

**DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION AND
EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY OF WOMEN
OF MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT IN
WEST BENGAL (1978-1998)**

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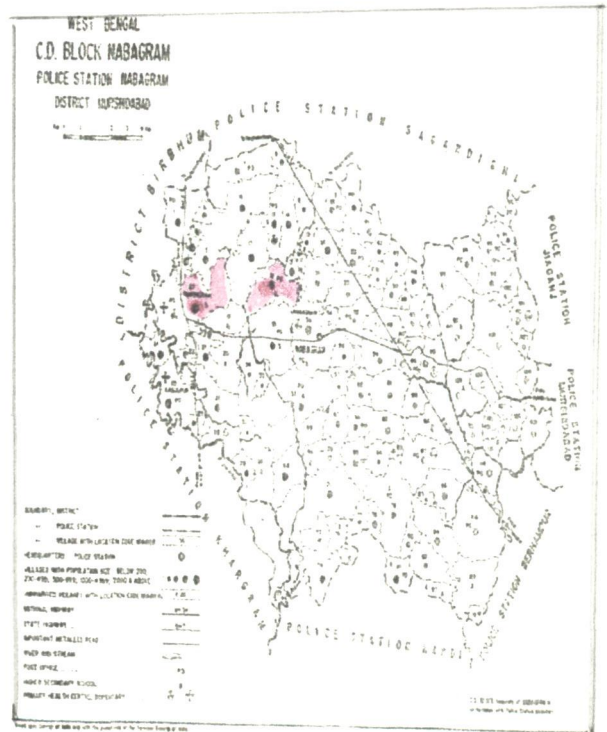
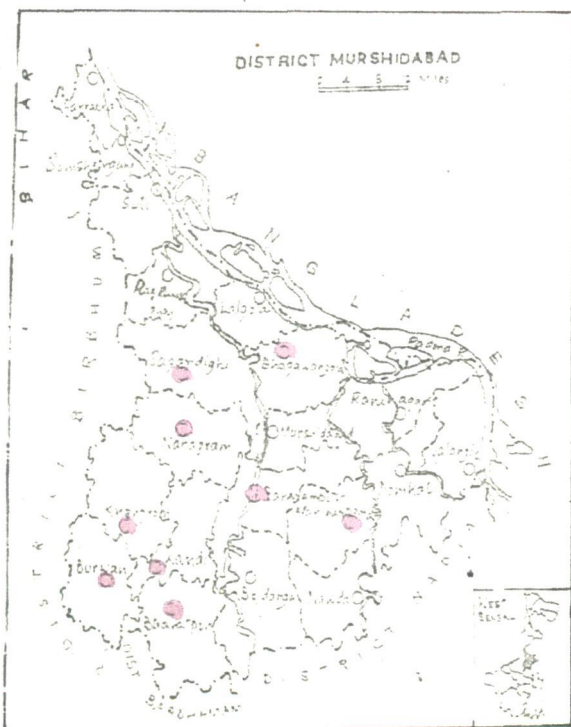
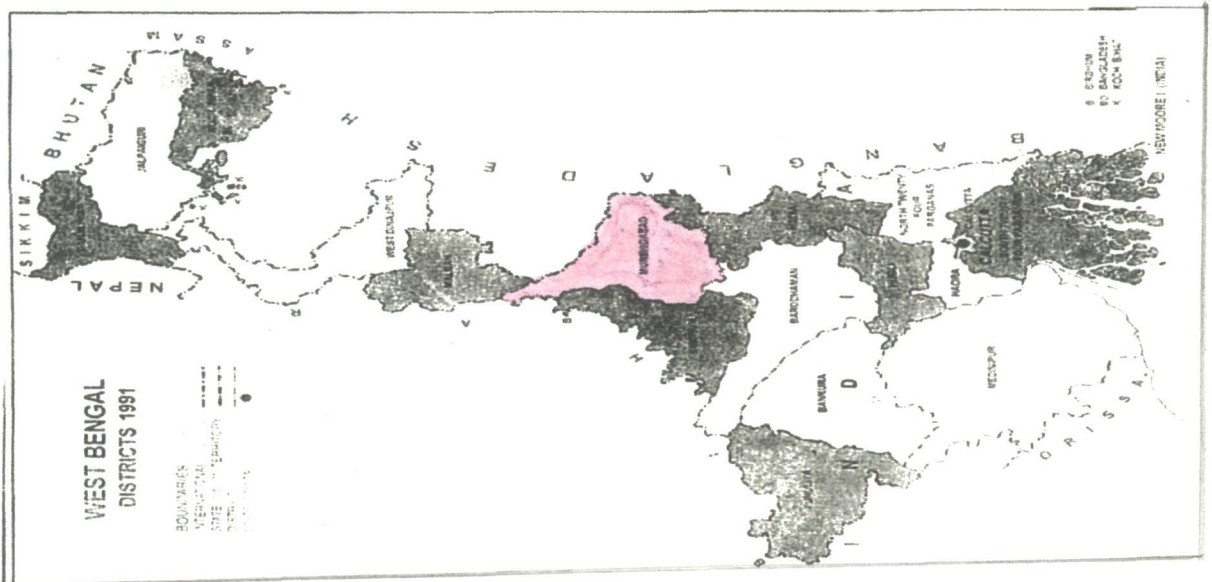
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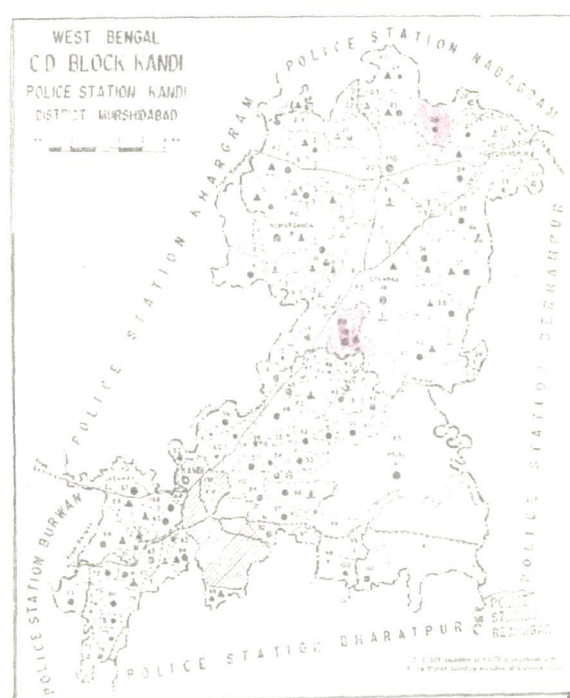
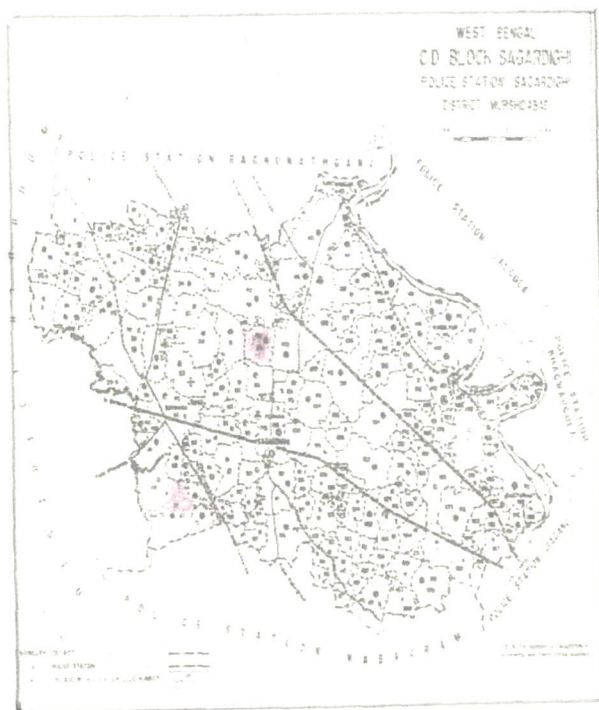
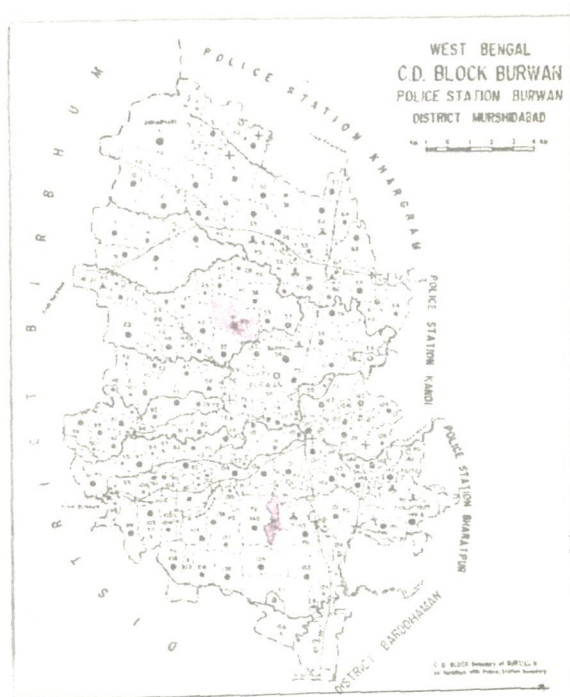
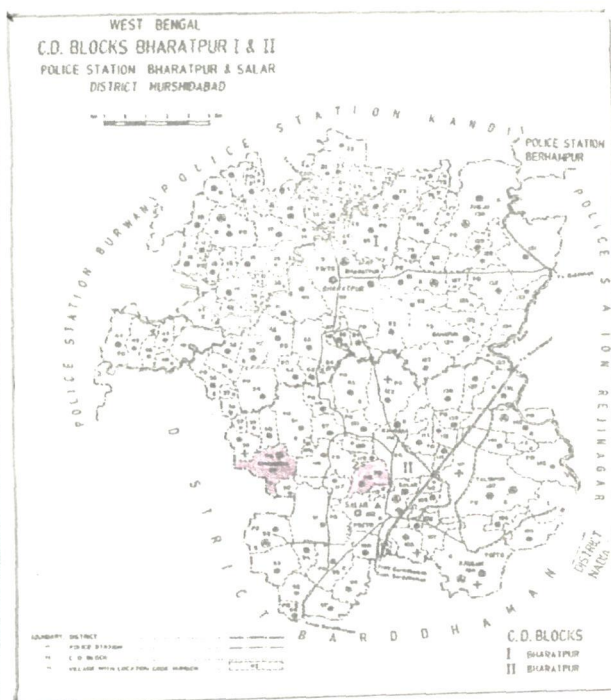
CONTENTS

| | Page No. |
|---|-------------|
| The Maps | |
| Preface | i-iii |
| Acknowledgement | iv-v |
| List of Tables | vi-viii |
| List of Charts | ix |
| Chapter - I : Introduction | 1-32 |
| Chapter - II : Method of Enquiry | 33-47 |
| Chapter - III : Democratic Decentralization in India; Historical Perspective | 48-76 |
| Chapter - IV : Democratic Decentralization and Development in India: Historical Perspective | 77-127 |
| Chapter - V : Democratic Decentralization, Development and Empowerment in India: Historical Perspective | 128-161 |
| Chapter - VI : Democratic Decentralization, Development and Empowerment; Murshidabad District Scenario | 162-200 |
| Chapter -VII: Summary of Findings and Concluding Observation | 201-217 |
| Bibliography | 218-258 |
| Annexure | 259-276 |

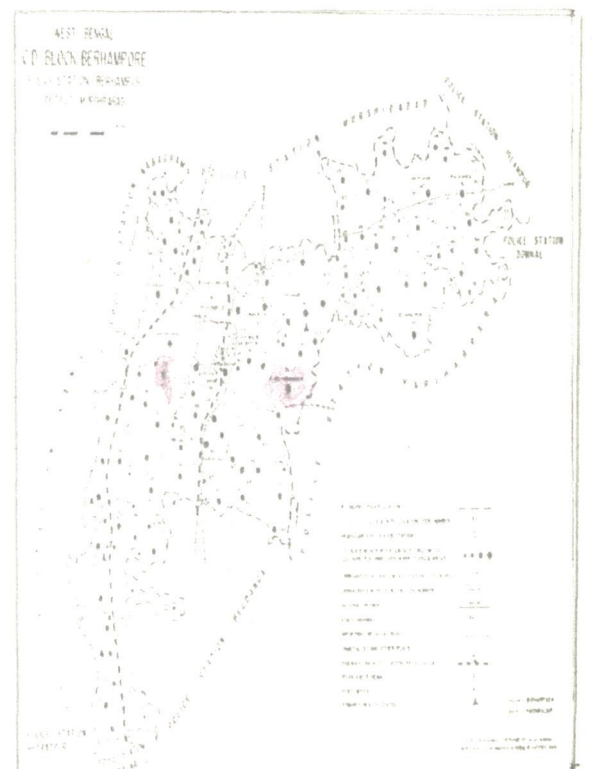
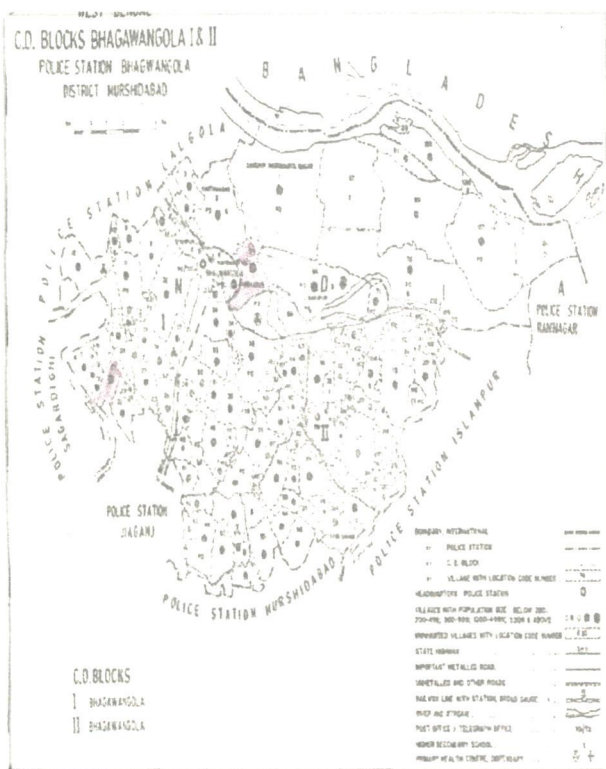
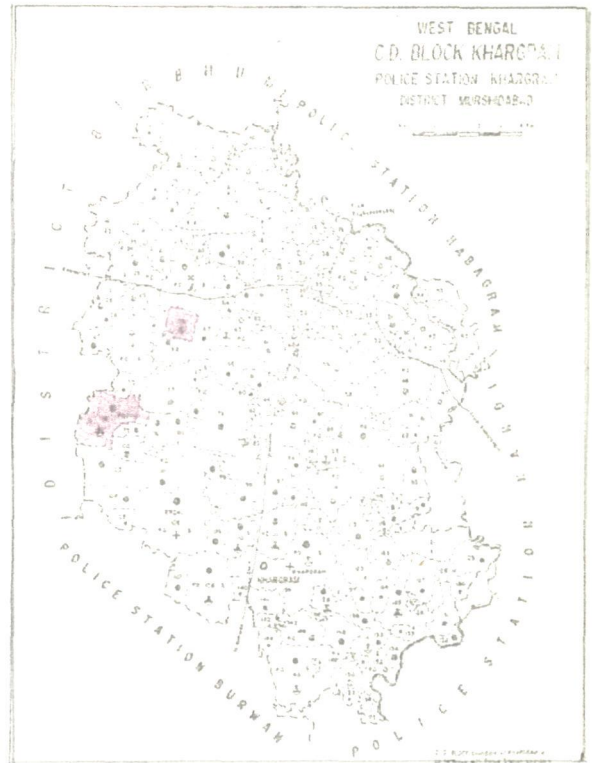
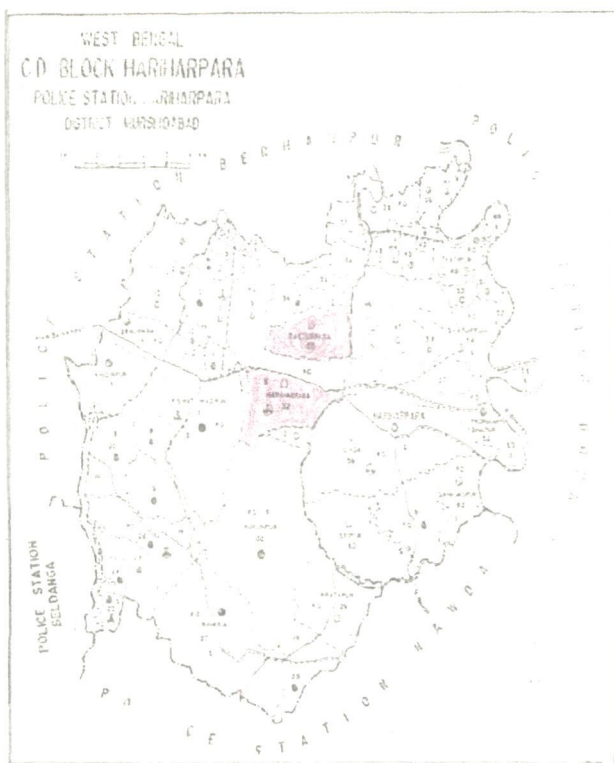
STUDY AREA: **SELECTED BLOCKS OF DISTRICT** **MURSHIDABAD IN WEST BENGAL**



Source: Survey of India, Census of India 1991.



Source: Survey of India, Census of India 1991



Source: Survey of India, Census of India 1991.

PREFACE

Panchayati Raj is not a novel phenomenon in the country. Its illustrious history goes back to more than thousand years. Panchayati Raj as a formal administrative set up at the local level, however, has been almost defunct for many decades. The avowed goal of democratic decentralisation has met with very limited success for it was superimposed on the basic feudal structure of the Indian society. Unless the administration at the lowest level becomes democratic in its functioning it would not be possible to create a true democratically administered country. The need was to enact laws relating to Panchayati Raj to have people's representatives in the administration through direct election and decentralisation of power at various levels of administration, from bottom upward. Although never at any period of Indian history was it said that women could not join politics, the fact is that women have to come out of the various constraints that bind them and one may feel that without achieving these, women cannot participate formally in politics. In West Bengal there has not been any apparent case of the Leftist Government having been discriminatory against women in its political activity but projected a new life in the process of democratic decentralisation.

Different development indicators show that even after five decades of planning in India, women are far behind their counterparts. One of the main reasons for such backwardness of women has been their non-involvement and non-participation in decentralised governance and development through Panchayats. The 73rd Constitution Amendment Act has enabled women to partake in these important political institutions. Women have been trying their best to make themselves assertive in local governance. However, the realities such as illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and lack of awareness constrain them. The experiences gathered about women's participation in Panchayats show that they have been projected as mother, or wife, or sister, or widow of any other renowned personalities. On the other hand, there are cases where women played a leading role in rural development. There is a positive relationship between removal of these constraints and women's effective participation in decentralised

governance. The government has taken many steps to remove those constraints and to empower the women section. Many programmes are working for the socio-economic upliftment of women besides constitutional provision for political empowerment of women.

The study focuses mainly on empowerment in the context of decentralised governance in general and women empowerment in particular. This study is based on the Murshidabad district in West Bengal where women empowerment is still a far cry. The process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables individuals and groups to realise their full destiny and power in all spheres of life. A women's empowerment brings with consciousness and perceptions about herself and her rights, her capabilities and her potentials, awareness on socio-cultural and political forces, political empowerment, economic development and thus, social upliftment of women is necessary to fight countless forms of patriarchal domination, exclusion and alienation. Murshidabad district in West Bengal having low rate of literacy, low rate of employment and socio-cultural constraints does not provide any bright idea of women empowerment. Although women have entered the political arena, they still remain invisible in decision-making. The subjugation of women of this district in the socio-economic spheres has resulted in a low status and an even lower self-image for them. Democracy at the grassroots level can only be successful if there is representation of all section of people. Reservation cannot bring about drastic changes unless supported by the socio-economic parameters. Socio-cultural factors are acting as a deterrent in this district. Thus, coming out of the domination of men, whether at home or at the panchayats, will not be an easy task for women panchayat members. Though some have already taken a lead, the majority of women have not yet attained it. It has to be fought legally and administratively for which women panchayat members have to be conscientized adequately.

Against the outlined scenario, the present dissertation seeks to find out the level of women empowerment particularly in the context of political empowerment in Murshidabad district. The study seeks to unfold the constraints of women empowerment, with the expectations that the result of this research work and the specific suggestions of the study could offer fresh insights and valuable inputs to the public policy-makers in their future policy-makings. The objective of the

study becomes more rational in the context of the year 2001 being declared by the Government of India as the 'Year for Women's Empowerment'.

The study has been divided into seven chapters covering many sections and sub-sections of the study. Chapter-I introduces the objectives of the study, conceptual framework, survey of literature, justification of the study and research questions. In Chapter-II, the methodical aspect of the study is discussed in detail with a brief profile of the selected nine blocks of the district Murshidabad. Chapter-III provides an analysis of democratic decentralisation In India: Historical perspective, Chapter-IV makes a detail study on democratic decentralisation and development in India in historical perspective. Chapter-V provides detailed analysis on democratic decentralisation, development and empowerment in India: historical perspective. Chapter-VI is concerned with democratic decentralization, development and empowerment in Murshidebad district. The chapter is based on the field data collected from the selected blocks. Chapter-VII is the concluding chapter. The Chapter summarizes the findings, makes concluding observations on findings and suggestions having implications for policy-making and further research.

Acknowledgement

In my research work, I have benefited from many sources. Without these sources of help and assistance my work would not have been completed. Considering the acknowledgement not a formality, but a sincere and heartily admission of indebtedness, I want to place on record my sincere gratitude to the magnanimity of my supervisor Dr. M. Yasin, Reader, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, for his scholarly guidance and extra creditability to give the present shape of my imagination into a reality. The credit also goes to Dr. Pradip Kumar Sengupta, Professor, Department of Political Science and Dean (Faculty of Arts, Commerce, and Law), University of North Bengal, for his guidance as Co-Supervisor of mine.

I would like to thank Professor D.J. Bhowmik for his early advice and inspiration. My thanks also go to all teaching and non-teaching staffs of the Political Science department of this university.

I express my indebtedness to Dr. S. Rahim Mondal, Director, Centre for Himalayan studies and Professor in Sociology, North Bengal University whose long discussion and criticism helped me to take my study in right direction. I am beholden to Dr. (Mrs.) Arti Ganguli, Women's Research Centre Calcutta, with whom I spent a lot of time for the benefits of my research work.

I am thankful to the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, and Women's Studies Research Centre, Calcutta University, Calcutta, to make use of their library. My gratitude is also extended to the National Library, Calcutta and Indian Council of Social Science Research, Calcutta, for their constant help during my visit to their library and providing me the latest available information. I extend my thanks to Dr. (Mrs) Nirmala Banerjee, Dr. C.L Gupta and Dr. S.N Roy to get a chance for discussion on theoretical and methodological part of my study, and giving me as many possible study materials which helped me a lot in constructing my idea on 'Women Empowerment' and finalisation of my dissertation. My thanks are due to the librarian and staff, Central Library, University of North Bengal for their help extended to me.

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Last but not the least, I express my love and reverence to my father Mr. Sukrear Rahman for his constant inspiration and teachings. No respect is adequate to my mother for her best teachings.

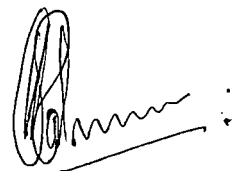
I am indebted to Mrs. Nazmun Nahar Begam, spouse of mine who constantly helped me all the way with her high imagination and best suggestions. No formal acknowledgement but my love goes to my twin Babies- Bappa and Minu for not disturbing me much during my study hours.

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LIST OF TABLES

| Table no. | Page no. |
|---|----------|
| 2.1 : Survey Area | 38 |
| 2.2 : Descriptive Statistics: Blockwise | 38 |
| 2.3 : Educational Statistics: Blockwise | 39 |
| 2.4 : Breakup of Occupation: Blockwise | 40 |
| 2.5 : Breakup of Main Workers: Blockwise | 41 |
| 2.6 : Percentage of Main Workers, Marginal Workers and non-Workers | 42 |
| 2.7 : Framework Illustrating the Critical Variables | 43 |
| 4.1 : Panchayat in the States | 80 |
| 4.2 : Number of Elected Representatives in the Three-tier Panchayati Raj System | 81 |
| 4.3 : Rural Development Programme since Independence | 85 |
| 4.4 : Partially Comprehensive and Segment Analysis of the Provisions in Various Bills | 92 |
| 4.5 : Performance of the IRDP | 94 |
| 4.6 : Central Government Expenditure on Rural Development | 97 |
| 4.7 : Approved Outlays in respect of Plan Schemes: Department of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation | 99 |
| 4.8 : Approved Outlays in respect of Plan Schemes: Department of Rural Development | 100 |
| 4.9 : Financial Progress under Jawahar Rojgar Yojana | 101 |
| 4.10 : Physical Performance under Jawahar Rojgar Yojana | 102 |
| 4.11 : Allocation and Release under Million Wells Scheme | 104 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table no. | Page no. |
|---|----------|
| 2.1 : Survey Area | 38 |
| 2.2 : Descriptive Statistics: Blockwise | 38 |
| 2.3 : Educational Statistics: Blockwise | 39 |
| 2.4 : Breakup of Occupation: Blockwise | 40 |
| 2.5 : Breakup of Main Workers: Blockwise | 41 |
| 2.6 : Percentage of Main Workers, Marginal Workers and non-Workers | 42 |
| 2.7 : Framework Illustrating the Critical Variables | 43 |
| 4.1 : Panchayat in the States | 80 |
| 4.2 : Number of Elected Representatives in the Three-tier Panchayati Raj System | 81 |
| 4.3 : Rural Development Programme since Independence | 85 |
| 4.4 : Partially Comprehensive and Segment Analysis of the Provisions in Various Bills | 92 |
| 4.5 : Performance of the IRDP | 94 |
| 4.6 : Central Government Expenditure on Rural Development | 97 |
| 4.7 : Approved Outlays in respect of Plan Schemes: Department of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation | 99 |
| 4.8 : Approved Outlays in respect of Plan Schemes: Department of Rural Development | 100 |
| 4.9 : Financial Progress under Jawahar Rojgar Yojana | 101 |
| 4.10 : Physical Performance under Jawahar Rojgar Yojana | 102 |
| 4.11 : Allocation and Release under Million Wells Scheme | 104 |

| Table no. | Page no. |
|---|-----------------|
| 4.12. : Financial Performance under Million Wells Scheme | 105 |
| 4.13. : Physical Performance under Million Wells Scheme | 107 |
| 4.14. : Development of Irrigation Potential through Plan Period | 110 |
| 4.15. : Numbers of Scheme taken up in Different Plans | 110 |
| 4.16. : Financial Performance under Employment Assurance Scheme | 112 |
| 4.17. : Physical Performance under Employment Assurance Scheme | 113 |
| 4.18. : Allotment on Employment Assurance Scheme | 114 |
| 4.19. : Plane-wise Resources Utilization and Houses Constructed under Indira Awaas Yojana | 115 |
| 4.20. : Financial Performance under Indira Awaas Yojana | 116 |
| 4.21. : Physical Performance under Indira Awaas Yojana | 117 |
| 4.22. : Allocation and Release under DPAP and DDP | 119 |
| 4.23. : Physical and Financial Progress under DPAP | 120 |
| 5.1 : Physical and Financial Achievement under DWCRA since its Inception | 139 |
| 5.2 : Performance under DWCRA (1992-99) | 142 |
| 5.3 : Physical Performance under TRYSEM | 142 |
| 5.4 : Physical Progress under TRYSEM | 143 |
| 5.5 : Financial Progress under TRYSEM | 144 |
| 5.6 : Allocation and Release under SITRA | 146 |
| 5.7 : Financial Progress under SITRA | 147 |
| 5.8 : National Social Assistance Programme | 149 |
| 5.9 : Physical Progress under IRDP | 152 |
| 5.10 : Financial Progress under IRDP | 153 |
| 6.1 : Profile Comparison: Murshidabad, West Bengal and India | 166 |
| 6.2 : Election Update: 1998 | 168 |

| Table no. | Page no. |
|---|-----------------|
| 6.3 : Main Profile and Party Position in Panchayat Election: 1998 | 168 |
| 6.4 : Women Position in top Governing Body at all the Three Levels: Murshidabad District | 169 |
| 6.5 : Educational Level of Parents/Husbands | 172 |
| 6.6 : Main Occupation of Fathers and Husbands | 173 |
| 6.7 : Annual Family Income | 175 |
| 6.8 : Political Involvement of Family Members | 176 |
| 6.9 : Educational Level of Respondents | 178 |
| 6.10 : Achievements of IRDP in Murshidabad District | 181 |
| 6.11 : Achievements of TRYSEM in Murshidabad District | 181 |
| 6.12 : Achievements of JRY, EAS and JGSY in Murshidabad District | 183 |
| 6.13 : Achievements of DWCRA in Murshidabad District | 183 |
| 6.14 : Panchayat Election: 1993 | 184 |
| 6.15 : Panchayat Election: 1998 | 184 |
| 6.16 : Crime Against Women Registered in District Magistrate Office, Murshidabad | 185 |

LIST OF CHARTS

| Chart No. | Page No. |
|--|----------|
| 1. Level of Intelligence Between Men and Women | 186 |
| 2. Equal Treatment of Women on Socio-Eco Fields | 187 |
| 3. More Freedom to Women on Social Issues | 187 |
| 4. Family Decisions are mostly Taken by Male Members | 188 |
| 5. Equal Economic Opportunity to Women | 188 |
| 6. Social Taboos should be Abolished | 189 |
| 7. Less Political Awareness Among Women | 190 |
| 8. Capable Women are not Getting Opportunity | 190 |
| 9. Decision of Elected Women Members are not Self-Dependent | 191 |
| 10. Only Political Reservation cannot Empower Women | 191 |
| 11. Modern Values on Women Empowerment are not Communicated Properly to the Mass | 192 |
| 12. Religious Values Hinders Women Empowerment | 192 |
| 13. Decision of Women Members to Contest in Election | 193 |
| 14. Election Canvassing done other than Women Candidate | 193 |
| 15. Attendance of Women Members at Panchayat Meetings | 194 |
| 16. Attendance of Women Members at Party Meetings | 194 |
| 17. Number of visits by Women Members to a Government Office before being Elected | 195 |
| 18. Number of Visit by Women Members to a Government Office after being Elected | 195 |
| 19. Work Satisfaction of Women Members as Panchayat Member | 196 |
| 20. Change into Economic Independance after being Panchayat Member | 196 |
| 21. Achievement of Her Political Empowerment after becoming Panchayat Member | 197 |
| 22. Women be Empowered through Reservation Only | 197 |
| 23. Achievement of Social Empowerment because of Political Reservation | 198 |
| 24. Husband or Family Head agreed to Women Empowerment | 198 |
| 25. How many of them can be Considered as Empowered | 199 |

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

Democratic decentralization serves as an instrument of development from below. The rationale behind democratic decentralization lies in the mass participation in local socio-political and economic affairs affecting the local people and thus it generates a leadership at a very base. Contemporary thrust of development discourse has also shifted from the traditional trickle down approach to the modern bottom-up approach with more emphasis on people's participation. Panchayat Raj institutions are the foundations of democratic decentralization in India as they seek to ensure planning and execution of development at local level.

