# Self Help Groups – An Empowerment Model or Financial Model: Perceptions of Stakeholders

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## Abstract

Economic and social marginalisation of poor by formal credit agencies including cooperatives led to the emergence of Self Help Groups (SHGs). SHGs emerge as an important strategy for empowering women, alleviating poverty and act as alternative credit source to the poor. Researchers identify SHGs as both empowerment and financial model of development. Sa-Dhan (2003) has sort out a lot of unresolved issues in quality assessment of SHGs for further discussion and research. The main objective of this paper is to assess the opinion of the direct stakeholders of SHGs regarding the issue whether SHG is an empowerment model or financial model. The study is conducted by using multi-stage random sampling method to collect primary data from the selected Development Blocks of Nagaon districts of Assam. It is observed that there is no correlation between perceptions of stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model. Moreover, from the ANOVA test on overall score of variables on empowerment model, we conclude that at least one of the group mean is significantly different from the others while in case of overall score of variables on financial model, we conclude that the group mean is not significantly different from the others.

**Keywords:** empowerment Model, financial Model, micro finance, perceptions of stakeholders, self help groups

## 1. Introduction

Economic and social marginalisation of poor by formal credit agencies including co-operatives led to the emergence of Self Help Groups (SHGs). SHGs emerge as an important strategy for empowering women and in alleviating poverty. SHG is a 'people's scheme' and its organisation is a significant step towards empowering women. SHGs are an outcome of the neo-liberal paradigm of development (Chitagubbi et al., 2011), where the poor take charge of their lives and fashion new improved future through self-reliant and socially sustainable efforts.

SHGs have been instrumental in empowerment by enabling women to work together in collective agency. A good number of researchers including Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) claimed that this movement helped in empowering women. Further, SHGs are effective in reducing poverty, creating awareness and ensure sustainability of environment which finally results in sustainable development of the nation. It is reported that SHGs are now emerging as the predominant model for poverty eradication, women empowerment (Chidambaram, 2004) and development agencies (Panda, 2005). The application of the strategy through UN's Millennium Development Goals has made provision of financial support to the poor or low income people by realising the fact that instead of targeting individual development, it would be more useful to apply this idea in case of group development and interestingly the result found in most cases is very positive. In India, the SHGs constitute a widely accepted development strategy for poverty reduction as they are perceived as powerful vehicle for the promotion of micro-credit and micro-finance especially for women (Chen et al., 2007).

The SHG model was introduced as a core strategy for empowerment of women in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) in India. This strategy was continued in the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) with the government commitment to encourage SHGs to act as agents of social change, development and empowerment of women (Planning Commission, 2002). It is the largest and fastest-growing micro-finance programme in the developing world (Seibel & Khadka, 2002; Bali Swain and Floro, 2008). Thus, SHGs can be viewed as 'Empowerment Model' of development which encompasses all.

In recent year SHGs are emerging as alternative credit source to the poor (e.g. Kumar, 2004; Bharathi, 2005; Singh, 2009; Nabavi, 2009). NABARD views the SHG as essentially a financial model facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that had not been reached by the banking system

(Tankha, 2002; Sinha and Patole, 2002). SHG-Banking is a programme that helps to promote financial transactions between the formal rural banking system in India comprising of public and private sector commercial banks, regional rural banks and co-operative banks with the informal SHGs as clients. Thus, it is reported that SHGs are financial intermediaries owned by the poor. They usually start by making voluntary thrift on a regular- mostly fortnightly or monthly basis (contractual savings). They use this pooled resource (as quasi-equity) together with the external bank loan to provide interest bearing loans to their members. Such loan provides additional liquidity or purchasing power for use in any of the borrower's production, investment, or consumption activities. SHGs are currently seen as an essential and integral part not only of financial services delivery, but also as a channel for the delivery of non-financial services within larger objectives of livelihood promotion, community development. SHGs are potential 'micro-banks', either on their own, or through higher levels of association, capable of using their own resources, grants and borrowed funds for financial intermediation (Tankha, 2002).

Those SHGs formed on the initiative of the Banking System have the overwhelming objective to help SHGs get access to banking (saving and credit) services to improve the economic condition of their members and to wean them away from moneylenders. They may be called financial SHGs (Kropp & Suran, 2002). SHGs are initiated by agents (bank clients, volunteers of farmers clubs, social workers etc) or taken over from NGOs to offer bank services to them. Linkage Banking in India is, therefore, not exclusively working through existing informal SHG-institutions but predominantly with the formal banking system. Thus, SHGs have the feature based on which it may be argued that SHGs are 'Financial Model' of development.

Different organisations have promoted and/or supported SHGs from a different perspective and agenda. The outlook of SHGs largely depends on how the promoters see them in the long run, whether they are intended to be temporary or permanent organisations. Looking across the prevalent perspectives on SHGs, it could be said that they are loaded with wide range of expectations on the part of different stakeholders. It is observed that different stakeholders have promoted SHGs with different expectations and understanding, and have sorted different parameters of quality of SHGs. Sa-Dhan (2003) published a discussion paper on "Quality Parameters of SHGs", wherein a lot of issues set out for further discussion and research to develop quality indicators for SHGs. Thus, the present study is limited to one of the unresolved issue of Quality Assessment of SHGs as raised by Sa-Dhan.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Degrees of empowerment in the domain relating to society were measured in combination with the three dimensions of empowerment, namely economic, social and political. But the reported economic empowerment resulted by SHGs is far different from financial intermediation of SHGs. In fact, SHGs are incepted as financial intermediaries facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that had not reached by the banking sector. Therefore, economic empowerment model is quite different form financial model aspect of SHGs.

An important issue that was deliberated at length in the Sa-Dhan sub-committee was whether an SHG is part of an empowerment model or a financial model. It was felt that this factor would also determine the focus of standards to be proposed for SHGs. Thus, if the SHG is part of a model that emphasises empowerment objectives then rotation of leadership among group members will carry more weight than, say, level of loan repayment. On the other hand, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (henceforth NABARD) views the SHG as essentially a financial model facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that had not been reached by the banking system (NABARD, 2000). In fine, SHG's are an effective strategy for poverty alleviation, women and social empowerment, financial intermediation and now, SHGs are emerging as the predominant model for livelihood promotion and financial inclusion. Hence, one question generally arose in mind that whether SHG is an empowerment model or financial model. Here in this study, modest effort is given to assess the stakeholder's perception in this regard.

