

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION

**India**, the second most populous country of the world is still in the abysmal of poverty even after more than five decades of independence. Majority of people in our country live in the rural areas and earn their livelihood from agriculture and related activities. Rural communities in India are characterized by their deep rooted vicious circle of poverty and unemployment and these are the major concern for their low socio-economic development. Socio-economic development involves a complete process of changing the rural sub-system and their interaction leading to desired improvement in rural income, employment opportunities, income distribution, rural welfare and other aspect of rural life.

The early ideas about rural development emphasized on self-sufficiency of the village represented by Gandhian model of development and other early efforts of rural development in India. The rural development paradigm adopted in the form of community development programme based on extension services to the village was a major departure from the Gandhian model of rural development.

The community development programme was introduced in India in 1952. The basic objective of the programme was to serve the rural people and to reach as large number of them as possible. The programme adopted a holistic approach to develop agriculture, village infrastructure and basic facilities in the village. It was assumed that as the process of development moves it will take care of each and every category of rural population (Thapliyal 2002).

To remove the poverty and unemployment problems in India, the government of India started the IRDP in 1978 and after that a number of allied programmes have been added over the years such as TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY etc. By the end

of nineties, all the six self-employment programmes, namely, IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, MWS <sup>X</sup>AND <sup>X</sup>GKY were merged into a single programme called Swarnajayanti Gram Swaraj Yojana (SGSY) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999. SGSY was designed to make self-employment programme more effective and to eliminate confusion arising out of the multiplicity of the programmes. One of the major focuses of this programme was the emphasis on group schemes through self help groups (SHGs).

*The success of DWCRA group in some parts of the country, particularly in southern states strengthened the belief that the rural poor perform better in groups particularly if organized into self help groups (SHGs) and their chances of success are much better than the individual poor. Thus, the programme emphasizes on the formation of self help groups (SHGs), imparting them training for capacity building, inculcating the habit of saving and micro financing of the members for their various need. For this purpose, the DRDAs, blocks, banks, NGOs, and local bodies have to come together and with their coordinated efforts to organize SHGs.*

Self help groups (SHGs) have emerged as the most vital instrument in the process of participatory development and women empowerment. A self help group is a voluntary association either of male or female members formed to attain some common goals. Most of its members have similar social identify, heritage, caste or traditional occupations and come together for a common cause and manage resources for the benefit of the group members. These groups provide monetary and moral support to individual members in times of difficulties. The group savings serve a wide range of objectives and help the members to escape from the clutches of money lenders.

In this research study, an attempt is made to highlight the structure and functioning of the SHGs in Chandrapur and Chayani Barduar blocks of Kamrup

district in Assam. The study also assesses the socio-economic impact of the SHGs on the beneficiaries.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters: The **FIRST CHAPTER** deals with the framework of the study. It includes meaning of development, various development theories, development approaches, rural development strategy in India, various rural development programmes in Assam, evolution of the self help groups (SHGs) , various stages for the formation of SHGs, the objectives of the study, its methodology and scope of the study.

The **SECOND CHAPTER** deals with the study area of the research. It covers details of the North-Eastern region, Assam, Kamrup district and two development blocks of Kamrup district namely the Chandrapur and Chayani Barduar block.

The **THIRD CHAPTER** deals with the socio-economic background of the beneficiaries in both the blocks. An attempt is made in this chapter to elaborate socio-economic background of the beneficiaries in terms of the locality, age group, sex, religion, caste category, language, educational qualification, marital status, family size, total land holding, occupation, monthly income and details of bank account of the beneficiaries.

The **FOURTH CHAPTER** deals with the structure and functioning of the SHGs in both the blocks. An attempt is made in this chapter to elaborate the structure and functioning of SHGs in terms of the locality of the SHGs, number of years completed by the SHGs, establisher of SHGs, sex-wise distribution of the SHGs, religion-wise distribution of the SHGs, language-wise distribution of the SHGs, member-wise distribution of the SHGs, criteria for the selection of members, decision of selecting of new members, monthly saving of the SHGs, support received by the

SHGs, training activities, trained members, time of organization of the meeting, selection of executive members, number of years completed by the executive members in their post, income of the SHGs, monitoring authority of SHGs, linkage with the bank, name of the bank, relationship with the bank, production activities of the SHGs, linkage with the co-operative society, total amounts with the SHGs through loaning, cash in hand and in banks, loan given to the outsiders, rate of interest, reasons for not providing the loan to the outsiders, linkages with development programme, tackling any social issue, marketing of the product, selling place, and future plan of the SHGs.

The **FIFTH CHAPTER** deals with the case studies of SHGs. It includes twenty case studies (ten from each block). Case studies have become a useful tool for gathering initial information about various aspects of a problem or system. It serves as a stepping-stone for more and more knowledge acquisition about the problem or system. An attempt is made in this chapter to explain the real story of the Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Chayani Barduar block and Chandrapur block.

The **SIX CHAPTER** deals with the explanation of the economic and social impact on the beneficiaries in both the blocks. It covers various indicators of both economic and social benefit of the beneficiaries. It covers occupation and income of the beneficiaries, credit system, rate of interest and power to provide credit, bank linkages and its impact, productive activities, training and its impact, marketing of the product, helping agencies and its impact, decision making capabilities of SHGs members and involvement of community mobilization, perceptions of members about SHGs, status of women and confidence of the group members.

The **SEVEN CHAPTER** deals with the summary and conclusion of the study. It includes the summary of the study, some suggestion for further development of the SHGs movement, references and the various schedules which were used for the collection of data.