In West Bengal, the Left Front Government injected a new life into the Panchayat Raj institutions since 1978. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act is seen as a landmark in this direction as the former has rendered constitutional sanction to the Panchayat Raj institutions. However, the objective of Democratic Decentralization is to involve cross-sections of the people including women in the process of decision making and development. But, inspite of this formal constitutional mechanism for ensuring participation and empowerment of all sections of the society, women's participation and empowerment are said to be not satisfactory. Hence, the effect of the development has been, and is bound to be, lopsided.

Objective of the Study:

Given this background, the primary objective of the present research is to study the various aspects and dimensions of empowerment in general and

women empowerment in particular. For women, empowerment is the restructuring of gender relations within both family and society at large, and it is society's recognition of women's equality with men in terms of their worth to society as independent persons (Hapke, 1992). Women became empowered through collective reflections and decision making (GOI, 1986). The empowerment process is facilitated by creating awareness about ones rights and responsibilities and socio-economic and political opportunities (Pandey 1993). Empowerment implies a fundamental redistribution of power, which also enables women to renegotiate their existence on equitable basis (Bannerjee 1992).

As far as India is concerned, observers notice conflicting views on empowerment. While some feel in India that though various development policies and programmes particularly through the panchayats for empowerment of the people have taken place, there is also the view that empowerment in real sense of the term has been in the papers only. Similarly, women constitute an important segment of the society. Hence, if this segment continues to lag behind and not empowered this will constitute an imbalance in the overall process of social development. On this realization, a number of policies, programmes and actions has been taken to ensure empowerment of women in India. Under the circumstance, the present research seeks to focus on this as to whether empowerment of women has been achieved and if not, what are the reasons that came in the way of empowerment of women in India.

Conceptual Framework:

"Empowerment" is seen as a process where outcomes would lead to renegotiations to gender relation, enhance women's access and control over human, material, financial and intellectual resources. Empowerment of women section can be understood as a process which enables women to question and analyze the basis of their subordination, to articulate this problem, ways of addressing their problems and to take decisions, to make forward and act upon. Empowerment does not end with election but to decision making, planning,

implementation of development programme, monitoring and evaluation of the programme and sharing the benefits of development. Women participation in to politics at local bodies through reservation is certainly a positive development but to make it work needs sincere efforts from different quarters. Something more than participation is required to which the term empowerment focuses. It is concerned with women empowerment through ideas, education and consciousness. The empowerment is frequently stimulated through participatory rural appraisal exercise giving women a clear sense of how they can improve upon their lives in practical way.

With constitutional and the legislative support, it was hoped that the process of decentralization as well as women empowerment would gather momentum, but despite various movements and legislative guarantee and despite the increase in out lay for development projects, women's empowerment remains to be achieved. Thus, the framework that is suggested here is that, mere political empowerment does not ensure overall empowerment in general and empowerment of women in particular.

Survey of Existing Literature:

There is enough literature on democratic decentralization but less on empowerment of women is available. A number of scholars have undergone empirical and field survey on the basic concept of decentralization and women empowerment as well. Decentralization does not merely denote division of the functions between state government and local bodies; the purpose is to train local leadership to assume responsibilities and to serve the people with maximum efficiency.

Gandhian values too give emphasis on the development from the bottom. Decentralization is not dilution or devolution alone. It is strengthening through a process of broad basing the decision making which enables the most active and knowledgeable participation of the people.

According to Appleby (1962), Democratic decentralization appears to suggest that decentralization axiomatically enhances democracy. Decentralization

curbs the powers of bureaucracy, which not only stultifies the initiative of the people but also curbs people's participation in development process. It is said by Henry Maddick (1975), that, decentralization embraces both devolution and decentralization.

Richard. C. Crook (1998), with an in depth knowledge of the area argue that decentralization did provide real benefits to poor peasants and disadvantaged group, women a lesser extent.

Iqbal Narain (1964), on Democratic decentralization and Rural leadership, observes that, political affiliations were relatively insignificant, a material benefits oriented leadership based on control over distribution of village goods and services have emerged.

Norman Uphoff (1986), refers decentralization as the physical dispersion or shifting of the offices or the seats of decision making, whereby decision makers are located closer to the activities and persons for whom they work but to be accountable to the central authority.

Decentralization to Neil Webster (1992), as a political phenomenon is interpreted as a means to make the state more responsive and adaptable to the local needs than that it could be with concentration of administrative powers and responsibility of the state.

David Beetham (1995) finds a system of elected local government as important to the vitality of a democratic system that greatly expands the opportunities for taking part in public decision-making. Iey K. John (1997) and G Padmaja (1997) admit the basic issues at the grass root level to prepare and implement programme and direct involvement of the people in the process of development. Decentralization and delegation of economic power have finally come to be accepted as the path to further progress, since development process is found to be impossible through the strategy of centralized decision making.

Democratic decentralization, to P.R. Dubhashi (1970), in simpler term, would be "free popular management of local affairs". To Abdul Aziz (1998), for the healthy growth of decentralized governance system provisions of constitutional amendments is very much essential. It is believed that the panchayat is treated as a meaningful mechanism for initiating grass root

democracy. Yet, Sudhir Krishna (1993) shows that panchayats have more often remained as showpiece of democratic decentralization.

The scope of decentralization is not only to ensure the democratic character of the government, opined by Baidyanath Mishra (1996), but also improves the effectiveness of planned development of the country.

Scholars like P.R. Dubashi (1960), Ensminger Douglas (1961), LC Gupta (1965), PI Mathur (1965), Bharat Bhushan Gupta (1968) and DS Chauhan (1977), opined that the institutions in democratic decentralization and various bureaucratic adjustments need to be made for its effective functioning. Keeping in view the administrative problem and practical feasibility as well as actual planning, it would have bigger units which could strengthen the local authorities and also regional level to facilitate the formulation of comprehensive plan. Thus, it considers the importance of democratic decentralization and the institution of local self-government in programme implementation.

To S.S. Meenaskhisundaram (1994), the concept of "Decentralization, Democracy" and "Local government" which are essential to this study would be acceptable universally. Democracy, as concluded, is not a form of government but a way of life; applies as well to democratic decentralization or "local self government"; so called "transfer of power" to the people cannot be brought about overnight; should be accompanied by a real change in social and production relationship.

Sweta Mishra (1994), in her book under review calls "phase of hectic activities", from the mid-1980's oriented to strengthening local bodies and achieving the goals of democratic decentralization. Nirmal Mukherjee (1993) in his article opined that the fundamental question before the panchayats everywhere in the country has, for long been whether they are there for development functions only or for the purpose of self-government.

The Mehta team recommended democratic decentralization to a three-tier panchayat structure. Kamta Prasad (1990), a noted economist, feels that more and more involvement of the people will rejuvenate the sagging spirit of self-help in the process of democratic decentralization as ultimate goal of development. Mention may be made of the observations of Bharat Bhushan

Gupta (1968) that, democratic decentralization takes the concept of popular government at grass-root democracy and involves people directly in administration.

A question appears in the writings of V.R. Gaikwad (1979), regarding the role of the paid functionaries in the welfare and economic development of rural people. BS Bhargava (1979) hold the view that political development and democratic growth depends on the local leadership and its functioning in the Panchayati Raj institutions. In the book of Abdul Aziz (1996) it is found that decentralization and securing the participation of the people through democratic institutions at levels lower than the national is the emerging political culture. In view of the sad plight of various economic development programmes, Sunil Kumar (1990) examines the need for re-engineering the process of development, which has its roots in indigenous perception of democratic decentralization.

There have been a large number of micro studies on decentralized planning. To mention a few, Sweeta Mishra (1997), SP Ranga Rao (1997), I Satya Sundaram (1997), Mahinder Singh (1997), MA Oommen (1997) -- all these focus on development planning "from below". To them, it is a system through which planning process is brought close to the people who are the beneficiaries of development and they formulate plans independently by them. The need for decentralized planning emerges to get rid of the ills of centralized planning.

In a simple term, BK Thapliyal (1990) mentions, the ultimate objective of the development planning is to maximize welfare of the people, in which, planning is attempted at different politico administrative and executive levels, so that there is greater integration between the developmental needs and priorities of smaller areas. Aneeta Benninger (1991) analyses the problems and evolves a methodology for operationalising participatory decentralized planning.

Towards the mid fifties the need to properly develop them with a view to entrusting them with the task of rural reconstruction, was felt in certain quarters, which consequently led to the establishment of Panchayat Raj, the propounder of the scheme originally described it as democratic decentralization stated by S Bhatnagar (1978). Local level planning, to RP Mishra (1983) is another term for planning from below, the local development as planning and development roles

are essentially played by the governmental agencies under the edxisting system of planning.

LC Jain (1993) points out that if decentralization remains confined to the political level without constructive component of area planning, the negative aspect of decentralization would doubtlessly emerge. PN Sharma (1987) on participatory planning, Durgadar Ray (1988) and Savitri Sharma (1988) on decentralized planning provide a common suggestion for a viable model for the decentralization of our planning process. Therefore, people's participation in the rural development at the grassroots level should be given more serious attention.

A study by SK Singh (1987) and Kamta Prasad (1980), on planning and development brings out contribution of Panchayat Raj as an institutional support for development administration and democratic decentralization as well as major factors responsible for impeding the development of this grass root institution. Bupendra Hooja (1980), VG Nandedkar (1979) and SG Deogaonkar (1980) present excellent studies on rural development as they feel that the overall management and development of the local village lands, water resources, forest and mineral and the development of agricultural and allied activities should be entrusted to the care of local village panchayats or a group of panchayats. They also highlight the role of village level worker in the effective implementation of community development programme. Participation in politics is only one dimension of people's participation in socio-economic development. Participation is development of mans essential powers – including human dignity and respect and making themselves responsible for developing their powers of deliberate action, believes RP Mishra (1983).

AK Guha (1980) tried to make it clear that the involvement of people in local self- government, so-called decentralized governance was to invoke the initiative from the hands of bureaucracy to the representatives of the people to solve their own problems. In the opinion of MA Muttalib (1982), the local government in a decentralized process is a body, representing a particular set of local views, conditions, needs and problems, depending on the characteristics of population and the economic elements. LC Jain was interviewed by Nirmal Ganguli (1989) and expressed the view for a rational distribution of functions

and responsibilities among authorities form the village up to the center and opined that what the village can do for itself should not be done by an authority at a higher level.

The Panchayati Raj institutions in India are the prime instruments of decentralization at the grass root level. Even though the constitutions 73rd Amendment Act has added a new dimension to the concept of Panchayat Raj democratization of our pluralistic society cannot be ensured automatically. To Rajni Kothari (1991), it is clear that only alternative to a decentralized and genuinely democratic political system in a country like India is the gradual dissipation, erosion and ultimate disintegration of the nation. But Md. Habibur Rahman (1989) believes that, decentralization is the redistribution of administrative powers and responsibilities only within the central government, it is only shifting of workload.

Prabhat Dutta (1994) observes that democratic decentralization associates people with local administration, and recognizes the rights of the people to initiate and execute decisions in an autonomous way.

SN Mishra (1995), G Dhawan (1995) say that there is need to transfer much of the allocation of decisions to the local authorities as financial arrangement is the life breath of all self government. AK Dubey (1998) reveals that the outcome of decentralization efforts, surprisingly turn out to be quite contrary to its intended objectives due to various factors. It is believed by G Thimmaiah (1998) that, democratic decentralization as it has been envisaged under 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution was prompted by the political compulsion of the 1980s.

The Macro study on Panchayat Raj by S Narayansamy (1998) held the view that as we march towards 21st century, grassroot level institutions must be strengthened and the Raj must be commanded by the poorest of the poor. Sharat Kumar (1997) made a comprehensive study and found under Article 243-G and 243 ZE that the Panchayat Raj have been assigned the responsibilities for preparation and implementation of plans for economic development. Under decentralization, instead of conceiving Panchayat Raj as an agent of

development, we have to conceive development as an agent of Panchayat Raj, i.e., of people's power, noted by Raj Singh (1998).

Noted by Hans Raj (1992) that, since independence the governments are proceeding in this direction and the panchayats have been given wide powers and made active participants in the talks of rural reconstruction and democratic decentralization. Ranbir Singh (1970) advocated that, the Panchayat Raj failed to bring about qualitative change in the rural society.

Scholars like B.M Chitlangi (1998) M Nagaraju (1999), CP Vittal (1998) and K.R.Sastry (1999) made detailed study on decentralized Panchayat raj bodies and conclude that the government should overcome narrow political considerations and strengthen the middle tier of Panchayat Raj by increasing its size and the Panchyats are to be strengthened as institutions of self government, and not merely as agents of state plan implementation. C Narasimhan (1989) has an extensive experience of the implementations of Panchayat raj in its initial years but laments over its gradual decline. In his opinion, rural development is inseparably linked with the Panchayat raj, which provides innumerable opportunities for self-help and self-reliance to the rural mass.

To believe Panchayat Raj as a process of decentralization for rural development Jaganath Pathy (1980) on Panchayat Raj and decentralization of political power, Debesh Chakroborthy (1981) on Panchayat Raj and decentralization, Nageshwar Prasad (1986) on decentralization in historical perspective and B.N.Sahay (1989) on Decentralization: the Nagaland way, put forth the view that decentralization of power through Panchayat Raj institutions has not been successful but all except Jaganath pathy have expressed their positive attitude towards Panchayat Raj institutions as an instrument of decentralization of power by directly providing plans and funds to the villagers, thereby increasing their competence to plan and implement development schemes.

The 73rd amendment act intends to provide meaningful role to Panchayat Raj bodies in the country, which will promote decentralization of power to the people at the grass roots level by creating responsive village panchayats, believes Hoshier Singh (1995). Talking on panchayat leadership, Basu (1981) and G.K.

Lieten (1988) finds that the forces of regression are strong in the rural areas. Leadership is not very efficient and people are hypothetical to make progress and it is local institutions to take the initiatives. It is noted that, women have not increased their visibility in panchayat leadership.

R.K. Dar (1995) questioned on the inter-relationship between the different tiers concerned with the wide range of sectors which now fall within the competence of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. V Ramachandran (1993) points out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and then suggests certain measures for making the 73rd amendment a true instrument of change for the better. M.Sam Roy (1995), keeping in mind a negative view, recognized that it is imperative for the poor and the weaker sections to compete for and occupy positions in the Panchayat Raj institutions.

M.R. Biju and J.N. Panda (1991), Satya Sundaram (1994), Ajinder Jain (1997), believe that in a vast country like India, decentralized planning through Panchayat Raj institutions assumes special significance from the point of view of decentralization, growth and social justice. Devolution of power to sub-state levels and a greater involvement of the people in the process of governance and policy planning would go a long way in development. Prabhat Datta (1995) says, a vibrant system of Panchayat Raj cannot be ensured simply by giving it constitutional sanction. He laments that the Panchayat Raj institutions' acts in some of the states have paved the way for bureaucratic centralization rather than democratic decentralization.

P.V. Narasimha Rao (1993) remarks – "Our Democracy cannot become strong unless the democracy at the village level is strong and the genuine development of rural areas can take place only through a process of decentralized planning and implementation fully involving the local people". To S.C. Vajpayee (1993), the backdrop of establishment of Panchayat Raj will be incomplete without the mention of the constitution 64th amendment bill for the introduction of the Panchayat System in almost all states.

A comprehensive study on self-government, and rural development by PC Mathur (1991), Nirmal Mukherjee (1994) and Swapan Kumar Pramanic (1994) bring out the idea of self government of any kind that must have not only

a clarity of democratic field activities but also instruments for rural development. It was further held that, through panchayat election on the power would be decentralized and only with organized forces of the village poor to establish the power of the people curbing that of centralism.

The studies conducted by C.P Vitthal (1998), R Gangadhar Reddy (1998) and P.L.D.V. Padmakar (1998) on Panchayat Raj and Decentralization concluded that, the 73rd Constitution Amendment has opened new avenues for the strengthening of the panchayat bodies, which will gather momentum on the process of devolution of finance. In the changing scenario, Panchayat Raj has to exclusively devote itself to the task of development, which was a watershed in decentralization as it provides a share for weaker section and women in particular.

S.P Ranga Rao (1998) holds that Panchayat Raj bodies are not only local bodies in the traditional sense but involves popular participation in development and socio-economic reconstruction of rural India. Besides these, Jitendra Kumar Sinha (1999), believes that the decentralized system is functioning well, the accountability and efficiency of the administration have got a fillip. But above all SS Meenakshi Sundaram (1999), noted the importance of administrative reforms in the cleansing of the environment. To her, the need to restore the sense of idealism and a spirit of dedication among the bureaucracy will remain a real challenge in the Panchayat Raj Institutions for the long time to come.

Chitra Sen Passayat and Sarmistha Barik (1998) hold the view that the functionaries of Gram Panchayat should maintain transparency and make the villages aware of the development works being undertaken at the panchayat levels.

Panchayati Raj institutions, to Shrawan Kumar Singh (1994), were considered as an important vehicle for rural economic development because de-bureaucratization and decentralization of power will encourage local initiative for development.

To Manoranjan Mohanty (1995), it is both the economic and social terms, the most productive policies and investments are these, which empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. Kameshwar

Chaudhary (1998) shares the view with Mohanty on empowerment, which implies formal rather than substantive power and it involves an external upper level agency to grant power rather than people below seizing it in the course of struggle.

Empowerment, to Eva Soren Sen (1997), implies that democratic strategy must propose the institutionalization of democratic procedures, which ensures both the aggregative, and the integrative aspects of democracy.

Empowerment, to the experience of N.K Bannerjee (1995), is autonomy --both collective and individual; it is autonomy and control over one's life. Empowerment implies redistribution of power between different groups; it is an emancipatory movement not only to provide a sufficient and equitable access to economic resources, but also to provide at emancipation from oppressive social and political forces. It can also be said as a process of building capacities and confidence for taking decisions and gaining control over the sources of power.

C.B Muthamma (1996) puts more emphasis on education and developmental schemes to empower the people to run their own affairs to make country progress further and faster. Swapan Garain, (1996) made a comprehensive study and believes that development implies change, which can be brought about through the process of conscientisation followed by collective action, necessarily to start all the grass root level with the consciousness of empowerment.

Andre Beteille (1999), made a specific strategic perspective by stating the view on the Indian way of securing power meant for the unempowered seems to be by the safe way of providing, as extensively as possible, quotas on the basis of the community, caste and gender.

T.V Lucy (1995), B.Meena Rao (1997), Sangeetha Purushothaman (1998), Mazhar Ali Sabri (1998), worked on women empowerment and discussed in detail about the empowerment of woman and felt that the improvement of their status in social-economic and political fields is a highly important end in itself. The eighth five-year plan (1972-1997) emphasized ensuring the benefits of development and that women must be enabled to function having empowered in all the fields.

Kiran Saxena (1994), Nitya Rao (1996), Uma Joshi (1997) and Kameshwari Jandhyala (1998) analyzing the various factors of empowerment concluded that economic emancipation is one of the crucial factor but self-enlightenment, renegotiation of gender-relation, enhance women's access and sustain the process of empowerment. Sujatha Viswanathan (1997) holds the view that economic empowerment would have major implication on overall empowerment, social empowerment and a more participation in decision making and active participation would improve political acumen and eventually help successful empowerment. P Anandharajkumar (1995) also realizes that an honest and continuous attempt in ensuring women's economic independence is the need of the hour.

Usha Narayanan (1998), as the first lady of regional steering committee expressed that the eradication of poverty and the empowerment of women in society go beyond the question of credit. K Subha (1995) experienced that mere learning about the functioning of Panchayati Raj is not enough to empower women. Mere physical participation in the formal political institutions like elections or political parties, Social movements or demonstrations are not enough, experienced by Susheela Kaushik (1993). Sakina Hasan (1997), opines on women's empowerment as gaining autonomy and control over one's life including economic, social and political empowerment.

The issues like ethnic and economic are intermingled in India where the majority of the population belongs to the lower social strata and women section may predominate. Therefore, grass root mobilization has emerged, believed by Ghanashyam Shah (1987). The problems faced by women cut across all regions, caste and class lines and yet, there is a controversy over the question of uniform civil code granting equal rights to women, stated by Sadhana Arya (1997). Shashi Shukla (1996) and Justice M. Fatima Beevi experienced that Muslim women have not been able to take full advantage of modernization due to social conservatism. Many of the problem faced by the Muslim women arise out of ignorance of law as well as from lack of will to assert their rights.

Pruthi Raj (1995), K Manju Devi (1997) and Jyothi Mitra (1999) made an attempt to collect and collate the informations from various sources to discuss

the different aspects of socio-economic and political problems faced by Indian women. They believe that lack of socio-economic empowerment continue to place women as backward citizen of India.

Maveen Soars Pereira (1998) holds the view that economic empowerment involves changes in power relationships in both, the economic sphere and in the social and political spheres. Arti Sawhny (1994) finds out the emergence of local women's organization as contributing to the process of empowerment.

Arabinda Ghosh (1997) and MN Roy (1995) makes a detailed descriptive study of West Bengal panchayat and finds women as the contributors to development rather than as the beneficiaries of welfare services. Biplab Dasgupta (1989) holds the view that, on the whole, it has been a highly fruitful and meaningful experience and experiment in an uncharted area in the Indian context and a great deal has already been achieved. But Promesh Acharya (1993) believes that despite the apparent "success" of Panchayati Raj in West Bengal under Left Front rule, the overall domination of the privileged classes over the rural power structure remains unchallenged. SK Singh (1993), also realizes genuine development, regenerating growth and panchayats are the only suitable institutional vehicle for social and economic development and empowerment of women. If reservations for women in Panchayat Raj system are to lead to the empowerment, social, economical and political conditions, which encourage their participation need to be created, says - Bidyut Mohanty (1995).

Prava Debal (1998) and Dina Abbott (1997) believe that, entrepreneurship in renewable resources can serve as an effective look for economic empowerment of women through radical breaks from traditional top-down patronage. Irene Tinkar (1997) holds the view that the economic rights of women in India and other developing countries can be guarded by organizations, which empower women, and work towards supportive politics. Same opinion is shared by Nitya Rao (1996) as women's organizations have reacted by shifting their emphasis from welfare to empowerment.

Women have always been man's dependent, if not his slave, the two sex have never shared the world in equality. The political participation of women was negligible. It is said by Rabindra Chaudhary (1997) that women are not the

ornamental showpiece for human being, they have the equal right to level for their uplift in the society. To focus on the political empowerment of women BS Bhargava (1992) puts his view that empowerment gives women the capacity to influence the decision making process by integrating them into our political system and other related socio-economic forum.

It is opined by Ahuja Ram (1992) that, political awareness and political participation of women varies with the level of education, degree of urbanization and quality of local leadership. There is no denying the fact that the economic empowerment of women is also very important for raising their status in the society, viewed by BK Pattanaik (1996). Aparna Basu (1996) puts a question on the fourth world conference, in September (1995), on women proclaimed on equality, development and peace.

Susheela Kaushik (1993) contends that political empowerment of women can be achieved only through their socio-economic advancement and increase in number. Scholars like Nirmala Deshpande (1989) agree with the process of reservation but hold a strong view that, women are not inferior or a second class citizen. Debel Kumar Singha Roy (1998) opined that, contemporary institutionalized mobilization has provided positive shifts to preexisting social, cultural and political institutions that have caused women's subordination. Aloka Sharma (1998) has agreed that India government has made various efforts to work for women empowerment.

Shahida (1998) and Saraswati Haider (1998) argued that political equality is meaningless in India where traditional attitude regard women as physically intellectually and socially inferior to men.

Number of studies by G.N. Reddy (1995), Miatrayee chaudhari (1995), Neerja Ahlawat (1995) and Nandini Azad (1996) concluded that empowerment of women requires action on many fronts as demographic and socio-economic variables on planned economy. Mahipal (1999) believes that awareness and psychological empowerment of women are indispensable for building confidence among them to play the role effectively at grass root level.

Sweta Mishra (1995) holds the view that land reforms have a positive bearing on the condition of women empowerment economically and socially as

well as politically. Anita Jhamtani (1995), Uma Joshi (1995) Meenakshi Anand Choudhary (1996) and B.K. Pattanaik (1997) made a specific strategic perspective by looking into the economic empowerment of women with economically productive work, which will enhance their contribution to rural development. For that purpose, a multi-pronged effort to make even the poorest of the poor woman active participants in the decision making bodies at village levels is to be undertaken.

Snehalatha Panda (1993) and Ramanbrahman (1990) hold the views that political efficiency and personal control in the political system has great influence on their socio-economic and other personal pursuits. However, there are structural and other constraints, which keep women away from actively participating in the work of panchayats. Uma Joshi's (1999) experiences show that women are as good or bad politicians as men are, even women do better.

According to Manu Bhasker (1993), women are the oppressed sex, exploited on the job by their employers and oppressed at home through family servitude. Indian women's involvement in politics started in the late eighteenth centuries. In the second half of the 1980s the government began to use other policy mechanisms to promote women's integration into development, but the religious fundamentalism jeopardizes women's movement. JK Das (1997) and Amal Mondal (1999) conclude in their writings with a hope that combination of constitutional provision, social actions and self-awareness will bring at least half of the women into mainstream of political power and decision making.

Reeta Chaudhary (1998), Mahipal (1998) and Nutan Sinha (1991) deal with the women empowerment and observed that the goal of women empowerment depends on going beyond the traditional study of the state and its structure where the state as a sources of modernization performing a constructive role or the state as a passive actor, representing the interests of dominant class and the male gender. Amar Jesani (1990) makes a detail descriptive study on women empowerment and finds that, participation does not in itself lead to empowerment where not only does the labor market favour men over women.

Parul Rishi (1997), SH Patil (1997), Ariz Ahmed (1999), and Abha Chauhan (1998) made an analytical study and realize that if a large number of rural woman are to vote independently, Indian Planers should ensure social equality, economic independence and adequate education to rural women. Their empowerment and access to decision making will certainly lead to a sustainable future for the country. Women's participation in decision-making bodies has the potentiality of raising the debates and discussion from the ethereal to the practical side as experienced by Usha Narayanan.

Rohini Gowankar (1999), Aditya Sen (1994) Uma Joshi (1994) and M Seetharaman (1994) made a specific strategic perspective by looking into the role of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions and concluded stating that the village women have a capacity to grasp the things if they are explained to them. However, women have a wealth of experiences in the basic skill of management, so reservation may be treated as an entry point for women but is not an end in itself.

Kirtikumar (1994), B.S Bhargava and K Subha (1995) and Rashmi Mishra (1998) have experienced the grass root level women who have to be empowered to participate effectively in the political process because the decisions of the local government have profound effect on the problems of women. Main drawback is the male relatives of women representatives who are sometimes taking active part in their official activities. Moreover, subordination of women in our society acts as a structural constraint to their empowerment. Sahadev Chaudhary (1995) noted that, being illiterate present lady members may serve as proxies but entry of more literate women of the next generation is bound to make great contribution in the deliberations of these bodies.

KB Saxena (1989), SV Saran (1993), Kamta Prasad (1994), Ashok Gupta (1994), Neela Mukherjee (1994) and Mahipal (1998) made a comprehensive study on women in panchayat and hold the view that women are not adequately empowered to play an effective role because of social, economic and political factors. However, it is possible to turn the tide in favour. Inspite of reservation actual role have been performed by male members.

Though 73rd Amendment Act empowers women in decision-making but in view of the reality in the quagmire of illiteracy, poverty and ignorance, effective participation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions will not materialize if the Panchayat Raj system does not operate in a democratic way without a proxy, as viewed by Mahipal (1994), SS Meenakshi Sunderam (1995), Sweeta mishra and SN Mishra (1995), and Linda MG Zerilli (1998). It is believed by Madhu Kishwar (1996) that marginalisation of women is integrally linked to the marginalisation of all decent people from our party politics and thus we need wide spectrum electoral reforms that will curb the role of muscle and money power in democratic decision making and ensure a sensible proportional representation for women without mechanical reservation.

Hazel d'Lima (1993) reminds us that those who had power earlier, still want to retain their hold. So they like to see their women in that position where he can have a say in decision making. It is, however, concluded in the analytical study on 73rd amendment and women by G.Ramathilagam (1995), SN Mishra (1996), and T Rajendran (1998) that women have to improve themselves through education, take an interest in public and socio-political affairs, if they have to take an active part in the politics and administration overall to have the empowerment.

Justification of the Study:

From the overview of the existing literature, it appears that most of the studies deal in most cases with Panchayat Raj Institutions. There has been little focus on empowerment of women. Here in lies the research gap. Thus, the present research seeks to measure through an in-depth study of a district (MURSHIDABAD) in West Bengal the process and level of empowerment of women. This has been done in line with the broad theoretical framework that there is interrelationship between democratic decentralization and empowerment and the two are heavily interdependent. As such, the present research enhances the existing body of knowledge on empowerment in general and in the Indian context in particular, helps to list the research questions thus helping to evaluate

the theoretical framework, identifies the factors and forces that tend to come in the way of empowerment in India, and finally, suggests measures along which future courses of action need to be undertaken to ensure and strengthen the process of women empowerment.

Research Question:

Given the broad objectives as outlined above, the present research seeks to address to the following specified research questions.

- (a) What are the formal as well as the operational conceptualization of empowerment?
- (b) Given the norm of conceptualization, what were reasons for, and form of empowerment, during the period preceding 1978?
- (c) What are the structural institutional changes pertaining to women in the period under study in the social, economic, political and cultural fields?
- (d) What are the functional behavioural changes about women in the period under study in social, economic, political and cultural fields?
- (e) Given the basic parameters of empowerment, can it be regarded that women have been empowered?
- (f) If yes, what are the conditions that helped the process of empowerment?
- (g) If not, what are the factors that come in the way of the process of empowerment?

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CHAPTER - II

METHOD OF ENQUIRY

METHOD OF ENQUIRY

The Primary objective of the present study is to make an in-depth study of empowerment of women. There is effectively no disagreement about the necessity of women's empowerment, as women constitute an important segment of the society. Given the importance of women and their potential contribution to the overall development, modern scholars in social science devote considerable time and energy on discourses on gender issues.

In the Indian context, it becomes more relevant in view of the fact that, Indian tradition accepted women only in a supportive role. But with the enlightenment spreading throughout the world the traditional belief on women began to change. It is now widely acknowledged that, women are to be brought at par with men in all the fields if they are not already. To this end, a number of programmes has been taken to ensure what is called empowerment of women. Given this broadly accepted premise that women are to be empowered, the present study seeks to analyse to what extent women have been empowered and what are the constraints that come in the way of women empowerment.

As such, the study is exploratory, descriptive and diagnostic in nature. The study aims at exploring the ideological and philosophical foundations of empowerment in general and women's empowerment in particular. The exploratory part of the study is based on the content analysis and review literature on the issue of empowerment. The study also aims, at describing the actual state of women empowerment in India, measures undertaken for empowering women and the outcome of those measures in empowering women in India. Finally, the study is diagnostic as it aims at diagnosing also what are the reasons that come in the way of women empowerment in India. Thus, the descriptive and the diagnostic parts of the study are covered through a survey conducted among the sample women in the selected blocks of Murshidabad district who are politically empowered by being the panchayat functionaries and

aspirants. Besides, a sample of politicians, officials, and common citizens were also brought under survey to elicit their views on the issues relating to the empowerment of women.

The survey was conducted on the basis of a structured schedule containing questions to elicit information on various aspects – social, political and economic that are thought to be parameters of empowerment. The schedules were pretested, finalized and then administered to the selected respondents in the selected blocks of Murshidabad districts.

The selection of the sample respondents was both purposive and on probability. As far the women functionaries and aspirants in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the sampling was purposive so as to cover a large number of the women. However, in the selection of other respondents i.e. the politicians, the officials and the common citizens the sampling was probability sampling:

The selection of the blocks was also purposive because the considerations of the level of development, demographic configuration, geographical location etc were kept in mind in selecting the blocks. In all, nine blocks were selected and studied.

Rationale for Selecting the District:

1. In West Bengal the district Murshidabad lies geographically in between South bengal and North Bengal. This district also has mainly two geo-climatic divisions popularly known as '**Bagri**' and '**Rarh**' anchal. The '**Bagri**' area are mainly attached to the international border and so the migrants from Bangladesh constitute not only a steady influx but also adding to the number of total population and changing the socio-economnic status of the people. As such, it calls for special administrative care. This district has also witnessed the historical impact of '**Nawabi regime**' and the dawn of the British rule in India.

2.

Distribution

| Sl. No. | District | Area (sq.Km.) | Population | Sex Ratio | Literacy Rate |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| 1 | Cooch Behar | 3387 | 2171145 | 881 | 45.78 |
| 2 | Jalpaiguri | 6227 | 2800543 | 843 | 45.09 |
| 3 | Darjeeling | 3149 | 1299919 | 876 | 57.95 |
| 4 | West Dinajpur | 5359 | 3127653 | 918 | 39.29 |
| 5 | Malda | 3733 | 2637032 | 1007 | 35.62 |
| 6 | Murshidabad | 5324 | 4740149 | 1040 | 38.28 |
| 7 | Nadia | 3927 | 3852097 | 1014 | 52.53 |
| 8 | 24 Pargana (N) | 4094 | 7281881 | 918 | 66.81 |
| 9 | 24 Pargana (S) | 9960 | 5715030 | 927 | 55.10 |
| 10 | Calcutta | 185 | 4399819 | 536 | 77.61 |
| 11 | Howra | 1467 | 3729644 | 935 | 67.62 |
| 12 | Hoogly | 3149 | 4355230 | 983 | 66.78 |
| 13 | Midnapore | 14081 | 8331912 | 1006 | 69.32 |
| 14 | Bankura | 6882 | 2805065 | 1032 | 52.04 |
| 15 | Purulia | 6259 | 2224577 | 1011 | 43.29 |
| 16 | Bardwan | 7024 | 6050605 | 1004 | 61.88 |
| 17 | Birbhum | 4545 | 2555664 | 1029 | 48.56 |
| West Bengal | | 88752 | 68077965 | 945 | 57.70 |

Source : *Census of India, 1991.*

The above distribution shows that among 17 districts in West Bengal, Murshidabad is ranking 8th position in area distribution, 5th position in population, where woman ratio per thousand male is 1040 which ranks on the top position in the state but in the case of literacy rate this district ranks 16th position which is at the bottom. This is very interesting to see that this district has a peculiarity and vewry appropriate to make an indepth study on woman.

3. Murshidabad is the only Muslim dominated district in West Bengal. Considering the Muslims as conservative, as runs the mainstream thought, particularly more on woman, empowerment of woman is thought to be less or limited. A study of this district is thus much relevance in view of its demographic peculiarity and its impact on the overall process of development in general and empowerment of women in particular.

4. There is also a pragmatic consideration for selecting the district. As the researcher belongs to the same district it provided necessary insight about the district that was thought to be of immense help in collecting reliable and accurate informations on the question of empowerment of women.

Rationale for Selecting The Blocks and Villages:

Murshidabad district is a polychromatic in nature having Muslims as majority. Though it is not multilingual but the language "Bangla" is spoken in multifarious way as per the geographic dimensions and cultural differences. Socio-economic behaviour of the people can be easily differentiated as such; the political behaviour is also not unified in the district.

The blocks were selected as per the geographical feature and socio-economic culture. Out of the 26 blocks in the district nine blocks were selected. Blocks like Bhagawangola can be identified as "Bagri" anchal where this block located at the "Bangladesh" border crossing the river Ganga. Barwan, Sagardighi, Khargram and Nabagram are in the border line of another district called "Birbhum", having cultural differences from other part of the district; Bharatpur-II block is adjoined to the district "Burdwan"; being in the south of the district, it differs in all the way from the block of the northern part. Blocks as Berhampore and Kandi are considered as in the middle of the district, urbanized in nature as sub divisional head-quarters.

Table No. 2.1
Survey Area

| DISTRICT | BLOCK | PANCHAYAT | VILLAGE - I | VILLAGE - II |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| M U R S H I D A B A D | Barwan | Sundarpur | Sundarpur | Hatisala |
| | Berhampur | Gurudaspur | Gurudaspur | Sultanpur |
| | Bharatpur-II | Salu | Kharera | Gulhatia |
| | Bhagawangola | Mohammedpur | Mohammedpur | Bahadurpur |
| | Hariharpara | Hariharpara | Hariharpara | Dasturpara |
| | Kandi | Gakarna-II | Santapara | Mahalandi |
| | Khargram | Parulia | Parulia | Uttar Gopinathpur |
| | Nabagram | Panchgram | Panchgram | Kesharpur |
| | Sagardighi | Monigram | Monigram | Karaiya |

Hariharpara and Barwan are dominated by the Muslims and Hindus respectively. Being religious orthodox, the people in these two blocks find themselves changed towards socio-economic and political behaviour. Table 2.1 and maps show the selected blocks, panchayats and villages for the study. From the above listed blocks one each panchayats were again selected. Another two villages were selected from each panchayats covering a total of 18 villages were taken into account for the final field survey. Table No. 2.2 shows the area (in sq km) population, no of villages and no of household of this study areas. Bharatpur- II has a less no. of villages (52 only) where as Sagardighi has 197 villages.

Table No. 2.2
Descriptive Statistics: Block Wise

| Blocks | Area in sq km | Population | | | Number of Villages | Number of house- hold |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Male | Female | Total | | |
| BARWAN | 278.94 | 1,01,475 | 95,439 | 1,96,914 | 160 | 36,534 |
| BERHAMPORE | 201.15 | 1,53,910 | 1,44,856 | 2,98,766 | 145 | 55,379 |
| BHARATPUR-II | 98.74 | 65,057 | 62,281 | 1,27,338 | 52 | 23,547 |
| BHAGAWANGOLA | 155.87 | 67,959 | 63,952 | 1,31,911 | 60 | 23,197 |
| HARIHARPARA | 252.80 | 96,032 | 89,506 | 1,85,538 | 63 | 35,064 |
| KANDI | 238.54 | 82,304 | 77,491 | 1,59,795 | 93 | 29,840 |
| KHARGRAM | 378.80 | 1,04,003 | 98,819 | 2,02,267 | 155 | 37,147 |
| NABAGRAM | 305.61 | 82,193 | 77,940 | 1,60,133 | 118 | 30,159 |
| SAGARDIGHI | 345.20 | 1,02,494 | 96,597 | 1,99,091 | 197 | 36,652 |
| DISTRICT | 5,324.00 | 21,86,950 | 20,58,852 | 42,45,802 | 2220 | 8,55,170 |

Source: *Census of India, 1991, Series 26 Part 12B, District Census Hand Book, Murshidabad.*

Berhampore has a maximum No. Of house hold (55379) where a block like Bhagawangola-I has only 23197 households. In area, Khargram can be considered as largest block (378.80 sq km) but in population Berhampore has maximum population covering a figure of 2,98,766.

Table No. 2.3
Educational Statistics: Block Wise

| BLOCKS | LITERACY | | | LITERACY RATE (%) | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| BARWAN | 45,623 | 25,407 | 71,030 | 55.77 | 33.05 | 44.76 |
| BERHAMPORE | 61,609 | 40,085 | 1,01,694 | 48.61 | 33.65 | 41.42 |
| BHARATPUR-II | 45,623 | 25,407 | 71,030 | 52.61 | 36.92 | 44.96 |
| BHAGAWANGOLA | 18,916 | 11,041 | 29,957 | 35.85 | 22.42 | 29.36 |
| HARIHARPARA | 54,682 | 32,619 | 22,063 | 41.75 | 30.86 | 36.55 |
| KANDI | 30,636 | 15,087 | 45,723 | 46.80 | 24.72 | 36.14 |
| KHARGRAM | 20,157 | 39,674 | 59,831 | 47.49 | 25.71 | 36.95 |
| NABAGRAM | 33,638 | 18,321 | 51,959 | 51.73 | 29.96 | 41.18 |
| SAGARDIGHI | 35,564 | 20,410 | 55,974 | 44.33 | 27.03 | 35.94 |
| DISTRICT | 8,99,266 | 5,35,186 | 14,34,452 | 43.68 | 26.77 | 38.52 |

Source: - *Census of India 1991, Series 26 Part 12B, District Census Hand Book, Murshidabad.*

Table No 2:3 shows the educational status as Bharatpur-II has maximum literacy rate of 44.96 %, the block like Bhagawangala has only 29. 36 % of literacy rate, which can be considered as lowest in the district. Considering the women literacy percentage Bharatpur-II presents 36.92 whereas Bhagawangola presents only 22.42 percent women literates.

Table No 2.4 shows the break up of occupation. Berhampore has 12780 main workers, 5254 marginal workers where as Kandi has only 2191 main workers and 925 marginal workers. In table 2.5 we find no of female cultivation as 631 and 3445 women agricultural labours. Bharatpur-II has least number of women as 95 in cultivators and 83 in agricultural labours. The block Sagardighi has very less no of women (124) in household industry, where as Hariharpara has 1009 women in household industry. Table 2.6 shows that the block Kandi has maximum non workers (71.53%) but Nabagram has only 67.79% non workers in which Barwan has more women (46.67 %) as non worker where as Nabagram has only 43.79 % women non workers.

Table No. 2.4
Break up of Occupation: Block Wise

| Blocks | Main workers | | | Marginal workers | | | Non workers | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------|----------|------------------|--------|--------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| BARWAN | 3,330 | 193 | 3,523 | 435 | 1,760 | 2,195 | 47,474 | 91,901 | 1,39,375 |
| BERHAMPORE | 12,141 | 639 | 12,780 | 967 | 4,287 | 5,254 | 73,748 | 1,34,236 | 2,07,984 |
| BHARATPUR-II | 3,384 | 147 | 3,531 | 229 | 1,282 | 1,511 | 31,148 | 58,474 | 89,622 |
| BHAGAWANGOLA | 4,826 | 414 | 5,240 | 204 | 432 | 636 | 33,275 | 61,829 | 95,104 |
| HARIHARPARA | 3,323 | 84 | 3,407 | 163 | 1,089 | 1,252 | 44,093 | 86,320 | 1,30,413 |
| KANDI | 2,047 | 144 | 2,191 | 130 | 795 | 925 | 39,415 | 74,884 | 1,14,299 |
| KHARGRAM | 2,331 | 76 | 2,407 | 908 | 3,621 | 4,529 | 48,822 | 91,759 | 1,40,541 |
| NABAGRAM | 2,227 | 135 | 2,362 | 595 | 2,815 | 3,410 | 38,430 | 70,130 | 1,08,560 |
| SAGARDIGHI | 5,519 | 179 | 5,698 | 314 | 2,673 | 2,987 | 49,119 | 89,612 | 1,38,731 |
| DISTRICT MURSHIDABAD | 1,82,940 | 5,032 | 1,87,972 | 12,306 | 56,850 | 69,156 | 1,18,3329 | 2,06,3175 | 3,24,6504 |

Source: Census of India, Series 26, Part 12B, District Census Handbook, Murshidabad.

Table No. 2.5
Break Up of Main Workers: Block Wise

| Blocks | Cultivators | | | Agricultural Labours | | | Household Industry | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| BARWAN | 27,012 | 162 | 27,174 | 16,864 | 440 | 17,310 | 1,733 | 377 | 2,110 |
| BERHAMPORE | 28,868 | 383 | 29,251 | 26,734 | 2,257 | 28,991 | 1,217 | 723 | 1,940 |
| BHARATPUR-II | 13,039 | 95 | 13,134 | 9,647 | 83 | 9730 | 2316 | 967 | 3,283 |
| BHAGAWANGOLA | 12,319 | 230 | 12,549 | 14,165 | 238 | 14,403 | 476 | 372 | 848 |
| HARIHARPARA | 24,663 | 239 | 24,902 | 19,433 | 297 | 19,730 | 1,426 | 1,009 | 2,435 |
| KANDI | 22,627 | 117 | 22,744 | 12,533 | 676 | 13,209 | 873 | 249 | 1,142 |
| KHARGRAM | 26,102 | 384 | 26,486 | 17,049 | 623 | 17,672 | 3,585 | 986 | 4,571 |
| NABAGRAM | 20,689 | 631 | 21,320 | 15,283 | 3,445 | 18,728 | 861 | 299 | 1,160 |
| SAGARDIGHI | 19,830 | 343 | 20,173 | 22,934 | 2,698 | 25,632 | 241 | 124 | 365 |
| DISTRICT | 4,42,790 | 5,479 | 4,48,269 | 3,98,476 | 18,704 | 4,17,180 | 71,558 | 1,22,760 | 1,94,318 |
| MURSHIDABAD | | | | | | | | | |

Source: Census of India, Series 26, Part 12B, District Census Handbook, Murshidabad.

Table No. 2.6
Percentage of Main Workers, Marginal Workers & Non Workers

| Blocks | Main Workers | | | Marginal Workers | | | Non Workers | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| BARWAN | 27.20 | 0.90 | 28.11 | 0.22 | 0.89 | 1.11 | 24.11 | 46.67 | 70.78 |
| BERHAMPORE | 26.65 | 2.10 | 28.75 | 0.33 | 1.49 | 1.81 | 24.57 | 44.87 | 69.44 |
| BHARATPUR-II | 26.45 | 1.98 | 28.43 | 0.18 | 1.01 | 1.91 | 24.46 | 45.92 | 70.38 |
| BHAGAWANGOLA | 26.14 | 1.28 | 27.42 | 0.15 | 0.33 | 0.48 | 25.23 | 46.87 | 72.10 |
| HARIHARPARA | 27.91 | 1.13 | 29.04 | 0.09 | 0.59 | 0.67 | 23.76 | 46.52 | 70.29 |
| KANDI | 26.76 | 1.13 | 27.89 | 0.08 | 0.50 | 0.58 | 24.67 | 46.86 | 71.53 |
| KHARGRAM | 26.83 | 1.45 | 28.28 | 0.45 | 1.79 | 2.24 | 24.14 | 45.35 | 69.48 |
| NABAGRAM | 26.96 | 3.12 | 30.08 | 0.37 | 1.76 | 2.13 | 24.00 | 43.79 | 67.79 |
| SAGARDIGHI | 26.65 | 2.17 | 28.82 | 0.16 | 1.34 | 1.50 | 24.67 | 45.01 | 69.68 |
| DISTRICT MURSHIDABAD | 26.49 | 3.44 | 29.92 | 0.27 | 1.22 | 1.49 | 24.76 | 43.83 | 68.59 |

Source: Census of India, Series 26, Part 12B, District Census Handbook, Murshidabad.

Critical Variables of the Study:

Table 2.7 given below shows the framework illustrating the critical variables of the study at the theoretical and operational levels. Socio-economic factors relate to social, economic and political empowerment in the process of development within the machinery of democratic decentralization. The critical variables of the study have accordingly, been identified and categorized into three sets, as (1) Independent, (2) Dependent, (3) Intervening variables.

Table 2.7

Framework Illustrating the Critical Variables

| VARIABLES (1) | THEORETICAL LEVEL (2) | OPERATIONAL LEVEL (3) |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Independent variables | Socio-Economic factors | 1. Sex 2. Age 3. Occupation 4. Education 5. Annual family income 6. Marital status 7. Religion 7. Caste |
| Dependent variables | Social indicators of Empowerment | 1. The level of intelligence between men & women. 2. Freedom of women on social questions like marriage, education and household planning. 3. Religious impact on women empowerment |
| | Economic indicators of Empowerment | 1. Economic independence of women. 2. Influence of economic independence on various decision-making levels. 3. Economic command of male members 4. Enjoyment of economic independence by women. |
| | Political Indicators of Empowerment | 1. Political awareness of the people. 2. Decision on voting. 3. Political opportunity to women. |
| Intervening Variables | Political affiliation of women panchayat members and their level of satisfaction in self-working. | 1. Socio-economic effect on decision making by women panchayat members. 2. Level of women satisfaction. 3. Position in party and Government bodies. |

Independent Variables:

Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents fall in the category of independent variable. The two categories of respondents are the elected women panchayat members and common citizens comprising various sections of people and government officials. The socio-economic characteristics are almost same. They are identified as (i) sex (ii) age (iii) occupation (iv) Education (v) annual family income (vi) Marital status (vii) religion and (viii) caste. These variables have been grouped under independent variables for the reasons as (a) they are assumed to be independent in nature, and (b) each variable becomes a basis for predicting variation on the dependent variable.

Dependent Variables:

Social, economic and political indicators of empowerment are the dependent variables in this study. The assumption was to find out what the people particularly women, understand the term of empowerment, awareness of the people on various government policies, what do they feel the barriers of women empowerment and what do they suggest to improve the level of empowerment.

In the context of social indicators of empowerment the questions were set on:

- (a) The level of intelligence between men and women.
- (b) Freedom of women on social questions like marriage, education and household planning.
- (c) Religious impact on women empowerment, etc.

Economic indicators of empowerment were taken into account on the questions were set as:

- (a) Economic independence of women.
- (b) Influence of economic independence on various decision-making levels.
- (c) Existing economic command of male members of a family.
- (d) Enjoyment of economic independence by women.

On the same line political indicators of empowerment were also assessed on the varying questions on:

- (a) Political awareness of people, women in particular,
- (b) Decision on voting
- (c) Political opportunity to women.

Intervening Variables:

Empowerment in general and women empowerment in particular call for the active involvement of the people in the process of democratic decentralization. Political affiliation of women panchayat members and their satisfaction on self-working ability and opportunity are treated in the study as the intervening variables. These attributes were assumed to influence the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

- (a) Socio-economic effect on decision-making by women members,
- (b) Level of satisfaction in her working as a member in development,
- (c) Position in party and in government bodies, etc. These intervening variables relate only to the elected women panchayat members.

Contents of the Schedule:

The data for the study was obtained from two main sources, primary and secondary. The primary data consisted of personal interviews through questionnaire for sampled women members in Panchayat Raj Institutions, and common citizens comprising village elites, religious heads, educationists, senior citizens, political leaders, government officials and even lower level people.

Questionnaires were prepared in different form for these two sets of respondents. For the elected women members, questions were formed to get the socio-economic background of the respondents, their exposure to media, social, economic and political indicators of empowerment.

Section 'A' of the questionnaires includes demographic variables as age, sex, religion, caste, qualification and occupation.

Section 'B' of the questionnaires includes their exposure to media, political affiliation, consciousness about national and regional problems and other information pertaining to national interest.

Section 'C' of the questionnaires includes the questions related to their (i) social empowerment containing religious faith and limitation, social liberty given to them, their position in family and society. (ii) Economic empowerment contains their economic conditions, economic dependence, working condition and working ability of women.

In the second set of questions, for the common citizens, section 'A' and section 'B' include same questions on demographic variables and exposure to media. In section 'C' questions relating to their attitude or views on women in social, economic and political aspect. Questions in the section were formulated on Likert's five point Scale. The Scale ranges from "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Undecided", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree", with scores 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

Data Processing:

Applying relevant statistical tools, the information's and data were analyzed to draw the generalization and to arrive at the conclusions. Mainly correlation analysis, the relationship both positive and negative between the variables of age, sex, education, income, religion, caste, occupation, work satisfaction (for the women panchayat members), level of awareness of empowerment in development process (women), level of given or acquired empowerment (women) in all the three aspects and ability of acceptance of such empowerment have been measured.

Seale Ranges from S.A, A, U.D, D.A and S D A was taken to score the intensity of orientation.

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CHAPTER - III
DEMOCRATIC
DECENTRALIZATION IN
INDIA: HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION IN INDIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Democratic decentralization has remained a basic tenet of national policy ever since India attained her independence. Various committees have recommended local self-government, as the most suitable agency for participatory planning to bring administration and development programmes nearer to the people.

Democratic decentralization is a concept, which associates people with local administration through popularly elected bodies. It recognizes the right of the people to take initiative and to execute policy decisions in an autonomous way; therefore, it could be called both an end and a means (Datta Prabhat, 1994). The contemporary Indian policy has been striving for establishing democratic goals through modernizing its political and administrative institutions, which existed since 400 BC. Almost every village had a self governing body of its own pattern. The British Rule in India had slowly demolished the system of government introducing the RYOTWARI system and centralization of executive and judicial powers (Chitlang, BM 1998). Though some attempts were made to strengthen the local bodies by Rippon Resolution (1882), Royal commission on decentralization, 1907, Government of India Act, 1919 and 1935, but the result was not satisfactory. They were for entrenchment and maintenance of British Regime (Bhattacharya M 1991), Mahatma Gandhi believed that India lived in its villages and so decentralization of power was the best and perhaps the only way to ensure grassroot participation in democratic experiments. In fact, Article 40 in part IV of the Constitution, states that, the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with powers and authorities to function as units of self government (Singh SK 1994).

Decentralization: The Concept

The Latin root of the word “Decentralization” conveys the meaning ‘away from the centre’ (Mac Mohan, 1961). Also it means the transfer of authority- legislative, judicial or administrative - from a higher level of government to a lower level (White .D Leonord, 1959).

‘Decentralization may take any of the four forms (Meenakshi Sundaram, 1994);

- (i) Deconcentration: - Handing over some amount of administrative authority to lower levels.
- (ii) Delegation: - Transferring responsibility for specifically defined functions to organizations that are out side the regular bureaucratic structure and indirectly controlled by the central government.
- (iii) Devolution: - Creation and strengthening of sub-national unit of the government activities of which are substantially outside the direct control of the central government.
- (iv) Privatization: - Passing all responsibility for functions to non-governmental organizations independent of the government.

The word ‘decentralisation’, therefore relates to the devolution of powers resulting from the creation of bodies separated by law from the national center to local representatives (Meenakshi Sundaram, 1994).

Decentralization in Vedic Era:

The local government in India traces its origin to the hoary past. The Vedas (Rig) reveal that the ancient Hindus used to lead a corporate life.

Jayswal (1955), an historian has found from the Vedas that “the national life and activities in the earliest times on record was expressed through popular assemblies and institutions”. Another history scholar also referred the nature and composition of those assemblies and institution and lists a few terms like, ‘Kula’, ‘Gana’, ‘Jati’, ‘Puja’, ‘Vrata’, ‘Sreni’, ‘Raigama’, ‘Sumana’, ‘Parisat’ and ‘Carana’ (Mookerji, 1958).

The epics and other scriptures, such as the *Smritis* and the *Upanishads* and the *Jatakas* also refer to the existence of the village. According to Ramayana and Mahabharata, there existed two types of villages – ‘Ghosh’ and ‘Gram’, used to be administered by an official, known as ‘Gramini’. Though nominated by the king, he had to work on the advice of the village elders known as ‘Gram Vridhas’, ‘Samiti’, ‘Sabha’ or ‘Panchyat’ (Mookerji. R 1958).

Thus research of a number of Indian historians has brought out the fact that there flourished a well settled and more or less highly developed system of local government, enjoyed a state of splendid isolation, the central government on its part, did not unduly bother itself about the local affairs (Bhatnagar S, 1978). Village Panchayats had their roots in the ancient past and were backbone of the Indian rural social and economic system (Hansraj, 1992).

Re-emergence of Decentralization in Colonial Phase:

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the traditional “Village Panchayat” was about to vanish, if a few existed in a remote areas had practically no say in the matter of the administration.

The period following 1830 saw a revolutionary change sweeping the country in almost all walks of life. The means of communication, a network of roads, railways, telegraphs were laid out and the educational advancement in English was spread throughout the country. The imperial government also realized the need for providing the basic amenities of life. The post-Mutiny period witnessed acute financial stringencies overtaking the government. To alleviate the fiscal hardship, the government devised the policy of devolving more and more powers to the provinces (Bhatnagar, 1978).

The most significant step in this regard was taken by the historic resolution of the Government of Lord Ripon in 1882. Lord Ripon was the first to initiate what may be called decentralization discourse during the colonial regime. His resolution (1882) stood for decentralization of a large network of local self-governing bodies. He, though for (a) Training the Indians art of governance (b) enabling them to learn from experience, and (c) Opening up

avenues for political participation of educated people, urged for an early establishment of the local boards not only in cities but also in rural areas (Datta, 1995). But his proposals remained in cold storage because the successor of Lord Ripon considered them too radical to be implemented. Though, local boards came to be established, they failed to give any semblance of democratic institutions. What Ripon wanted to secure was not a presentation of the people of an European democratic type, but the training of the best, most intelligent and most influential went to take an interest and an active part in the administration. Ripon's aim was to advance and promote the political and popular education to the people and to induce the best and most intelligent men. But, Ripon's dream remained largely unfulfilled. Decentralization or local self-government did not become an active and stimulating agency for political education.

The government of India accepted the recommendations of the Royal Commission in principle and introduced "Panchayat" in a few selected villages. Though, the scheme did not succeed the idea of village Panchayat, got the imagination of government and people. In 1935, a new era of hope was looked in; efforts were made not only to democratize the constitution and functioning of the Village Panchayat but also to physically expand their way to work.

Gandhi on Democratic Decentralisation:

In February 1916, Gandhi appreciated the ancient Panchayat system. He referred to the Panchayat system as the right medium for securing cheap justice as well as for avoiding reliance on government for the settlement of mutual dispute. To Gandhi, a democratic policy involves decentralization in a way that the local affairs are managed by the local people. Without decentralization it is impossible to ensure individual liberty, and mental and moral growth of man (Raju MR, 1995).

Gandhi pleads for decentralization of both economic and political power. He rejects the power structure of the west on the ground of centralization of power. Though not absolute sufficiency but Gandhi's decentralization implies

the fundamental principal of self-sufficiency. He believes that, success of political decentralization depends on economic decentralization. He visualizes a social and political order based on decentralization of both economic and political power.

Gandhi wants to transform every region into a small Republic or a Panchayat. His approach to democratic decentralization is based on the principles of non-violence, truth, individual freedom, non-exploitation and morality of the Indian masses.

Gandhi argued that Indian Independence must begin at the bottom. He pleaded for decentralization as an essential precondition for the realization of the ideal democracy to enable each individual to participate in the decision making and implementation process, Vinobha Bhave extended the idea of Gandhian “Sarvodaya” and laid the major emphasis on economic transformation and development.

Decentralization after Independence:

Unfortunately, the Draft Commission in 1948 made no reference to panchayats. After good deal of thought and discussion, the issue was resolved through a move by K.Santhanam. Article 40 of the Constitution says, “the state shall take steps to organize will Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government (Bhatnagar S,1978). The inclusion of the ‘Panchayats’ in Indian constitution gave a new life and nearly half of the Indian villages came to be covered by 1954.

