

## **Role of Self-Help groups in supporting Agriculture in India: An Empirical Study**

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### **Abstract**

In India, self-help groups (SHGs) have become a crucial forum for advancing and supporting agriculture. These groups are typically made up of people from rural areas who gather together to share resources and knowledge in order to accomplish shared objectives. The main goal of SHGs in agriculture is to increase the income and productivity of small and marginal farmers, who make up the bulk of Indian farmers. SHGs serve as a link between farmers and other governmental and non-governmental groups that offer farmers technical and financial support. They support farmers in obtaining loans, knowledge about cutting-edge farming methods, and markets for their produce. SHGs help farmers adopt new technology and farming techniques by giving them a forum to exchange experiences and learn from one another. Initiatives have been essential in empowering rural communities and giving farmers sustainable means of subsistence. Overall, SHGs have played a critical role in assisting India's agriculture sector in addressing issues encountered by small and marginal farmers and advancing inclusive and sustainable development in rural areas. The sample size of the study was 171 respondents. The data analysis was performed with the help of t-test and mean. The sample size of the study was 171 respondents. The data analysis was performed with the help of t-test and mean.

**Keywords:** *Self-help groups (SHGs), Agriculture Rural communities, Small and marginal farmers, Sustainable development.*

### **Introduction**

Self-help groups (SHGs) have shown to be successful in enhancing communication between grower organizations and agricultural research. It was revealed that networks developed by SHGs played a crucial role in promoting contact between farmers and research institutes. As a result, farmers had access to current and pertinent knowledge on farming techniques and new technologies, which they could then use on their own farms. So, it has been determined that the

usage of networks is a crucial element in increasing the productivity and revenue of small and marginal farmers in India (Gianatti and Carmody 2007).

By giving farmers a place to exchange their knowledge and experiences, SHG organizations have the potential to be crucial in advancing sustainable agriculture. Effective farmer groups can aid in determining the best agricultural techniques for their region, climate, and soil type as well as resolving common issues experienced by farmers. The ability to share knowledge among farmers is one of the main advantages of farmer groups. Farmers can choose the best farming techniques for their location by combining their knowledge and experience. For small and marginal farmers who might not have access to knowledge on contemporary farming practices, this can be especially helpful. Farmer organizations can aid in the information transfer between generations, preserving traditional farming methods (Kilpatrick et al. 2003).

Self-help groups (SHGs) have become a crucial forum for advancing sustainable agriculture in India, particularly among small and marginal farmers. SHGs normally consist of a collection of people who voluntarily band together to form a savings and credit organization. These organizations have, however, broadened the scope of their operations to cover a variety of social and economic endeavors, including agricultural development. The entrepreneurial spirit of individual farmers and their capacity to collaborate to achieve a shared objective are two factors that contribute to the success of SHGs in promoting sustainable agriculture. Farmers take the initiative in determining their requirements and coming up with solutions, which is encouraged by SHGs as a bottom-up approach to agricultural development. Because farmers are actively involved in the development and implementation of farming practices, this strategy is particularly effective at promoting sustainable agriculture (Lal and Clemant 2005).

### **Literature Review:**

Self-help groups (SHGs) have gained popularity in India as a means of encouraging rural development and reducing poverty. By giving access to capital, inputs, and market connections, SHGs in agriculture have significantly aided smallholder farmers, particularly women. In several regions of India, SHGs have supported agriculture in a good way, according to Das et al. (2001).

SHGs have improved smallholder farmers' access to markets and knowledge, as well as their income and productivity.

SHGs have developed as a powerful platform for spreading such services, which are essential for educating farmers on agricultural knowledge and technologies. SHGs have the benefit of being community-based, which makes them more accessible to farmers, especially in distant locations, as Black (2000) points out. SHGs have organised training and awareness programmes for farmers, which have aided in enhancing their agricultural knowledge and abilities. Due to the use of more effective farming techniques and technologies, yields and incomes have increased.

Providing financing to farmers who might not otherwise have access to official financial institutions has been one of the key advantages of SHGs in agriculture. SHGs combine their funds and lend to their members with a low interest rate. Dalal-Clayton et al. (2003) claim that SHGs have been effective in lowering farmers' reliance on moneylenders and other unofficial sources of credit. As a result, farmers have been able to invest in their operations, buy inputs, and enhance their standard of living.

Insights into the possible effects of SHGs on agriculture in India can be gained from Lyon's (2003) study on community groups and livelihood in isolated rural parts of Ghana. According to Lyon, community groups, which are crucial for giving assistance and resources for livelihood activities, enable small-scale farmers in remote parts of Ghana to sustain collective action. It was discovered that these organisations foster innovation and knowledge sharing while also giving farmers access to new markets and tools. The effect of self-help groups (SHGs) on long-term agricultural livelihoods in the Indian state of Orissa was the subject of a research by Sahoo and Bhatt in 2007. By encouraging sustainable agricultural practises, enhancing crop output, and facilitating access to loans and marketing assistance, the study revealed that SHGs had a favourable effect on farmers' livelihoods. By facilitating group learning and training initiatives, the authors noticed that SHGs had a major impact on farmers' ability to adopt new methods of farming.

To maintain SHGs' long-term viability and efficiency in supporting rural finance in India, Prabakaran and Venkatachalam (2008) underlined the need for more institutional assistance. They

recommended collaborating with government organizations, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders to give SHGs training, capacity building, and financial support, especially in the fields of marketing, product development, and value chain management. In order to improve the flow of credit to farmers and other rural households, the authors also emphasised the significance of creating solid connections between SHGs and official financial institutions, such as banks and credit cooperatives.

