



**WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND MICRO-FINANCE GROUPS IN CAMBODIA
KHAM PHANG FLOATING VILLAGE**

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KEYWORDS :

The word self-help groups are coined by Khan at Bangladesh. These SHGS are thrift groups and useful for family needs. Microfinance is a powerful tool to fight poverty and transform lives. When poor people have access to financial services, they can earn more, build their assets, and cushion themselves against external shocks. Poor households use microfinance to move from everyday survival to planning for the future: they invest in better nutrition, housing, health, and education. Microfinance can also serve as a means to empowerment. Cambodia is famous for Angkor Wat, Vishnu temple and daily number of pilgrims visit temple and they visit floating villages also.

Microfinance in Cambodia

According to the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC), ninety-three microfinance programs were operating in Cambodia as of October 2003, including NGOs, licensed microfinance institutions (MFIs), and banks with microfinance services. These programs provide credit, savings and other financial services to some 374,000 families. Most microfinance programs charge interest rates of between three and four per cent, though some NGO programs charge less. 3 Outstanding loans total US\$56.9 million as of October 2003 (NBC, 2003). The sector has grown very rapidly in the past decade till now in 2022-2023.

Rounding out the leaders is Aleda Bank, which has recently converted to commercial bank status. It is the largest microfinance provider in Cambodia, with 104,644 microfinance clients and a portfolio valued at \$28.4 million. Overall, there has been tremendous growth in microfinance services in recent years, but the vast majority is accounted for by a few institutions.

Aleda has recently garnered international attention for its conversion from NGO to commercial bank, and its leading position within the Cambodian microfinance sector. However, many programs in Cambodia require or strongly encourage borrowers to use loan funds for microenterprise development. land, livestock, fishing nets, small boats farm equipment, housing materials, Small group formation. With help from local NGOs, women are encouraged to form small groups of 15-20 members. Groups are responsible for setting their own meeting rules and electing their own officers. In addition, WORTH recommends that each woman pay a nominal program entrance fee and book fees that can be used to increase the group's savings fund.

This study is primary Anthropological study at Siem Reap, near Cambodia in the floating village named " khamphang". We selected 75 women SHGS for the study using random sampling method. We collected data collection in the month of November and December 2022. The village is in the water and houses are made up with pine wood trees which sustain in water. In front of houses a small boat is there as we park bicycle , scooters and car. The women and 10 to 14 years children ride the boat for sake of customers and earned money for their livelihood. Men catch fish and sell in the markets. The women SHGS are excellent in repaying the loan. In the capital city Phnom penh Cambodia microfinance are well developed.

Objectives

1. to study about the SHGS in floating village
2. to provide microfinance loans to the eligible SHGS
3. to elicit the problems of monitoring banking regarding SHGS
4. to discuss the problems facing in the floating village.

Evolution Stages of Micro-finance Groups

Every Self-help group usually goes through 3 stages of evolution stated below:

1. Formation of group
2. Funding or Formation of Capital
3. Development of required skills to boost income generation for the group

Many self-help groups are formed with the assistance of Self-help to promote agencies.

| S. NO | Name of the groups | Type of stage | Active members and eligible for loan | Defaulters |
|-------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Savithrie sung | 3 | 20 | Nil |
| 2 | Sakunthailai sung | 3 | 20 | Nil |
| 3 | Sitai sung | 2 | 18 | 2 |
| 4 | Ream group | 2 | 12 | 3 |
| | Total =75 | | 70 | 5 |

According to the above table there are four groups in the Kham Phang floating village the first two groups Savitrai and Sakuntalai are at third stage according to above mentioned stage division. The last two groups Sitai and Ream are at second stage . In the first two groups Savitrai and Sakuntalai each consists of 20 members all are active regular and eligible for loan and no defaulters. In the last two groups Sitai 18 members are active regular and eligible for loan and two members are defaulters where as in the last ream group 12 members are active regular and eligible for loan and three members are defaulters. Out of 75 women, 70 are regular and remaining 5 are defaulters. Therefore micro-finance is running 90 per cent successfully.

Functions of Micro-finance Groups

- They try to build the functional capacity of poor and marginalised sections of society in the domain of employment and income-generating activities. The leaders provide loans for the correct payment of SHGS and educate the defaulters. Sometimes they remove.
- They offer collateral-free loans to sections of people that generally find it hard to get loans from banks.
- They also resolve conflicts via mutual discussions and collective leadership.
- They are an important source of microfinance services to the poor.
- They act as a go-through for formal banking services to reach the poor, especially in rural areas.
- They also encourage the habit of saving among the poor. The money helps for family needs, marriage purpose, education wise, health wise and house building wise.

Advantages of Micro-finance Groups

- Alternate source of livelihood/employment – SHGS help people earn their livelihood by providing vocational

training, and also help improve their existing source of livelihood by offering tools, like fishing nets, baskets and small boats because it is a floating village.

- Financial Inclusion – SHGs incentivise banks to lend to poor and marginalised sections of society because of the assurance of returns.
- Voice to marginalised – SHGs have given a voice to the otherwise underrepresented and voiceless sections of society.
- Social cooperation – SHGs help eradicate many social ills such as dowry, alcoholism, early marriage, etc.
- Gender Equality – By empowering women SHGs help steer the nation towards true gender equality.
- Health and house hygiene – Financial inclusion due to SHGs has led to better family planning, reduced rates of child mortality, enhanced maternal health and also helped people fight diseases better by way of better nutrition, healthcare facilities and housing.
- Banking literacy – SHGs encourage people to save and promote banking literacy among the rural segment.

Problems of Micro-finance Groups

1. Kham phang floating village is in water the livelihood is difficult
2. During rainy season fishing is difficult and income is low
3. They have to keep the money aside for repayment of the loan during the market session
4. Sustainability and the quality of operations of such groups have been questionable.
5. There is a need for monitoring cells to be established for SHGs across the country.

CONCLUSION

The temple Angkor Vat visits the floating village in the boats for Sun rise and Sun sett watching. The boat riders earned money for their livelihood besides fishing. To meet their basic needs the micro-finance loan empowers the women for their family expenditure, children education, marriage, house building and health care. The micro-finance groups at floating village are running 90 per cent successfully even the village floats in water.

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