First Phase of Panchayats:

The first phase of village self-government in the form of Panchayati Raj Institutions sprang up in India in the mid 20th century not as a part of the Art 40 of the Indian constitution, but as a sequel to the recommendations of Balwantray Mehta Committee.

Balwantray Mehta Committee:

In January, 1957, the Balwantray Mehta study team was appointed to evaluate the workings of the Community Development Programme (CDP) and the National Extension Service (NES), and submitted its report on the 24th November 1957, with a recommendation of three-tier-Panchayat system, namely, the village Panchayat consisting of directly elected member on the basis of adult franchise; Panchayat Samiti, the middle tier, would be directly elected by the village Panchayat at block level with the B.D.O., acting as the executive officer of the Panchayat Samiti, which will perform specific types of functions; Zilla Parishad, the upper tier with the power to approve the annual budget, co-ordinate plans, distribute government, funds and guide the activities of Panchayat Samiti (Sen Prontesh, 1998). The main thrust of the B Mehta Committee report was towards the democratic decentralization, an effort to shift decision making closer to people, to encourage people's participation and to put bureaucracy under local popular control (Mehta Report Vol-I). The B Mehta Committee Report was accepted by the government of India in 1958 and were made operative in different states according to the structure and pattern suitable to the conditions of each state. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were the first to adopt the Panchayat Raj form of Government in 1959.

Evaluations:

In spite of many successes in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, Panchayat Raj had also generally failed to deliver the goods to the rural people. Structural inadequacy, subsidiary legislation to curtail decision-making power of elected bodies, meager source of income and the role of bureaucracy were the main causes of the failure. During the B.Mehta period the Panchayat Raj institutions were also denied a sound democratic basis and proper administrative nourishment. The devolution of administrative and financial powers to the grass-root level was mere a slogan. Iqbal Narain (1987) observes "Nothing has done greater harm to Panchayat Raj than the effort to bypass them institutionally in launching target oriented development programme (Narain

Iqbal, 1987). Ashok Mehta identified the ups and down of first phase of Panchayat in (i) Ascendancy period (1959-64) (ii) The stagnation period (1965-69) (iii) The period of decline (1969-77) (Datta P, 1995).

In reference to the Balvantray Mehta committee report, state governments decided to appoint some other committee in order to review the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions of their own states. The states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh appointed various committees in respect of their states as V.P.Naik committee, 1961, Sadiq Ali Committee, 1964, Hardayal Singh Committee, 1965, and Ram Murti Committee, 1965. These committees suggested that the zilla parishad should be placed at the prime position in the system of Panchayat Raj Institutions, and the district should be the central part in the process of development.

Second Phase of Panchayats:

Revamping of Panchayats was noticed with the change of Indian political scenario in 1977. New Janata Government appointed the Ashok Mehta committee to suggest for revitalization of Panchayat Raj institutions. The committee, in August 1978, submitted its report which initiated the second phase of Panchayats with emphasis on regular election, devolution of more powers to local bodies. Soon after that, three states, West Bengal, Karnataka and Kerala, injected a new life to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, and West Bengal emerged successfully.

Important Feature of Ashok Mehta Committee Report:

Out of 132 recommendations the most important findings of the committee was the functional necessity of decentralizing administration closer to the people. The committee observed that, where millions of people were involved and a lot of the poor was sought to be improved, decentralized administration was an unavoidable necessity.

The most important recommendations of A Mehta committee report was to introduce a two-tier Panchayat system in place of three-tier existing Panchayat

system. The Zilla Parishad sought to be made the executive body; below of that would be a Mandal Panchayat as a mark of decentralization below the district level. Another important recommendation was the provision for "open participation of political parties in Panchayati Raj affairs"(Yasin M., 1990).

Evaluation:

Majority of the state governments opposed the idea of party based election and Mandal Panchayat. The Chief Ministers in a meeting held on May 19, 1979, decided to appoint a drafting committee, comprising a number of Chief Ministers and Union Minister as its head. Some of the principles adopted by the Chief Ministers were: the existing three tier structure could be continued, the term of these office should be for five years.

The proposals recommended by Ashok Mehta committee were not adequate enough for the complete transfer of power to the local bodies in making decentralization a living reality. The Panchayati Raj Institutions failed to fulfill the characteristics of 'village-government' in the real sense of the term. The A Mehta committee recommendation for the abolition of block level body, the Panchayat Samiti, aroused indignation among the people. Being the creation of the Janata government (1977-80), the committee enjoyed a low credibility with the congress government (Maheshwari, 1979).

Other states either lagged behind with marginal achievements or stayed away from the movements after the governmental change took place. The most distinguishing feature of this second phase of Panchayats in West Bengal is the social composition of the leadership replacing the old patterned rural leadership by means of election (Datta, 1993).

VKRV Rao Committee, 1985, emphasized decentralization at the district level and all the developmental department should be brought under the control and supervision of Zilla Parishad. The budgets, non-plan and plan, of these departments and funds for other various schemes implemented at the district level or below should be transferred to the Zilla Parishad.

L.M Singhvi committee, 1986, felt that as the peoples participation in development process and decision making can not be achieved through bureaucratic structure and devolutionary strategies, the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be viewed as the institutions of self-government which naturally involve the people in decision making process and their development.

Third Phase of Panchayats :

After the 73rd constitutional amendment act, 1992 the third phase of Panchayat emergence in India began. The concern for decentralization was technical to improve the planning process. Rajiv Gandhi government formulated a model of Panchayat bill in 1989 as a “controlled decentralization” but this bill was not passed in the upper house of the parliament. The National front government also presented this bill in September 1990 but the government, went out of power soon. Finally under PV Narasimha Rao government, the bill was again introduced in Parliament and was passed in December 1992 but was assented by President of India on 23 April 1993 and was brought as Act on 24 April 1993 (Mathew, 1994).

The Main Features of 73rd Constitution Amendment Act:

Until this amendment was made, the formation, structure, composition, power, functions, election matters were the responsibilities of state govt. With the effect of this 73rd constitution Amendment, the legislative and administrative and executive actions of the state govt. as regards Panchayats will have to come under the provision of part ix of the constitution (Ramachandran V, 1993).

To enlist (Mathew 1994) the main features in brief of this Act we find:-

- a) Panchayats will be institutions of self- government.
- b) There will be Gram Sabha for each village or group of villages.
- c) A three-tier pachayat system, at village, Block and District levels.
- d) Seats in Panchayats at all level shall be filled by direct election.
- e) Members of Parliament, M.L.A.s and M.L.Cs can be members of Block or District level.

- f) Reservation of seat in all tiers for S.C and S.T in proportion to their population, even offices of chairperson also to be reserved accordingly.
- g) One third of total seats will be reserved for women. One third of reserved seat for S.C and S.T also to be reserved for women.
- h) State Legislatures have the liberty to provide reservation of seats and offices of chairperson in favour of backward classes.
- i) Uniform five year term of Panchayats and elections to be held before expiry of present term. In the event of dissolution, election will be held within six months.
- j) It will not be possible to dissolve the existing Panchayats amending any act before the expiry of its duration.
- k) Person disqualified under any law for election to the legislature of any state will not be entitled to become a member of Panchayat.
- l) Independent Election Commission will be established in the state for direction and control of election process.
- m) Specific responsibilities will be entrusted to the Panchayats to prepare plans for economic development and social justice in respect of 29 subjects listed in the ix schedule.
- n) Panchayats will receive adequate funds to carry out these functions
- o) In each state a Finance Commission will be established to determine the principles on the basis of which adequate financial resources could be ensured for Panchayats.

Powers and Functions of Panchayati Raj Institutions:

Article 243 (G) of the 73rd constitution amendment has enabled state govt. to provide necessary powers and functions to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (a) to function as institutions of local self govt and (b) Plan and implement schemes for economic development and social justice including those 29 subjects enlisted in XI schedule –

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extensions.

2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.
3. Minor irrigation, water management and water shed development.
4. Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Social forestry and farm forest.
7. Minor forest produce.
8. Small scale industries including food processing industries.
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries.
10. Rural housing.
11. Drinking Water.
12. Fuel and Fodder.
13. Roads, Culverts Bridge, ferries, waterways and other means of communication.
14. Rural electrification including distribution of Electricity.
15. Non- conventional energy sources.
16. Poverty alleviation programme.
17. Education including primary and secondary schools.
18. Technical training and vocational education.
19. Adult and non-formal education.
20. Rural libraries.
21. Cultural activities
22. Market and fairs.
23. Health and Sanitation including hospitals, primary health centers and dispensaries.
24. Family welfare.
25. Women and Child development.
26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.
27. Welfare of the weaker sections and in particular of the scheduled casts and scheduled tribes.
28. Public distribution system.

29. Maintenance of community assets.

Panchayat and Women:

Women's empowerment is one of the objectives of the third phase of Panchayats in India. Gandhi found that, there is no justification for men to deprive women or deny them equal rights on grounds of illiteracy but education is useful for enabling women to uphold their natural rights to improve their knowledge (Gupta A 1994). Women in India as in many other countries awfully under represented in political institutions. National perspective plan for women (1988) was formulated on the question of women's political participation (Dutta P 1995).

Women's participation has been quite encouraging in Karnataka Panchayat election of 1994 where woman participants were 43.77 pc (Menon in P Dutta, 1995). Even before the reservation, women of Maharashtra came forward to submit women panels for Panchayat election (Gail 1987).

In West Bengal also the 1998 Panchayat election shows that inspite of 33 pc reservation for women, more than 35 pc women were elected which shows political awareness of women towards Panchayats. Though the 73rd Constitutional amendment enlisted participation of women in local govt but their roles have been actually performed either by husbands or any male member of the family (Mahipal, 1998). Millions of women Panchayat members will not all be capable of fulfilling their responsibilities, they may be proxies for men, who manipulate them from behind the scene (Narayan U 1996 & Sinha 1999).

Panchayati Raj Experienced in West Bengal:

Panchayats in West Bengal have a long history, inherited from undivided Bengal passing through different model of Panchayat system. Local self-government in West Bengal was established with the passing of Village Chowkidari Act in 1870, which was directly controlled and guided by the village body. As the members of these bodies were not directly elected by the people, it was not a village government in real sense of the terms (Village Chowkidari

Act, 1870). With the appearance of Lord Ripon's resolution on May 18, 1882, this Act became obsolete.

The Bengal village self- government Act, 1885 recommended local boards at each sub divisional level, depending on district for its performance and activities. By this act, the village government was established not from the below but from the top (Roy NC, 1936).

Under the provision of the Bengal village self-government Act, 1919, Union Board was formed. The Chowkidari Panchayat was abolished but Chowkidar and Dafadars were brought under the disposal of the Union Boards. New Panchayats in the shape of Union Board worked on village community affairs, roads, water works, public health and sanitation etc (Das P, 1991).

Thus, District Board at district level, local Board at sub-division level, and Union Board at village level were there in Pre independent Bengal. These Boards could not uphold the socio-economic status of the rural people. And the dawn of the independence brought an opportunity for the people of the country to stand behind the masses.

With the advent of independence in 1947, the old system of District Boards and Local Boards on the one hand and Union Boards on the other were found a dismal failure. With the passage of the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957, Panchayati Raj consisted of two tiers: Gram Panchayat and Anchal Panchayat. The four tier structure of West Bengal Panchayat system was formally inaugurated on Oct 2, 1964, after passing of the West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act, 1963. These four tiers were Gram Panchayat, Anchal Panchayat, Anchalik Parishad and Zilla Parishad.

Structure, Composition and Functions of Four Tiers

Panchayat System:

Gram Panchayat:

According to the Act of 1957, Gram Sabha in West Bengal was a first step towards the formation of the Panchayat Raj structure. Gram Panchayat was

the executive committee of the Gram Sabha, and was elected by the members of the Sabha from amongst themselves. The Act of 1957, also provided for state nominated members possessing special qualifications. The elected members were to elect the Adhyaksha and Upadhyaksha from amongst themselves.

The functions of Gram Panchayats fall under three categories; obligatory, discretionary and delegated. First category included common municipal functions relating to public health, water supply and local public works. The other two categories consisted of development such as, construction, promotion of cottage industry, street lighting, cooperatives and so on.

Anchal Panchayat:

The second tier, placed above the Gram Panchayat, was the Anchal Panchayat, a unique which made the West Bengal Panchayat system a four-tier Panchayat. Under the Act of 1957, 8-10 Gram Panchayats come under Anchal Panchayat, all Adhyaksha of Gram Panchayats were the members of this tier and members to be elected by the members of Gram Sabha, keeping in view that at least one member was elected for every 500 members of the Gram Sabha. At the first meeting this tier would elect its Prodhan and Upa-pradhan (Diwakar, 1984).

This tier was made responsible for imposition of taxes, maintenance of law and order, and rural justice. The executive work of this tier was to look after by a secretary, appointed by State government.

Anchalik Parishad:

As per the recommendations of B.Mehta study team and West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act, 1963, Anchalik Parishad was constituted at block level.

This tier consisted of:

- a) All prodhans of that particular block area.
- b) One Adhyaksha elected, by the Adhyaksha of Gram Panchayat.
- c) M.L.A and M.P within the block area

- d) Two women and two person of backward community appointed by state government.
- e) Two co-opted members having experience in social work.
- f) The Block Development Officer.

This Parishad elects president and, vice president amongst its member. The B.D.O is executive officer of this tier.

The Anchalik parishad was entrusted with development work of entire block, was to act as a coordinating agency for plans and programmes. To be more specific, its function included the development of agriculture, livestock, cotton industry, cooperatives, rural roads, water supply and many other object of general public utility.

Zilla Parishad:

Under the West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act 1963, Zilla Parishad constituted of both the members and the associated members as

- i) All presidents of concerned Anchalik parishads, ex-officio
- ii) Two adhyakshas
- iii) MPs and MLAs elected within the district
- iv) Chairman of the Municipality
- v) President of the School Board, ex-officio
- vi) Two women appointed by State government.
- vii) The sub-divisional officers of the district

The Zilla Parishad was to elect one chairman and one vice chairman from amongst members in its first meeting (Government of West Bengal Act, 1963).

Zilla Parishads were empowered to undertake a wide range of functions similar to those of Anchalik Parishads. This parishad had additional responsibility of advising the state government. on the distribution of work among the lower tiers. State government had a number of officials at this tier as district Panchayat officer, Assistant Engineer etc.,

Assessment of the Four Tier Panchayat System in West Bengal:

The four tier Panchayati Raj system in West Bengal introduced through the Acts of 1957 and 1963 failed to evoke much expected enthusiasm and to enlist popular support.

The failure may be attributed to a number of related factors as:

- (i) This Panchayati Raj structure did not affect the traditional role, status and functions of the key functionaries like District Magistrate who rather remain aloof. Ineffectiveness of the control of the non-official member over the officials, was very much evident. The powers, status and the prestige of the elected members were there fore, circumscribed and restricted by the government officials.
- (ii) Elections in all the tiers were due every four years, However, elections were postponed due to political instability, President's rule, war and emergency resulting in the ad-hocism in the functioning of the local government.
- (iii) Another reason for the failure of that four tier PRIs was the paucity of funds, which is regarded as the institutional fuel for any agency.
Structural arrangements of Panchyati Raj bodies were the other factors coming in the way of healthy growth of the Panchyati Raj activities.
- (iv) The absence of direct election for the upper three tiers resulted in lack of initiatives and spirit of service of the members of upper tiers bodies.
- (v) Presence of MLA's and MP's discouraged the growth of local leader ship.

The Cumulative effect of these loopholes in the system of Panchayat Raj in West Bengal stopped the natural growth and development of people's organization and failed to live up to the rate of state field administration.

Three Tier System of New Panchayati Raj in West Bengal:

Replacing the earlier Act of 1957 and 1963, West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973 was the new dimension of Panchayati Raj. With this act West Bengal came on the same line of all India pattern of three tier Panchayati Raj system, Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. But this Act was not implemented till 1977 and with the emergence of left front government in West Bengal, Panchayat Raj got a new life since 1978.

GRAM PANCAHYAT:

Gram Panchayat, under the new Panchayat Raj system, consists only of elected members. The member varies between seven and twenty five. In the first meeting it elects one Prodhan and Upa Prodhan from among its elected members. Official functions are looked after by the secretary, appointed by the state government.

There is also a provision for a job assistant as to assist in implementing plans and policies of the Gram Panchayat. The state government may send some officers and staff to act under the Gram Panchayat.

Functions:

The functions of a Gram Panchayat are mainly three types – obligatory, assigned and discretionary. The important obligatory duties are laid down in section 19 of the West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973. These are as:

Sanitation, Conservancy and Drainage and prevention of public nuisance, supply of drinking water, preventive measures in respect of malaria, smallpox, cholera or another epidemic.

The maintenance, repair and reconstruction of public tanks, burning ghats and public graveyards, the control and administration of the G.P. fund, the imposition and collection of tax etc,

Section 21 has laid down the discretionary duties.

These functions are those pertaining to the rural development and rural reconstruction and include maintenance and beautification of public streets,

sinking of wells, excavation of ponds and tanks, construction and regulation of markets; fairs and local exhibitions, establishment and maintenance of libraries and reading rooms, recreation centers, the introduction and promotion of cooperative farming, stores and other enterprises. And any other local work of public utility which is likely to promote the health, comfort, convenience, or material prosperity of the people.

Section 20 deals with the assigned functions.

These functions are assigned by the state government for execution with full financial support. They are primary, social, technical or vocational education, rural dispensaries, health center, child welfare centers, irrigation, promotion of waste land into cultivation, plantations, grow-more food campaign etc..

PANCHAYAT SAMITI:

The middle tier is the Panchayat Samiti that consists of the following categories of members :-

- i) All the prodhans of the G.Ps within the area of the Block.
- ii) All the elected members of each Panchayat Samiti.
- iii) All the MLAs, MPs within the block area.

The Samiti at its first meeting elects one Sabhapati and saha Sabhapati from amongst the members. This tier required to meet at least once in three months. B.D.O. is the ex-officio executive officer Extension Officer Panchayats (EOP) is the secretary of this body.

For the proper functioning of the Samiti, it has the following standing committees:-

- 1) Artho-o-sanstha sthayee Samiti
- 2) Janasasthya sthayee Samiti
- 3) Purta Karya sthayee Samiti
- 4) Krishi sech-o- samabaya sthayee Samiti
- 5) Siksha sthayee Samiti
- 6) Khudra silpa, tran-o-janakalyan sthayee Samiti
- 7) Unnayan, Parikalpana o bhumi sanskar sthayee Samiti

- 8) Matsya-o-posupalan sthayee Samiti and
- 9) Khadya-o-sarabaraha sthayee Samiti.

Functions:

As per West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1993, Section 109 (i) (e) (f), the main functions of this tier are to coordinate and integrate the activities of the constituent G.Ps.

- (i) Undertake any schemes or adopt measures including the financial assistance relating to the development of agriculture, live stock, cottage industry, water supply, irrigation, public health and sanitation etc.
- (ii) Undertake management of any institution or organization entrusted to it by the state government or any other authority.
- (iii) Manage or maintain any work of public utility under its control and management (section 110).
- (iv) Make grants in aid of any school, public institution or public welfare organisation within the block (section 111).
- (v) Adopt measure for relief of distress.
- (vi) Co-ordinate and integrate the development plans and schemes prepared by G.P. in the block.(sec111).
- (vii) This tier may take over the maintenance and control of any road, bridge, tank, ghat, channel or drain belonging to a private owner or any other authority (section 112).

ZILLA PARISHAD:

Zilla parishad is the upper most tier of Panchayati Raj bodies based at the district level. As laid down in sec 140 of the Act of 1973, this tier consists of the following members:

- i) Sabhapatis of the Panchayati Samitis within the district as ex-officio member.
- ii) All the elected members of zilla parishad.

iii) MLAs, MPs within the district.

This parishad is headed by the Sabhadhipati and Sahakari Sabhadhipati elected from amongst its members. District magistrate is the executive officer of zilla parishad. One secretary from the category of civil service is appointed by state government. The secretary is to assist the D.M in discharging his duties. The executive officer, the D.M remains responsible for executing the policies of zilla parishad.

Zilla parishad also like Panchayati Samiti, has standing committees, may also constitute more with approval of the state government. These committees are :-

- (i) Artha O sanstha sthayee Samiti.
- (ii) Ganasastha sthayee Samiti.
- (iii) Purta karya sthayee Samiti.
- (iv) Krishi, sech O samabaya sthayee Samiti.
- (v) Shiksha sthayee Samiti.
- (vi) Khudra shilpa, tran O ganakalyan.
- (vii) Such other Samities as the zilla parishad may, constitute, subject to the approval of state government (section 171).

Section 153, 155, 157, 158 lay down the power of Zilla Parishads.

These are:

- (a) To undertake any schemes or offer financial assistance for the development of agricultural, livestock, industries, rural credit, water supply, irrigation, primary, secondary, adult education etc.
- (b) To undertake the execution of any scheme entrusted to it by the state government or any other authority.
- (c) To manage or maintain any work of public utility or any institution.
- (d) To make grants in aid of any school, public institution or public welfare organization.
- (e) To examine and sanction the budget estimate of the Panchayat Samiti.

- (f) To adopt measures for the relief of distress.
- (g) To perform such other functions as the state government may, by general or specific order, direct.

It is observed that, earlier the government officials played the main role in the matter of policy formulation and its implementation. Now the elected representatives, in the three-tier level of Panchayati Raj Institutions, formulate the policies.

WEST BENGAL PANCHAYAT: A New Experience

After Independence, West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957 was passed. West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act, 1963 was passed for remodeling the local government, bringing about democratic decentralization. In 1973, West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973 was passed to give Panchayat Raj a new shape. In 1977, after the Left Front was voted to power in the state and having faced many social, structural, constitutional, and political constraints, has injected a new life to the Panchayats.

Major amendments to the West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973, were made in 1992, 1994 and 1997, so as to conform to the 73rd constitutional amendments. It would be appropriate to highlight some important provisions of these amendments (Task Force of Panchayati Raj 2000)

- a) It provides for a Gram Sansad for each electoral constituency.
- b) The Gram Sabha is to meet once in a year. The Panchayat is required to be place before the meeting.
- c) The tenure of the three-tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions has been fixed at five years.
- d) The amendment also established the state Election Commission state Finance Commission and the District Council.
- e) Providing one- third seat to women by rotation (Pramanik SK, P Dutta 1994).

Literal meaning of self- government is autonomy without outside interference. Panchayats in West Bengal have survived for so long and provided

continuity of governance at the sub-state level. The constitutional protection now offered to them by 73rd amendment has enabled them to continue even if there is any change in Writer's Building (Mukherjee N, Bandopadhyay 1993). It has been observed that through Panchayat election, power has been decentralized and with the organized force of the village poor and middle class the task of establishing the power of poor curbing the power of the administrative officers in the villages has been carried out (Acharya P, 1993).

Gram Sabha in Panchayati Raj System:

Rural progress depends entirely on the existence of an active organization at village level, which can bring all the people of different sections into common programme. Panchayati Raj is a unit of governmental system and Gram Sabha is the most important basic institution in Panchayati Raj system. Gram Sabha is a village assembly of all adults men and women to look after its internal administration and development of village. This is a model for democracy at the grass root level based on direct participation by the people (Diwakar, 1984). Gram Sabha is an institutional approach to popular participation. It is a base of Panchayati Raj system having democratic decentralization at village.

At grass root level, the immediate task is to create a faith in the village people regarding the social utility of Panchayati Raj. To establish a vital link between the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat, proceedings of the Gram Sabha should be recorded and approved by the Panchayat in their meetings. Gram Sabha would establish an active dialogue between the village people and their elected representatives at Panchayat level regarding development matters, agenda should cover the budget and earlier audit report and also to discuss the annual administrative report with progress report of the development work. This would result in developing the link between the common people and their Panchayat System. It is birth right of every village to conduct its own affairs. Gram Sabha should therefore take into its hands the management of village affairs or development (Narayanasamy S, 1998).

To enlist the people's active cooperation in the national campaign to secure the proper distribution and utilization of government sources, Gram Sabha being a primary body, would be face to face organ of direct democracy, not made up of representatives but all adult residents. Gram Sabha to which every voter in village Panchayat is a member, is a consultative body, a forum of thought.

Gram Sabha must be free from all social and political evils; it must have a spiritual fiber, which will unite all forces at the grass, root level. As we stepped into the 21st Century, grass root institution must be strengthened village assembly must be commanded by the poorest of the poor, and in this direction people have to dedicate themselves to strengthen Gram Sabha in the Panchayat system (West Bengal Panchayat Amendment Act, 1994 Sec 16 B). With effect from 1998, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad is working on the following Sthayee Samiti basis:

- a) Artha, Sanstha, Unnayan-o-Parikalpana Sthayee Samiti.
- b) Banaswastha-o-paribesh sthayee Samiti.
- c) Krishi-Sech-O-Samaboy Sthayee Samiti.
- d) Purta Karya-O-Paribhan Sthayee Samiti.
- e) Siksha-Sanskriti, Tathya-O-Kriya Sthayee Samiti.
- f) Sishu-O-Nari Unnayan, Janakalyan-O-Tran Sthayee Samiti.
- g) Bon-O-Bhumi Sanskar Sthayee Samiti.
- h) Matsya-O-Prani Sampad Bikash Sthayee Samiti
- i) Khadya-O-Saraberaha Sthayee Samiti
- j) Khudra Shilpa, Bidyut-O-Achiracharit Shakthi Sthayee Samiti

(West Bengal Panchayat (amendment) Act 1997)

Conclusion:

The Panchayats of West Bengal are today lively centers of activity. However, such decentralization is in the nature of 'de-concentration' type under which Panchayats serve as the implementing agencies of the state government.

Skewed distribution of benefits, failure to evoke popular support, inability to achieve common acceptance of the decisions, lack of spirit in leadership, dominance of rich farmers, undue political interference and paucity of funds are the deficiencies existing in the functions of Panchayats. Reservation to various sections has given them opportunities to articulate and fulfill their needs and aspirations. With the legislative support of the 73rd constitutional amendment, it is found that the process of democratic decentralization has gathered momentum.

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CHAPTER - IV
DEMOCRATIC
DECENTRALIZATION AND
DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA : HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Democratic Decentralisation:

The creation of a democratic, efficient and viable rural administration is the basic to the development of the country and is an essential part of modernisation. With the ever-expanding functions of the government in the area of welfare and development, the decentralised administration is not only desirable but also necessary (Government of India report 1978). Without decentralisation no meaningful development is possible.

To implement, coordinate and supervise the entire development programme, an organisation at an appropriate level is necessary. It is the district below the state, is the first point of decentralisation. The Administrative Reform Commission also recommended the district as the unit of planning and hence, the Zilla Parishad should be solely responsible for the formulation and implementation of central and state schemes within the district.

Democratic decentralisation in present context has, two positive virtues: it is consistent with the democratic trend and is also the most efficient method of formulating and executing local developmental plans. The fundamental purpose of decentralized democracy in the Indian context should be, to train local leadership to assume greater responsibility and to serve the local people with efficiency and economy (Government of Maharashtra, Report 1961).

Democratic Decentralisation In Development:

Essential and pre-requisite for the success of decentralized planning at sub-state level is the presence of democratic institutions at grassroots level, endowed with powers, functions and adequate financial sources. During the

fifties planning for development was basically a centralized affair. But the importance of and the need for decentralized planning was keenly felt. Next phase of development (1960–70) witnessed the establishment of local-self Government under democratic decentralisation. Local-self government institutions (LSGI) in India has a hoary past. The modern local-self government was laid in 1882 with the Rippon resolutions. Working of the local-self government revealed that inadequate funds and excessive official control crippled the functioning of the local-self government.

As decentralisation works at grassroot level, the 'development' can be focused as development at the bottom, which takes the turn towards rural development. Decentralised governance have been considered the best suited agencies to carry out rural development. Panchayats were established in our country after independence but major thrust was given after Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) Report. With the emergence of Janata Government at the centre and appointment of Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) the system took a new turn towards decentralisation and development.

The basic task of India was to dismantle the colonial structure and restore the traditional order of our civilization. But what actually happened was a continuation of the old colonial order with a little adjustment (Shankar K, 1999).

The 73rd constitutional amendment Act has adopted the colonial concept and as such village panchayats are apart of the political administrative patronage set up (Suri. PC 1993). While talking about decentralisation of power to lower bodies, central schemes are increasing both in number and in size, which became difficult to know about, kind of decentralisation India is heading (Hirway.I 1989). We cannot deny that Panchayat bodies has great potential, capacity and role in regard to development of our country, so this decentralisation process has to play an important role in the overall development of the economy and polity of India.

It is true that Panchayati Raj in India was not functioning in the right direction, requiring its revitalization leading to mass participation in socio-economic power structure. Therefore, the constitutional 73rd amendment Act is

no doubt an attempt in that direction and certainly will revitalize Panchayati Raj for decentralisation and development.

Table – 4.1
Panchayats in the States

| Name of the State | Number of Panchayat Units | | | Total |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------|
| | District Panchayat | Block Panchayat | Village Panchayat | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 22 | 1098 | 21943 | 23063 |
| Bihar | 55 | 725 | 12181 | 12961 |
| Gujarat | 19 | 184 | 13316 | 13519 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 12 | 72 | 2922 | 3006 |
| Karnataka | 27 | 175 | 5640 | 5842 |
| Kerala | 14 | 152 | 991 | 1157 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 45 | 459 | 30922 | 31426 |
| Maharashtra | 29 | 319 | 27619 | 27967 |
| North East: | | | | |
| Assam | 21 | 202 | 2489 | 2172 |
| Tripura | 03 | 16 | 525 | 544 |
| Manipur | 03 | - | 166 | 169 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 12 | 79 | 2012 | 2103 |
| Orissa | 30 | 314 | 5261 | 5605 |
| Punjab | 17 | 138 | 11591 | 11746 |
| Rajasthan | 31 | 237 | 9185 | 9453 |
| Tamilnadu | 28 | 384 | 12584 | 12996 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 68 | 901 | 58605 | 59574 |
| West Bengal | 17 | 341 | 3314 | 3672 |

Source : *Panchayati Raj in India – Status Report, 1999, Task force on Panchayati Raj, Rajeev Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi March 2000*

Table 4.1 and 4.2 show the number of Panchayat Units and their elected representatives in the three tier Panchayati Raj System. Uttar Pradesh

represents 59574, the maximum number of Panchayat units whereas Manipur represents only 169 units.

