

International Journal of Agriculture Extension and Social Development

Volume 9; Issue 1; January 2026; Page No. 83-86

Received: 11-10-2025
Accepted: 16-11-2025

Indexed Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal

Constraints faced by SHG members and government functionaries under DAY-NRLM: A Garrett ranking approach

¹Pooja Goswami and ²Arpita Sharma Kandpal

¹Ph.D Research Scholar, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pant Nagar, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand, India

²Assistant Professor, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pant Nagar, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand, India

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26180723.2026.v9.i1b.2881>

Corresponding Author: Pooja Goswami

Abstract

Under the framework of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY–NRLM), SHGs serve as an essential platform that enables women’s financial inclusion, livelihood security and participation in collective decision-making. Despite their widespread coverage, SHGs continue to face several constraints that affect their effective functioning and hinder their socio-economic advancement. The present study was conducted to identify and rank the major constraints faced by both SHG members and implementing officials under the DAY–NRLM. A sample of 162 SHG members was selected using a multistage random sampling method and 42 government officials were selected using a quota sampling method, from Pauri Garhwal and Udham Singh Nagar districts of Uttarakhand state. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule and analyzed using the Garrett Ranking Technique. The findings revealed that, among SHG members the most severe constraints were ‘inadequate financial literacy’, ‘lack of proper knowledge about programme’ and lack of time to participate in activities. Government functionaries reported ‘difficulty in accessing remote areas’, ‘shortage of staff’ and ‘reluctant participation of rural women’ as the major implementation challenges. The study highlights the need for strengthening financial literacy initiatives, improving human resource deployment, and enhancing community mobilization to ensure sustainable functioning of SHGs under DAY–NRLM.

Keywords: Challenges, livelihood activities, rural women, functionaries

1. Introduction

Rural women in India remain one of the most disadvantaged groups in society despite their major contribution to agriculture and rural livelihood. Challenges such as limited access to credit, education and health care adversely affect their socio-economic status, which was further worsened by global food and economic crises. Globally, the disparity in the ratio of men to women is not significant, but women have less authority, are marginalized and generally face difficulty in accessing credit in the formal sector due to the demand for high levels of collateral (Sarumathi and Mohan, 2012) [13]. In addition, women have no or little access to resources and political power.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have emerged as a crucial tool for women's empowerment, poverty alleviation, and financial inclusion, mainly in rural India (Neelam, 2025) [11]. SHGs help individuals in accessing credit, start income generating activities, improve their standards of living, and become more active participants in decision-making processes. The core of the SHG model lies in its ability to empower marginalized communities, especially women, to take charge of their own progress (Gurumoorthy, 2000) [6]. Further, women's self-help groups in India represent an intervention which is aligned with theoretical perspectives

on competence growth and broader policy objectives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, empowering rural women will benefit not just individuals, families and rural communities, but also the overall economic productivity (Duflo, 2012 and Gautam, 2018) [3, 5]. There has been a substantial increase in the implementation of programmes that aim to enhance the livelihoods of rural people by organizing them into groups, emphasizing women towards achieving women empowerment (Mohapatra and Jha, 2025) [8]. Recognizing the potential of SHGs, the Government of India launched Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) to promote self-employment in rural areas through SHG formation. SGSY was restructured as a national movement in 2011 and named National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), which has since evolved into the world's largest poverty alleviation programme (Sharma *et al.*, 2009; Senthilkumar *et al.*, 2020) [15, 14]. NRLM facilitated access to the reliable, affordable and cost-effective financial services to the poor like financial literacy, credit, insurance, bank account, savings, remittance, pension and counseling on various financial services. Over the years, SHGs under NRLM have expanded their activities into various sectors such as agriculture, dairy farming, handicrafts, and small scale manufacturing. While the SHG

model has been successful in improving rural livelihoods, it faces several challenges that hinder its long-term sustainability and effectiveness. These challenges range from financial mismanagement, poor market access, monitoring and evaluation issues to lack of adequate training and capacity building (Mary *et al.* 2015) ^[9]. The present study explores the problems faced by SHG members and concerned government functionaries, and their impact on rural development, particularly in the context of the state of Uttarakhand.

The main objectives of the study were

1. To identify and rank the constraints faced by the SHG beneficiaries under DAY-NRLM.
2. To identify and rank the various constraints faced by the government officials while implementing DAY-NRLM.

2. Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in the year 2024-2025 at Pauri and Udham Singh Nagar districts of Uttarakhand state. Pauri district consists of 15 community development blocks and Udham Singh Nagar district consists of 7 community development blocks respectively. Subsequently, Dugadda and Thalissain block from Pauri and Sitarganj and Kiccha block from Udham Singh Nagar were selected purposively based on the highest number of self-help group members working under the national rural livelihood mission in the areas. The respondents were selected through a multistage random sampling technique from the 8 selected gram panchayats. A sample of 162 SHG members was selected from 16 SHGs that have been successfully functioning for at least the last three years in the selected villages. Further, 42 government officials were selected through a quota sampling method. Quota sampling was considered suitable as the population of officials was heterogeneous and unevenly distributed across different institutional categories, making probability sampling unfeasible. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule and a comparative analysis of constraints was done using the Garrett Ranking Technique. Garrett ranking technique was applied as it is suitable for prioritizing qualitative constraints perceived by respondents. Garrett scores were used to determine the most important constraints perceived by rural Women and government officials. The formula for per cent position suggested by Garrett (1981) ^[4] is:

$$\text{Percent position} = 100 (\text{Rij} - 0.5) / \text{Nj}$$

Where,

Rij = Rank given for the ith variable by jth respondents

Nj = Number of variables ranked by the jth respondents

3. Results and Discussion

Constraints faced by SHG members

Table 1 highlights the various constraints faced by women beneficiaries under NRLM along with their ranks. The analysis reveals that '*inadequate financial literacy*' emerged as the leading constraint with the highest mean score of 68.54. This indicates that limited understanding of financial management, budgeting, and credit utilization hampers the effective participation of women in livelihood activities.

The second major constraint identified was the 'lack of proper knowledge about the programme' (mean score 65.5), as many beneficiaries were not completely aware of the objectives, benefits, and processes involved in NRLM initiatives. Further, 'Lack of time to participate in activities' ranked as third major constraint (mean score 60.98). This could be because women's household responsibilities restrict their active involvement in programme-related activities. Findings of the present study are in line with the study of Dhanya, (2004) ^[2] and Shilpa *et al.*, (2021) ^[16] who reported that lack of accounting skills, unskilled group members and difficulty in managing time to spare for SHG activities as the major constraints faced by them. The other prominent constraints faced by women SHG members are 'lack of official cooperation' (mean score 57.92), 'difficulty in loan repayment' (53.37), and 'inadequate training facilities' (51.29), which were ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth, respectively. 'Lack of cooperation among SHG members' was also observed as a reasonable constraint (Mean score 49.75). On the other hand, delay in loan processing and disbursal of funds (38.83), lack of market linkages (34.02), and lack of family support and cooperation (29.39) were ranked relatively lower, indicating that although these challenges exist, they are comparatively less severe than others. Dhanya and Purushothaman ^[9] who found that lack of accounting skill, unskilled group members

Table 1: Constraints faced by SHG women beneficiaries based on Garrett Mean Score

S. No.	Constraints	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Inadequate financial literacy	68.54	I
2.	Lack of proper knowledge about programme	65.5	II
3.	Lack of time to participate in activities	60.98	III
4.	Lack of official's cooperation	57.92	IV
5.	Difficulty in repayment of loan	53.37	V
6.	Inadequate training facilities	51.29	VI
7.	Lack of cooperation among members of SHG	49.75	VII
8.	Delay in processing loan application and disbursal of funds	38.83	VIII
9.	Lack of market linkages	34.02	IX
10.	Lack of Support and cooperation from family	29.39	X

Constraints faced by Government functionaries

The results presented in Table 2 indicated that 'difficulty in accessing remote areas' emerged as the major constraint for government functionaries working under NRLM and ranked as first, with the highest mean score of 70.09. The finding highlights the logistical and geographical challenges faced by the functionaries in reaching distant and hilly regions for implementation of the program. Behura and Patra (2025) ^[1] documented similar challenges in their study, emphasizing that capacity building in underdeveloped rural settings involves overcoming geographical isolation and limited connectivity, which hinder effective program implementation. The 'shortage of staff' was identified as the second major constraint with mean score 64.42, indicating the excessive workload and limited human resources available for effective implementation. Pahwa (2017) ^[12] reported similar observations that shortage of key personnel such as community service providers, district-level trainers, and coordinators were among the major program

implementation challenges. The ‘low participation of rural women’ (mean score 56.78) and ‘lack of inter-agency coordination’ (mean score 56.71) were ranked third and fourth respectively, signifying the need for community mobilization and improved convergence. Similar results are reflected in the findings of a large-scale impact evaluation study by Kochar et al. (2020) ^[7], revealing that SHG membership was predominantly restricted to middle-income women, with extremely poor women unable to join due to financial constraints and affluent women perceiving no need to participate. Similarly, the coordination gap identified in the present study was confirmed by the recent policy analysis by Mukherjee (2025) ^[10].

Another constraint like ‘Poor infrastructure’ with mean score of 56.59 was ranked as fifth, highlighting the lack of office space, and limited transportation, and communication

facilities. Other constraints included ‘poor integration of related programs’ (mean score 53.11) ranked at sixth, ‘inadequate financial resources’ (mean score 40.45) ranked as seventh, and ‘lack of training and capacity-building for staff’ (mean score 39.26) ranked as eighth, pointing at institutional level shortcomings. ‘Issues in tracking and reporting program outcomes’ (mean score 35.04) and ‘delay in fund disbursement’ (mean score 32.5) were ranked ninth and tenth respectively, indicating that these challenges are relatively less severe compared to others. Overall, the results recommend that increasing and strengthening human resources, improving inter-department coordination, upgrading infrastructure, and ensuring timely fund flow are thus, essential to enhance the efficiency and performance of NRLM functionaries.

