

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
FINANCE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2558  
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2006  
MICRO CREDIT TO SELF HELP GROUPS  
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

**Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether micro-credit based Self-Help Groups(SHG) are caste driven as reported in the Hindustan Times dated November 9, 2006;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether recent study conducted by NGO has revealed that in some States the minority share in SHGs is less than 7% and even zero in some States; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken or being taken by Government to ensure that minorities get their share in SHGs?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL)

(a) to (d) : No, Sir. The objective of SHG-Bank Linkage Programme facilitated by NABARD through the banks is to promote financial access of rural poor to the formal rural banking system. The poor include marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers, small farmers and others belonging to weaker sections without any bias towards caste, creed or religion. The SHGs are organised by the SHG promoting agencies on the basis of homogeneous socio-economic background and common interest and not driven by caste considerations.

The programme has made inroads in minority concentration districts of the country as well. The cumulative number of credit linked SHGs in about 44 districts in 11 States with minority concentration has increased from 33,698 SHGs as on 31 March, 2002 to 1,93,573 SHGs as at March 2006, registering a four-fold growth.