultimately helped them overcome their pangs of poverty. Therefore, it can be rightly assumed that entrepreneurship development through microfinance might have a synergistic effect on alleviating the problem of poverty in society and will guide society towards a healthy economic life.

**(Devi & Kumar, 2015 [6]):** Before joining SHGs, approximately 40% of household income came from labor, followed by around 21% from agriculture. Following participation in SHGs, the proportion of revenue from labor decreased to 17.6%, while income from economic activities increased from approximately 10% to 22%. The study observed a growth in economic activity participation from 47% to 88% post-SHG membership. Furthermore, 83% of members acknowledged an increased influence over their family's financial resources after joining SHGs, attributed to group savings and microcredit access enabling engagement in income-generating activities. The research concluded that SHG participation enhanced decision-making involvement, raised awareness of various programs and organizations, and facilitated improved access to such resources. These findings underscore the necessity for continued support for human resource development, emphasizing the urgency of ongoing training and capacity building, particularly in financial literacy, for SHG members.

**(Saikia, 2017 [7])** SHG-BLP undertook an extensive visit to Assam in 2001–02, but its performance fell short, compared to the national average. Nonetheless, notable advancements have been achieved through SHG-BLP, which not only fostered financial assistance but also cultivated entrepreneurial abilities among its members.

**(Ahmed et al., 2018 [8])** Since its inception, the SHG bank linkage program has shown a spatial preference in certain districts of Assam. The primary aim of partnering

with SHG banks is to extend credit support to extremely impoverished individuals who lack access to formal financial institutions and the banking system. Consequently, only the neediest SHG groups are expected to be benefitted from this initiative. Moreover, this approach contributes to enhancing the social standing of women. Hence, our study endeavors to present the current status of the SHG Bank Linkage Program (SBLP) in Assam. Through the analysis of pertinent secondary data, the study concluded that, if implemented effectively, this program could yield substantial benefits for the community in the foreseeable future.

**(Deepa & Sonia 2024 [9]):** There is a radical undercurrent of socio-economic transformation in Karnataka. Women's self-help groups initially emerged as economic entities, advocating for their rights and contributing to the local economy. Women's entrepreneurship in this context presents multifaceted challenges. In a country like India, where economic conditions in rural areas are often dire and income potential is limited, self-help groups (SHGs) have emerged as a pathway toward economic autonomy for rural women. This study conducts a literature review on entrepreneurship and self-help groups for rural women, aiming to provide an overview of articles published in the past decade. The review identifies a lack of theoretical underpinning in existing research and emphasizes the need for further empirical investigations to validate emerging variables. The study synthesizes existing literature and offers recommendations for future research endeavors.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study is an empirical one, in this study, efforts have been made to analyze the performance of the SHG-bank linkage program in the state of Assam. This part deals with the research methods and techniques used in the present study, which is made to understand the performance of NABARD's SHG-Bank linkage program in Assam. It is furnished under the following heading:

### A. Area of Study

The state of Assam was selected as the area of study for analyzing the performance of NABARD's SHG-Bank linkage program. Periodicity of study: The period of study is 2006–07 to 2022–23.

### B. Source of Data Collection

The study is based on secondary data. The National Sample Survey manual, circulars, and published bank reports are the sources of secondary data collection.

### C. Method of Analysis

The data collected from the various sources is analyzed and interpreted. The information gathered about the many facets of SHG-BLP is displayed through tables, appropriate graphs, and charts. The researcher has examined the SHG-Bank Linkage Programme's development by analyzing data about Assam and India [15].



#### IV. STATUS OF SHG-BANK LINKAGE PROGRAMME IN ASSAM

The microfinance movement in Assam, a state in northeastern India, gained momentum relatively late, around 1997-1998. Since then, the growth regarding the number of SHGs linked with banks and the volume of loans disbursed to these groups has been remarkable.

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus agreed to assist in launching a microcredit program aimed at improving the living standards of rural residents in Assam.

Professor Yunus, a trustee of the Grameen Trust in Bangladesh, was invited by then-Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi to help introduce a microcredit scheme in Assam. Yunus offered his expertise, and the state government agreed to expand its support.