Table 2: Constraints faced by Government functionaries based on Garrett Mean Score

S. No.	Constraints	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Difficulty in accessing remote areas	70.09	I
2.	Shortage of staff	64.42	II
3.	Reluctant participation of rural women	56.78	III
4.	Lack of inter- agency coordination	56.71	IV
5.	Poor Infrastructure	56.59	V
6.	Poor integration of related programs	53.11	VI
7.	Inadequate financial resources	40.45	VII
8.	Lack of training and capacity-building for staff	39.26	VIII
9.	Issues in tracking and reporting program outcomes	35.04	IX
10.	Delay in fund disbursement	32.5	X

4. Conclusion

The current study systematically identified and ranked the major challenges faced by both SHG members and the government functionaries responsible for implementing DAY-NRLM. The use of Garrett Ranking Technique enabled a clear prioritization of the problems that people at the grassroots level as well as administrative and operational levels face and ranked them in order of importance. The most critical problems for SHG members were, ‘inadequate financial literacy’, ‘lack of proper knowledge about programme’ and lack of time to participate in activities. The results highlight that despite significant outreach of DAY-NRLM, there are still personal barriers that make it harder for SHGs to empower themselves. Similarly, the identification of major challenges faced by NRLM program officials revealed several program execution-related constraints. The highest ranked constraints included difficulty in accessing remote areas, shortage of staff and reluctant participation of rural women. These issues underline the administrative bottlenecks that weaken programme delivery and restrict the effective facilitation of SHGs. Thus, strengthening financial literacy training, improving staff deployment in remote areas, and enhancing community mobilization may significantly improve the effectiveness of SHGs under DAY-NRLM

References

- Behura BP, Patra K. Capacity building and economic development of beneficiaries: A study of National Rural Livelihoods Mission in Odisha. *Eur Econ Lett.* 2025;15(3):50-59.
- Dhanya B. Assessing the role of self-help groups in ensuring conservation-linked livelihoods in MM Hills, Karnataka. Kerala: Mahatma Gandhi University; 2004.
- Duflo E. Women empowerment and economic development. *J Econ Lit.* 2012;50(4):1051-1079.
- Garrett HE. Statistics in psychology and education. Mumbai: Vakils, Feffer and Simons Ltd.; 1981.
- Gautam S. Constraints analysis regarding smooth functioning of women self-help groups in Akbarpur block of Kanpur Dehat district, Uttar Pradesh. Kumarganj, Ayodhya (UP): Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture and Technology; 2018.
- Gurumoorthy TR. Self-help groups empower rural women. *Kurukshetra.* 2000;48(5):36-40.
- Kochar A, Barooah B, Jain C, Singh G, Closepet N, Narayanan R, et al. Impact evaluation of the National Rural Livelihoods Project. Impact Evaluation Report No. 128. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie); 2020. DOI:10.23846/NRLMIE128.
- Mahato T, Jha KM. Does participation in self-help groups affect the political empowerment of tribal women? Evidence from India. *Int J Soc Econ.* 2025;52(3):359-374.
- Mary MVKJ, Ravichandran V, Sujeetha TN. Income generation pattern of self-help group members. *J Ext Educ.* 2015;27(1):5382-5386.
- Mukherjee S. DAY-NRLM: Transforming rural livelihoods through women’s empowerment. New Delhi: IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute; 2025.
- Neelam, Awasthi S. Empowering women through self-help groups: A case study of Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. *Int J Environ Sci.* 2025;11(5S):634-641.

12. Pahwa P. Rural development programmes: Implementation challenges and solutions. New Delhi: Ideas India; 2017.
13. Sarumathi S, Mohan K. Role of microfinance in women's empowerment: An empirical study in Pondicherry region rural SHGs. *J Manag Sci.* 2011;1(1):1-10.
14. Senthilkumar CB, Arumugam A, Dharmaraj BC, Indhumathi BC, Selvam CV, Kandeepan E. A study on women empowerment through self-help groups with special reference to Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu. *Int J Crit Rev.* 2020;7(6):355-358.
15. Sharma N, Wason M, Singh P, Padaria RN, Sangeetha V, Kumar N. Effectiveness of SHGs in improving livelihood security and gender empowerment. *Econ Aff.* 2009;59:74-78.
16. Shilpa B, Bhople PP, Sainath B. Constraints faced and suggestions received by self-help group members of Akola district, Maharashtra. *Asian J Agric Ext Econ Sociol.* 2021;39(4):155-158.