## 2. Operationalising the Concepts

### 2.1 Measuring Empowerment through SHG

An attempt has been made in this study to identify a few key indicators that impinge on aspects of social capital and empowerment of the poorest people (including women and indigenous peoples). It was observed that the

indicators used to measure empowerment in different studies are familiar and easy to construct (Hulme and Mosley, 1996; Seibel and Dave, 2002). Gaiha and Nandhi, 2005 articulated a list of indicators to measure empowerment which are refined from earlier studies and extended through systematic application.

In this study when developing the questionnaire and interview guidelines, the notion of degrees of empowerment introduced by Ruth Alsop and Nina Heinsohn, 2005 and other researchers were used. The domain of empowerment will be limited to that of society, with its sub-domains family and community, as this is where the SHGs operate. The degrees of empowerment in the domain of society were measured in combination with the three dimensions of empowerment, namely economic, social and political. Further, to analyse the dimensions of empowerment, the Luttrell et al. (2007) identified four dimensions of empowerment which are also duly considered in this study, viz. a) Economic empowerment–getting skills, capabilities, resources and access to secure and sustain incomes and livelihoods; b) Human and social empowerment– getting control over one's own life and have the power to act; c) Political empowerment– being able to organise and mobilise collective action needed for collective change; and d) Cultural empowerment–being able to redefine rules and norms and create new cultural and symbolical practices.

Some other commonly used dimensions of women's empowerment developed by Malhotra et al., 2002 and Basu (2006) to analyse the empowerment indications which are reflected on six dimension like economic, socio-cultural, legal, political, psychological, and familial or interpersonal, are also duly considered. Some other studies are also consulted while chalking and framing out the different characteristics of empowerment (viz. Beijing conference, 1995; Hashemi et al., 1996; Mayoux, 2000; Oakley, 2001; Malhotra, Schuler and Boender, 2002; Holland and Brook, 2004; Gaiha and Nandhi, 2005; Angus Buchanan, 2006).

In fine, a lot of studies are reviewed and different elements/indicators of women empowerment are identified. However, it is observed that the following are the key areas where each and every study through some lights.

a) **Self confidence**: To assess the self-confidence level of SHG members, the researcher collected information on those actions that indicate confidence levels of a person such as ability to sign, confidence to approach bank, confidence to speak to others etc.

b) **Family support**: To assess the support that the family members provide to SHG members includes attending SHG meetings, overcoming the resistance from husband and other members of the family to join the SHG etc.

c) **Access to family income**: To understand how far the SHG members access family income, data were collected by different researchers on sale of household produce, raising of hand loans, enhancement of women's financial contribution to household etc.

d) **Control on resources/assets**: To understand the control of SHG member's over household resources/assets, data was collected by different researchers on use of earnings from income generating activities, increases the capacity to spend more etc.

e) **Mobility:** To understand how far the SHG members have free mobility regarding whether members go alone or take the help of family or the group members to visit shops outside the village, the Public Health Centre/hospital etc.

f) **Role in decision-making**: To understand who decides in the household, data was collected on purchase and/or sale of household assets, family savings, children's education & marriage, occupational change, casting of vote etc. , purpose of loan and adoption of household infrastructure etc.

g) **Changes in women roles**: To assess whether there were changes in the roles of men and women, different researchers collected information on some of the roles performed by men and women such as attending meetings, participation in village meetings, non-domestic roles etc.

In this way a list of forty (40) indicators were taken into consideration under different domains of empowerment including women empowerment which measures economic, socio-cultural, familial, political, psychological

aspects of empowerment (Figure. 1). In order to quantify the degree of perceptions of different stakeholders whether SHG is an empowerment model, five point scales are used.
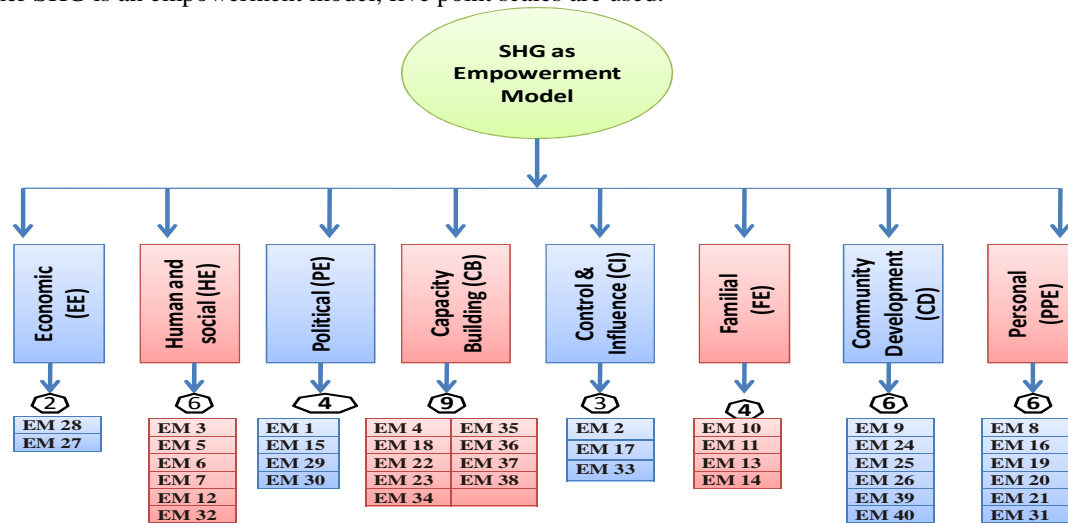


Figure 1. Components of SHG as Empowerment Model

Source. Designed based on Survey of Literature

## 2.2    SHG as Financial Intermediaries

Finding innovative ways to provide financial services to the poor so that they can improve their productive capacity and quality of life is the role of the financial intermediaries in the 21st century. Most formal financial institutions do not serve the poor because of perceived high risks, high costs involved in small transactions, low profitability, and most importantly, inability to provide the physical collateral generally required by such institutions. However, Government of developing economies has made serious effort to bring the 'unreachable' within the formal banking net through the directives and also offered a number of fiscal & monetary mechanism to shorten the credit gap. Despite this progress, as of 2008 (2005 statistics), the World Bank has estimated that there were an estimated 1,345 million poor people in developing countries who live on $1.25 a day or less (Headey, 2011). The demand for financial services from these low-income households is substantial, and their demand covers a wide range of products and services (ADB, 2007). Most poor and low-income households continue to rely on meager self-finance or informal sources of finance.