Consequently, several innovative approaches promoted by the Central Government are being developed and tested with the technical and financial backing of NABARD. The active support of various development agencies, including the Government of Assam, banks, and NGOs, has been instrumental in this process.

Following the state government's proposal, the project was initially implemented in Assam, which, according to an RBI study, had the highest population outside the formal banking system. However, it was during the 2001-02 period that development through microfinance gained significant momentum in Assam with the introduction of NABARD's SHG Bank Linkage Scheme.

##### A. Strategies Initiated by NABARD to Scale up the SHG Bank Link Program in Assam

- The inclusion of all RRBs to act as SHPIs for promoting SHGs: A grant was provided to RRB for this purpose. The program includes in-service training of RRB branch staff by experienced NGOs regarding social mobilization and group processes [11].
- Ensuring full integration of commercial banks to expand their reach: Bank-specific training programs are implemented for commercial banks.
- Ensuring effective participation of Assam Cooperative Apex Bank: [12].
- Cover more dedicated and effective institutions [NGOs/Farmers Clubs] like SHPI. That is why NABARD selectively awards grants to NGOs in areas where the program has no demonstrable impact [13]. This support will be released to cover the costs of SHG promotion, capacity building, credit linkage, and monitoring based on measurable production indicators [14].
- Facilitation of incorporation of RRBs and SBIs into IRVS (Individual Rural Volunteer Scheme) The main objective of this program is to promote SHGs by engaging socially committed rural volunteers through RRBs and SBIs. Training costs for branch staff, NGOs,

and IRVS (individual rural volunteers) are covered by grants from NABARD.

- Selective inclusion of Anganwadi workers in potential districts.
- Consider the possibility of promoting his SHG through existing and fully functioning SHGs to ensure a broader impact through the active intervention of NGOs.
- Conduct more training programs for people at the state, district, or village level. Participants in the training program include bankers, government officials, NGOs, SHG members, and other stakeholders. Training documents, brochures, etc. must be produced in English and local languages.
- Collaborate with the district administration to promote his SHGs through a qualitative and holistic approach that will bring long-term benefits to the people.
- Ensure the implementation of an effective rating system for the evaluation and monitoring of SHGs by banks and SHPIs.
- Effective training inputs on accounting and group dynamics are needed to ensure sustainability.
- Organize more awareness, training programs, and inspection visits for all stakeholders.
- Externalization of training programs involving experienced NGOs.
- Focus on areas with higher growth potential for SHGs.
- Establishment of an effective rating system for the evaluation and monitoring of SHGs by banks and SHPIs to assess the performance and creditworthiness of SHGs, making informed decisions about lending and support.
- The stabilization of MIS (management information system) at the bank level (branches and administrative institutions) and NGO level and submission of timely reports to RBI/NABARD.
- The creation of district resource officers for training SHGs, NGOs, and bankers.
- To research various aspects of SHG-Bank linkage programs.
- Effectively document success stories and update regular developments under state programs.

##### B. Performance of Shg-Bank Linkage Programme in Assam

The performance of NABARD under the SHG –Bank linkage program in Assam for the period 2006-07 to 2022-23 can be analyzed through the following facts as narrated below:

##### C. Parameters Taken

- i. Savings of SHGs with Banks in India and Assam.
- ii. Bank Loan Disbursed to SHGs in India and Assam
- iii. Bank Loan Outstanding against SHGs in India and Assam
- iv. Progress of NABARD's support training and building capacity initiative SHGs members.
- v. Comparison of the amount of non-performing assets (NPA) against the bank loan outstanding towards SHGs.



# An Analysis of the Implementation, Outcomes, and Challenges of NABARD's Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Programme in Assam, India

**Table 1: Savings of SHG with Banks of India and Assam**

(Amount in Rs. Lakh)

