

# **Self-Help Group and Rural Poverty**

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The majority of poor are living in rural India and the women are its main component. Poverty has taken the shape of 'feminization of poverty' in the country. With this awareness, the planning Commission has focused on women empowerment issues in the Ninth and Tenth plans. To wage a direct war against poverty, the Government has introduced 'Self-Help Group' programme as an innovative and dynamic anti-poverty Programme. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is the main initiator of 'Self-Help Group' (SHG) movement started from 1986-87 in India. Now the various Departments of both Central and State Governments, nationalized commercial banks, regional rural banks, co-operative banks and societies and non - Governmental organizations have joined the SHG movement as promoters. SHG are the best facilitators of rural employment and income generation, income distribution and empowerment of rural women.