Table – 4.2

Number of Elected Representatives in the three-tier

Panchayati Raj System, State-wise :

| States | No of Gram Panchayat | No of Elected Representatives | No of Inter-Mediate-ries | No of Elected Representatives | No of Zilla Parish-ads | No of Elected representatives |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 20500 | 396000 | 1093 | 22953 | 22 | 1210 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 2012 | 5733 | 79 | 1205 | 12 | 77 |
| Assam | 2486 | 24860 | 196 | 2486 | 40 | 2486 |
| Bihar | 11653 | 150000 | 589 | 15000 | 39 | 1500 |
| Goa | 183 | 1433 | - | - | 2 | - |
| Gujarat | 13330 | 133300 | 82 | 2730 | 19 | 323 |
| Haryana | 5958 | 48201 | 10 | 3100 | 16 | 271 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 2921 | 18258 | 72 | 1661 | 12 | 252 |
| J & K ** | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Karnataka | 5640 | 77500 | 75 | 4860 | 20 | 1215 |
| Kerala | 991 | 10800 | 152 | 1550 | 14 | 360 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 28000 | 319056 | 296 | - | 29 | 1450 |
| Maharashtra | 30922 | 473500 | 459 | 8262 | 45 | 946 |
| Manipur * | 166 | 3714 | 9 | - | - | - |
| Meghalaya * | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mizoram * | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Nagaland | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Orissa | 5263 | 76462 | 814 | 5263 | 30 | 850 |
| Punjab | 11591 | 104319 | 136 | 1088 | 14 | 286 |
| Rajasthan | 9185 | 91850 | 237 | 3792 | 31 | 527 |
| Sikkim | 148 | 827 | - | - | 4 | 198 |
| Tamil Nadu | 12787 | 165000 | 387 | 7000 | 22 | 900 |
| Tripura | 525 | 5400 | 16 | 196 | 3 | 70 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 58605 | 804000 | 902 | 55750 | 68 | 2230 |
| West Bengal | 3242 | 61385 | 332 | 8516 | 17 | 664 |
| India | 226108 | 2971446 | 5736 | 145412 | 457 | 15815 |

- Traditional Councils

** Information Not available

Source: Basic Rural Statistics, 1996. Government of India, Ministry of Rural Areas and employment, Krishi Bhawan New Delhi.

Concept of Development:

Development has been defined in many ways (Ray M.N 1995). To Ronuld Bunch, 'Development' is a process by which people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems. To David.C Korten 'Development' is a process by which the members of a society increases their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations. Thus, development is not merely growth in available goods and services, it is meaningful only when the same is consistent with the aspirations of the people and it is the people who are at the focus of development.

Any planning for the development of India could not be complete without embracing the rural chapter of India as about 70 percent of Indians live in villages.

Development is defined in terms of technological or industrial development, but rural development is a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people. Uma Lele (1975), defined rural development in terms of raising living standard of rural people. Crops (1972), a sociologist, defined rural development as a process through collective efforts, aimed at improving the well being and self-realization of people living outside the urbanized area.

According to a UN report, rural development has in international usage to connote the process by which the efforts of people themselves are united to those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural condition of life of the nation and to relate them to contribute fully to national programme (1966). In the words of Robert Chambers (1983), rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need.

Mishra and Sundaram (1979) define rural development as not merely development of rural areas but also the development of quality of life of the rural masses into self reliant and self sustaining modern communities. Rural development has been defined by Sharma and Malhotra (1977), as systematic

approach aiming at total development of the area and the people by bringing about the necessary institutional attitudinal changes and by a package of services with an ultimate objective of improving quality of life in the rural area.

To say, development is a multi-dimensional process including socio economic condition of the people and their participation in development process.

Rural Development in India:

It is necessary to know about the past attempts, which have given the present shape to rural development programme. The contribution of rural sector in national income is very much substantial and so, this important sector will naturally draw the attention of the people and the government for development.

The long history of Rural Development in India can be divided into three phases (Singh Hoshiar 1995).

First Phase (1858-1919):

Britishers of their period were not interested in socio-economic development of the Indian people. Rural development thus began as a humanitarian act which was not backed by any legal sanction when Indian people were affected badly by famines (Mishra BB 1983). Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India succeeded in establishing departments of agriculture in UP and Bihar. Curzon was interested in agricultural development because he was also pressurized by British cotton trade for cotton cultivation in India. So it was colonial interest rather than rural development.

Second Phase (1920-1950):

A number of rural reconstruction steps were taken by the nationalists during the national movements period. Among these steps, most well known were:

- (a) Srinikatan Experiment (1920): Tagore laid the foundation of this institute for rural reconstruction and all round village development (Ram

Bhai 1959). Though there was improvement but due to lack of professional support such examples of Tagore were not multiplied.

(b) Martandam Experiment (1921): Dr. Spencer Hatch set up a project at Martandam, near Trivandrum for the purpose to bring about a complete upward development of life of the rural people spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and economically (Singh P 1982).

(c) Gurgaon Experiment (1927):- Mr. Brayne ML, the then collector of Gurgaon district conceived the rural development scheme as those of the IKDP, but could not spread beyond Punjab.

(d) Baroda Experiment (1932):- The maharaja of Baroda was a progressive and enlightened person who started a rural reconstruction scheme covering the various aspects of rural life to self help and self-reliance.

(e) Firka Experiment (1946):- Short term objectives of the scheme were to develop basic amenities and sanitation. The long term objectives were to attain self-sufficiency in food, cloth, shelter, khadi and cotton industries for the development of Madras.

(f) Etawah Experiment (1948):- This Etawah pilot project was conceived by Mr. Albert Mayor for the development of the rural areas of Etawah district in Uttar Pradesh having its main objective to see the degree of improvement, self confidence and development (Mayor A 1958).

(g) The Gandhian Experiment:- Gandhi underlined the importance of rural India by saying that "India lives in villages". Gandhi started his reconstruction activities from Wardha which included the use of khadi promotion of village industries, adult education, sanitation, welfare of women upliftment of backward classes (Pyarelal 1963) that received mass

popular support in regard to rural development in India. His ideology of rural development is still deeply rooted to our national policies.

Third Phase (1950 to till date):

The framers of Indian Constitution tried to incorporate Gandhi's ideas of rural reconstruction and because of his intervention at the last stage, local self government had found a place in the Directive Principles of State Policy. Ultimately rural development drew the attention of central government thus acquiring high priority in all the Five Year Plans. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) is also most important step towards decentralisation and making our women flock active in the process of development.

Though the development concern was not totally absent under colonial rule but the concern for rural development in India acquired a high level of priority only after Independence.

Table No : 4.3

Rural Development Programme Since Independence

| Five Year Plan | Programme | Year of Introduction |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| I (1951-56) | 1. Community Development Programme (CDP) | 1952 |
| | 2. National Extension Service (NES) | 1953 |
| II (1956-61) | 3. Khadi & Village Industries Programme | 1957 |
| | 4. Village Housing Project Scheme | 1957 |
| | 5. Multipurpose Tribal Development Blocks Programme | 1959 |
| | 6. Package Programme | 1960 |
| III (1961-66) | 7. Intensive Agricultural District Programme | 1960 |
| | 8. Applied Nutrition Programme | 1962 |
| | 9. Rural Industries Projects | 1962 |
| | 10. Intensive Agriculture Area Programme | 1964 |
| | 11. High Yielding Variety Programme | 1966 |
| | 12. Farmers Training & Educational Programme | 1966 |
| | 13. Well Construction Programme | 1966 |
| Annual Plans (1967, 1968 and 1969) | 14. Rural Work Programme (RWP) | 1967 |
| | 15. Tribal Development Block | 1968 |
| | 16. Rural Manpower Programme | 1969 |
| | 17. Composite Programme for Women & Pre-School Children | 1969 |
| IV (1969-74) | 18. Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) | 1970 |
| | 19. Crash Scheme for Rural Employment | 1971 |
| | 20. Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA) | 1971 |
| | 21. Tribal Area Development Programme | 1972 |
| | 22. Pilot Projects for Tribal Development | 1972 |

Contd.

| | | |
|------------------------|--|------|
| | 23. Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme | 1972 |
| | 24. Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) | 1972 |
| | 25. Command Area Development Programme | 1974 |
| V (1974-78) | 26. Hill Area Development Programme | 1975 |
| | 27. Special Livestock Production Programme | 1975 |
| | 28. Food for Work Programme | 1977 |
| | 29. Desert Development Programme (DDP) | 1977 |
| Annual Plans (1978-80) | 30. Whole Village Development Programme | 1979 |
| | 31. Training Rural Youth for Self Employment | 1979 |
| | 32. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) | 1979 |
| VI (1980-85) | 33. National Rural Employment Programme | 1980 |
| | 34. Prime Minister's New 20-Point Programme | 1980 |
| | 35. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme | 1983 |
| | 36. Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas | 1985 |
| VII (1985-90) | 37. Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme | 1985 |
| | 38. Special Livestock Breeding Programme (SLBP) | 1986 |
| | 39. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana | 1989 |
| VIII (1992-97) | 40. Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) | 1993 |
| | 41. Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) | 1993 |
| | 42. National Nutrition Policy (NNP) | 1993 |
| | 43. Supply of Improved Tool-Kit to Rural Artisan (SITRA) | 1993 |
| | 44. Watershed Development Programme (WDP) | |
| | 45. National Plan of Action | 1993 |
| | 46. Convergent Community Action (CCA) | 1995 |
| | 47. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) | 1995 |
| | 48. Self Employment Scheme for Minorities (SESM) | 1995 |
| | 49. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) | 1996 |
| | 50. Million Wells Scheme (MWS) | 1996 |
| IX (1997-2002) | 51. Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) | 1997 |

Source : Compiled from Various Five Year Plans, Government of India, New Delhi.

Table 4.3 presents the various rural development programme introduced in India during different Five Year Plan. Eighth Plan has introduced a maximum number of programme, popular among them are PMRY, EAS, IAY, MWS and SITRA.

The First Five Year Plan was drafted to reconstruct the country economically and socially intending to:

(a) Provide for substantial increase in country's production and the improvement in the rural health and hygiene and in village education.

(b) Initiate and direct a process of integrated cultural change aimed at transforming the social and economic life of the village (Yasim M 1990).

The intended change was sought to be achieved by initiating the scheme on

socio-economic development, which known as community Development programme (CDP) as a method and National Extension Service as an agency (NES).

Community Development Programme (CDP):

The community development programme was conceived, planned and initiated as a peoples self help programme, launched on Oct 02, 1952 on a pilot schème over 55 selected blocks all over the India to extend the development of the rural India.

The aims of the CDP and NES were more or less similar but the NES was a permanent organisation and was intended to cover the entire country in a relatively shorter period, by the end of the year 1956, There was 1,114 blocks with a population of 11million and by the end of sixties CDP covered the whole country (Mukherjee B 1961), so far as the organisational pattern of the CDP was concerned, it was under three basic units – the village, the mandi and the development block. For operation, there were Project Executive Officers, responsible for all developmental work under his area. BDO was to act as Project Executive Officer.

Community Development Programme was proclaimed as a people's movement and was premised on principles of sustained self-help and popular participation. The block area was carved as the main focus of the operation of CDP. It was the first service-oriented programme whereas the administrative system of the country was rooted in the basic law and order culture. Being the pioneering programme, the problem of adjustment was serious which resulted in the garbing of the benefits by larger farmers, and hence, others did not get much benefits from it.

Balwantray Mehta Committee Recommendations:

The Balwantray Mehta Committee, which was constituted to evaluate the workings of CDP and NES, submitted its report on the 24th November, 1957.

This team observed, that the development cannot progress without power and responsibility.

The committee, as a way out, recommended the three tier panchayat system with “Gram Panchayat” at village level, “Panchayat Samiti” at the block level and “Zilla Parishad” at the district level. Main aim of the report was towards decentralisation for democratic institutions and to shift the decision-making process closer to the people to encourage them in participation (Yasin 1990).

The Balwantray Mehta Committee report was accepted by the Indian Government and was made operative in 1958. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh were first to adopt the Panchayati Raj system of local government in 1959.

According to the suitability of the state this new pattern of government was adopted by all the states by the end of the decade. The National Development Council (NDC) indicated the scope of variation among states in the implementation of such Panchayati Raj system, as the Mehta team had envisaged the structural variations. Though the committee admitted the urgency of democratic and decentralised administration but failed to recommend directly elected panchayats at these three levels (West Bengal panchayat Act 1973). Accordingly, each state adopted a different type of Panchayati Raj on the basis of their administration and tradition.

Pre Ashok Mehta Panchayati Raj System:

Panchayati Raj which was so long operated for rural development since the period of community development has achieved a limited success in many states. In Kerala, Gram Panchayat did well, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad had become successful in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat had a record of better performance in Panchayati Raj as a whole. In West Bengal, Anchal Panchayats had achieved better performance (Prantosh Sen).

On the whole, Panchayati Raj generally failed to give the best result to the people. The reasons can be considered as:

- a) Structural inadequacy which resulted into imbalance in development.

- b) Panchayati Raj Institutions were dominated by the privileged section of people depriving the weaker section of its benefits.
- c) The functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions revealed that they were plagued by corruption and inefficiency of the elected representatives.
- d) The social milieu also weakened the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

After the introduction of Panchayati Raj system on the Balwantray Mehta Committee Report, the state governments began to appoint various committees to review the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions in their respective states. VP Naik Committee (1961) in Maharashtra, Sadiq Ali Committee (1964) in Rajasthan, Hardayal Singh Committee (1964) in Himachal Pradesh and Ram M Committee (1965) in Uttar Pradesh reviewed the functioning of the Panchayati Raj system. All these Committees had recommended that the district should be hub of the development activities and Zilla Parishad should be positioned at a higher level in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Thus, the Ashok Mehta Committee was set up in 1977 by the Janata government in order to rebuild and restructure the Panchayat Raj Institution. This committee submitted its report on the 21st August 1978.

Important Recommendations of Ashok Mehta Committee:

The most important recommendation was that the structural and functional pattern of Panchayati Raj institutions should be changed in order to ensure effective participation of the people.

The decentralisation of planning process and developmental activities below the state level is necessary from the political and socio-developmental perspectives. Below the state, the next step should be the district.

A Mandal Panchayat should be constructed next to the district, which would be the hub of developmental activities.

A village committee could be constituted by the Mandal Panchayat to look after municipal and civic functions and other welfare activities.

In order to formulate plans and periodic review a planning committee at the district level would be constituted with all members of Zilla Parishad and MLA's and MP's of the concern district.

In order to ensure clearer orientation towards development programme and to facilitate healthier linkages with higher level political process, political parties should participate in the Panchayati Raj elections.

All the district level officials should be placed under the Zilla Parishad and lower tiers. A chief executive officer should be placed in Zilla Parishad for the proper implementation of the policies and programmes.

Besides allotment of fund by the state Government, the Panchayati Raj Institutions should have enough scope for mobilising their own resources. Panchayati Raj Institutions should have the power of imposing taxes.

However majority of the state Government opposed the idea of party based election and mandal panchayat. The proposals recommended by the Ashok Mehta Committee were not adequate for the complete transfer of power to the local bodies in making decentralisation a living reality. VKRV Rao committee (1985) also was in favour of a significant decentralisation at district level. This committee recommended that all the developmental work should be at district level or below be brought under Zilla Parishad. L.M Singhvi committee (1986) was of the view that Panchayati Raj Institutions should be treated as institution of self-government which will facilitate the peoples participation in decision-making process at planning and development. This committee also advocated that bureaucratic structure cannot achieve full participation of the people in a meaningful manner.

73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and the Revitalization of Panchayati Raj:

Mahatma Gandhi ardently believed in Gram Swaraj, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was repulsive to it, Rajiv Gandhi cradled and nursed it and P.V. Narasimha Rao institutionalized it. Almost five decades after Indian independence, on April 24,

1993, the Government of India revitalized the concept of decentralization of power, through the Constitutional Amendment Act, by making Panchayati Raj Institutions as a part of the Constitution (Dhawan. G, 1995).

Many discussions on major issues raised by politicians, scholars, journalists, regarding the devolution of powers, functions, finance, responsibilities etc., upon the panchayat. Panchayati Raj encompasses both democracy and development and offer an institutional framework for democratic decentralization, which facilitates peoples participation in the framework of miniature governments in their own local areas. To this end, the Constitution 73rd Amendment Act has come into effect on 24th April, 1993, with mandates of uniform system of Panchayati Raj throughout the country except for some specified tribal and hill regions and state in which special arrangements already exists. This Act introduces Part-IX in the Constitution regarding the structure, composition, election and scope of powers of panchayats at district, block and village levels.

The main characteristics of the Act are:

- a) Provision for establishment of Gram Sabha in each panchayat area and the establishment of a uniform three-tier system of Panchayati Raj.
- b) Provision for reservation of seats for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in proportions to their percentage to the total population of a panchayat and reservation of seats of chairpersons for the SC/ST candidates in all tiers.
- c) Provision for reservation of one-third of seats in the panchayats at all levels for women including reservation of the seats of chairpersons in all the tiers.
- d) Provision for a state Finance Commission, appointed by the Governor.
- e) Provision for a state Election Commission, responsible for preparation of electoral roles and holding of regular elections to the Panchayats.

Table: 4.4

**Partially Comprehensive and Segmental Analysis of the Provision in
the Various Bills for the Panchayati Raj Institutions**

| Provisions in Bill | Ashok Mehta Report | Rajiv Gandhi's 64 th Amendment | Bomma and V.P. Singh | V.P. Singh's 74 th Amendment | Narasimha Rao's 73 rd Amendment |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| Composi- tion of Panchayat | | | | | Endured with State Legis- lature |
| Their duration | | | | | Five years to be enacted by State |
| Reservation for women, SC/STs | | | | | 30% for women and a percen- tage for SC/STs to be enacted by state |
| Qualification for membership | | | | | Subject to provision in the Constitution |
| Powers, responsibili- ties and authority | Confer administra- tive and develop- mental functions | Endured with purely developmental function | Dilution and absurdity of the XI schedule removed | Stress on independent institution of self-govern- ment | Endured with purely developmental functions; legislative and executive powers at state |
| Financial Devolution and Reve- nue | | | | | State to authorise, assign, provide laws to Panchayats |
| Arrange- ment for election | State gover- nment in consulta- tion with CEC | Control and superintendence with EC | Control and superinten- dence with EC | Control and superinten- dence with state legislature | State to enact a law for elec- tion; control and superinten- dence with CEO |

Source: Compiled from 1) The 73rd Amendment Act, 2) Mukherjee N., L.C. Jain & A. Ghosh (1991), the Panchayats Report of a Panel Discussion on Constitution Bill, 1991. Institute of Social Science, New Delhi.

It is found that revitalization of Panchayati Raj has been initiated in 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1993. Among various Amendments, government effort and report, the 73rd Amendment has put more emphasis on composition of Panchayat, duration, reservation for SC/ST and women and financial devolution.

Article 243 (G) of the 73rd Constitution Amendment has enables State Government to provide necessary power and functions to the Panchayati Raj institutions. The XI Schedule added to the Constitution, lists the subject under which power and functions could be given to the Panchayat at all levels. These are:

- (1) Agriculture, including agricultural extension.
- (2) Land improvement and implementation of land reforms.
- (3) Minor irrigation and water management.
- (4) Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.
- (5) Fisheries.
- (6) Social forestry and farm forestry.
- (7) Minor forest produce.
- (8) Small scale industries including food processing industries.
- (9) Khadi, village and cottage industries.
- (10) Rural housing.
- (11) Drinking water.
- (12) Fuel and fodder.
- (13) Roads, culverts, bridges and ferries.
- (14) Rural electrification including distribution of electricity.
- (15) Nonconventional energy sources.
- (16) Poverty alleviation programme.
- (17) Education including Primary and Secondary School.
- (18) Technical training and vocational education.
- (19) Adult and non-formal education.
- (20) Libraries.
- (21) Cultural activities.
- (22) Market and fairs.
- (23) Health and sanitation.
- (24) Family welfare.

- (25) Women and child development
- (26) Social welfare.
- (27) Welfare of the weaker sections.
- (28) Public distribution system
- (29) Maintenance of community assets.

However, since inception Panchayati Raj institutions have been on planning significant role in bringing about rural development. For the people, the Panchayati Raj institutions are implementing a numbers of rural development programmes. These are:

Table :- 4.5
Central Govt. Expenditure on Rural Development (Rs. in Crores)

| Year | Plan Expenditure | Total Expenditure | Share in Total Expenditure (%) |
|---------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1979-80 | 14 | 14 | 0.08 |
| 1980-81 | 9 | 9 | 0.04 |
| 1981-82 | 79 | 79 | 0.32 |
| 1982-83 | 244 | 244 | 0.82 |
| 1983-84 | 383 | 384 | 1.08 |
| 1984-85 | 729 | 730 | 1.67 |
| 1985-86 | 706 | 707 | 1.34 |
| 1986-87 | 1360 | 1362 | 2.16 |
| 1987-88 | 1844 | 1847 | 2.71 |
| 1988-89 | 1753 | 1757 | 2.22 |
| 1989-90 | 2766 | 2769 | 2.98 |
| 1990-91 | 2672 | 2678 | 2.54 |
| 1991-92 | 2279 | 2283 | 2.05 |
| 1992-93 | 3208 | 3211 | 2.62 |
| 1993-94 | 4676 | 4680 | 3.30 |
| 1994-95 | 5801 | 5803 | 3.61 |
| 1995-96 | 6607 | 6609 | 3.71 |
| 1996-97 | 5080 | 5081 | 2.53 |
| 1997-98 | 5577 | 5583 | 2.41 |
| 1998-99 | 5396 | 5403 | 1.93 |
| 1999-00 | 5176 | 5185 | 1.71 |
| 2000-01 | 5388 | 5397 | 1.59 |

Source: *Budget Estimate, CMIE, March, 2000.*

Table 4.5 reveals the details of expenditure by Central Government on rural development programmes. During the year 1995-96 Central Government has expended Rs. 6609 crores, the highest expenditure since 1979-80.

Wage Employment and Infrastructure Development:

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):

Poverty as a phenomenon has existed since the beginning of known history. As the centuries rolled by and population increased, it began to appear on a larger scale. By the time India got her freedom, many countries, mostly in the west, had already overcome the problem of mass poverty by the application of new and progressive expanding scientific and technological knowledge. In India, the need for rural development was felt with a view to transform the socio-economic life of rural India.

The concept of Integrated Rural Development came into vogue with the need for a multipurpose thrust to rural planning. It connotes a strategy for bringing about improvements in the economic and social life of the rural poor. The various dimensions of rural life – growth of agriculture, rural industrialization, education, health, public works, poverty alleviation and rural employment programmes – all together form a part of an integrated approach to the problem of rural development. It is called Integrated because it integrates various economic programmes in an area to ensure social development.

The IRDP was first proposed in India in 1976-77 and saw the light of day on a pilot basis in 20 selected districts representing different socio-economic and ecological conditions. In 1979-80, the IRDP was expanded to 2600 blocks. Though the idea of science and technology in the service of rural poor people was attractive, but were lacking for translating the ideal into practical schemes. Later, IRDP underwent modifications in 1978-79 and revised form was implemented from October 2, 1980, i.e., after the launching of Sixth Plan, and the IRDP was extended to all the 5011 development blocks throughout the country.

Objectives of IRDP:

The principal objectives of the IRDP has been the elimination of unemployment and the eradication of poverty in the rural areas.

The main objectives are:

- a) To help the families below the poverty line to come up and cross it.
- b) To create substantial additional opportunities of employment in the rural sector.
- c) To reduce the rural poverty.
- d) To make the family economically viable and self-sufficient.
- e) To assist the rural population to derive economic benefits from the developmental assets of each area.

Thus, the overall objectives of the IRDP has been the reduction of unemployment and the provision of asset coupled with the inputs necessary to the rural poor for enabling them to rise above the poverty line.

Coverage under IRDP:

In the selection of the beneficiaries under IRDP, income is considered to be the main criterion. Families below the poverty line (BPL) are listed and priority in selection is to be accorded to the poorest families among the poor. Assistance is provided to a target group which comprises small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans. Though the poverty line is drawn at an annual income level of Rs. 11,000, the assistance is targeted primarily at families with an annual income of Rs. 6,000, the coverage emphasize among the identified group is on the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, women and physically handicapped persons. At least 50 percent of the beneficiaries from SC/STs, 40 percent from women group and 3 percent for physically handicapped is always reserved.

Implementing Agency:

The primary responsibility for formulation of the strategy for the rural poor rests with the Ministry of Rural Development at the Centre. At the state level, separate departments for rural development are responsible for the policy, planning and implementation of rural development programmes. At the district

level, the responsibility of IRDP has been entrusted to a single agency named DRDA, for the major functions:-

- (i) Identification of families below the poverty line.
- (ii) Preparation of action plan/schemes.
- (iii) arrangement of institutional credit support to the identified beneficiaries, and
- (iv) Overall charge of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IRDP.

At grassroot level, the block and panchayats are responsible for the smooth functioning of the IRDP.

Performance of the IRDP:

The renewed IRDP was launched in the 6th Plan with an outlay of Rs. 1,500 crores and Rs. 1,767 crores were actually utilized. Total number of beneficiaries covered during the plan was 156.6 million against a target of 150 million. From Table 4.6, it is found that from 1985-86 to 1992-93, the performance as it is figured remained more than satisfactory. Coverage of women under the IRDP has steadily been increased from 9.89 percent in 1985-86 to over 32 percent during 1992-93.

Table: 4.6

Performance of the IRDP

| Year | No. of families (in lakh) | | Women beneficiaries (in lakh) | Total funds (in crore) |
|---------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Target | Achievement | | |
| 1985-86 | 24.71 | 30.60 | 3.03 | 407.36 |
| 1986-87 | 35.00 | 37.47 | 5.67 | 543.84 |
| 1987-88 | 39.64 | 42.47 | 8.30 | 613.38 |
| 1988-89 | 31.94 | 37.72 | 8.74 | 687.95 |
| 1989-90 | 29.09 | 33.51 | 8.59 | 747.75 |
| 1990-91 | 23.71 | 28.98 | 8.45 | 747.31 |
| 1991-92 | 22.52 | 25.37 | 8.41 | 703.61 |
| 1992-93 | 18.75 | 20.69 | 6.91 | 662.22 |

Source: Singh Hoshiar, *Administration of Rural Development in India*, Sterling Publication, New Delhi, 1995.

The above discussion shows that the IRDP has been a good innovation for ameliorating the socio-economic condition of the rural weaker sections. It believes in an integrated plan of actions, but also reveals certain causes responsible for the poor performance of the IRDP. The reasons are:

- a) The beneficiaries have been mis-identified.
- b) The amount of loans and subsidies have been reported to be inadequate in addition, the beneficiaries had to pay gratification fee or commission to get them cleared.
- c) Political intervention is also main cause responsible for low performance of the IRDP.
- d) Due to the untrained and inadequate field staff, to what extent the beneficiaries have improved their income and employment levels have never been investigated with thoroughness.
- e) The repayment of installments has been fixed without considering the capacity of the beneficiaries.
- f) Illiteracy and ignorance in rural areas have been the major hindrance in the rural transformation.

With the efforts to overcome the above said difficulties, a better implementation of the IRDP could go a long way for a total attack on rural poverty. The Integrated Rural Development Programme has been renamed from April 1, 1999, as Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and working for the same objectives with new dimensions.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY):

From April 1989, the on going National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were merged into a single Rural Employment Programme known as the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) having as its main objective the generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and under employed people, both men and women, in the rural areas through the creation of rural economic

infrastructure, community and social assets, with the aim of improving the quality of life in the rural areas.

After three years of implementation of JRY, it was felt that the resources were being too thinly spread and adequate attention was not being paid to the backward areas of the country. Accordingly, the scheme was revised in 1993 to include two more streams. The second stream of JRY called Intensified Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (IJRY) was launched in 120 identified districts in the country with the stipulation that the allocation of IJRY not to be less than Rs.700 crores or 20 percent of the funds earmarked for the total JRY. The third stream was also introduced for taking up innovative projects. A portion of the allocation under JRY was set apart for the stream. The second stream of JRY has been discontinued by merging the backward district under Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). The Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and the Million Wells Scheme (MWS) have also been made independent schemes with effect from 1st January 1996.

Table No : 4.7
Approved Outlays in respect of Plan Schemes
Department of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation (Rs.in crores)

| SI No. | Name of the Scheme | Approved Outlay For 1997-98 | Approved Outlay For 1998-99 | Approved Outlay For 1999-2000 |
|--------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Jawahar Rozgar Yojana | 2077.70 | 2095.00 | 2095.00 |
| 2. | Employment Assurance Scheme | 1970.00 | 1990.00 | 1700.00 |
| 3. | Million Wells Scheme | 448.00 | 450.00 | 100.00 |
| 4. | Integrated Rural Development Programme | 571.00 | 740.00 | 859.00 |
| 5. | Rural Artisans Scheme | 40.00 | 60.00 | 70.00 |
| 6. | Ganga Kalyan Yojana | 200.00 | 0.94 | 0.00 |
| 7. | Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment | 59.00 | 60.00 | 70.00 |
| 8. | Development of Women and Children in Rural Area | 65.00 | 100.00 | 116.00 |
| 9. | Indira Awaas Yojana | 1190.00 | 1600.00 | 1710.00 |
| 10. | Drought Prone Areas Programme | 115.00 | 95.00 | 95.00 |
| 11. | Desert Development Programme | 70.00 | 90.00 | 85.00 |
| | Total | 6805.70 | 7280.94 | 6900.00 |

Source: *Annual Report – 1999-2000, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi.*

Table 4.7 and 4.8 show the approved outlays in respect of various plan schemes in which JRY stands on top in the development of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation whereas in the department of Rural Development, Rural Water Supply Programmes has maximum outlays.