As on31 March	No. of SHGs		Growth Rate		Savings Amount		Growth Rate	
	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India
2007	1,21,474	41,60,584	N/A	N/A	5,261.61	3,512.71	N/A	N/A
2008	1,49,719	50,09,794	23.45	20.41	5,800.06	3,785.39	10.23	7.75
2009	1,80,996	61,21,147	20.89	22.18	6,296.92	5,546.62	8.57	46.52
2010	2,18,352	69,53,250	20.64	13.59	7,359.94	6198.71	16.88	11.77
2011	2,45,120	74,61,946	12.26	7.31	8,169.60	7,016.30	11.00	13.17
2012	2,76,565	79,60,349	12.83	6.67	9,845.98	6,55,141.46	20.52	-6.62
2013	2,71,072	73,17,551	-1.99	-8.07	10,750.76	8,21,725.47	9.19	25.43
2014	2,85,327	74,29,500	5.26	1.52	11,289.51	9,89,741.54	5.01	20.44
2015	2,92,071	76,97,469	2.36	3.60	9,943.07	11,05,984.07	-11.92	11.75
2016	3,33,686	79,03,002	14.25	2.67	11,128.22	13,69,139.01	11.92	23.78
2017	3,47,505	85,76,875	4.14	8.52	10,446.64	38,781,15.64	-6.12	17.69
2018	3,75,986	87,44,437	8.20	1.95	19,466.96	19,59,211.52	86.35	21.58
2019	4,10,481	1,00,14,243	9.17	14.52	25,581.26	23,32,448.15	31.41	19.04
2020	4,49,870	1,02,43,323	9.43	2.28	31,084.69	26,15,204.89	21.51	12.12
2021	4,94,870	1,12,23,400	10.17	9.56	53,912.66	37,47,761.37	73.44	43.30
2022	5,41,389	1,18,93,053	9.4	5.96	71,883.29	47,24,048.10	33.33	26.05
2023	6,01,955	1,34,03,083	11.18	12.69	86,779.75	58,89,267.56	20.72	24.66

Source: Stats of Microfinance NABARD 2006-07 to 2022-23 [10]

**Table 2: Bank Loan Disbursed to SHGs in India and Assam**

(Amount in Rs. Lakh)

As on31 March	No. of SHGs		Growth Rate		Loan Amount		Growth Rate	
	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India
2007	26,343	11,05,749	N/A	N/A	8,681.1	6,57,038.85	N/A	N/A
2008	20,318	12,27,770	-22.87	11.03	8869.1	8,84,926.24	2.17	
2009	26,448	16,09,586	30.17	31.08	15,696.20	12,25,351.39	76.98	38.46
2010	39,048	15,86,822	47.68	-1.41	19,573.61	14,45,330.30	24.70	17.95
2011	29,094	11,96,134	-25.51	-24.6	22,715.61	14,547,73.19	16.05	0.65
2012	28,012	11,47,878	-3.72	-4.03	18,746.98	16,534,76.87	-17.47	13.68
2013	21,497	12,19,821	-23.26	6.26	13,755.83	20,585,36.44	-26.62	24.49
2014	14,918	13,66,421	-30.60	12.01	11,867.51	24,017,35.85	-13.73	16.67
2015	17,565	16,26,238	17.74	19.01	14,676.55	27,582,31.06	23.67	14.84
2016	22,625	18,32,323	28.81	12.67	15,865.56	37,286,90.09	8.10	35.18
2017	26,361	18,98,120	16.51	3.59	24,901.44	38,78,115.64	56.95	4.00
2018	31,029	22,61,132	17.71	19.12	30,934.94	47,185,87.61	24.23	21.67
2019	19,895	26,98,400	-35.88	19.33	23,242.96	58,317,62.88	-24.87	23.59
2020	28,805	31,46,002	44.79	16.58	43,744.89	77,659,34.84	88.21	33.16
2021	53,743	28,87,394	86.58	-8.22	82,210.31	58,070,67.81	87.93	-25.22
2022	72,631	33,98,267	35.14	17.69	1,51,845.80	99,729,22.50	84.70	71.73
2023	97,333	42,95,521	34.01	26.40	2,67,090.70	145,200,23.33	75.89	45.59

Source: Status of microfinance NABARD 2006-07 to 2022-20 [10]

**Table 3: Bank Loan Outstanding Against SHGs in India and Assam**

(Amount in Rs. Lakh)

