

phase in the micro-finance sector. In total, there are 9 chapters, each part redefining an important aspect of the growth process of the self-help groups. Some notable points from some chapters are illustrated below reflecting the richness of the book.

The Chapter II is entitled as 'Origins and Evolution of SHG-Bank Linkage', wherein the author has highlighted the working group report which viewed the linking of SHGs with the banks as a cost effective, transparent and flexible approach to improve the accessibility of credit from the formal banking system to the unreached rural poor as well as a solution to commercial banks problem of recovery of loans in rural areas and the high transaction cost in dealing with small borrowers.

In Chapter III on 'Growth and Performance of SHG – Bank Linkage Programme' the author disclosed that initially the linkage programme was not a great success because the NGOs having worked with grant-based programmes were reluctant to resort to coercive method to recover the loans given to SHGs. However, after switching to the Joint Liability Group (JLG) methodology, the NGOs were attracted by the good repayment performance and this is the fact behind the success of phenomenal growth of self-help groups in the country.

In Chapter IV on 'NGOs and Community Organisations as Financial Intermediaries' the author has stressed that in the absence of a suitable regulatory environment, a gap still remains in many areas of unfulfilled needs for credit and other financial services to the poor. Indeed, it is high time for the government to place a sound regulatory footing for smooth operations of the micro-finance entities.

In Chapter V on 'Government SHG Programmes', the author has stressed that a process-oriented approach undertaken in a professional manner and based on cooperative principles is required to maintain sustainability of the SHGs. He is hopeful that

with the emergence of the NRLM as a game-changer, the range of issues related to the effectiveness of government SHG programmes will be properly addressed.

In the sixth Chapter on 'Cost of Promotion of SHGs and SHG Federations' the author felt that with the formulation of the NRLM, it is inevitable that significant investments will be made in SHGs and their federations in the future. He is hopeful that a clear mechanism will be evolved to direct the investments in a way that is self-managed, sustainable and self-reliant.

In both VII and VIII Chapters the author analysed that there is a significant increase in women's empowerment of the SHG members group due to provision of services like training, awareness raising and other activities which are important determinants for the success of group building.

Finally, it can be outrightly said that this book is a must reference for those who want to delve into the gamut of origin and growth of self-help groups process as well as interested to know the status of various policy decisions taken by the NABARD and other agencies in facilitating the growth and achievement of SHGs in rural pockets of India. Further, the author should be highly appreciated as the book highlights most of the issues connected with SHGs in a most comprehensive manner and projects the growth process in a most fascinating manner.

– Dr. B.K. Swain

WTO and India's Agricultural Trade: Structure, Trends and Competitiveness by S.N. Babar and V.B. Bhise, GRP (Global Research Publications), New Delhi (India), 2010, pp. 162, ₹ 595.

The provisions in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement contained Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) with market

access, export competition and domestic support. Now the question that arises here is how these provisions affect India's trade in agriculture commodities? The authors have shown some sort of deviation from earlier studies of growth of India's overall and agricultural trade during the WTO regime and focused on the commodity-wise and country-wise analysis of India's agricultural trade under the WTO regime. The present book has focused mainly on growth pattern, stability, competitiveness, price elasticity, and diversification etc. of India's agricultural trade during the pre- and post- WTO periods (1990-2007). The growth in agricultural commodity export and import of India is estimated for quantity and value by using the analytical tools of compound growth rates, analysis of instability, analysis of comparative advantage, analysis of trade diversification and analysis of changing composition. By using the secondary sources of data, the authors have established that India's exports of rice, fruits and vegetables, spices and tea have increased during the WTO regime. Exports of these commodities from India have also exhibited competitiveness in the international market. Whereas edible oils, pulses, wood and wood products have been the main items of India's agricultural imports even during the WTO regime.

The book under review consists of five chapters. The findings presented in the book are vivid as they have used the secondary sources of data. The average value of total agricultural imports and exports increased during the study period. Commodity-wise average export value, pulses, wheat, tea, spices, sugar, rice, tobacco and marine products registered an increasing trend in the post-WTO period. In the same way commodity-wise agricultural import, average values of pulses, cashewnuts, fruits and nuts, spices, sugar, wood and wood products and total agricultural imports increased during the post-WTO period.

One of the objectives of the study was the growth and stability (in terms of quantity and value) of some of the commodity-wise agricultural exports. The authors have used the co-efficient of variation method and exhibited that some of the agricultural commodities like wheat, tea, sugar, cotton raw including waste and tobacco registered maximum growth and stability during the post-WTO period as compared to the pre-WTO period. In case of imports, the growth and instability of some agricultural commodities like other cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, fish, wood and wood products registered maximum during the post-WTO period.

The authors of the book have also addressed some policy measures such as farm diversification in agriculture by increasing adequate employment opportunities so that it will not only promote agri-business, food processing, agro-exports, but also help in alleviating rural poverty besides increasing agricultural capital formation and agricultural growth.

The limitation of the study is that the analysis is limited to secondary sources of data only. The uniformity of data and tools used for establishing certain export and import of agricultural commodities especially in terms of quantity and value is in question. But the authors have tried to some extent. Structural weaknesses like lack of clarity in methodology especially different data sources have used different methods for collection of data and publishing.

However, the book is quite informative dealing with a critical area of India's agricultural trade structure. This book could be of great use for researchers, policymakers especially macro-economic development practitioners.

– Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar