

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background :

The basic premises of India's five year plans have been development along socialist lines to secure rapid economic growth and provision of basic necessities to the poor and weaker sections of the society. Human development and improvement in the quality of life are the ultimate objective of planning. The development efforts of the country encompass improved productivity, expansion of employment opportunity, reduction in disparities in income and wealth with an equal society having minimum acceptable level of food, shelter, education and healthy environment. Eradication of poverty and provision of basic minimum services are integral elements of any strategy to improve the quality of life.

The World Social Development Summit held between 6-12 March 1995 in Copenhagen Denmark adopted a declaration and programme of action which represent a new consensus or the need to put people at the centre of development.

Among the ground breaking agreements made by the world leaders in the Declaration are ten commitments to :

- (i) eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country.
- (ii) support full employment as a basic policy goal.
- (iii) promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights.
- (iv) achieve equality and equality between women and men.
- (v) accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries.
- (vi) ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals ;
- (vii) increase resources allocated to social development ;
- (viii) create "an economic, political , social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development" ;

- (ix) attain universal and equitable access to education and primary health care ;
and
- (x) strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN.

1.1 The Problem

Despite the facts that there has been a decline in the incidence of poverty over the past two decades, millions of people continue to live below the poverty line in rural areas. In the area of basic minimum services, different five year plans have placed greater emphasis on primary health care, primary education and provision of safe drinking water and shelter. Social sector planning, therefore ensures that appropriate policies and programmes are formulated and adequate investment provided by the state so that poor and vulnerable segments of the society can access essential facilities based on their need.

Different programmes to combat major health problems have been implemented which have resulted in steep fall in mortality. However, there has not been any reduction in the communicable diseases and nutrition related morbidity.

Specially designed anti-poverty programmes for both self employment and wage employment are redesigned to make them more effective under the self-employment programme of Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP). There has been a productive shift from the individual beneficiary approach to the existing sub-schemes of Training of Rural Youth for self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Tool kits of Rural Artisans (SITRA), Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) in the IRDP. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) is confined to the creation of rural infrastructure according to the felt needs of the people at the village level through panchayats. However, at the block and district level, the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) is the single wage employment programme. Efforts have been made to bring about a greater integration between the poverty alleviation programmes and various sectorial programmes within the umbrella of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Since the beginning, a number of social sector programmes have been

implemented in the state of West Bengal for upliftment of rural people with the objective of provision of income, employment, health, sanitation education etc. Crores of rupees have been pumped into the state to ensure multi-faceted social development. But the impact of all these programmes in terms of improving the quality of life are yet to be felt.

Objectives :

The state of West Bengal have implemented a good number of poverty alleviation programmes. But the development process has not percolated down to the poorest sections of the society. The present study shall have the following objectives.

- (i) To identify the social sector programmes implemented in the state and examine the process of identification of beneficiaries for availing benefits.
- (ii) to assess the mechanism of services provided by the govt. officials, bank employees and local organisation and its commitment.
- (iii) to study the impact of social sector programming on families and specifically on the quality of life.
- (iv) to find out the extent of peoples participation in formulation and implementation of the social sector programmes.
- (v) to analyse the crucial factors for effective implementation of the social sector programmes.
- (vi) finally to suggest for improvement in social sector programme planning and implementation in rural areas.

1.2 Hypotheses :

The study has the following hypotheses to be tested :

- a) Participatory Programme Planning and implementation of social sector programmes have a positive developmental impact on the success of the programme ;
- b) Integration of sectoral programmes gives a package of services in improving the quality of life of the people.

1.3 Relevance of the study :

The State as well as Central Govt. have implemented a number of social sector programmes in West Bengal. However, there had been no impact study conducted on social sector programmes for which no possible information available on the performance of the programmes. Therefore, it is felt necessary to conduct an impact study of social sector programmes in West Bengal to find out the short-comings and loopholes of the programmes and suggest suitable measures to improve in programme planning and implementation.

1.4 Methodology :

Considering the task on hand, the diversity of information required and the multiplicity of information sources, primary and secondary source of information has been collected. The secondary data are collected from official records pertaining to different programmes. The primary level data are aimed at sample survey of beneficiary households, from the sample villages. For this purpose, the following quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are adopted. These are (a) Household Survey : (b) Group interview and (c) Direct observation. The coverage and content of inquiries under different research methodologies are described below.

1.4 (a) Household Survey :

Primary survey at the household level are collected to study the quality of life of rural people to assess the impact of the social sector programmes. The following variables of which data have been collected from the beneficiary households are mentioned below. A total of 200 sample households have been selected from both the districts.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Information</u>
1. Basic Need	Food	Number of days household

			members remaining hungry or half fed.
2.	Wel-being Needs	Health	% of households practising family planning methods. % of households using ironfolic tablets for children. % of delivery attended by trained personnel. % of pregnant women checked-up.
3.	Opportunity Needs	Education	% of male literacy % of female literacy
4.	Amenities Needs	Services	% of household accesses to radio % of households access to T.V. % of household access to safe drinking water % of households access to toilet facilities % of households access to electricity.

1.4 (b) Group Discussion :

Group discussion is one of the participatory Rural Appraisal technique where interaction among beneficiaries in a group situation stimulates qualitative research.

1.4 (c) Direct Observation :

During the survey, direct observations are done of the household level as well

as at programme sites to look into the socio economic conditions and opportunities available etc.