In India, SHGs represent a unique approach to financial intermediation (EDA, 2007; Solomon, 2010; Venkatalakshmi & Ambujam, 2012). The approach combines access to low-cost financial services with a process of self management and development for the women who join as members of an SHG (Kulkarni, & Sonawane, 2012). The SHGs are formed and supported usually by NGOs, or (increasingly) by Government agencies and sometimes directly by banks. SHGs are linked to banks first with a group deposit account, then for credit, which is disbursed to the group and in turn distributed to the members. SHGs encourage the saving habit which indirectly enhances the financial ability of the members and ensures prompt repayment. This is a very good substitute for the collateral insisted by the traditional bankers. Micro-finance through its SHG Linkage model is considered as a potential alternative for extending the financial services to the poor for various reasons like the ability of these institutions in providing credit and other financial services to the poor and the weaker sections, help them in overcoming financial shocks, support them in venturing into profitable entrepreneurial activities and encourage small savings. They also provide other financial services like Micro Insurance and transfer of funds. SHG as financial intermediaries provides the following financial functions.

a) **Savings function in SHGs**: Thrift contributions by members to the group which sometimes mandatory or optional must be perceived as a savings product serving long term financial security needs. The thrift contribution reflects confidence of members on the group and is seen as an index of their stake in the process.

b) **Credit function in SHGs**: Providing credit access to members of poor household on sustainable basis is the primary objective of SHG. Loans are often given for various purposes with/ without collateral security.

c) **Fund management in SHGs**: Management of fund is an important task. The SHGs generally accommodate funds to the members on need based and only for productive purposes along with a fixed repayment scheduled.

d) **Record keeping in SHGs**: Record keeping is possibly the most crucial function in a SHGs often confined to the periphery. An efficient record keeping assumes significance for promoting transparency in the system considering the need for providing safety of micro-deposits pooled in savings and credit programmes.

e) **Promotion of financial literacy**: But lack of information and guidance regarding practices of savings and credit result wrong financial decisions which stands in the way of their empowerment. Wise financial practices and right financial decision-making go hand in hand. To achieve this, increased information dissemination, knowledge sharing and promoting the practice of financial planning SHG organises such training for members. Generally SHGs provides training on budgeting, savings, debt management and other bank services.

f) **Promotion in financial inclusion:** SHGs are financed by bank without any collateral. Here, peer group pressure is considered as collateral by the lenders. SBLP also helps to reduce transaction costs facilitates proper monitoring of funds by group members, economic empowerment of SHG members by collective decision making etc. In spite of the increased spread of formal banking network in the recent past, access to basic financial services are still beyond the reach of large sections of society. SBLP model exhibits the potential to provide an alternative mechanism to extend financial services to large unbanked sections of the society.

The micro-credit programme in general and SBLP in particular is a unique innovation of credit delivery technique to enhance income generating activities. The programme extends small loans to poor people for self-employment activities, thus, allowing the clients to achieve a better quality of life (Hussain, 1998; Morduch, 2000; Rahman, 1995). It is the most sensational anti-poverty tool for the poorest, especially for women (Micro Credit Summit, 1997). It has been quite well recognised that micro-finance smoothens consumption, reduces the vulnerability of the poor and leads to increase in their income. By giving the world's poor a hand up, micro-finance can help break the vicious cycle of poverty in as little as a single generation (Maheswaranathan & Kennedy, 2010).

In this research, when developing the questionnaire and interview guidelines, the notion of degrees of financial model introduced by Tankha, 2002; Kropp & Suran, 2002; Sinha and Patole, 2002 and other researchers were used. The domain of financial intermediaries is limited to savings function, credit function, fund management, record keeping, banking relationship, insurance function, investment function, financial literacy, financial management and portfolio management (Figure 2). In this way a list of thirty (30) indicators relating to financial intermediation are included in this study to access the perceptions of different stakeholders of SHG whether SHG is a financial model.
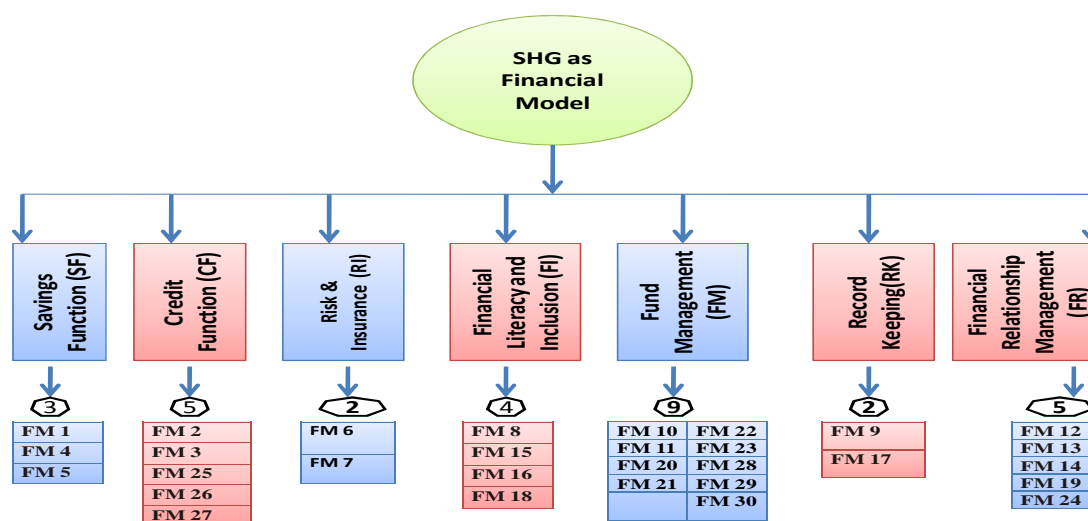
Figure 2. Components of SHG as Financial Model
Source. Designed based on Survey of Literature

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Overview of the Study Area

The Central Assam District of Nagaon (spelled by the British as Nowgong) is one of the largest districts of Assam. It sprawls across almost four thousand square kilometers of fertile alluvial plains and thickly forested hills. Nagaon extends from 250-45' to 260 -45' North Latitude and 920 -33' -6" East Longitude. The district is bounded by Sonitpur district and the river Brahmaputra in the north, West Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills in the south and East Karbi Anglong and Golaghat district in the east. The mighty river Brahmaputra flows along the northern periphery of the district. Other major tributaries meandering through the district such as Kolong, Kopili drain into the Brahmaputra. Lying at a distance of 123 Kilometers by road from Guwahati, Nagaon town constitutes a vital corridor linking the Upper Assam districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and the North Assam districts of Sonitpur and North Lakhimpur. Nagaon has covered total area of 3,993 sq. km. The demographic profile (Table 1) and progress of SBLP in India in general (Table 2) and in the study district are briefed in Table 3.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Nagaon District of Assam, India