Table -- 4.8
Approved Outlays in respect of Plan Schemes
Department of Rural Development

(Rs.in crores)

| Sl. No | Name of the Schemes | Approved Outlay for 1997-98 | Approved Outlay for 1998-99 | Approved Outlay for 1999-2000 |
|--------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Rural Water Supply Programme | 1302.00 | 1627.00 | 1800.00 |
| 2. | Rural Sanitation | 100.00 | 100.00 | 110.00 |
| 3. | Grants to National Institute of Rural Development | 5.00 | 5.00 | 6.00 |
| 4. | Strengthening of State Training Centre | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.25 |
| 5. | Assistance to CAPART | 12.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 |
| 6. | Org. of Training Courses, Seminars | 0.50 | 0.50 | 1.25 |
| 7. | Strengthening of Ext. Training Centre | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| 8. | Assistance to Assignees of Ceiling Surplus Land | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| 9. | Grants-in aid to institute for Agrarian Studies | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.00 |
| 10. | Computerisation of Land Reforms | 20.00 | 30.00 | 33.00 |
| 11. | Strengthening of Revenue Machinery & Updating of L.R. | 18.80 | 8.80 | 10.00 |
| 12. | Committee on Land Reforms | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| 13. | Communication Cell | 4.00 | 4.00 | 10.00 |
| 14. | Promotion of Voluntary Scheme | 10.00 | 20.00 | 26.00 |
| 15. | Organisation of Beneficiaries | 3.50 | 3.50 | 4.00 |
| 16. | Panchayat Development and Training | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| 17. | Roads in Special Problem Areas | 2.00 | 1.50 | 0.50 |
| 18. | NSAP | 700.00 | 700.00 | 725.00 |
| 19. | Agricultural Marketing | 7.25 | 7.25 | 0.00 |
| 20. | Monitoring Mechanism | 0.00 | 0.50 | 2.00 |
| | Total | 2195.00 | 2530.00 | 2750.00 |

Source : *Compiled from Annual Report – 1997-98, 98-99, 99-2000, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.*

Since inception of JRY in 1989-90 to 1995-96, the states were released central assistance of Rs.17,442.24 Crores, with the state share total amounting to Rs.21,953.65 Crores. During these years the states utilised Rs.21,335.58 Crores which works out to an achievement of 98.18 percent. During 1996-97, total of Rs.1,992.09 Crores was available to the state, which includes central release of Rs.928.13 Crores, state share of Rs.224.69 Crores and an opening balance of Rs.832.27 Crores. Against this, the states have utilised Rs.1,033.29 Crores till the end of 1996, indicating an achievement of 51.87 percent.

Since the inception of this programme till 1995-96, against a target of 5,936.40 Million man days of employment, the state Governments have reported employment of 5,823.54 Million man days, which was 98.10 percent of achievement. SCs share was 2,179.56 million mandays (37.43 %), STs share, 1,063.66 million mandays (18.26 %). The share of women was 1,458.23 million mandays (25.04 %).

Besides generating massive employment in rural areas, the scheme has created a wide range of physical assets in the sector of social, forestry, minor irrigation, soil conservation, wells, rural roads, primary school buildings, sanitary system etc.

Table No : 4.9

**Financial Progress Under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana During 1998-99
(Progress upto November , 98)**

(Rs. in Lakh)

| States/UTs | Balance As on 1.4.98 | Allocation | | Release | | Total Funds Available | Funds Utilised |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|----------|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| | | Centre | State | Centre | State | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2893.90 | 11703.94 | 2925.99 | 7022.36 | 1755.59 | 1167.85 | 8364.24 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 86.68 | 257.32 | 64.33 | 129.68 | 32.42 | 248.78 | 73.16 |
| Assam | 1145.81 | 6686.18 | 1671.55 | 4011.71 | 1002.93 | 6160.45 | 2735.23 |
| Bihar | 13323.20 | 38340.77 | 9585.19 | 23004.46 | 5751.12 | 42078.78 | 20847.84 |
| Goa | 24.58 | 172.20 | 43.05 | 103.32 | 25.83 | 153.73 | 122.32 |
| Gujarat | 1076.52 | 4405.58 | 1101.40 | 2756.73 | 689.18 | 4522.43 | 3180.05 |
| Haryana | 213.86 | 2591.88 | 647.97 | 1555.13 | 388.78 | 2157.77 | 1215.92 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 189.25 | 1091.54 | 272.89 | 710.02 | 177.51 | 1076.78 | 577.82 |
| J & K | 368.41 | 1350.93 | 337.73 | 856.15 | 214.04 | 1438.60 | 805.66 |
| Karnataka | 2748.83 | 8838.13 | 2209.53 | 5434.00 | 1358.50 | 9541.33 | 6398.97 |
| Kerala | 1308.26 | 3965.64 | 991.41 | 2536.58 | 634.15 | 4478.99 | 1801.13 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 3753.71 | 19433.93 | 4858.48 | 12207.04 | 2915.09 | 18875.84 | 12539.15 |
| Maharashtra | 2156.99 | 17470.82 | 4367.71 | 10482.27 | 2620.57 | 15259.83 | 10518.12 |

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| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Manipur | 37.24 | 448.24 | 112.06 | 155.56 | 38.89 | 231.69 | 37.82 |
| Meghalaya | 162.15 | 502.19 | 125.55 | 301.75 | 75.44 | 539.34 | 79.70 |
| Mizoram | 4.82 | 116.21 | 29.05 | 116.10 | 29.03 | 149.95 | 82.70 |
| Nagaland | 6.97 | 344.48 | 86.12 | 206.69 | 51.67 | 265.33 | 290.92 |
| Orissa | 2870.78 | 13386.90 | 3346.73 | 8216.81 | 2054.20 | 13141.79 | 8050.64 |
| Punjab | 200.06 | 1259.63 | 314.91 | 851.45 | 212.86 | 1264.37 | 920.78 |
| Rajasthan | 427.52 | 67110.09 | 1677.77 | 4039.82 | 1009.96 | 5477.30 | 5146.64 |
| Sikkim | 21.76 | 128.66 | 32.17 | 77.20 | 19.30 | 118.26 | 169.80 |
| Tamil Nadu | 1045.98 | 10348.85 | 2587.21 | 10348.85 | 2587.21 | 13982.04 | 9363.68 |
| Tripura | 9.95 | 809.31 | 202.33 | 807.68 | 201.92 | 1019.55 | 824.32 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 8494.04 | 42194.35 | 10548.59 | 35723.74 | 8930.94 | 53148.72 | 24597.01 |
| West Bengal | 4964.52 | 14876.87 | 3719.22 | 7957.84 | 1989.46 | 14911.82 | 5553.43 |
| A & N Islands | 61.26 | 117.89 | 0.00 | 31.44 | 0.00 | 92.70 | 20.70 |
| D & N Haveli | 7.67 | 77.81 | 0.00 | 46.69 | 0.00 | 54.36 | 10.43 |
| Daman & Diu | 3.67 | 37.70 | 0.00 | 10.06 | 0.00 | 13.73 | 2.06 |
| Laksha-dweep | 14.10 | 59.10 | 0.00 | 35.46 | 0.00 | 49.56 | 21.13 |
| Pondicherry | 7.72 | 115.42 | 0.00 | 82.14 | 0.00 | 89.86 | 19.74 |
| Total : | 47630.21 | 207843.56 | 51858.91 | 139818.73 | 34766.57 | 222215.51 | 124371.11 |

Source : *Compiled from Annual Report – 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.*

In Table 4.9 and 4.10 the financial and physical progress under JRY during 1998-99 have been shown. West Bengal has given Rs. 14876.87 lakhs (7.15% of total central allocation) and this state is able to achieve 27.76% of its target. Nagaland has 95.42% achievement whereas Sikkim achieved 109.61% of its target

Table No : 4.10
Physical Performance Under JRY During 1998-99

(Progress upto November' 98)

| States/Uts | Annual Target (tentative) | Achievement | % Achievement | Sectoral Achievement (Lakh Man Days) | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|----------|
| | | | | SC/ST | Others | Women | Landless |
| Andhra Pradesh | 254.01 | 131.16 | 41.34 | 55.50 | 75.66 | 44.86 | 95.67 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 7.97 | 0.62 | 7.78 | 0.62 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Assam | 144.36 | 50.00 | 34.64 | 26.71 | 23.29 | 5.43 | 13.81 |
| Bihar | 688.11 | 299.11 | 43.47 | 179.48 | 119.63 | 77.75 | 188.55 |
| Goa | 3.32 | 1.21 | 36.45 | 0.00 | 1.21 | 0.52 | 0.00 |
| Gujarat | 53.34 | 36.63 | 68.67 | 21.02 | 15.61 | 7.23 | 11.06 |
| Haryana | 30.49 | 9.35 | 30.67 | 5.57 | 3.78 | 1.87 | 9.09 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 17.00 | 7.05 | 41.47 | 3.66 | 3.39 | 0.34 | 0.01 |
| J & K | 27.50 | 9.56 | 34.76 | 0.00 | 9.55 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Karnataka | 188.82 | 133.77 | 70.85 | 53.13 | 80.64 | 36.80 | 44.16 |
| Kerala | 69.77 | 19.08 | 27.35 | 6.17 | 12.91 | 6.45 | 2.73 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 325.80 | 176.77 | 54.26 | 110.93 | 65.84 | 60.63 | 61.59 |
| Maharashtra | 541.22 | 203.55 | 37.61 | 102.45 | 101.10 | 69.29 | 75.24 |
| Manipur | 6.92 | 0.50 | 7.15 | 0.40 | 0.10 | 0.04 | 0.00 |
| Meghalaya | 10.22 | 9.18 | 89.82 | 4.59 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Contd.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Mizoram | 1.84 | 1.10 | 59.78 | 1.10 | 0.00 | 0.39 | 0.00 |
| Nagaland | 9.82 | 9.37 | 95.42 | 9.37 | 0.00 | 2.64 | 0.00 |
| Orissa | 317.94 | 158.57 | 49.87 | 104.72 | 53.85 | 48.07 | 36.04 |
| Punjab | 15.46 | 8.50 | 54.98 | 6.25 | 2.25 | 0.17 | 6.20 |
| Rajasthan | 49.43 | 80.67 | 53.99 | 52.22 | 28.45 | 26.72 | 9.78 |
| Sikkim | 2.29 | 2.51 | 109.61 | 1.62 | 0.89 | 0.80 | 0.08 |
| Tamil Nadu | 230.42 | 173.96 | 75.50 | 89.11 | 84.85 | 66.78 | 130.17 |
| Tripura | 18.02 | 24.11 | 78.30 | 10.63 | 3.48 | 4.22 | 4.98 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 626.32 | 304.38 | 48.60 | 155.93 | 148.45 | 57.62 | 62.63 |
| West Bengal | 220.83 | 61.31 | 27.76 | 32.75 | 28.56 | 14.95 | 38.48 |
| A & N Islands | 1.30 | 0.15 | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.03 | 0.06 |
| D & N Haveli | 1.11 | 0.19 | 17.12 | 0.19 | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.00 |
| Daman & Diu | 0.57 | 0.14 | 24.56 | 0.02 | 0.10 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Lakshadweep | 1.12 | 0.30 | 26.79 | 0.30 | 0.00 | 0.11 | 0.00 |
| Pondicherry | 1.25 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total | 3966.57 | 1902.80 | 47.97 | 1034.51 | 863.67 | 533.84 | 790.33 |

Source : Compiled from Annual Report – 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

New initiatives has been taken to this programme:

- (a) To further empower the Panchayati Raj institutions it has been decided to allocate 15 percent of the funds under JRY to intermediate level of Panchayati Raj system. Funds to be distributed among Zilla Parishads, intermediate levels and village panchayats in the ratio of 20:15:65.
- (b) Three percent of the funds were proposed to be earmarked for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

Million Wells Scheme:

The Million Wells scheme (MWS) was launched as a sub-scheme of the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) during the year 1988-89. After the merge of the two programmes, in April 1989, into JRY, it continued as sub-scheme of JRY till December 1995. Million Wells Scheme has been delinked from JRY and made into an independent scheme with effect from January 1996.

Million Wells Scheme is a centrally supported scheme and the expenditure under the scheme is shared by the centre and the states on 80:20 basis. Allocation to the states is made on the basis of proportion of rural poor in a state to total rural poor in the country. Allocation for a district is decided by the state Government, keeping in view the potential of well, irrigation and the

land held by the target group. MWS aims to provide an asset in the form of an irrigation sources or land development, free of cost, to the target group. Upto 1992-93, the target group for MWS comprised of poor, small and marginal farmers belonging to SCs/STs and freed bonded labours only, but from 1993-94 onwards, MWS has been extended to non SC/ST, small and marginal farmers also who are below the poverty line. It is however, ensured that the funds under MWS for non- SC/ST beneficiaries do not exceed one third (1/3) of the total allocation for the scheme. Where wells are not feasible due to geological factors, the amounts allotted under the scheme could be utilised for other schemes of minor irrigation like tanks, water harvesting structures and also for the development of lands belonging to small and marginal farmers. The cost and area norms in regard to works under MWS are decided by a specially constituted state level committee. The beneficiaries themselves are to undertake the construction of their wells through their own labour and the local labour for which they are paid. In no case, works are entrusted to a contractor by the project authorities. Each well or irrigation sources constructed under the scheme has to be located in the holding of the beneficiaries and an entry to that effect was made in revenue records. DRDAs/ZPs are responsible for maintenance of accounts, monitoring , implementation and supervision of the programme in a district.

Table No : 4.11

Allocation and Release Under Million Wells Scheme During 1998-99

(Progress upto November 1998)

(Rs. In lakhs)

| States/UTS | O.B. As on 1.4.98 (prov) | Allocation | | Release | | Total Availab ility |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|---------|---------|--------|---------------------------|
| | | Centre | State | Centre | State | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 679.88 | 2532.39 | 633.10 | 1266.20 | 316.55 | 2262.63 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 16.14 | 55.68 | 13.92 | 23.38 | 5.85 | 45.37 |
| Assam | 430.05 | 1446.70 | 361.68 | 723.35 | 180.84 | 1334.24 |
| Bihar | 3890.50 | 8295.83 | 2073.96 | 3619.85 | 904.96 | 8415.31 |
| Goa | 17.94 | 5.84 | 1.46 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 17.94 |
| Gujarat | 280.88 | 953.24 | 238.31 | 474.23 | 118.56 | 873.67 |
| Haryana | 116.00 | 560.81 | 140.20 | 121.75 | 30.44 | 268.19 |

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| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Himachal Pradesh | 112.67 | 236.18 | 59.05 | 118.09 | 29.52 | 260.28 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 72.80 | 292.30 | 73.08 | 148.01 | 37.00 | 257.81 |
| Karnataka | 637.85 | 1912.32 | 478.08 | 862.99 | 215.75 | 1716.59 |
| Kerala | 161.95 | 858.05 | 214.51 | 461.62 | 115.41 | 738.98 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 2526.42 | 4204.94 | 1051.24 | 1904.71 | 476.18 | 4907.31 |
| Maharashtra | 825.16 | 3780.18 | 945.05 | 1884.03 | 471.01 | 3180.20 |
| Manipur | 18.21 | 96.99 | 24.25 | 25.70 | 6.43 | 50.34 |
| Meghalaya | 27.50 | 108.66 | 27.17 | 57.71 | 14.43 | 99.64 |
| Mizoram | 0.69 | 25.14 | 6.29 | 25.14 | 6.29 | 32.12 |
| Nagaland | 3.25 | 74.53 | 18.63 | 37.27 | 9.32 | 49.84 |
| Orissa | 1179.39 | 2896.54 | 724.14 | 1448.27 | 362.07 | 2989.73 |
| Punjab | 238.33 | 272.55 | 68.14 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 238.33 |
| Rajasthan | 3739.70 | 1452.09 | 363.02 | 203.28 | 50.82 | 3993.80 |
| Sikkim | 5.55 | 27.84 | 6.96 | 13.92 | 3.48 | 22.95 |
| Tamil Nadu | 182.81 | 2239.19 | 559.80 | 2239.19 | 559.80 | 2981.80 |
| Tripura | 0.00 | 175.11 | 43.78 | 172.04 | 43.01 | 215.05 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 2405.22 | 9129.64 | 2282.41 | 5957.10 | 1489.28 | 9851.60 |
| West Bengal | 2553.83 | 3218.92 | 804.73 | 1019.03 | 254.76 | 3827.62 |
| A & N Islands | 10.04 | 13.47 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.04 |
| D & N Haveli | 4.72 | 13.47 | 0.00 | 6.74 | 0.00 | 11.46 |
| Daman & Diu | 1.63 | 00.45 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.63 |
| Lakshadweep | 0.00 | 0.90 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Pondicherry | 8.94 | 17.06 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8.94 |
| Total | 20148.05 | 44897.01 | 11212.92 | 22813.60 | 5701.72 | 48663.37 |

Source: *Annual Report, 1998-99 Government of India Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, New Delhi.*

In Table 4.11 the allocation and release reflects under Million Wells Scheme during 1998-99. Centre has allotted Rs 321.92 Lakhs to West Bengal which is 7.17 percent of total central allotment on MWS. This table indicates 18.47 percent (Rs 8295.83 Lakhs) of total central allocation to Bihar.

Table No : 4.12
Financial Performance Under Million Wells Scheme During 1998-99
 (Progress upto November 1998)

| States/UTS | Total Availab- ility | Expenditure | | | % Utilisa- tion against Total availabi- lity |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------|---------|---|
| | | SC+ST | Others | Total | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2262.63 | 658.62 | 415.71 | 1387.20 | 61.31 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 45.37 | 11.15 | 0.00 | 11.15 | 24.58 |

Contd.

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Assam | 1334.24 | 282.76 | 185.54 | 468.30 | 35.10 |
| Bihar | 8415.31 | 2361.93 | 1134.35 | 3496.28 | 41.55 |
| Goa | 17.94 | 0.00 | 16.03 | 16.03 | 89.35 |
| Gujarat | 873.67 | 465.13 | 166.67 | 631.80 | 72.32 |
| Haryana | 268.19 | 37.86 | 26.70 | 64.56 | 24.07 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 260.28 | 47.12 | 33.47 | 80.58 | 30.96 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 257.81 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 133.29 | 51.70 |
| Karnataka | 1716.59 | 754.41 | 219.78 | 974.19 | 56.75 |
| Kerala | 738.98 | 256.85 | 153.44 | 410.29 | 55.52 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 4907.31 | 1175.13 | 657.54 | 1832.67 | 37.35 |
| Maharashtra | 3180.20 | 1211.30 | 759.78 | 1971.08 | 61.98 |
| Manipur | 50.34 | 11.02 | 6.52 | 17.54 | 34.85 |
| Meghalaya | 99.64 | 7.94 | 0.00 | 7.94 | 7.97 |
| Mizoram | 32.12 | 14.98 | 0.00 | 14.98 | 46.64 |
| Nagaland | 49.84 | 38.77 | 0.00 | 38.77 | 77.79 |
| Orissa | 2989.73 | 1060.96 | 397.10 | 1458.06 | 48.77 |
| Punjab | 238.33 | 9.41 | 3.62 | 13.03 | 5.47 |
| Rajasthan | 3993.80 | 353.79 | 181.68 | 535.47 | 13.14 |
| Sikkim | 22.95 | 8.33 | 8.36 | 16.69 | 72.72 |
| Tamil Nadu | 2981.80 | 1365.86 | 709.40 | 2075.26 | 69.60 |
| Tripura | 215.05 | 170.30 | 43.55 | 213.85 | 99.44 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 9851.60 | 3506.72 | 1754.39 | 5261.11 | 53.40 |
| West Bengal | 3827.62 | 878.31 | 573.81 | 1452.12 | 37.94 |
| A & N Islands | 10.04 | 1.63 | 0.96 | 2.59 | 25.80 |
| D & N Haveli | 11.46 | 3.83 | 0.00 | 3.83 | 33.42 |
| Daman & Diu | 1.63 | 0.00 | 0.52 | 0.52 | 31.90 |
| Lakshadweep | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Pondicheery | 8.94 | 0.00 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.67 |
| Total | 48663.37 | 14694.11 | 7448.98 | 22589.24 | 46.42 |

Source : Annual Report 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

Total Expenditure is for the month of September. Whereas break-up of SC/ST/Others is for August

Table : 4.13**Physical Performance Under Million Wells Scheme 1998-99**

(Progress upto November 1998)

| States/UTS | Well Constructed (Nos.) | | | | Wells under Construction (Nos.) |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| | SC+ST | Others | Total | Women | |
| Andhra Pradesh * | 1705 | 615 | 2320 | 21 | 12437 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 20 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 55 |
| Assam | 572 | 201 | 773 | 0 | 811 |
| Bihar | 6380 | 3300 | 9680 | 94 | 26563 |
| Goa | 0 | 43 | 43 | 0 | 183 |
| Gujarat | 1107 | 388 | 1495 | 65 | 4957 |
| Haryana | 77 | 100 | 177 | 3 | 94 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 104 | 69 | 173 | 0 | 202 |
| J & K § | 0 | 0 | 746 | 0 | 1284 |
| Karnataka | 978 | 238 | 1216 | 142 | 3233 |
| Kerala | 1822 | 761 | 2583 | 448 | 3432 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 6104 | 3503 | 9607 | 696 | 18713 |
| Maharashtra | 1983 | 1659 | 3642 | 252 | 15916 |
| Manipur | 53 | 34 | 87 | 2 | 0 |
| Meghalaya | 162 | 0 | 162 | 0 | 2 |
| Mizoram | 188 | 0 | 188 | 51 | 0 |
| Nagaland | 242 | 0 | 242 | 92 | 8 |
| Orissa | 4407 | 1759 | 6166 | 168 | 9233 |
| Punjab # | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rajasthan | 627 | 263 | 890 | 16 | 5017 |
| Sikkim | 19 | 15 | 34 | 7 | 19 |
| Tamil Nadu | 2289 | 794 | 3083 | 408 | 6098 |
| Tripura | 850 | 218 | 1068 | 0 | 0 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 38 | 26 | 64 | 0 | 14 |
| West Bengal | 3967 | 1372 | 5339 | 35 | 192 |
| A & N Islands | 4 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 20 |
| D & N Haveli | 17 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 20 |
| Daman & Diu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Lakshadweep | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pondicherry | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 33715 | 15360 | 49821 | 2501 | 108504 |

- Physical Performance is for the month of August, report for September is not available.
- # A sum of Rs.13.03 Lakh has incurred on land levelling for development of 106 Hect. Land which benefited 106 beneficiaries.
- § Break-up of SC, ST & Others in J & K is not available.

Source : Annual Report (1998-99), Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

From Table 4.12 and 4.13, the financial and physical performance under MWS is evident during 1998-99. West bengal has constructed 10.7 percent of the total well constructed under this scheme.

Ganga Kalyan Yojana:

On 15 August 1996, the launching of Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) for providing assistance to poor cultivators belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the rural areas was announced. Ministry of Rural Area and Employment accordingly launched GKY on 1st February 1997 in all the districts of the country. The objective of the scheme was to provide irrigation through exploitation of ground water (bore wells and tube wells) to individuals as well as group of beneficiaries belonging to poor small and marginal farmers.

GKY was launched as a sub-scheme of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and was implemented as an independent centrally sponsored scheme where expenditure is shared between the centre and the state Governments in the ratio of 80:20 basis. At the district level the scheme is implemented by the DRDA or ZP. During the year 1996-97, central assistance of Rs.90.82 crores was released to the states under GKY.

Some of the broad features of the scheme are :

- i) To provide irrigation through exploitation of ground water to individuals and groups of beneficiaries of small and marginal farmers living below the poverty line.
- ii) The individual or groups are to be assisted through subsidy by Government and term credit by financial institutions.
- iii) The funds are allotted among the states on the basis of poverty ratio and among the districts on the basis of the recommendations of the state Government
- iv) At least 50 % of the funds are to be earmarked for SCs and STs.
- v) Under the scheme, subsidy of 75% of the project is allowed for SCs/STs and physically disabled groups and 50% for the others. The monetary ceiling on subsidy per group is however, Rs.40,000. In case of individual beneficiaries, subsidy is Rs.5,000 per acre of land under the scheme, subject to a ceiling of Rs.12,500 per beneficiary.

- vi) The gap between the project cost and subsidy admissible has to be bridged with term credit by financial intuitions or SC/ST/BC Financial and Development Corporation.
- vii) The selection of beneficiaries is to be approved by the Gram Sabha in an open central body meeting in the presence of concerned officers.
- viii) In GKY, for SC/ST/PH groups, part of the operation and maintenance cost, subject to a ceiling of 5% of the project cost per annum is admissible as additional subsidy for three years, for the other groups and for individual schemes, no subsidy on operation and maintenance would be admissible.
- ix) Areas where ground water is already over exploited such as grey areas, dark areas and pockets where significant fluctuations are observed during summer seasons and implementation of ground water schemes may cause drinking water scarcity and also the coastal strip is 15-20 km from the seashore are to be excluded from the operation of the scheme.

A large percentage of the land holding belongs to small and marginal farmers. From time immemorial, the ground water was used for irrigation. Be it a dug well or other minor irrigation schemes under MWS or bore well under GKY, both try to ensure assured sources of irrigation to the poor, small and marginal farmers in the rural areas. This assured irrigation would enable them to grow food crops, vegetables and other crops and would provide income and employment on sustained basis. The assistance provided under these scheme is tremendous. The assistance so provided under MWS or GKY would permanently lift the poor, small and marginal farmers above the poverty line for all time to come and the poverty of the assisted family would be eradicated on a permanent basis.

Table: 4.14

Development of Irrigation Potential through Plan Period

| Plan | Major/Medium | | Minor | | Total | |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Potential | Utilization | Potential | Utilization | Potential | Utilization |
| Pre-Plan | 9.70 | 9.70 | 12.90 | 12.90 | 22.60 | 22.60 |
| I Plan (1951-56) | 12.19 | 11.00 | 14.06 | 14.06 | 26.25 | 25.06 |
| II Plan (1956-61) | 14.33 | 13.30 | 14.79 | 14.75 | 29.08 | 28.05 |
| III Plan (1961-66) | 16.57 | 15.20 | 17.00 | 17.00 | 33.57 | 32.20 |
| Annual Plan (1966-69) | 18.10 | 16.80 | 19.00 | 19.00 | 37.20 | 35.80 |
| IV Plan (1969-74) | 20.71 | 18.70 | 23.50 | 25.50 | 44.21 | 42.20 |
| V Plan (1974-78) | 24.72 | 21.20 | 27.30 | 27.30 | 52.02 | 48.50 |
| Annual Plan (1978-80) | 26.61 | 22.70 | 30.00 | 30.00 | 56.61 | 52.70 |
| VI Plan (1980-85) | 30.01 | 25.33 | 37.52 | 35.25 | 67.53 | 60.58 |
| VII Plan (1985-90) | 31.52 | 27.77 | 46.00 | 43.12 | 78.12 | 70.89 |

Source: *Eight Five Year Plans, 1992-97, Government of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi.*

Table No : 4.15

**Numbers of Schemes Taken up in
Different Plans (Irrigation)**

| Plan | Major | Medium |
|----------------------------------|-------|--------|
| First Five Year Plan (1951-56) | 24 | 212 |
| Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) | 23 | 116 |
| Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) | 27 | 74 |
| Annual Plan (1966-69) | 10 | 38 |
| Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) | 33 | 94 |
| Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) | 73 | 333 |
| Annual Plan (1979-80) | 15 | 53 |
| Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) | 41 | 141 |
| Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) | 18 | 29 |

Source : *Five Year Plans, Government of India, New Delhi.*

From Table 4.14 and 4.15 we find the development of irrigation potential and number of schemes taken up through various Plan period. Fifth Five Year Plan has a maximum of 73 major and 333 schemes for irrigation. Table 4.14 also

shows that before the schemes Ganga Kalyan Yojna came into effect, government of India implemented many schemes for irrigation in various Five Year Plans.

Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS):

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was introduced with effect from 2nd October 1993 in 1,778 rural blocks of 261 districts in which the Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was in operation. The blocks selected were in the draught prone areas, desert areas, tribal areas and hill areas, During 1994-95 EAS was extended to 409 blocks under DPAP/DDP and Modified Area Development Approach (MADA) blocks having a larger concentration of tribes. In march 1995 the scheme was further extended to 256 blocks, out of which 233 blocks were prone to floods in the state of Utter Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and 23 blocks of J&K.

The IJRY has been merged with EAS with effect from 1st January 1996. The EAS was extended to 722 non-EAS blocks in 120 IJRY districts as a result of the merger, rising the total number of blocks where EAS were being implemented to 3206. A decision was taken to extend EAS to cent percent of the remaining blocks of the country. This scheme was launched during the middle of 1993-94. As a result, some states initially experienced difficulties in mobilising the state share of funds for the scheme. Besides the lean agricultural season in some districts did not fully coincide with the implementation period of EAS during 1993-94.

A total assistance, amounting to Rs.548.77 crores, including the states share was provided under EAS during 1993-94, against which Rs.183.75 crores were utilised. The total employment generated under EAS during the year 1993-94 works out to 494.74 lakh mandays. During 1994-95 Rs.1200 crores was provided as control assistance under EAS, against which the central releases were Rs.1,128.52 crore, Rs.1,235.45 crore were utilised and 2,739.56 lakh man days were generated during 1994-95. During 1995-96 against an outlay of Rs.15,70.00 crore Rs.1707.61 crores were released as central share, Rs.207.61

crore were re-appropriated for JRY as a result of merger of IJRY with EAS. The total man days generated was 3,467.27 lakhs mandays. IJRY was merged with EAS with effect from 1st January 1996 and EAS was extended to 722 non EAS blocks in the IJRY districts. During 1996-97 against an outlay of Rs.1790.00 crores, Rs.1,089.07 crores has been released from centre and 1,547.13 lakh man days generated.