According to Roy's (2014) research, SHGs were crucial in empowering women farmers by increasing their access to resources, strengthening their ability to make decisions, and advancing gender equality. According to the author, SHGs improved women's access to loans and other resources as well as their participation in agricultural decision-making. The study discovered that women's participation in SHGs improved their social and economic status, which in turn had a favorable effect on the region's overall agricultural sustainability.

In Mann's 2005 study, the focus is on the contribution of self-help groups (SHGs) to the empowerment of rural women in Punjab, India. Despite the fact that the study does not specifically address how SHGs promote agriculture, it does underline the critical role that SHGs may play in fostering sustainable livelihoods in rural regions. SHGs can give women a platform to access resources and information as well as create social networks and support networks. This can encourage sustainable livelihoods and provide women the power to participate in activities that generate cash, like farming. SHGs can also help with knowledge-sharing and training initiatives that will make it easier for women farmers to embrace sustainable farming methods.

Self-help groups (SHGs) have been shown to be effective in promoting sustainable agricultural practises in Tamil Nadu, India, according to research by Viji and Dharmaraj from 2016. By training, demonstration, and information sharing, the study indicated that SHGs significantly contributed to improving farmers' capacity to adopt sustainable farming techniques. According to the authors, SHGs gave farmers a forum to exchange experiences and learn from one another, which helped them gain a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of sustainable agriculture. For SHGs to be effective and sustainable in aiding small-scale farmers over the long term, Patil and Shivani (2018) advised that the government and other stakeholders should give

them more institutional support. For SHG members, they underlined the necessity for training and capacity-building initiatives, notably in the fields of marketing, product development, and value chain management. To ensure the flow of credit and other financial services to small-scale farmers, the authors also emphasised the significance of forging connections between SHGs and official institutions like banks and credit cooperatives.

## Objectives

1. To explore the role of Self-help group.
2. To ascertain how Self-help group support Indian Agriculture.

## Methodology

Nature of study is empirical. 171 participants were included in study. Questionnaire was structured in nature to collect data. To ascertain result of Mean and t-test applied. The researcher had collected the primary data through random sampling method and was analysed by statistical tool called mean.

## Demographic Result

This research work surveyed participants from agricultural sector, participants from rural and semi urban areas of India, from different educational level, and background.

## Findings

**Table1. Role of Self-help group in supporting Indian Agriculture**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Statement of Survey</b>	<b>Mean Values</b>	<b>T-Values</b>	<b>Significance.</b>
1.	SHG is a crucial forum for advancing and supporting agriculture	4.21	16.101	0.000
2.	SHG is successful in enhancing communication and agricultural research	4.13	15.132	0.000

3.	SHG is beneficial for advancing sustainable agriculture in India	4.27	17.277	0.000
4.	SHG has made huge contribution towards empowerment of rural women in Agriculture sector	4.29	17.195	0.000
5.	SHG provides financial, technical, and social support to Agricultural sector	4.10	14.903	0.000
6.	The goal of SHG is to increase the income and productivity of small and marginal farmers	4.11	14.785	0.000
7.	SHG helps in encouraging rural development and reducing poverty	4.02	13.715	0.000
8.	SHGs have organized training and awareness programmes for farmers	3.13	1.756	0.040
9.	SHGs improved women's access to loans and other resources as their participation in decision-making	3.17	2.268	0.012
10.	SHGs gave farmers a platform to exchange experiences and learn from one another	4.17	15.885	0.000

Table 1 shows mean values of the “Role of Self-help group in supporting Indian Agriculture” the first statements of T-test is SHG is a crucial forum for advancing and supporting agriculture (mean 4.21), SHG is successful in enhancing communication and agricultural research (mean 4.13), SHG is beneficial for advancing sustainable agriculture in India (mean 4.27), SHG has made huge contribution towards empowerment of rural women in Agriculture sector (mean 4.29), SHG provides financial, technical, and social support to Agricultural sector (mean 4.10), The goal of SHG is to increase the income and productivity of small and marginal farmers (mean 4.11). SHG helps in encouraging rural development and reducing poverty (mean 4.02), SHGs have organized training and awareness programs for farmers (mean 3.13), SHGs improved women's access to loans and other resources as their participation in decision-making (mean 3.17), SHGs gave farmers a platform to exchange experiences and learn from one another (mean 4.17). T-value of survey statements with regards to Role of Self-help group in supporting Indian Agriculture are significant as t-value of statement is positively significant as the value is less than 0.05.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, self-help groups (SHGs) serve small-scale farmers in India's agriculture by offering them financial, technical, and social support. SHGs have shown to be a successful strategy for advancing sustainable agricultural practices, expanding rural families' access to credit and other financial services, and enhancing their own well-being. In addition to their positive effects on the general social and economic development of rural communities, the research reviewed emphasizes the significance of SHGs in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. However, a number of criteria, such as institutional support, training, capacity building, connections with formal financial institutions and other stakeholders, and sustainability and effectiveness of SHGs, are important. To maintain SHGs' long-term viability and efficiency in assisting agriculture and rural development in India, it is crucial to increase institutional support for them, notably in the areas of training, capacity building, and financial assistance. Also, SHGs must be given the authority to assume leadership positions in their communities, including the organisation, management, and planning of agricultural projects and other development programmes. Increased engagement in decision-making processes, initiatives to enhance capacity, and the development of solid relationships with other stakeholders can all help with this. SHGs in India have a huge potential to help the growth of rural communities and sustainable agriculture. Hence, in order to maintain their long-term sustainability and efficacy, it is vital to acknowledge their work and offer the required institutional support. By doing this, we can build a society that is more diverse and egalitarian, one in which rural households and small-scale farmers may prosper and advance the nation as a whole. T-value of every statement in the context of Role of Self-help group in supporting Indian Agriculture is significant because t-value statements are found to be positive and significance value also less than 0.05.

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