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Population | 2,826,006 |
| | 1,440,307 (Males); 1,385,699 (Female) |
| Total ST Population | 89394 |
| Total SC Population | 215209 |
| Male literacy | 78.19% |
| Female literacy | 69.21% |
| Population Density | 711 per sq. km |
| Total House Holds | 378778 |
| BPL House Holds | 177697 |
| BPL P/C | 46.91 |
| No. of SHG Formed | 24156* |

*Up to March 2011; Source. Census Report 2011 and Microfinance Status Report, NABARD 2010-11

Table 2. Overall Progress of SBLP in India

| Particulars | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. of SHGs  Savings linked | 69,53,250 | 74,61,946 | 79,60,349 |
| Savings amount in SB Account (Rs. in Lakhs) | 6,19,871 | 7,01,630 | 6,55,141 |
| Bank loans disbursed to SHGs during the year | 15,86,822 | 11,96,134 | 11,47,878 |
| Amount disbursed during the year (Rs. in Lakhs) | 14,45,330 | 14,54,773 | 16,53,477 |
| No. of SHGs having loans outstanding | 48,51,356 | 47,86,763 | 43,54,442 |
| Amount of loan outstanding (Rs. in Lakhs) | 28,03,828 | 31,22,117 | 36,34,000 |
| Amount of Gross NPAs against SHGs | 82,304 | 1,47,411 | 2,21,273 |

Source. Status of Microfinance in India, 2009-10, 2010-11; 2011-12 & NABARD's Publication Status of Microfinance in India 2011-12

Table 3. Progress of SHGs in Nagaon, Assam (As on 31st March 2011)

| Promoter | No. of SHG Formed Total* | No. of SHG taken up Economic activity Total | No. of Women SHGs Formed Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| SGSY | 20590 | 5592 | 12630 |
| Asomi-MFI | 24 | 15 | 22 |
| Prochesta- MFI | 64 | 35 | 37 |
| RGVN- MFI NGO-MFI | 87 | 56 | 64 |
| SK Human Welfare Assoc. | 50 | 27 | 44 |
| Gharoa** | 50 | 28 | 38 |
| Jana Chetana Samity Asom | 62 | 24 | 48 |
| Zeal Thrill Friend-ship Group** | 50 | 10 | 40 |
| Gramya US | 31 | 11 | 26 |
| Bank *** | 165 | 56 | 132 |
| Farmer Club /SHG as Cooperative society | 258 | 123 | 168 |
| Others including Govt. Depts. | 2725 | 121 | 87 |
| Total | 24156 | 6098 | 13336 |

*Total since 1st April, 1999;**Promoted with Banks, ***Reported from SLBC Report, March 2010.
Source. Microfinance Status Report, NABARD 2010-11, and SLBC Report, March 2010

## 3.2    Objective of the Study
The study is pursued keeping in view the following main objectives
   a) To examine the perception of the direct stakeholders (i.e. Promoters, Donors, Financial Institutions and the Group members) of SHGs regarding the issue whether SHG is an empowerment model or financial model.
   b) To forward conclusion based on the findings of the study.

### 3.3        Research Hypotheses

Given the survey of literature and objectives, the study is pursued to test the following statistical hypothesis:

**Ho:** There is no significant association in the opinion of the direct stakeholders (i.e. Promoters, Donors, Financial Institutions and the Group members**)** of SHGs regarding the issue whether SHG is an empowerment model or financial model.

### 3.4        Methodology

The research design and methodology devised in this paper is being presented which has been designed keeping in mind the focused objectives and with the aim of acquiring accurate and authentic data. The methodology of research for preparation of this paper may be categorized into two parts viz. methodology applied for descriptive analysis about SHGs and methodology applied for perception assessment of direct stakeholders on the issue of SHGs as empowerment vs. financial model. The study adopted a descriptive study design; this design was crucial in capturing the socio-economic characteristic of the study groups such as demographics data, economic status, social benefits, and entrepreneurial activities. As explained by Mugenda it helped in collecting data concerning behavior, attitude, values and characteristic (Mugenda 2003). The study uses both primary data and secondary data. The information about the number of Self Help Groups in respective development blocks and number of other stakeholders is obtained from the Office of DRDA, Nagaon. The year of existence of SHGs and the age of the group are coded so that SHGs with 2 years and above and have income generating activities were purposely selected. Similarly those other direct stakeholders who are directly engaged in SHG promotion and financing are included in the study. It is also estimated that out of the stakeholder population, approximately 10% stakeholders (i.e. Promoter, Donor, Financial Institutions and the Group) needs to be covered as sample**.** In brief, multi-stage random sampling method is used for the present study to collect primary data. As no such study was conducted in the context of Nagaon district of Assam and again the area being the native district of the scholar was purposively chosen for the present study. At the next level, five Development Blocks (viz. Raha, Binakandi, Dhalpukhuri, Odali, and Lumding) are selected randomly out of twenty seven Development Blocks of the district. In the later stage, three revenue villages from each of the selected Development Blocks are purposively selected. From each revenue village, three SHG members, who are associated actively, are selected randomly. Further, 12 Financial Institutions i.e. nationalised commercial bank and RRBs (operating in the study area); 10 Donors and 34 Promoters including banks, NGOs, NGO-MFI, Farmers Club and Government Departments are also selected randomly who are directly associated with the sampled SHGs (Table 4). Thus, the total sample size is 100 (Considered adequate by researchers like Nunnally, 1978; Comrey, 1973; Barrett & Kline, 1981; Guadagnoli and Velicer, 1988; Gorsuch, 1983; Comfrey and Lee, 1992; Oppenhein, 1992; Coakes and Steed, 1997 and Onwuegbuzie, et al., 2004, 2007).   Primary data was collected using pre-tested questionnaire. Sensitive and personal information were extracted from respondent through honest and personal interaction between the respondent and interviewer (Mugenda, 2003). Secondary data was collected from report on Micro-finance Status by NABARD, Branch Banking Status of RBI, NEDFi Databank on Northeast, SBI Local Head Office, Zonal and Regional Offices of Commercial Banks, Head Offices of Regional Rural Banks, Census India, NSSO, Directorate of SGSY (Guwahati- Assam), DRDA (Nagaon- Assam), Government of Assam, Reports of State Level Bankers Committee, Assam and Economic Survey, and literature published by different institutions on micro-finance have been used. The important variables were formulated and the relevant data collected from the field were coded and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Perceptions of direct stakeholders whether SHG is an empowerment model or financial model were expressed based on 5 Point Scale where SA= Strongly Agree (2), A = Agree (1), NAND = Neither agree nor disagree (0), DA = Disagree (-1), SDA = Strongly disagree (-2). Further, the data collected using the questionnaire was analysed using the measure of descriptive statistics like mean, variance, standard deviation, maximum, minimum etc. Further, Cronbach alpha, Kolmogorov- Smirnov Test, Paired t Test, Paired correlation, and ANOVA analysis were applied in analysing and interpreting the data.