Table No : 4.16
Financial Performance under Employment Assurance Scheme During
1998-99 (Progress up to November 1998)

| (Rs. In lakhs) | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| States/UTS | Unspent Funds as on 1.4.98 | Centre Release as on 30.11.98 | State Matching Share | Total Available Funds | Expenditure | % Expenditure to Total Availability |
| Andhra Pradesh | 5663.03 | 16660.00 | 4165.00 | 26488.03 | 14082.86 | 53.17 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 823.27 | 1070.00 | 267.50 | 2160.77 | 792.90 | 36.70 |
| Assam | 4262.15 | 2488.00 | 622.00 | 7372.15 | 4512.37 | 61.21 |
| Bihar | 13527.41 | 12686.00 | 3171.50 | 29384.91 | 16019.92 | 54.52 |
| Goa | 36.48 | 180.00 | 45.00 | 261.48 | 197.38 | 75.49 |
| Gujarat | 3687.16 | 1760.00 | 440.00 | 5887.16 | 389.29 | 66.17 |
| Haryana | 3105.97 | 440.00 | 110.00 | 3655.97 | 1304.74 | 35.69 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 1778.27 | 1240.00 | 310.00 | 3328.27 | 1811.05 | 54.41 |
| J & K | 592.50 | 4760.00 | 1190.00 | 6542.50 | 4352.09 | 66.52 |
| Karnataka | 2592.03 | 8720.00 | 2180.00 | 13492.03 | 7500.74 | 55.59 |
| Kerala | 2528.23 | 3051.00 | 762.75 | 6341.98 | 3521.12 | 55.52 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 7033.29 | 18153.00 | 4538.25 | 29724.54 | 17384.09 | 58.48 |
| Maharashtra | 4146.45 | 5920.87 | 1480.00 | 11547.54 | 6397.84 | 55.40 |
| Manipur | 582.42 | 370.00 | 92.50 | 1044.92 | 333.31 | 31.90 |
| Meghalaya | 251.75 | 150.00 | 37.50 | 439.25 | 124.17 | 28.27 |
| Mizoram | 107.66 | 800.00 | 200.00 | 1107.66 | 952.96 | 86.03 |
| Nagaland | 8.75 | 1980.00 | 495.00 | 2483.75 | 1047.69 | 42.18 |
| Orissa | 3294.81 | 10522.00 | 2630.50 | 16447.31 | 9441.09 | 57.40 |
| Punjab | 2234.89 | 320.00 | 80.00 | 2634.89 | 1231.80 | 46.75 |
| Rajasthan | 4992.85 | 7105.00 | 1776.25 | 13874.10 | 9186.93 | 66.22 |
| Sikkim | 29.90 | 220.00 | 55.00 | 304.90 | 296.24 | 97.16 |
| Tamil Nadu | 755.58 | 18720.00 | 4680.00 | 24155.58 | 16244.97 | 67.25 |
| Tripura | 201.08 | 1440.00 | 360.00 | 2001.08 | 1994.52 | 99.67 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 17089.02 | 31564.83 | 7891.21 | 56545.06 | 30470.91 | 53.89 |
| West Bengal | 6541.81 | 6100.00 | 1525.00 | 14166.81 | 3993.71 | 28.19 |
| A & N Islands | 75.87 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 75.87 | 17.39 | 22.92 |
| D & N Haveli | 9.73 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 9.73 | 9.47 | 97.33 |
| Daman & Diu | 2.17 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.17 | 1.38 | 63.59 |
| Lakshadweep | 100.15 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.15 | 66.90 | 66.80 |
| Pondicherry | 112.29 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 112.29 | 11.18 | 9.96 |
| Total | 86166.97 | 156420.70 | 39105.18 | 281692.85 | 157197.01 | 55.80 |

Source : Annual Report 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

Table No : 4.17
Physical Performance under Employment Assurance Scheme
During 1998-99 (lakh Mandays)

| States/ UTS | Mandays Generated | | | | | | No of Works | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | SC | ST | Others | Total | Women | Landless | Completed | In Progress |
| Andhra Pradesh | 78.99 | 40.07 | 94.34 | 213.40 | 66.89 | 66.24 | 12745 | 16082 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 0.00 | 12.68 | 0.00 | 12.68 | 4.23 | 0.00 | 269 | 611 |
| Assam | 14.24 | 20.24 | 44.60 | 79.08 | 4.99 | 26.03 | 1974 | 2605 |
| Bihar | 98.37 | 35.48 | 98.51 | 232.36 | 62.43 | 141.17 | 6829 | 15209 |
| Goa | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.20 | 2.20 | 0.94 | 0.00 | 75 | 179 |
| Gujarat | 8.42 | 11.30 | 23.32 | 43.04 | 12.41 | 21.11 | 1206 | 3327 |
| Haryana | 4.43 | 0.00 | 3.47 | 7.90 | 1.75 | 7.77 | 569 | 960 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 9.97 | 1.35 | 9.47 | 20.79 | 1.07 | 0.02 | 3261 | 4818 |
| J & K * | NR | NR | NR | 55.81 | NR | NR | 10072 | 19187 |
| Karnataka | 41.97 | 17.87 | 99.96 | 159.80 | 45.37 | 63.86 | 11569 | 10055 |
| Kerala | 12.07 | 1.68 | 24.20 | 37.95 | 14.20 | 3.92 | 1827 | 2384 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 57.19 | 96.96 | 83.92 | 238.07 | 76.88 | 72.03 | 7542 | 15135 |
| Maharashtra | 30.60 | 37.93 | 61.19 | 129.72 | 43.81 | 45.50 | 4094 | 13382 |
| Manipur | 0.10 | 4.96 | 0.42 | 5.48 | 1.43 | 1.60 | 450 | 250 |
| Meghalaya | 0.00 | 3.01 | 0.00 | 3.01 | 0.79 | 0.72 | 166 | 119 |
| Mizoram | 0.00 | 16.82 | 0.00 | 16.82 | 5.80 | 0.00 | 1338 | 35 |
| Nagaland | 0.00 | 24.92 | 0.00 | 24.92 | 3.05 | 0.00 | 126 | 72 |
| Orissa | 59.16 | 63.00 | 64.51 | 186.67 | 44.27 | 56.60 | 7017 | 13108 |
| Punjab | 5.38 | 0.00 | 2.58 | 7.96 | 0.34 | 3.19 | 376 | 365 |
| Rajasthan | 44.19 | 38.98 | 54.32 | 137.49 | 52.16 | 18.32 | 3682 | 8275 |
| Sikkim | 1.27 | 1.63 | 1.18 | 4.08 | 1.22 | 0.30 | 151 | 200 |
| Tamil Nadu | 136.51 | 11.43 | 156.70 | 304.64 | 111.65 | 248.78 | 13279 | 14460 |
| Tripura | 8.58 | 17.09 | 8.51 | 34.18 | 18.25 | 4.25 | NR | NR |
| Uttar Pradesh | 176.18 | 2.84 | 192.69 | 371.71 | 62.66 | 61.90 | 1304 | 942 |
| West Bengal | 15.88 | 7.32 | 21.20 | 44.40 | 10.30 | 28.38 | 3629 | 2079 |
| A & N Islands | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.28 | 0.31 | 0.04 | 0.08 | 7 | 23 |
| D & N Haveli | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.00 | 0 | 14 |
| Daman & Diu | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0 | 0 |
| Lakshadweep | 0.00 | 1.32 | 0.00 | 1.32 | 0.41 | 0.00 | 9 | 12 |
| Pondicherry | 0.14 | 0.00 | 0.05 | 0.19 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 3 | 47 |
| Total | 803.64 | 469.05 | 1047.64 | 2376.14 | 639.46 | 871.77 | 93569 | 143935 |

NR Not Reported

- J & K has not shown SC/ST employment generation separately

Source : Annual Report 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

From table 4.16 and 4.17, the findings show the Financial and Physical performance under Employment Assurance Scheme during 1998-99, indicating 20 percent (Rs. 31,564.83 lakh) of the total central allotment to Uttar Pradesh where only 9.79 percent (Rs. 62.66lakh) of total women mandays were generated. In West Bengal getting only 3.89 percent (Rs. 6100 lakh) generated 1.86 percent (44.40 lakh) mandays, in which 1.61 percent (10.30 lakh) women mandays were generated.

Table No: 4.18

Allotment on WES

| Year | Outlay / in crores | Released from Centre (in crores) | Man days generated (in lakhs) |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1993-94 | 548.77 | 183.75 | 494.74 |
| 1994-95 | 1,200 | 1,128.52 | 2,739.56 |
| 1995-96 | 1,570 | 1,707.61 | 3,467.27 |
| 1996-97 | 1,970 | 1,089.07 | 1,547.13 |

Source: *Annual Report, 1997-98, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.*

Indira Awaas Yojana:

In June 1985, the union Finance Minister made an announcement in parliament earmarking a part of RLEGP fund for construction of houses of SCs / STs and freed bonded labourers. The Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was a result of that announcement and has continued as a part of JRY which replaced NREP/RLEGP in April 1989. The scheme operates as a 100 percent subsidised centrally, sponsored independent programme with the resources being shared on 80:20 basis by the centre and the states.

In the chief ministers conference held on 4-5 July 1996, it was recommended that all shelterless rural poor should be provided with a house by 2000 AD. In the above conference it was also recommended that the construction assistance under IAY should be enhanced from Rs.14,000 to Rs.20,000. Accordingly, the ministry enhanced the ceiling of assistance on construction under JAY Rs.20,000 per unit for plain areas and Rs.22,000 per unit for hilly/difficult areas with effect from 1st April 1996. The beneficiary for IAY

house has to be identified by the Gram Panchayat in a Gram Sabha and than the list of beneficiaries has to be approved by the Panchayat Samiti. The provision is in conformity with the 73rd amendment Act 1992, of the constitution, which empowers Gram Panchayat to implement 29 subjects pertaining to village development, under which rural housing is also one of the subjects.

In order to ensure that women are not denied their due share, it has been provided that the allotment of houses should be in the name of the female members of the beneficiary household. Alternatively, it can be allotted in the joint name of both husband and wife. Suitable local voluntary agencies can be associated with the implementation of IAY. Particularly they can motivate the beneficiaries in regard to the use of sanitary latrines and smoke free stoves.

Table No : 4.19
Plan Wise Resources Utilisation and Houses
Constructed Under Indira Awaas Yojana

| Plans | Rs. (in crores) |
|--|-----------------|
| Seventh Plan : | |
| Resources Utilised | Rs. 780.63 |
| Houses Constructed | No. 705966 |
| Annual Plan (1990-91) (1991-92) | |
| Resources Utilised | Rs. 476.63 |
| Houses Constructed | No. 389099 |
| Eighth Plan : | |
| Resources Utilised | Rs. 3781.66 |
| Houses Constructed | No. 177405 |
| Grand Total : | |
| Resources Utilised | Rs. 5038.37 |
| Houses Constructed | No. 3672470 |

Source: *Compiled from Five-Year Plans, Government of India, New Delhi.*

Table 4.19 reveals the information on resource utilization and house constructed under Indira Awaas Yojana during 7th and 8th Five-Year Plan and Annual plan (1990-91, 1991-92). Total resources utilized Rs. 5,038.37 crore and 36,72,470 houses were constructed.

Table No : 4.20
Financial Performance under Indira Awaas Yojana
From April 98 to November, 98

| State | O.B as on 1.4.98 | Allocation | | Release | | Total Availabil ity | Total Expend iture | % of Utilis ation |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | Centre | State | Centre | State | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 3568.42 | 8370.41 | 2092.60 | 5859.29 | 1464.82 | 10892.53 | 5473.55 | 50.25 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 100.99 | 184.03 | 4601 | 36.54 | 9.14 | 146.67 | 80.49 | 54.88 |
| Assam | 532.13 | 4781.82 | 1195.46 | 3347.27 | 836.82 | 4716.22 | 842.13 | 17.86 |
| Bihar | 8633.21 | 27420.52 | 6855.13 | 19194.36 | 4798.59 | 32626.16 | 14135.4 | 43.33 |
| Goa | 0.00 | 19.20 | 4.80 | 29.21 | 7.30 | 36.51 | 48.45 | 132.7 |
| Gujarat | 464.84 | 3150.78 | 787.70 | 2258.27 | 564.57 | 3287.68 | 2282.72 | 69.43 |
| Haryana | 243.10 | 1853.66 | 463.42 | 1297.56 | 324.39 | 1865.05 | 347.37 | 18.63 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 66.53 | 780.64 | 195.16 | 546.45 | 136.61 | 749.59 | 215.73 | 28.78 |
| J & K * | 403.07 | 966.16 | 241.54 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 799.07 | 440.60 | 55.14 |
| Karnataka | 2394.69 | 6320.85 | 1580.21 | 4424.60 | 1106.15 | 7925.44 | 4222.63 | 53.28 |
| Kerala | 91.31 | 2836.20 | 709.05 | 1985.34 | 496.34 | 2572.99 | 1838.87 | 71.47 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 3855.05 | 13898.74 | 3474.69 | 9729.12 | 2432.28 | 16016.45 | 5713.49 | 35.67 |
| Maharashtra | 3544.59 | 12494.77 | 3123.69 | 8746.34 | 2186.59 | 14477.52 | 6589.28 | 45.51 |
| Manipur | 0.00 | 320.57 | 80.14 | 89.81 | 22.45 | 112.26 | 6.52 | 5.81 |
| Meghalaya | 0.00 | 359.16 | 89.79 | 33.92 | 8.48 | 42.40 | 21.88 | 51.60 |
| Mizoram | 2.53 | 83.11 | 20.78 | 58.18 | 14.55 | 75.25 | 56.01 | 74.43 |
| Nagaland | 0.00 | 246.36 | 61.59 | 172.45 | 43.11 | 215.56 | 138.24 | 64.13 |
| Orissa | 1556.66 | 9574.03 | 2393.51 | 6701.82 | 1675.46 | 9933.94 | 4539.13 | 45.69 |
| Punjab | 118.93 | 900.86 | 225.22 | 546.54 | 136.64 | 802.11 | 305.11 | 38.04 |
| Rajasthan | 1100.36 | 4799.63 | 1199.91 | 3359.74 | 839.94 | 5300.04 | 2908.20 | 54.87 |
| Sikkim | 9.06 | 92.02 | 23.01 | 64.41 | 16.10 | 89.57 | 72.01 | 80.39 |
| Tamil Nadu | 707.23 | 7401.30 | 1850.33 | 5180.91 | 1295.23 | 7183.36 | 9010.02 | 125.43 |
| Tripura | 9.94 | 578.80 | 144.70 | 405.16 | 101.29 | 516.39 | 513.55 | 99.45 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 4181.05 | 30176.52 | 7544.13 | 21123.56 | 5280.89 | 30685.50 | 14521.87 | 47.32 |
| West Bengal | 3597.49 | 10639.62 | 2659.91 | 4770.91 | 1192.73 | 9561.13 | 2554.51 | 26.72 |
| A & N Islands | 29.16 | 44.40 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 29.16 | 16.65 | 57.10 |
| D & N Haveli | 10.36 | 43.80 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.36 | 0.73 | 7.05 |
| Daman & Diu | 2.25 | 1.82 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.25 | 2.93 | 130.00 |
| Lakshadweep | 17.60 | 3.65 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 17.60 | 5.05 | 28.69 |
| Pondicherry | 0.00 | 56.57 | 0.00 | 39.60 | 0.00 | 39.60 | 50.52 | 127.58 |
| Total | 35240.54 | 148400.00 | 37062.44 | 100001.4 | 24990.44 | 160728.34 | 76953.64 | 47.88 |

Source: Annual Report 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

In Table 4.20 and 4.21, the financial and physical performance has been shown under Indira Awaas Yojana during 1998-99. Maximum number (61,943) of houses were constructed in Uttar Pradesh where only 2,764 for women. West Bengal has got 7.16 percent of Central allocation (Rs. 10,639.62 lakh) but percentage of utilization is 26.72 which is very low comparing to many other state. It is also found that West Bengal had 7.55 percent of the total target in India, percentage of achievements is 20.99 whereas total countris achievement is 35.93.

Table No : 4.21
Physical Performance under Indira Awaas Yojana During 1998-99

| States/ UTS | Target | (IN Nos.) Houses Constructed | | | | Houses in Progress | % of Achieve- ment to Comple- tion |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|
| | | SC+ST | Others | Total Houses | Women | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 73645 | 14317 | 9796 | 24113 | 0 | 35397 | 32.74 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 1046 | 56 | 0 | 56 | 10 | 244 | 5.35 |
| Assam | 28576 | 2772 | 1950 | 4722 | 1032 | 2225 | 16.52 |
| Bihar | 171378 | 51447 | 15482 | 66929 | 17390 | 132390 | 39.05 |
| Goa | 130 | 0 | 412 | 412 | 0 | 1647 | 316.92 |
| Gujarat | 19692 | 8358 | 2788 | 11146 | 3426 | 8705 | 56.60 |
| Haryana | 10690 | 1063 | 613 | 1676 | 451 | 1536 | 15.68 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 4435 | 252 | 141 | 393 | 0 | 1456 | 8.86 |
| J & K * | 7699 | 0 | 0 | 4200 | 0 | 7747 | 54.55 |
| Karnataka | 39505 | 12610 | 6850 | 19460 | 2722 | 18569 | 49.26 |
| Kerala | 17726 | 4852 | 2655 | 7507 | 1447 | 14601 | 42.35 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 103652 | 34837 | 16279 | 51116 | 3361 | 47458 | 49.32 |
| Maharashtra | 78092 | 9891 | 6313 | 16204 | 2340 | 27954 | 20.75 |
| Manipur | 1911 | 45 | 22 | 67 | 0 | 339 | 3.51 |
| Meghalaya | 2409 | 81 | 0 | 81 | 0 | 28 | 3.36 |
| Mizoram | 472 | 255 | 0 | 255 | 179 | 0 | 54.03 |
| Nagaland | 2050 | 876 | 0 | 876 | 0 | 0 | 42.73 |
| Orissa | 67684 | 15410 | 4994 | 20404 | 6070 | 32882 | 30.15 |
| Punjab | 5630 | 1396 | 92 | 1488 | Nil | 611 | 26.43 |
| Rajasthan | 35599 | 10781 | 4214 | 14995 | 12782 | 27396 | 42.12 |
| Sikkim | 784 | 179 | 217 | 396 | 114 | 103 | 50.51 |
| Tamil Nadu | 46258 | 23871 | 3991 | 27862 | 4003 | 51378 | 60.23 |
| Tripura | 4519 | 2488 | 78 | 2566 | 0 | 0 | 56.78 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 188051 | 45622 | 16321 | 61943 | 27643 | NR | 32.94 |
| West Bengal | 74594 | 9619 | 6042 | 15661 | 3634 | 8651 | 20.99 |
| A & N Islands | 202 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2.97 |
| D & N Haveli | 309 | 5 | 0 | 5 | NR | 16 | 1.62 |
| Daman & Diu | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0.00 |
| Lakshadweep | 17 | 31 | 0 | 31 | | 125 | 182.35 |
| Pondicherry | 257 | 86 | 27 | 113 | 6 | 760 | 43.97 |
| Total | 987022 | 251200 | 99283 | 354683 | 86610 | 422218 | 35.93 |

Source: Annual Report 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) has many positive features. Its major achievement has been to provide the houseless poor a feeling of security, status and identity thus integrating him in the social milieu. This is a programme which is well received by all the states. Planning Commission evaluations have also highlighted its positive aspects. The IAY has proved to be a popular programme and targets have been exceeded in almost every year since its inception. A total of about 30 lakh houses were constructed from 1985-86 to 1996-97. Under this

scheme during 1996-97 an allocation of Rs.1,425 crores has been made for construction of 11,23,560 houses. (Annual Report)

Draught Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP):

DPAP was under implementation in 947 blocks of 155 districts in 13 states. The total area covered under the programme was 746 lakh hectares. DDP was under implementation in 227 blocks of 36 districts in seven states. Total geographical area covered under the programme is 457 lakh hectares. Area development under DPAP and the DDP on watershed basis has been made mandatory under the new guidelines for watershed development. 1995-96 was the year transitional for switching over from the old to the new guidelines for implementation of the programmes. There were many ongoing works started prior to 1995-96 under the old guidelines.

Total allocation for the DPAP for 1995-96 was Rs.25,000 lakhs, out of which central share was Rs.12,500 lakhs. Based on the total allocation, 4611 watershed projects under the DPAP were targeted to be planned and developed from 1995-96 to 1998-99. Additional 384 projects were also targeted, as such the total numbers of watershed projects taken up for development during 1995-96 was 4995.

Allocation under DDP was Rs.10,585 lakh, out of which the central share was Rs.10,000 lakh. Based on the total allocation, 1,629 watershed projects were initially targeted to be planned and developed from 1995-96 to 1998-99. Additional 66 projects were also targeted, as such the total number of watershed projects taken up for development during 1995-96 was 1695. A watershed project should be completed in four years, funds @ 25%, 40%, 25% and 10% of the total cost of each project is to be released in the first, second, third and fourth year respectively.

The first year was earmarked for completion of the following activities:

- i) Construction of district watershed development advisory committee by DRDA.

- ii) Selection of project implementation agencies and appointment of watershed development teams by DRDA.
- iii) Formation of watershed associations and their registration under registration of societies act.
- iv) Formation of watershed committee by watershed associations.
- v) Setting up of watershed development fund.
- vi) Preparation of watershed development plans by watershed committee and development teams.
- vii) Approval of plan by district rural development agency or zilla parishad.
- viii) Training of Government officials and local people.

During 1995-96 the expenditure of new watershed projects was very low. The major portion of the fund was completion of on going work started prior to 1995-96.

During 1996-97, the allocation made for both the programmes has been kept at the level of the allocation of 1995-96. Total allocation central releases a expenditure upto Nov 1996 was as under (Rs. In lakhs)

Table :- 4.22
Allocation and Release under DPAP/DDP

| Programme | Allocation | | Release | Expenditure | | |
|-----------|------------|---------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| | Total | Central Share | | Ongoing Work | Projects | Total |
| DPAP | 25,000 | 12,500 | 3,666.23 | 658.60 | 5,484.72 | 6,143.32 |
| DDP | 10,585 | 10,000 | 2,385.70 | 442.26 | 1,661.27 | 2,103.53 |

Source: *Annual Plan, 1996-97, Government of India, New Delhi.*

Out of Rs.25,000 lakhs, under DPAP, Rs.23,454.18 lakhs had been allocated to DRDA, under DDP, out of Rs.9,928 lakhs has been allocated to DRDA.

Table No : 4.23
Physical & Financial Progress Under DPAP During 1998-99

(Rs. In lakhs)

| State | No. of Projects Targetted | Taken-up Watershed Works | Central Release on Watershed Works # | State Release on Funds | Total Available Watershed Works | % of Expenditure |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 1608 | 1605 | 1051.37 | 1051.37 | 5365.17 | 45.50 |
| Bihar | 536 | 492 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 955.75 | 17.43 |
| Gujarat | 450 | 360 | 671.95 | 638.24 | 1930.23 | 39.52 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 64 | 40 | 14.00 | 35.25 | 300.52 | 33.33 |
| Jammu & Kashmir @ | 0 | 0 | 40.00 | 40.00 | 193.88 | 51.64 |
| Karnataka | 453 | 406 | 777.03 | 408.86 | 2692.04 | 22.01 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 966 | 891 | 859.27 | 313.25 | 39500.90 | 37.52 |
| Maharashtra | 873 | 794 | 280.25 | 35.75 | 4037.71 | 28.73 |
| Orissa | 222 | 191 | 274.56 | 69.78 | 852.43 | 18.30 |
| Rajasthan | 176 | 176 | 112.00 | 112.00 | 928.23 | 45.24 |
| Tamilnadu | 339 | 297 | 272.71 | 0.00 | 1249.34 | 100.00 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 606 | 551 | 602.36 | 940.01 | 2651.04 | 47.74 |
| West Bengal | 161 | 153 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 559.93 | 1.96 |
| Total | 6454 | 5956 | 4955.50 | 3644.50 | 25604.16 | 37.57 |

@ As a special case, the State has been permitted to implement the programme as per old guidelines.

Release upto December, 98.

Source: *Annual Report (1998-99)*, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Table 4.23 shows the Physical and Financial progress under DPAP during 1998-99. A Maximum number (1608) of projects, 24.9 percent were targetted in Andhra Pradesh and only 161 Projects, 2.5 percent were targetted for West Bengal.

Role of Panchayat in Development:

It is thus seen that panchayats play an important role in poverty alleviation and rural development in the country. The most significant role of panchayats in poverty eradication is to help in the process of empowerment of the poor. It is hoped that the situation is bound to change as the provisions of the 73rd amendment of the constitution are implemented by all states in the near future. State functions and finances have to be devolved on local bodies precisely for the same reasons the state Governments are today demanding the

decentralisation from the national to the state level. The role of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) in poverty eradication is not only to implement certain schemes handed down to them by the state Government, but their greatest strength lies in mobilising and motivating the people to fight poverty and social justice in connection to a total development. When a development programme involves poor people, it helps them to become self-confident, conscious and powerful. When this stage is achieved, poverty can be removed. Planning is now widely accepted way to handle any complex problems of decision-making. It involves the use of collective intelligence and foresight to chart direction, order, harmony and progress in public activity relating to general welfare (Mishra. R.P, 1990). Developmental planning can be viewed at panchayat level for greater integration between the developmental needs and priorities of smaller areas and different social classes with national level policies and goals (Mishra. S, 1997). Under decentralisation, plans are formulated independently either by local bureaucracy or a local body as panchayats. The autonomy enjoyed in the formulation and implementation of plans is the essence of panchayats. There may be assistance from above in the planning process but it would not substantially alter the freedom of the local authority in its planning activities (Ranga Rao, 1997). The importance of the panchayat system at the local level has been recognised, yet the function is to be improved.

Since the acceptance of democratic decentralisation as a policy for community development by the National Development Council and state Governments, the role of non officials also has acquired equal importance. Decentralisation calls not only for political but also economic and administrative decentralised development, ensures equality, economy, effectiveness and people centred development (Bave.N, 1996). The development of rural economy depends upon the extent to which rural development takes place in our country and this depends upon the way in which the development programmes are implemented by the Panchayati Raj institutions, unless the common people come forward to participate in development, the development would not be realistic. Advantage of involving local people through panchayats in planning and development helps to raise the level of development (Prasad.K, 1990).

Involvement of the local people by the way of discussions in open assemblies in villages may be equally useful in identification, formulation, selection and location of schemes of local importance.

Decentralised Development in West Bengal:

In the context of decentralisation and development, West Bengal presents a model and a path which could be usefully emulated, when in most of the Indian states, Panchayati Raj or decentralised Government has been unsuccessful due to excessive bureaucratic control, political interference, inadequate resources, elite domination. West Bengal, under Left Front Government in 1978, initiated the decentralisation with many success (Roy.S N, 1997). It goes to the credit of the West Bengal Government that regular elections of this decentralised governance body have been held. It brought the rural population and the state administration closer to each other helping in fundamental and durable developmental change in West Bengal.

To take the West Bengal on account it is found in the various schemes the allotment and achievements (up to December 1996).

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) – 3813 lakh man days of employment generated and Rs.1,78,715 lakh was utilised.

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) – 166161 houses constructed and distributed at the cost of Rs.20,385 lakhs.

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) – Assured employment of 582 lakh man days of employment, over 48,41000 persons registered, Rs.36,558 lakh incurred.

Million wells scheme (MWS) – over 41,443 wells constructed, Rs.35,863 lakh utilised.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) – over 32,20,879 families assisted at the cost of Rs. 70,914 lakh.

Rural water supply and sanitation – over 50,929 villages covered, more than Rs. 575.723 crores spent, over 2,62,390 sanitary latrines constructed, Rs.873.180 lakh spent.

Watershed Development- under integrated wasteland development projects sanctioned. Over Rs.0.8 crores released, 20 voluntary agencies assisted and over Rs.44 lakh released.

Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) – minimise drought conditions of 72,948 lakh hectors under land resources development. 46,823 lakh hectors area under resource development and 1,26,100 lakh hector area under afforestation and pasture development have been treated. 161 micro-watersheds have been targeted through peoples participation, Rs.79.85 crore were utilised up to 1996-97. Table No. 4.17, 4.18, 4.20, 4.21, 4.22 reflects the achievements in development programme in West Bengal.

Last 24 years of Left Front Government working in West Bengal show that it has been able to carve out a crucial role for itself in the process of social change and economic development.

The main focus of the West Bengal Governments policy regarding decentralisation has been on (i) Acceleration of organizational development, (ii) development of human resources and (iii) effective implementations (Ray SN, 1997). Actually, peoples participation in decision-making, grassroots planning and programme implementation through Panchayati Raj has been the moving spirit and the motive force behind the successful development in West Bengal. Left Front Government has introduced the principle of decentralised rural developmental planning. The District Planning Committee (DPC) and Block Planning Committee (BPC) have been constituted to bring together panchayat members and concerned officials. DPC and BPC are headed by sabhadhipati and Sabhapati respectively (Basu Jyoti, 1997). Effective implementation of land reform have generated significant socio-economic development in West Bengal. A Planning Commission study has revealed that till 1978 about 95% of panchayat members at all India level belonged to landlord families, but the Left Front Government changed the trend having 71% of the panchayat members in West Bengal from small and marginal farmers. The West Bengal model of development is different from that of other parts in the country where the bureaucracy dominates the development programme (Datta.P, 1996). Development policy of the West Bengal Government is guided by the

philosophy of what may be called redistribution before growth to ensure growth with social justice. Decentralised governance can be greatly strengthened with the better relationship between panchayat and the people. To monitor and implement the development programme, West Bengal decentralised governance has formed ten standing committees as (i) Bon -o- Bhumi Sanskar (BOB) (ii) Krishi, Sech -O Samabay (KSS) (iii) Artha, Sanstha, Unnayan -O- Parikalpana (ASUP) (iv) Purtya, Kara - O - Paribahan (PKP) (v) Janaswantha - O - Paribesh (JP) (vi) Siksha, Sanskriti, Tathya - O - Krira (SSTK) (vii) Khudra Shilpa, Tran - O - Janakalyan (KTJ) (viii) Matsya - O - Prani Sampad Bikas (MP) (ix) Khadya - O - Sarabaraha (KS) (x) Bidyut - O - Achiracharit Shakti (BA).