While the beneficiaries formed the main sources of primary data, information on various aspects of social sector programmes implemented and performance were collected from a variety of sources by adopting various social research methodologies. These included contacting a number of offices to collect required information by scanning through different records, documents, reports etc. Discussions were also held with the relevant officials at different levels on aspects relating to programme implementation.

1.4 (d) Sampling Frame :

The sampling frame for the above study was based on multi-stage sampling procedure. It is intended to cover two districts in West Bengal. Two districts from two regions of the state i.e. Medinapur and Birbhum was selected. At the second stage sampling, one block from each district is selected on the basis of literacy rate as indicator of social development. Further from each block five villages were selected on the basis of size of villages i.e. less than 200, 201-500, 501-800, 801-1200, 1201 and above as third stage sampling. Twenty households are selected as the fourth stage sampling from each village covering landless, marginal farmer, small farmer, large farmer and rural artisan households on the basis of 4,4,5,5, 2 houses respectively. The list of districts, blocks and villages selected are mentioned below.

District	:	1.	Medinapur (100)	1.	Birbhum (100)
Block	:	2.	Kharagpur. I	2.	Bolpur-Sriniketan
Villages(Households):		i)	Gomariyapal (20)	i)	Mahulara (20)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| ii) Burra (20) | ii) Baral (20) |
| iii) Kunjachak (20) | iii) Palsa (20) |
| iv) Khalkona (20) | iv) Salan (20) |
| v) Arjuni (20) | v) Bergram (20) |

Total Households - 200

1.4 (e) Tools of Observation :

In order to have uniformity in the data collection and to enquire its quality, following tools of observation were used for the field data collection.

Methodology	Tool of Observation	Level of enquiry	Main areas
1. Household	Household schedule	Beneficiary family	Extent of quality of life service availed employment, income & food consumption pattern.
2. Group interview.	Guide lines	Group of beneficiary family	Programme planning implementation, perception of the group about social sector programmes.
3. Direct observation	Checklist	Programme sites/villages	Food habits, employment opportunities etc.
3. PRA	Combination of all above tools	Programme sites/villages	triangulation

The schedules were pretested before using for the actual data collection. Besides these tools of observation, information were also collected from different official records. Detailed discussions were also held with the concerned functionaries

on various aspects of social sector programmes.

1.5 Manpower Deployment :

While family level primary data collection was carried out by field investigators through face to face interviews by contacting head of the household, information was also collected through qualitative techniques by professionals alongwith the research assistant and field level personel. Discussion with functionals of the programme implementation were mainly carried out by the professionals. Calling out relevant information from various government records, documents, reports, etc. where the main responsibility of the research assistants under the over all supervision of the concerned professional.

The primary data collection encompassing personal interviews with beneficiary families was carried out by two field team. Consisting of 8 field investigators under the overall supervision of two field supervisor. The minimum qualification of a field team member was graduation. In order to have a multi-disciplinary approach in the field data collection, the members of the team were drawn from different disciplines like sociology, anthropology and economics. Almost all the team members had good exposure to the working in different rural and tribal development programmes and were experienced in conducting impact studies of such programmes.

Before the team moved to the field an extensive training and orientation programme was organised under the guidance of the project director supported by research professionals involved in the study. The orientation included both classroom discussions and field visits for better understanding of the objectives of the study and the concepts used in the survey. At the same time, they were also oriented to the nature of the approach desired in such studies to elicit the required data from the beneficiaries who were predominantly tribals characterized by illiteracy and poverty. The field team was briefed and about the socio-economic characteristics of the area and its inhabitants life including their tradition, customs, rituals, food habits, occupation pattern and so on. All these steps aimed mainly to ensure better approach

while dealing with the beneficiaries. Although, the local language is pre-dominantly Bengali, people of the area were also found speaking different languages like Hindi and Oriya. In order to ensure better and proper understanding of the beneficiaries and the people of the area, translators were selected from among the local people wherever needed.

1.6 Field Work Organisation :

In the field, the team members initially worked directly under the supervision of the research professionals mainly to ensure proper understanding of various concepts, clarification of doubts, arising if any, and refining the approach in field data collection. The empirical analysis of the information pertaining to sample households is based on tabulation. An attempt has been made to find out the critical factors through PRA exercises.

1.7 Limitations of the Study :

The problems were mainly at the field level in collection of relevant information. Since the study area pertained to tribal district where the population is sparse and spread for wide, most of the sample villages were found to be inaccessible. It was more so during the rains when the field work was in progress. In some of the places the field team members and the research professionals were forced to walk for long distance to reach a village. Secondly most of the respondents are characterized by illiteracy and poverty, for which, it was difficult task to get qualification of certain information like number of days remaining hungry, quantity of food consumed etc.

1.8 Reporting Plan :

The interpretation of the data has been contained into seven chapters. While the background of the study, need and objective and methodology have been discussed

in the first chapter, poverty and Social Development in West Bengal is contained in second chapter. Details on social Sector Programme covering rural development and poverty alleviation programmes in West Bengal have been outlined in third chapter. The impact of the programmes on the beneficiary households have been formed in chapter four. The next chapter deals with the improvement in delivery of Social Development Programmes. People participation in various steps of social sector programme planning and implementation have been outline in chapter six. Finally the study ends with concluding remarks in the last chapter.