As of 31 <sup>st</sup> March,	No. of SHGs		Growth Rate		Bank Loan Disbursed		Growth Rate	
	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India
2007	24,832	28,94,505	N/A	N/A	6,035.11	12,366,49.39	N/A	N/A
2008	75,405	36,25,941	203.66	25.26	24,224.37	16,999,90.66	301.39	37.46
2009	88,878	42,24,338	17.87	16.50	32,855.42	22,679,84.25	35.63	33.41
2010	10,04,22	48,51,356	12.99	14.84	49,123.37	2803828.07	49.51	23.62
2011	11,15,89	47,86,763	11.12	-1.33	51,470.27	3122116.55	4.78	11.35
2012	11,78,09	43,54,442	5.57	-9.03	63,021.64	36,340,00.18	22.44	16.39
2013	1,21,490	44,51,434	3.12	2.22	64,856.42	39,375,29.72	2.91	8.35
2014	10,95,87	41,97,338	-9.80	-5.70	65,549.13	42,927,52.40	1.07	9.02
2015	10,86,18	44,68,180	-0.88	6.45	61,753.76	51,54,546.14	-5.79	20.07
2016	10,71,37	46,72,621	-1.36	4.57	66,031.12	57,11,923.47	6.93	10.81
2017	10,14,57	48,48,287	-5.30	3.75	63,379.51	61,58,130.36	-4.02	7.81
2018	10,04,55	50,203,58	-0.99	3.54	67,772.01	75,598,45.12	6.93	22.76
2019	90,218	50,77,332	-10.19	1.13	68,028.05	87,09,815.43	0.38	15.21
2020	10,13,24	56,770,71	12.31	11.81	79,861.49	108,07,507.24	17.39	24.08
2021	12,64,31	57,80,244	24.78	1.81	11,0861.18	10,328,970.83	38.82	-4.42
2022	16,66,71	67,39,957	31.82	16.60	18,9363.80	151,05,129.61	70.81	46.24
2023	21,42,42	69,57,051	28.54	3.22	31,7205.45	18,807,879.11	67.51	24.51

Source: Status of microfinance NABARD 2006-07 to 2022-20 [10]



**Table 4: Progress of NABARD Support Training and Capacity Building Initiative SHGs Members India and Assam Position**

As of 31 <sup>st</sup> March,	India		Assam	
	No. of SHGs	Growth Rate	No. of SHGs	Growth Rate
2006-07	2,01,588	N/A	10,847	N/A
2007-08	2,68,870	33.37	10,533	-2.89
2008-09	1,41,984	-47.19	11,955	13.50
2009-10	83,131	-41.45	14,609	22.1
2010-11	94,560	12.08	9,298	36.35
2011-12	83,961	-11.20	10,021	7.77
2012-13	68,634	-18.25	10,675	6.52
2013-14	55,594	-18.99	7,120	-33.30
2014-15	61,162	10.01	8,653	21.53
2015-16	40,470	-33.83	3,754	-56.61
2016-17	54,151	33.80	5,352	42.56
2017-18	67,912	25.41	1,156	-78.40
2018-19	55,349	-18.49	3,214	178.02
2019-20	43,265	-21.83	2,838	11.69
2020-21	40,474	-6.45	10,621	274.24
2021-22	54,502	34.65	17,066	60.68
2022-23	56,108	2.94	9,250	-45.79

Source: Status of Microfinance 2006-07 to 2022-23 [10]

**Table 5: Comparative Analysis of NPA Against the Bank Loan Outstanding Towards SHGs**

As of 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Assam			India		
	Bank Loan Disbursed	Amount of NPA	%NPA total Loan Disbursed	Bank Loan Disbursed	Amount of NPA	%NPA total Loan Disbursed
2007	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2008	24224.37	N/A	N/A	1480947.92	42,292.28	2.86
2009	32,855.42	3,107.93	9.8	21,56,104.35	62,586.78	2.9
2010	49,123.37	2,597.22	5.29	28,03,828.07	82,304.14	2.94
2011	51,470.27	4,275.68	8.31	31,22,116.55	14,7410.80	4.72
2012	63,021.64	2,893.15	4.59	36,34,000.18	22,1273.18	6.09
2013	64,856.42	5,265.82	8.12	39,3,7529.72	27,8692.95	7.08
2014	65,549.13	4,814.99	7.35	42,92,752.40	29,3266.51	6.83
2015	61,753.76	6,309.77	10.22	51,54,546.14	38,1470.65	7.40
2016	66,031.12	8,723.47	13.21	57,11,923.47	36,8622.90	6.45
2017	63,379.51	11,461.35	18.08	61,58,130.36	40,02,18.81	6.50
2018	67,772.01	11,232.51	16.57	75,59,845.12	46,28,05.51	6.12
2019	68,028.05	22,674.75	33.33	87,09,815.43	45,24,01.05	5.19
2020	79,861.49	22,272.75	27.88	53,2170.42	53,21,70.42	4.92
2021	11,08,61.18	22,937.15	20.68	48,89,21.34	48,89,21.34	4.73
2022	18,93,63.80	22,602.28	11.94	57,4,371.42	57,43,71.42	3.80
2023	31,72,05.45	17,812.61	5.62	52,49,33.81	52,49,33.81	2.79

Source: Status of Microfinance 2006-07 to 2022-23 [10]

**V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The Introduction of banking services to the underprivileged and poor sections of the Society through SHG bank linkages has proven to be one of the most effective tools for poverty alleviation. As mentioned earlier, the SHG Bank Linkage Program, a pilot project proposed by NABARD, also gained momentum in the state of Assam, along with the rest of India. This part presents the findings of an analysis of the program's performance in India with special reference to the state of Assam, where certain facts are highlighted. The research results were presented objectively.

i. The Introduction of banking services to the underprivileged and poor sections of the Society through SHG bank linkages has proven to be one of the most effective tools for poverty alleviation. As mentioned earlier, the SHG Bank Linkage Program, a pilot project proposed by NABARD, also gained momentum in the state of Assam, along with the rest of India. This part presents the findings of an analysis of the program's performance in India with special reference to the state

of Assam, where certain facts are highlighted. The research results were presented objectively.

- ii. Concerning the saving of SHGs (regarding SHG formation), it is observed that till 2012–13, there were no downward trends regarding the formation of SHGs, after which there was a mixed trend; however, the position of Assam can be considered slightly better if compared with India's position as a whole.
- iii. Concerning the saving amount of SHG with banks, it is observed that till 2016–17, the position of Assam was slightly lower than the overall Indian position, but from 2017–18 onward, Assam's position registered better growth.
- iv. Until 2010-11, the all-India performance regarding bank loans disbursed to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) was better than the performance of Assam
- v. However, from 2013-14 onwards, Assam's performance mirrored the national trend, indicating a significant improvement in the state's microfinance landscape.



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- vi. Concerning the status of bank loans outstanding to SHGs (regarding the number of SHGs), it was observed that the position of Assam follows the same trend as the whole of India from 2007–08 to 2022–23. Concerning the status of bank loans outstanding to SHG, it was observed that till 2008–09, the position of Assam could be considered slightly better if compared with the overall Indian position; however, from 2020–21, the position of Assam reflected the increased growth.
- vii. The SHG members responded fairly well to the NABARD's support of training and capacity-building initiatives for SHG members, which can be evidenced from the record, which says that from 2018–19, the rate of SHG members in Assam taking part in the program increased comparatively to the rate of SHG members taking part in the program in India till 2022–23.
- viii. Concerning the status of non-performing assets against bank loans outstanding to SHG (regarding SHG formation),. It was observed that from 2007–08 to 2022–2023, the position of Assam followed the same trend as that of India.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Since its inception in 1992, NABARD's SHG-Bank Linkage Program has emerged as a vital tool for rural development in India. Members actively participate in the daily operations of their groups, primarily driven by financial incentives. To access the group's lending facility, SHG members need to save money regularly, which will promote financial awareness and literacy. Consequently, the SBLP is significantly reshaping India's rural landscape, evolving into a large-scale socio-economic movement. As a result, SHG members have experienced improvements in their status, lifestyle, and standard of living. The program has also fostered better investment and saving habits among SHG members while enhancing their ability to access credit.

The program has effectively engaged SHG members in productive endeavors, leading to increased confidence in overcoming daily challenges. However, it has also faced several challenges, such as insufficient loan amounts, limited markets for SHG products, and members lacking technical expertise. To address these issues, it is essential to implement planned and adaptable strategies. One key approach is to promote skill development training centers tailored to local trades, utilizing available resources. Collaboration among banks, government bodies, panchayats, and local authorities is crucial to channeling efforts towards inclusive growth.

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After aggregating input from all authors, I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

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