Table 4. Sample SHGs, NGOs, MFIs and Financial Institutions
(Promoter, Donor, Financer and SHG members)

| Name of Development Block | Name Revenue Villages | No of Sample SHGs | NGO/ NGO-MFI/ Promoter | No of Sample | Govt. Stakeholders | No of Sample | Name of the Financier/ Promoter | No of Sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Raha | Raha Bazar, Rajagaon, Amsoi | 3*3= 9 | NGO | 3 | Agr. Extension Officers | 1 | PNB, SBI | 2 |
| Binakandi | Ambari, Ruhini Pather, Pachim Jamunagaon | 3*3= 9 | Farmers Club | 2 | Agr. Extension Officers | 1 | UBI, SBI, AGVB | 3 |
| Dhalpukhuri | Kapilipar, Howaipur, Pachim Lankagaon | 3*3= 9 | Farmers Club | 2 | Field Offcier, Dist Vet & Animal Hus, Nagaon | 1 | SBI, AGVB | 2 |
| Odali | No. 2 Pipal pukhuri, Lankajan, Ranipukhuri, , | 3*3= 9 | Farmers Club | 2 | Village Extension officers | 1 | UBI, UCO | 2 |
| Lumding | 3 No. Derapather, 2 No. kaki, Narayanpue, | 3*3= 9 | NGO | 2 | Agr. Extension Officers | 1 | Allahabad Bank, SBI, AGVB | 3 |
| District level (Nagaon) | Nil | | NGO-MFI= 3 Govt. Depts.= 7 | | DRDA Officials= 1 Programme Officer- NERCRMP, Nagaon= 1 Field Officer, SIRD=1 Field Officer, ASFABC= 1 | | Financer = Nil | |
| State Level (Assam) | NIL | | MFI = 3 | | NABARD = 1 | | NIL | |
| Total | | 45 | | 24 | | 10 | | 12 |
| Total Sample Respondents | 100 (Promoter= 34, Donor = 10, Financial institutions = 12 and Group members = 44) | | | | | | | |

Total Sample consists of 100 since  Bank and NGO have different status and one group member declined to give information

## 4.    Results & Discussion

It is worth mentioning here that the variables relating to empowerment and financial model are included in the questionnaire without any clear arrangement so that the interviewer could not understand easily at a glance which one of the variable relates to empowerment and which one for financial model. Later for the purpose of our analysis, the variable relating to empowerment and variable relating to financial model are clubbed together separately to get the specific result. The result of different statistical tests and their interpretation are narrated as below.

## 4.1    Reliability Test

To understand the reliability of the field data, Cronbach's alpha test was conducted separately on both the overall score of variables of empowerment model and financial model. The result of the reliability test reveals that Cronbach's Alpha is 0.750 (for empowerment model) and 0.892 (for financial model) which are considered acceptable and further denotes that there are the presences of internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally &

Bernstein, 1994 and George and Mallery, 2003).

## 4.2    Validity

The instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers after an extensive review of literature. We drafted a pool of 50 items on each issue, which were submitted to 4 content judges for review and to determine the face and content validity of the items. These judges had expertise in research design, survey design, micro finance management and group development. This panel of content judges included local university faculty members and micro-finance practitioners of repute. We requested this panel to check the instrument items for clarity, length, time to complete, difficulty in understanding and answering questions, flow of questions, appropriateness of questions based on the research topic, any recommendations for revising the survey questions (e.g., add, substituted or delete), and overall utility of the instrument. Based on their feedback, some items of the sub-scales were revised according to appropriate demographic circumstances of the study district. At this stage, 50 items each considering SHGs as empowerment and financial model were reduced to 40 items for empowerment model and 30 items for financial model.

## 4.3    Descriptive statistics

The descriptive scale statistics on the overall score on perception of different stakeholders of SHGs reveals that for empowerment model, the mean is 17.05, variance 70.674 and standard deviation 8.407 (Table 5) while that for financial model, the mean is -3.76, variance 149.578 and standard deviation 12.230 (Table 6).

It is observed from the Table 5 & 6 that

1) The opinion of direct stakeholders regarding SHGs as Empowerment model is more homogeneous (SD= 8.41) then the opinion of direct stakeholders regarding SHGs as Financial Model (SD= 12.23).

2) Apparently, from the descriptive statistics it may be concluded that SHGs are considered more as Empowerment Model (Low Range, High Mean, and high median) then that of Financial Model (High Range, low Mean, and low median).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics on Overall Score on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment model

|  |  |  | Statistic | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Score on Empowerment | Mean |  | 17.050 | .84068 |
|  | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 15.382 |  |
|  |  | Upper Bound | 18.718 |  |
|  | Median |  | 15.000 |  |
|  | Variance |  | 70.674 |  |
|  | Std. Deviation |  | 8.4068 |  |
|  | Minimum |  | -2.00 |  |
|  | Maximum |  | 40.00 |  |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics on Overall Score on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Financial model

| | | | Statistic | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | | -3.760 | 1.223 |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | -6.187 | |
| | | Upper Bound | -1.333 | |
| Overall Score on Financial Model | Median | | -6.000 | |
| | Variance | | 149.578 | |
| | Std. Deviation | | 12.230 | |
| | Minimum | | -30.00 | |
| | Maximum | | 26.00 | |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

### 4.4    Test of Normality

To evaluate the normality of distribution of data on the perceptions of different stakeholders on different variables relating to empowerment and financial model, Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was conducted on the total score on empowerment model and total score on financial model of SHGs separately. Further, this test was conducted to interpret the significance of the opinion of different stakeholders on overall score on perception of stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment and Financial model (Table 7).

Since the p-value is 0.052 for overall score of variables on Empowerment and 0.138 for overall score of variables on financial model respectively, there is no reason to doubt the distribution is normal, so we can safely proceed with the Paired 't' test.

Table 7. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model

| | | Overall Score on Empowerment Model | Overall Score on Financial Model |
|---|---|---|---|
| N | | 100 | 100 |
| Normal Parameters[a,b] | Mean | 17.050 | -3.76 |
| | Std. Deviation | 8.407 | 12.230 |
| Most Extreme Differences | Absolute | .135 | .116 |
| | Positive | .135 | .116 |
| | Negative | -.066 | -.062 |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | | 1.350 | 1.156 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | | .052 | .138 |

a.    Test distribution is Normal.
b.    Calculated from data.

