

# Mapping the Intellectual Landscape of Self-Help Groups and Financial Inclusion: A Bibliometric and Thematic Study

Chaithra N<sup>\*</sup> and S. Baskaran<sup>\*\*</sup>

*Department of MBA*

*Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Technology, Bangalore, India*

**Abstract:** Thematic content analysis and macro-bibliometrics are applied in this article to trace the intellectual history of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and financial inclusion. The topic evolution has been followed over the past 30 years by examining trends in publications, co-authorship, citation, and clusters of themes in 467 articles published by Scopus-indexed journals between 1995 and 2025. According to the Biblioshiny analysis conducted in R, the annual growth rate of publications is 10.5%, indicating a steady increase in research on SHGs and reflecting the growing policy relevance of the field. With an average of 7.63 co-authors per article, no single-authored papers, and a moderate international collaboration rate of 20.99%, the publication trends indicate that this field of study is highly collaborative and multidisciplinary. They single out four key groups of studies as themes of thematic mapping: (i) SHGs as agents of community development and women empowerment; (ii) access to credit and microfinance as agents of poverty reduction; (iii) sustainability and financial inclusion in the digital age; and (iv) mainstreaming SHGs into larger development programs such as resilience, health and education. Since the early years of microcredit and poverty reduction and the present day interests in digital finance, gender equality and sustainable livelihoods, the evolution of key words would identify a shift. The findings point at the collectivity of the SHGs research, its responsiveness, and applicability, yet they also indicate the absence of theoretical integration, cross-country orientation, and long-term impact evaluation. In addition to providing insightful feedback for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers involved in launching inclusive development with SHGs, this study offers value by thoroughly analyzing knowledge forms and identifying new research directions.

**Keywords:** Self-Help Groups, Financial Inclusion, Microfinance, Bibliometric Analysis, Women's Empowerment, Digital Inclusion

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\* Research Scholar. Email: chaithraraju21@gmail.com; \*\* Email: rsbkaran.mba@drait.edu.in