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

### 4.5    Paired t Test

Given the hypothesis and methodology paired t test is applied to test the main hypothesis. Table 8 depicts the Paired Samples Test on perception of stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model wherein the Sig. (2-Tailed) value is 0.000 (which is also known as p value). This value is less than 0.05 and we can conclude that there is statistically significant difference between the mean score of variables on overall Empowerment model and Financial model. Since our Paired Samples Statistics revealed that the Mean of overall score of variables on empowerment was greater than the Mean for overall score of variables on financial model, we can

conclude that participants in the overall score of variables on empowerment were significantly more than the overall score of variables on financial model (Table 7).

Table 8. Paired Samples Test on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model

| | | | Pair 1 Overall Score on Empowerment & Financial Model |
|---|---|---|---|
| Paired Differences | Mean | | 20.81 |
| | Std. Deviation | | 11.019 |
| | Std. Error Mean | | 1.102 |
| | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | Lower | 18.624 |
| | | Upper | 22.997 |
| | t | | 18.886 |
| | df | | 99 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

### 4.6    Paired Correlation test

From the Table 9 of Paired Samples Correlations on perception of stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model, it is observed that there is no correlation between perceptions of stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model.

Table 9. Paired Samples Correlations on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model

| | | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pair 1 | Overall Score on Empowerment & Financial Model | 100 | 0.481 | 0.000 |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

### 4.7    ANOVA Analysis

From the ANOVA output (Table 10) which is the key table because it shows whether the overall $F$ ratio for the ANOVA is significant or not. In case of overall score of variables on Empowerment, $F$ ratio (2.115) is significant ($p = 0.103$) at the 0.05 alpha level. We have accepted the null hypothesis that all four groups' means are statically equal, since $p \geq 0.05$. We conclude that at least one of the group means is not significantly different from the others (or that at least two of the group means are not significantly different from each other).

Table 10. ANOVA on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Empower-ment Model | Between Groups | 433.758 | 3 | 144.586 | 2.115 | 0.103 | |
| | Within Groups | 6562.992 | 96 | 68.364 | | | |
| | | | | | | | Accept |
| | Total | 6996.750 | 99 | | | | |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

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Again, the Table 11 from the ANOVA output relating to overall score on Financial model, which is observed significant. In case of overall score of variables on Financial model, $F$ ratio (5.816) is significant ($p = 0.001$) at the 0.05 alpha level. We conclude that at least one of the group means is significantly different from the others (or that at least two of the group means are significantly different from each other).

Table 11. ANOVA on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial Model | Between Groups | 2277.524 | 3 | 759.175 | 5.816 | 0.001 | Reject |
| | Within Groups | 12530.716 | 96 | 130.528 | | | |
| | Total | 14808.240 | 99 | | | | |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

Further, the stakeholder wise descriptive statistics (Table 12) on overall score on Empowerment Model and overall score on Financial Model depicts that Donor shows highest mean value followed by Promoters on overall score on Empowerment Model while promoter reported highest mean value followed by Financial Institutions on overall score on Financial Model.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment model

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Overall Score on Empowerment Model | Promoter | 34 | 17.118 | 8.123 | 1.393 | 14.283 | 19.952 | 3.00 | 40.00 |
| | Donor | 10 | 23.00 | 10.198 | 3.225 | 15.705 | 30.295 | 7.00 | 40.00 |
| | Financial Institutions | 12 | 15.083 | 5.775 | 1.667 | 11.414 | 18.753 | 3.00 | 23.00 |
| | Group Members | 44 | 16.182 | 8.467 | 1.276 | 13.608 | 18.756 | -2.00 | 40.00 |
| | Total | 100 | 17.050 | 8.407 | .841 | 15.382 | 18.718 | -2.00 | 40.00 |
| Overall Score on Financial Model | Promoter | 34 | .736 | 10.766 | 1.846 | -3.021 | 4.492 | -14.00 | 26.00 |
| | Donor | 10 | .00 | 10.360 | 3.276 | -7.411 | 7.411 | -10.00 | 20.00 |
| | Financial Institutions | 12 | .083 | 9.239 | 2.667 | -5.787 | 5.954 | -13.00 | 14.00 |
| | Group Members | 44 | -9.136 | 12.576 | 1.896 | -12.96 | -5.313 | -30.00 | 20.00 |
| | Total | 100 | -3.76 | 12.23 | 1.223 | -6.187 | -1.333 | -30.00 | 26.00 |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

Since in the overall score of variables on Empowerment, it is statistically proved that the means form all four groups are equal but in case of overall score on Financial model wherein the means form all four groups are not equal hence, we resorted to find out item- wise analysis on variables relating to empowerment and financial model to find out wherein the means are not equal from the Descriptive Statistics tabulated as below Table 13 and Table 14 which are self explanatory. It is observed from the perceptions of direct stakeholders that Financial Institutions does not perceived to consider SHG as Empowerment Model of development as the mean value on the score of perception is only 15.08, Promoter and Group member perceived to consider SHG as Empowerment Model of development as the mean value on the score of perception is17.12 and 16.18. Further, Donor strongly perceived to consider SHG as Empowerment Model of development as the mean value on the score of perception is too high (23). Similarly, it is further observed from the perceptions of direct stakeholders that Group members does not perceived to consider SHG as financial Model of development as the mean value on the score of perception is -9.14, Donor and Financial Institutions perceived to consider SHG as financial Model of development as the mean value on the score of perception is 0.00 and 0.083. Further, Promoter strongly perceived to consider SHG as Financial Model of development as the mean value on the score of perception is too high (0.736).

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment

| EM –ID | Statements relating to empowerment | Minimum Statistic | Maximum Statistic | Mean Statistic | Std. Error | Std. Deviation Statistic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EM -1 | Participation in public protests and campaigning | -2 | 1 | -.72 | .062 | .621 |
| EM -2 | Ability to make judicious purchases | -2 | 1 | -.53 | .080 | .797 |
| EM -3 | Reduction in domestic violence | -2 | 1 | -1.30 | .088 | .882 |
| EM -4 | Community members seek the help of the group | -1 | 2 | .39 | .113 | 1.127 |
| EM -5 | Overcoming the resistance from husband and other members of the family to join the SHG | -2 | 1 | -1.05 | .088 | .880 |
| EM -6 | Increased participation in decision-making within the household to issues that were usually considered outside the domain of woman | -1 | 2 | .67 | .062 | .620 |
| EM -7 | Improved status and increase in respect within the household | -1 | 2 | 1.10 | .056 | .560 |
| EM -8 | Feeling fearless, open and confident | -1 | 1 | .19 | .066 | .662 |
| EM -9 | All group members learn to sign their names and some have joined adult literacy programmes | -1 | 2 | .93 | .076 | .756 |
| EM -10 | Freedom in deciding number of children they can have & adopting family planning measures | -1 | 2 | 1.01 | .083 | .835 |
| EM -11 | More mobile, can move out of the house and the village more frequently | 0 | 2 | .82 | .050 | .500 |
| EM -12 | Talking to the male persons in their village, which they were not confident to do before because of cultural / social reasons | 0 | 2 | .58 | .052 | .516 |
| EM -13 | Actively participating in the decision to send their children to school | 0 | 2 | 1.31 | .049 | .486 |
| EM -14 | Some women can actively engage in the decision of their marriage with the elders in her household i.e. freedom in choosing life partner | -2 | 1 | -1.62 | .060 | .599 |
| EM -15 | Awareness about politics and engaged in political participation by way of voting or directly, by standing as a candidate in the local elections. | -2 | 2 | .43 | .081 | .807 |
| EM -16 | Sense of devotion to work | -2 | 2 | .50 | .080 | .798 |
| EM -17 | Ability to manage productive resources | -1 | 2 | .62 | .072 | .722 |
| EM -18 | Helps the women who lack access to banks / financial services in own right | 0 | 2 | .97 | .046 | .460 |
| EM -19 | Improvements in courage | -1 | 2 | .37 | .071 | .706 |
| EM -20 | Self confidence | -1 | 2 | .51 | .070 | .703 |
| EM -21 | Helps in self reliance/ independence | -1 | 2 | .63 | .063 | .630 |
| EM -22 | Helps in acquisition of skills for income generation. | -1 | 2 | 1.03 | .052 | .521 |
| EM -23 | Ability to understand & solve problems. | -1 | 2 | .84 | .055 | .545 |
| EM -24 | Awareness on health and sanitation | -1 | 1 | .10 | .052 | .522 |
| EM -25 | Awareness on food and nutrition | -1 | 1 | .02 | .123 | 1.231 |
| EM -26 | Awareness about the environment | -1 | 1 | .10 | .052 | .522 |
| EM -27 | Ability to develop alternative economic structures locally. | -1 | 2 | 1.13 | .066 | .661 |
| EM -28 | Increased income. | 1 | 2 | 1.92 | .027 | .273 |
| EM -29 | Participation in democratic institutions | -1 | 2 | .51 | .072 | .718 |
| EM -30 | Expressing opinions freely | -2 | 2 | .33 | .068 | .682 |
| EM -31 | Work outside the village /locality | -1 | 2 | .55 | .058 | .575 |
| EM -32 | Campaign against social evils | -2 | 1 | -.48 | .077 | .772 |
| EM -33 | Members can dispose of their own income according to their choice. | -2 | 2 | .29 | .071 | .715 |
| ISSN -34 | Helps group holds its meetings without help of NGO. | -1 | 2 | .66 | .061 | .607 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EM -35 Helps group to establish the linkages for successful working of the enterprises | -1 | 2 | .65 | .064 | .642 |
| EM -36 Helps group to demand services from NGO/project | -1 | 2 | .61 | .063 | .634 |
| EM -37 Helps group can maintain its record without support from NGO. | -1 | 2 | .60 | .065 | .651 |
| EM -38 Helps group to contact DRDA/ other agency for information and support. | -1 | 2 | .61 | .063 | .634 |
| EM -39 Helps women members to be aware about the rights to equitable share of resources i.e. same time of job, same wage rate etc | -1 | 2 | .87 | .058 | .580 |
| EM -40 Helps women members to be aware about rights to equitable share of inherited property | -2 | 2 | .90 | .054 | .541 |
| Valid N (list wise) | | | 100 | | |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

Further, it is observed from the Table 13 that the direct stakeholders have negative perception on the statements which does not recognise SHGs as Empowerment model viz. Participation in public protests and campaigning (EM 1), Ability to make judicious purchases (EM 2), Reduction in domestic violence (EM 3), Overcoming the resistance from husband and other members of the family to join the SHG (EM 5), Some women can actively engage in the decision of their marriage with the elders in her household i.e. freedom in choosing life partner (EM 14), and Campaign against social evils (EM 32).

Table 14. Descriptive Statistics on Perception of Stakeholders about SHG as Financial Model

| FM -ID | Statements relating to Financial Model | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic |
| FM -1 | Helps in collection of deposits. | 1 | 2 | 1.72 | .045 | .451 |
| FM -2 | Helps in providing loans without security. | 1 | 2 | 1.57 | .050 | .498 |
| FM -3 | Helps in providing loans with security. | -2 | 2 | .57 | .155 | 1.552 |
| FM -4 | Helps in money transfers. | -2 | 2 | -.51 | .108 | 1.078 |
| FM -5 | Helps in cash deposit in Bank at the earliest possible time. | -1 | 2 | 1.12 | .077 | .769 |
| FM -6 | Helps in insurance to group members | -2 | 1 | -.51 | .113 | 1.133 |
| FM -7 | Ability to take financial risk. | -2 | 2 | -.18 | .101 | 1.009 |
| FM -8 | Helps in increases the capacity to spend more. | -1 | 2 | .35 | .074 | .744 |
| FM -9 | Helps in preparation of cash book and other ledger books. | -2 | 1 | -.48 | .102 | 1.020 |
| FM -10 | Helps in acquiring the skill of cash management. | -2 | 1 | -.63 | .099 | .991 |
| FM -11 | Helps in acquiring the skill budgeting. | -2 | 1 | -1.02 | .091 | .910 |
| FM -12 | Helps in special loan products for women from funding agencies. | -2 | 1 | -1.35 | .088 | .880 |
| FM -13 | Helps in pre-loan help with business planning by fund provider to the groups | -2 | 1 | -1.36 | .094 | .938 |
| FM -14 | Helps in special loan guarantee and collateral arrangements for groups. | -2 | 1 | -1.45 | .087 | .869 |
| FM -15 | Helps in launching of financial literacy projects for SHG members by promoters, donors and FI | -2 | 2 | .38 | .085 | .850 |
| FM -16 | Helps in women members having workable knowledge of calculations | 0 | 2 | 1.03 | .026 | .264 |
| FM -17 | Helps women members maintaining records of financial transactions. | -1 | 2 | .75 | .074 | .744 |
| FM -18 | Helps women members understanding of basic banking process. | -1 | 2 | .91 | .047 | .473 |
| FM -19 | Understand and manage commercial rate of interest on loan. | -2 | 1 | -.75 | .073 | .730 |
| FM -20 | Understand and manage investment of SHGs. | -2 | 1 | -.82 | .070 | .702 |
| FM -21 | Understand and manage assets of SHG. | -2 | 1 | -1.01 | .056 | .559 |
| FM -22 | Understand and manage liability of the SHG. | -2 | 2 | -.90 | .081 | .810 |
| FM -23 | Understand and manage financing portfolio of SHG. | -2 | 2 | -1.00 | .085 | .853 |
| FM -24 | Understand and manage compulsory saving requirement. | -1 | 2 | 1.06 | .040 | .397 |
| FM -25 | Understand and manage repayment methods. | -1 | 2 | .87 | .061 | .614 |
| FM -26 | Understand and manage revolving of credit mechanism. | -1 | 2 | .63 | .073 | .734 |
| FM -27 | Understand and manage loan utilization check. | -2 | 2 | .24 | .095 | .955 |
| FM -28 | Understand and manage cash flow projection. | -2 | 1 | -.97 | .074 | .745 |
| FM -29 | Understand and manage return on earning. | -2 | 1 | -1.01 | .075 | .745 |
| FM -30 | Understand and manage operating expenses. | -2 | 1 | -1.01 | .075 | .745 |
| Valid N (list wise) | | | | 100 | | |

Source. Compiled from the Questionnaire

Further, it is observed from the Table 14 that the direct stakeholders have negative perception on the statements

which does not recognise SHGs as Financial model viz. Helps in money transfers (FM 4 ), Helps in insurance to group members (FM 6), Ability to take financial risk (FM 7), Helps in preparation of cash book and other ledger books (FM 9), Helps in acquiring the skill of cash management (FM 10), Helps in acquiring the skill budgeting (FM 11), Helps in special loan products for women from funding agencies (FM 12), Helps in pre-loan help with business planning by fund provider to the groups (FM 13),  Helps in special loan guarantee and collateral arrangements for groups (FM 14), Understand and manage commercial rate of interest on loan (FM 19), Understand and manage investment of SHGs Understand and manage investment of SHGs (FM 20), Understand and manage assets of SHG (FM 21), Understand and manage liability of the SHG (FM 22), Understand and manage financing portfolio of SHG (FM 23),   Understand and manage cash flow projection (FM 28), Understand and manage return on earning (FM 29) and Understand and manage operating expenses (FM 30).

From the above Tables 13 and 14 of descriptive statistics on item wise perception of stakeholders about SHG as empowerment model, it is observed that out of 40 elements of empowerment, in six (6) elements where mean value is negative while in 34 elements whose mean value is positive. Again, in case of descriptive statistics on item wise perception of stakeholders about SHG as financial model, it is observed that out of 30 elements of empowerment, in seventeen (17) elements where mean value is negative while in thirteen (13) elements whose mean value is positive.

## 5.       Conclusion

It is worth mentioning here that SHGs emerge as an important strategy for empowering women, alleviating poverty and alternative credit source to the poor. They are an effective strategy for poverty alleviation, women development and social empowerment. NABARD views the SHG as essentially a financial model facilitating a supplementary credit delivery mechanism for poor families that had not been reached by the banking system.

A lot of literature are found on the role of SHGs in empowering women and also have cross world evidences that SHGs are helpful in reducing poverty. Further, a few studies also supported that the SHG is considered as financial model too and ensures low cost means of rural lending in the absence of formal financial institutions.

It is observed from study that there is no correlation between perceptions of stakeholders about SHG as Empowerment & Financial model. Further, from the Paired 't' Test, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of variables on overall Empowerment model and Financial model. Since our Paired Samples Statistics revealed that the Mean of overall score of variables on empowerment was greater than the Mean for overall score of variables on financial model, we can conclude that participants in the overall score of variables on empowerment were significantly more than the overall score of variables on financial model.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on overall score of variables on empowerment and financial model is used to determine whether there are any significant differences between the means of two or more independent (unrelated) groups.  From the ANOVA test on overall score of variables on empowerment model, we conclude that at least one of the group means is significantly different from the others (or that at least two of the group means are significantly different from each other). Further, from the ANOVA test on overall score of variables on financial model, we conclude that at least one of the group means is significantly different from the others.

## 6.       Generalisation of Research Findings

In traditional quantitative social research the problem of generalisation is discussed under the concept of external validity (of experimental studies) wherein would the same result be found under a different set of circumstances are analysed (Sarafino, 2005). Again, in quantitative research, generalisability is considered a major criterion for evaluating the quality of a study (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Polit & Beck, 2008). A familiar criticism of qualitative methodology questions the value of its dependence on small samples which is believed to render it incapable of generalising conclusions (Hamel et al., 1993; Yin, 1984, 1993, 1994). Further, Radhakrishna & Doamekpor, 2008 in their article "Strategies for Generalising Findings in Survey Research' argued that random sample which somewhat limits the external validity of the study because of non response of respondents. Indeed, generalisation represents an active process of reflection (Greenwood & Levin, 2000). Firestone, 1993 developed a typology depicting three models of generalisability that provides a useful framework for considering generalisations in quantitative and qualitative studies viz. Statistical generalisation, analytic generalisation and case-to-case

translation (transferability). The present study featured statistical generalization, since it is based on random sampling which give every member of the population an equal chance to be included in the study with a determinable probability of selection (Polit, 2010). The present study is considered to be have general acceptability as a whole to the present socio-economic set up of the study area since the sample was selected randomly from the population and there were a low proportion of refusals and dropouts i.e. below 30% (Will, 1999). Further, the present study also satisfy the third model of generalisability i.e. case-to-case translation or reader generalisability (Misco, 2007) or transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), since similar finding are also observed by other researchers in different contexts (external validity/ proximal similarity). Some of the findings of the present study virtually support earlier studies. Thus, the present finding is of profound implications since attitudes & perceptions guide behaviour toward valued goals and away from aversive events (Baron and Byrne, 1993). In fact, the present study is totally a new dimension of SHGs as empowerment or Financial model of development (though is it extension of earlier works of Sa-Dhan, 2003 on some unresolved issues) hence justification regarding generalisation of present finding needs further research and future investigation in the same subject area and in the same construct. Moreover, the lack of analytic generalisation of the present study may be considered as one of the limitation of the study.

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