West Bengal has commendable performance on account of its policy on rural development (Lieten, 1994). The index can be noticed as (a) out migration from villages has virtually stopped; (b) the percentage of rural non-worker in most Indian states has gone up but in West Bengal it has come down; (c) agrarian production has virtually doubled; (d) process of polarisation and depeasantisation also appears to have been reversed. The socio-historical backdrop of West Bengal is one of the major causes of a pro-poor, successful rural development process (Kar S, 1999) which relied mostly on meaningful land reforms and a vigilant, poor-friendly panchayat system mostly on meaningful land reforms and a vigilant, poor friendly panchayat system.

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CHAPTER - V
DEMOCRATIC
DECENTRALIZATION,
DEVELOPMENT AND
EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALIZATION DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA : HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Over the last two decades, the issue of empowerment has been placed firmly on the agenda of development studies. The idea of empowerment is not the outcomes of new brains but has taken a hold over the minds of increasing number of persons for many years. The term is focused on television, in the press, in political field and in academic and legal circles. Empowerment can be thought of as the power of the powerless. This can be focused on poor, backward-class people, of women and of many other disadvantaged section. Empowerment has been context-driven rather than theory-driven. Context is the contradiction between a hierarchical social order and a democratic political system.

Concept of Empowerment:-

Empowerment is all about social transformation and it is all about the ordinary people rather than advantaged people. Empowerment is also invoked in the context of economic weakness and insecurity of marginalized and other disadvantaged groups. The focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis to the building of economic and social capabilities among individuals, class and community. The idea of empowerment is a theory of social change. Empowerment differs on predominantly aggregative and predominantly integrative theory of democracy.

Empowerment, in predominantly aggregative theory of democracy, means equal influence and individual autonomy. In a predominantly integrative theory of democracy, empowerment means transforming individuals into citizens. Democratic strategy of empowerment must propose the institutionalization of democratic procedures which ensures both the aggregative and the integrative aspect of democracy. According to Hirschman (1970),

empowerment may be viewed from exit and voice options. The exit option is a weak means of empowerment, logically linked to economic life. The voice option is introduced as a supplementary means of empowerment, linked to family life and political life, choosing between the two, Hirst Paul (1994), gives priority to the exit option. Like Hirst, Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett regard the empowerment of ordinary citizens as the greatest challenges for reformers of the public sector in the 1990s.

The old idea of "growth with social justice" is now converted to "development with empowerment." Empowerment is an objective of economic development to the democratic discourse. Declaration (1995), on "empowerment" signed by the heads of the states says ----- we affirm that in both economic and social terms, the most productive policies and investments are these which empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. Empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation implementation and evaluation of decision determining the functioning and the well being of our society.

India country papers at UN summit (1995), talks about the poor being empowered to be able to help themselves and breaking social, economic, cultural and psychological barriers to convert them from being "passive recipients" of government programme to "active participants". "Empowerment" and "Democratization" respond to the long standing demands of struggling groups. Hegel and Marx characterized the civil society in terms of the property structure by which democratization can be understood as limited democracy operating at the upper and middle class level which the masses are theoretically empowered.

Empowerment is often used to mean a variety of different things, from individual self-realization and self-assertion to participation to the control over decisions. The term 'empowerment' is used more of attempting to change the social and economic institutions that embody the basic and unequal power structure in society.

The concept of empowerment implies formal rather than substantive power and it involves an external upper level agency to grant power rather than people below seizing it in the course of struggle. Empowerment can be

understood in simply as 'strengthening the capacities' which can be 'achieved through 'full participation of people'. The process of empowerment involves not just an improvement in physical and social conditions, but also equal participation in decision-making process and control over resources. Thus, empowerment requires full participation of people that means the maximization of people's capacities, resources and opportunities.

The objectives and socio-economic goals as enunciated in the Preamble of Indian Constitution have a direct focus on women. The concept of empowerment has difference in understanding between government and women movement, which emphasizes more on participatory dynamism but the government seems to have adopted its static meaning. The word 'empowerment' is now being pervasively used not only by government but NGOs, social activists and researchers also. Empowerment is a product of early eighties with importance on participation and transfer of power to powerless and since then 'empowerment' has become an accepted term in development vocabulary. Researchers, social activists, planners, policy-makers and various agencies had tried to find a range of meaning to women's empowerment.

- (i) Empowerment is autonomy both collective and individual levels. It encompasses several mutually reinforcing components but begins with and is supported by economic independence. According to this definition, access to and control over productive resources, knowledge and awareness of self and society, and of personal needs, of socio-economic resources, realization of one's capabilities and the potential and confidence to take decision are the components of empowerment. To woman, empowerment is the restructuring of gender relation within family and society, (Hape,1994).
- (ii) Empowerment is the process in which people assume an increased involvement in defining and promoting their own agenda for political and social projects designed to enact change, (Wilkinson,1990).

- (iii) Empowerment means going autonomy and control over one's life. The empowered person become agents of their own development, and able in decision making and are able to challenge and change their subordinated position in society in respect of social-economic and political matters, (Sorensen 1997).
- (iv) Empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systemic forces which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections, (Sharma,1992).
- (v) Empowerment is a process to participate effectively in decisions that affect women's lives at the family, community and higher level of political process, (Institute of Socio-Economic Development ,1991).
- (vi) Empowerment is a process of building capacity and confidence for taking decisions about one's own life at an individual and collective level, gaining control over productive resources. The empowerment process is facilitated by creating awareness about one's life and responsibilities in socio-economic and political fields, (Pandey,1993).
- (vii) Empowerment is the process of challenging existing power-relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power, (Baltiwala,1994).
- (viii) Empowerment is the development of skills and abilities to enable rural people to manage better, have a say in development process, (Oakley,1991).
- (ix) A true emancipatory movement not only in economic resources but in political and social process has been variously labeled as empowerment, (Leiten,1992).
- (x) Empowerment implies a fundamental redistribution of power between different groups. It is a process of equality enhancement and can be achieved through disempowering some structure, system, process and institutions. Empowerment as an enabling process for equality demonstrates selectivity, unevenness, self-

generated momentum and compulsions. Empowerment is the vehicle which enables women to renegotiate their existence, (Banerjee,1995).

Women Empowerment :-

The first 25 years of development planning in India, was assumed that the general progress made by the population, would be shared by all sections and whatever the benefits accrued to the women. A new chapter on women and development was included in 6th plan document. A separate ministry for women and children was also created in 1984. Bringing women into the mainstream of development was a major concern of the government. It was realized that the goal of poverty alleviation and development cannot be achieved without full and active participation of women. In order to empower women an enabling environment with requisite policies and programmes has been taken by the government. Social and economic empowerment seeks to improve the access of rural women to health, education, sanitation, nutrition etc and bring about an enhancement in the equality of life of women, (Annual Report, 1998-99).

Inspite of the Constitution prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Indian women are continued to be discriminated even after 53 years of independence. Woman, especially rural poor and illiterate never get portrayed as agents of change. Women became a 'target' in developmental activities rather than a group to be cooped as active participants. Hence, women empowerment is not merely important but "crucial" if development is to be sustainable, (Narasimhan S, 1999).

One of the fundamentals for the working towards social equality, empowerment of women is now being put in place. Empowerment of women, being one of the major objectives of the ninth plan, is thought to ensure to create an enabling environment and financial resources to achieve the object. In ninth plan an integrated approach has been adopted towards empowering women on social, economic and political fronts, (Draft, 1997).

Empowerment of women is a political issue located in a broad social context, is possible only by undoing the traditional arrangement of our society. Indian Constitution has recognized gender equality but an enormous gap between constitutional mandate and social realities on women issue were evident, for that reasons amendment to the constitution took place for gender equality and women empowerment, (Singh Raj, 1995).

Since decentralization has been recognised as a means to ensure democratic functioning and decision making, empowerment of women through panchayati raj assumes importance. It was commonly agreed that reservation is the best way of ensuring women participation in local body of decision making and women empowerment can be held through panchayati raj institutions, (Meenakshi Sundram, 1995). Empowerment of women would enable them to overcome the obstacles placed by socio-economic and political structure and also redeem their own weakness and deficiencies, (Kiriti Kumar, 1994). Programmes like National Literacy Mission(NLM), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana(JRY), DWCRA, IRDP, TRYSEM, Mahila Samakhya Programme(MSP), Legal Literacy Camp, Adolescent Girls Scheme(AGS), Indira Mahila Yojana(IMY), Integrated Child Development Service(ICDS), Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana(PMRY), Ganga Kalyan Yojana(GKY), Watershed Development Programme(WDP), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans(SITRA), Indira Awaas Yojana(IAY), Million Wells Scheme(MWS), Employment Assurance Scheme(EAS) and many other programmes implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions, certainly help in empowering women.

Ministry of rural areas and employment strives to improve the socio-economic condition, of the people below the poverty line in rural areas, various steps is being taken in this regard. The programmes and their main features can be focused as:

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY);

- Generates additional gainful employment for rural unemployed and under-employed.

- Creates sustained employment for strengthening the rural economic infrastructure.
- 6619.44 million mandays of employment generated since inception to 1997.

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY);

- Provision of dwelling units free of cost to mainly SC, ST and freed bonded labour below poverty line.
- Scheme extended to non SC/ST beneficiaries below poverty line since 1993-94.
- 37 lakh houses constructed and distributed up to 1997.

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS);

- Provides assured employment of 100 days to two members of a poor family who need and seek work.
- Emphasis on sustained employment through watershed development and creation of durable productive assets.
- Till 1997 more than 27.67 million persons registered under the EAS and more than 1131.1 million mandays of employment generated.

Million Wells Scheme (MWS);

- Provision of open irrigation wells, minor irrigation schemes and land development works free of cost to small and marginal farmers amongst SC/ST.
- Since 1993-94, 2/3 of allocation are for SC/STs and 1/3 for non-SC/ST.
- 1.11 million wells constructed at a cost of Rs.4037.50 Crore.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP);

- A major self-employment programme for poverty alleviation.
- Provides productive assets to small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, rural artisans and other rural poor.
- Fifty percent beneficiaries SC/ST, forty percent women.

- Till 1997 51 million families assisted at an expenditure of Rs. 11,435 Crore.

Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY);

Ganga Kalyan Yojana, a centrally sponsored new scheme, has been launched in February, 1997 to help poor farmers by providing irrigation through exploitation of ground water.

- Individual groups consisting of small and marginal farmers below poverty line would be assisted through subsidy by government and credit by financial institutions.
- 50 percent of the funds have been earmarked for SC/ST.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA);

- DWCRA in operation in all the districts in the country.
- Raises income-levels of poor women to make them economically self-reliant.
- Over 1,93,170 groups formed benefiting over 31,58,900 women.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM);

- Aims at providing basic technical and managerial skills to the rural youth from families below the poverty line to enable them to take up self/wage employment in the broad fields of agriculture and allied sectors, industries, services and business activities.
- 4.1 million youth have been trained under this programme till 1997.

Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA);

- The programme aims at enabling the rural artisans to enhance the quality of their products, increase their production and income through improved tools.
- The programme launched in July 1992 has so far distributed 6.10 lakh toolkits benefiting 8.32 lakh persons up to 1997.

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP);

- Provides assistance to old persons having little or no regular means of substance.

- Each person will get Rs. 75 per month.
- Voluntary sector.
- Funds to voluntary agencies, under various schemes routed through Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).
- 16553 projects approved and Rs. 31071 Crore released to 5600 voluntary agencies till 1997.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) :

DWCRA is a sub-scheme of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). It was started in 1982-83 on a pilot basis in 50 districts but has now been extended to all districts of the country. The basic objective of the programme is to provide income, generating skills and activities to poor women in rural areas, thereby improving their social and economic status. Through such social and economic empowerment, the programme seeks to improve the access of rural women to health, education, sanitation, nutrition etc., and to bring about an enhancement in the quality of life and general well being of the women and children. The members of DWCRA form groups of 10-15 women each, for taking up economic activities suited to their skill, aptitude and local conditions. A revolving fund amounting to Rs. 25,000 per group is given to each group to meet its working capital requirements.

NGO have been involved in the implementation of the DWCRA programme since its inception in 1982-83. CAPART has been supporting voluntary agencies for taking up DWCRA schemes in rural areas.

Recent Initiatives :-

Child Care Activities (CCA)

CCA was incorporated in DWCRA during 1995-96 with the objective of providing crèche service for children of DWCRA women. Setting up of literacy centres for DWCRA women with specific emphasis on girl child.

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) :-

IEC was incorporated in DWCRA in 1995-96 with the objective of generating awareness among rural women about DWCRA and other programmes for their benefit and to encourage thrift and credit among them. Each district is given Rs. 1.50 lakh per year. DWCRA is being implemented by the DRDA. To facilitate the implementation of the scheme, one post of Assistant Project Officer (women) has been sanctioned to be part of the DRDA team. The post of Gram Sevika has been sanctioned at the block level.

The team is responsible for necessary monitoring and follow up. The APO is to help in establishing contacts with different agencies in mobilisation of resources and training facilities, marketing of the products of DWCRA and also to look after day-to-day administration.

Marketing of Products :-

Since one of the focal points of DWCRA is income-generating activities for women, it is necessary that their activities are economically viable. Marketing of products of the women's group is therefore very important. The interest of women in the programme can be sustained only when a proper market is arranged for their products.

Linkages with other Programmes :-

The state governments have set up co-ordination committees at state, district and block levels for proper integration of the programmes focusing on women and children. These committees also enable interaction with officers of

other programmes like National Literacy Mission and Mother and Child Health Care, so that there is mutual exchange of benefits flowing out of DWCRA. DWCRA has already been dovetailed with Integrated Community Development Scheme (ICDS) in many states.

Table 5.1
Physical and Financial Achievements Under DWCRA
since its Inception

(Rs.in Lakhs)

| Plan | Target | Achievements Groups | Women Benefited | Central Assistance Released |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Sixth Plan | 6035 | 3308 | 52170 | 298.53 |
| Seventh Plan | 35000 | 28031 | 469707 | 3663.53 |
| Annual Plan 1990-91 | 7500 | 7139 | 109557 | 898.00 |
| 1991-92 | 7500 | 9378 | 208012 | 962.72 |
| Eight Plan | 91900 | 141514 | 2268327 | 19074.17 |
| Ninth Plan Upto 1998-99 | 91850 | 56093 | 695803 | 8354.68 |
| Total | 239785 | 245463 | 3803576 | 33251.632 |

Source : *Annual Report- 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural*

Areas and Employment.

Table 5.1 reflects a total no of 3803576 women in 245463 groups has been benefited under this programme where the target group was 239785. Initially no specific coverage of vulnerable groups such as SC/STs was fixed. However, during the year 1997-98, it has been made compulsory that 50 % of the groups have to be women belonging to SC/ST. Priority has to be given to physically handicapped person and also girls and women rehabilitated from prostitution.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment :-

TRYSEM as a centrally sponsored scheme started on 15th August 1979, aiming at providing basic technical and entrepreneurial skill to the rural youth from families below the poverty line to enable them to take up self-employment in the broad fields of agriculture and allied sectors, industries, services and business activities. This objective was enlarged in the year 1983 to include taking

up of wage employment also to the trained youth. TRYSEM plays an important role in facilitating diversification of activities taken up under IRDP. This programme seeks to impart new skills and upgrade existing skill of beneficiaries who are by and large attuned only to stagnant levels of agricultural or artisan skills. It was identified as the weakest link in the over all strategy for self - employment in rural areas.

Members of the steering group felt that TRYSEM should be revamped in its design, curriculum and method of training in order to improve the employment opportunities, short cuts in this area of training could backfire and undermine the objectives of providing sustainable employment for the rural youth. It was felt that training curriculum under TRYSEM should upgrade their syllabus in tune with the rapid changes in the job market. At a macro level, TRYSEM could be expanded to include the entrepreneurship development programme for IRDP beneficiaries. It was also felt that the training institutes should possess staff having requisite knowledge and expertise and that the trainers besides having a sound theoretical foundation should be suitably in touch with the ground realities. There was scope for upgrading the training skills of trainers in various government institutions engaged in imparting training under TRYSEM. There should also be a technical appraisal of private institutions / master craftsmen to ensure the imparting of quality training under TRYSEM.

Under TRYSEM it was observed that training is imparted in certain skills to women but they are rehabilitated in different trades. The group recommends that provision of limited, stereo typed training should be stopped and ruralisation of women ITIs should be done to give training in development activities including electronics, computers, drafting, chemical analysis etc. be undertaken. A Management Information System (MIS) should be developed through which important training institutes of relevance for TRYSEM through out the country be identified and networked. This would give some idea of the areas deficient in training infrastructure and where investment should flow during the ninth plan for meeting the training requirements. In those blocks where there is a concentration of unemployed youth and where there are no

reputed training institutions in the vicinity, ITIs could be set up. Priority should be attached to financing of IRDP projects for the TRYSEM trainees so that the investments made in TRYSEM training did not go waste. To ensure sustained self-employment it should be made incumbent on the training institutions under TRYSEM to continuously monitor the progress of their trainees in the respective trades they were pursuing.

In the Ninth Five-Year Plan a major thrust should be given to revamping of existing craft training centres, skill development institutions etc. for their modernization and infrastructural improvement to cater to the needs of the changing situations. It was felt that there should be an effort to assess the training requirements of the industry sector and TRYSEM training should be geared to meet these requirements. No institutional arrangements had been worked out for linking sectors with economic potential for self-employment in partnership with the private sector. The private sector needs should be taken in to account not only for marketing of products but also for identifying necessary skills. There should be an effective liaison and interface between the state government and the DRDAs. At present, TRYSEM training is not oriented towards the service sector. It was therefore recommended by the members of the steering group that training could be profitably imparted in the service sector activities such as marketing, catering, gardening etc.. Since that sector offered ample employment opportunities.

To take an account of this programme it is found that the rural youth in the age group of 18-35 years from families below poverty line are enlisted for training under the scheme. The minimum age for providing training under TRYSEM is relaxed to 16 years for inmates of orphanages in rural areas. The upper age limit is 45 years in case of widows, freed convicts and cured leprosy patients. 50 percent of selected youths should belong to the SC/ST, 40 percent should be women and 03 percent trainees should be physically handicapped persons. The duration of training is normally six months. The trainees are paid a stipend varying from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per month.

Table 5.2
Performance of TRYSEM During (1992-93) - (1998-99)

(Rs. In Crores) (No in Lakhs)

| Year | Allocation | Release | Expenditure | Target | No of Youth Trained |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 1992-93 | 39.87 | 47.04 | 47.50 | 3.00 | 2.76 |
| 1993-94 | 111.24 | 89.45 | 55.02 | 3.50 | 3.04 |
| 1994-95 | 89.16 | 74.03 | 68.46 | 3.18 | 2.82 |
| 1995-96 | 90.25 | 73.31 | 94.55 | 3.54 | 2.91 |
| 1996-97 | 90.25 | 70.11 | 100.27 | 2.90 | 3.64 |
| 1997-98 | 90.00 | 68.08 | 80.74 | 3.04 | 2.54 |
| 1998-99 * | 89.76 | 40.61 | 30.86 | 2.92 | 0.66 |
| Total | 600.53 | 562.63 | 477.40 | 22.08 | 18.37 |

Source: *Annual Report – 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.*

* Up to November 1998.

During the period (1992-93-1998-99) total releases were Rs.562.63 Crore out of which Rs.477.40 Crores have been utilized. During the same period against the largest of 22.08 lakhs only 18.37 lakh youth have been trained.

Table 5.3
Physical Performance Under TRYSEM

| Year | No of Youth to be Trained | No of Youth Trained | Self Employment | Wage Employment | Total | No of Women Trained |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|---------------------|
| 1992-93 | 300000 | 275993 | 99334 | 42058 | 141392 | 134929 |
| 1993-94 | 350000 | 303821 | 107919 | 43004 | 150923 | 153981 |
| 1994-95 | 318436 | 281874 | 86466 | 44965 | 131431 | 137822 |
| 1995-96 | 353980 | 291450 | 92665 | 48450 | 141115 | 124462 |
| 1996-97 | 290079 | 364377 | 130812 | 51725 | 182537 | 195522 |
| 1997-98 | 304129 | 251387 | 73358 | 39384 | 112742 | 132841 |
| 1998-99 * | 292485 | 66016 | 12988 | 11175 | 31535 | 46390 |

Source: *Annual Report – 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.*

* Up to November 1998.

Table 5.4

Physical Progress under TRYSEM (Recurring Expenditure)**During 1998-99 (Up to November, 98-Provisional)**

(In Numbers)

| States/UTs | Target | Trained Youth Self Employed | Trained Youth Wage Employed | Total Trained Youth Employed | Trained Women | % to Women Trained |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 38534 | 1416 | 1102 | 2518 | 3943 | 54.82 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 750 | 41 | 0 | 41 | 24 | 0.00 |
| Assam | 10965 | 354 | 209 | 563 | 118 | 61.46 |
| Bihar | 56370 | 1980 | 995 | 2975 | 10250 | 55.51 |
| Goa | 2000 | 207 | 26 | 233 | 912 | 55.44 |
| Gujarat | 4265 | 970 | 172 | 1142 | 1504 | 49.85 |
| Haryana | NF | 43 | 102 | 145 | 220 | 48.67 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 707 | 73 | 81 | 154 | 65 | 0.00 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | NR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1211 | 0.00 |
| Karnataka | 13666 | 298 | 194 | 492 | 135 | 43.97 |
| Kerala | 1939 | 442 | 974 | 1416 | 1185 | 63.47 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 13770 | 2367 | 2269 | 4636 | 965 | 18.63 |
| Maharashtra | 20100 | 1003 | 1040 | 2043 | 892 | 24.06 |
| Meghalaya | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 87.10 |
| Mizoram | Nil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 42.78 |
| Orissa | 18840 | 1156 | 1238 | 2394 | 2141 | 40.15 |
| Punjab | 1800 | 157 | 324 | 481 | 482 | 52.28 |
| Rajasthan | 10000 | 128 | 0 | 128 | 811 | 63.21 |
| Sikkim | 732 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Tamil Nadu | 13602 | 657 | 444 | 1101 | 2905 | 56.48 |
| Tripura | 1200 | 40 | 26 | 66 | 706 | 68.81 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 62974 | 7122 | 1357 | 8479 | 14873 | 68.12 |
| West Bengal | 19630 | 1897 | 597 | 2494 | 2941 | 49.92 |
| A & N Islands | 411 | 0 | 25 | 0 | NR | 0.00 |
| Daman & Diu | NR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| D & N Haveli | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Lakshadweep | 30 | 29 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Pondicherry | 200 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0.00 |
| All India | 292485 | 12988 | 11175 | 31535 | 46390 | 70.27 |

Targets are fixed by states/UTs

NR: Not Reported

NF: Not Fixed

Source: Annual Report 1992-99, Government of India Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.

Table 5.5

**Financial Progress Report Under TRYSEM (RE) during 1998-99
(Up to November, 98) (Provisional)**

(Rs. In Lakhs)

| State/Uts | Central Share | State Share | Central Release | State Release | Total Release | Utilisation | % Utilisation |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 237.98 | 237.98 | 124.38 | 124.37 | 248.75 | 221.50 | 46.54 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 12.46 | 12.46 | 4.98 | 2.09 | 7.07 | 14.35 | 57.59 |
| Assam | 323.71 | 323.71 | 71.22 | 0.00 | 71.22 | 49.89 | 7.71 |
| Bihar | 779.64 | 779.64 | 232.36 | 150.00 | 382.36 | 456.70 | 29.29 |
| Goa | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.29 | 3.84 | 4.13 | 13.06 | 1189.44 |
| Gujarat | 89.58 | 89.58 | 46.93 | 46.93 | 93.86 | 109.44 | 61.08 |
| Haryana | 52.70 | 52.70 | 23.95 | 9.33 | 33.28 | 27.15 | 25.76 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 22.20 | 22.20 | 9.44 | 12.08 | 21.52 | 10.93 | 24.62 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 27.47 | 27.47 | 10.96 | 0.00 | 10.96 | 46.93 | 85.43 |
| Karnataka | 179.71 | 179.71 | 87.63 | 3.86 | 91.49 | 10.72 | 2.98 |
| Kerala | 80.64 | 80.64 | 34.74 | 34.74 | 69.48 | 57.77 | 35.82 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 395.20 | 395.20 | 207.04 | 207.04 | 414.08 | 278.65 | 35.25 |
| Maharashtra | 355.28 | 355.28 | 159.20 | 172.02 | 331.22 | 289.61 | 40.76 |
| Manipur | 21.70 | 21.70 | 0.00 | | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| Meghalaya | 24.31 | 24.31 | 5.49 | 0.00 | 5.49 | 2.49 | 5.12 |
| Mizoram | 5.63 | 5.63 | 4.12 | 4.12 | 8.24 | 8.29 | 73.68 |
| Nagaland | 16.68 | 16.68 | 6.86 | | 6.86 | | 0.00 |
| Orissa | 272.24 | 272.24 | 120.78 | 122.78 | 243.56 | 189.20 | 34.75 |
| Punjab | 25.61 | 25.61 | 12.94 | 13.33 | 26.27 | 28.31 | 55.26 |
| Rajasthan | 136.46 | 136.46 | 40.17 | 25.03 | 65.20 | 38.33 | 14.04 |
| Sikkim | 6.33 | 6.33 | 1.39 | 6.00 | 7.39 | 3.64 | 28.75 |
| Tamil Nadu | 210.42 | 210.42 | 110.24 | 154.21 | 264.45 | 107.15 | 25.46 |
| Tripura | 39.18 | 39.18 | 13.10 | 25.00 | 38.10 | 36.28 | 46.30 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 858.04 | 858.04 | 738.58 | 906.98 | 1645.56 | 830.06 | 48.37 |
| West Bengal | 302.54 | 302.54 | 136.17 | 115.88 | 252.05 | 251.22 | 41.52 |
| A & N Islands | 11.15 | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.53 | 13.72 |
| Daman & Diu | 2.36 | | 2.30 | 0.00 | 2.30 | 0.38 | 16.12 |
| D & N Haveli | 4.38 | | 1.24 | 0.00 | 1.24 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Lakshadweep | 1.10 | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.32 | 29.14 |
| Pondicherry | 4.74 | | 2.49 | 0.00 | 2.49 | 1.52 | 32.04 |
| All India | 4500.00 | 4476.27 | 1921.71 | 2139.63 | 4061.34 | 3085.42 | 34.04 |

Source: Annual Report – 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.

It is observed from the table 5.3 that the year 1996-97 has a little more success having 364377 youth trained out of which 195522 were women, in the case of self employment a total no of 112742 youth were employed. From table 5.4 that among state West Bengal had a target of 19630 out of 292485 (India) during 1998-99. In West Bengal 2494 trained youth employed out of 31535

(India) a number of 2941 women as 49.92 percent were trained among 46390 women (India wide). In table 5.5 we found during 1998-99 West Bengal total release were 252.05 lakhs as all India picture shows 4061.34 lakhs. Percent of utilisation in West Bengal is 41.52 as 34.37 India wide.

Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisan (SITRA) :

The artisan in rural areas, despite their rich heritage and skills belong to the poverty groups. The existing programme aims at upgrading their skills and improving their production capabilities, by supplying them with modern toolkits enhancing there by their productivity and income levels. The scheme was launched in July 1992 with the objective of enabling the rural artisans to enhance the quality of their products, increase their production and income. Under the scheme, artisans from a variety of crafts except weavers, tailors, needle workers and beedi-workers are supplied with kit of improved hand tools within the financial ceiling of Rs.2000, of which the artisans have to pay only 10 percent and the rest 90 percent is subsidy from government of India. The supply of power-driven tools subject to a ceiling of Rs.4500 has also been permitted under the scheme. The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is the nodal agency for implementation of the scheme. Prototypes of improved tools in pottery, carpentry, blacksmith, leather work, wood craft, metal craft and laquerware have been developed by the National Small Industries corporation, Regional Design and Technical Development Centres under the Development Commission. The state government have been authorised to choose models/tools which suit the need of their artisans.

There is 50% reservation for SC and ST communities, wherever SC/ST persons are not available, the DRDA governing body can decide to allocate the percentage meant for SC/ST to other categories of artisans. There is no provision of reservation for women and physically handicapped persons. However, if eligible, preference will be given to such persons of other persons. Regular monthly monitoring is done by the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment. State and district level committees have been set up by the state

government for implementation and monitoring of the scheme. Areas Officers nominated for various states by this ministry also regularly inspect the implementation of the scheme in the field during their visits to the states.

Table 5.6
Yearwise Allocation and Release under the Scheme SITRA

(Rs. In Crores)

| Year | Allocation | Release | Expenditure | Target | No of Toolkit Distributed (In Lakhs) |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---|
| 1992-93 | 16.85 | 16.85 | 13.86 | 0.98 | 0.83 |
| 1993-94 | 23.22 | 23.22 | 18.60 | 1.29 | 1.09 |
| 1994-95 | 29.00 | 29.00 | 22.91 | 1.61 | 1.25 |
| 1995-96 | 40.00 | 40.00 | 28.69 | 2.22 | 1.54 |
| 1996-97 | 40.00 | 40.00 | 36.02 | 2.22 | 1.81 |
| 1997-98 | 35.00 | 30.82 | 34.37 | 1.94 | 1.62 |
| 1998-99 | 59.00 | 26.87 | 25.14 | 3.27 | 1.32 |
| Total | 243.05 | 216.76 | 179.59 | 13.53 | 9.46 |

Source : *Annual plan 1998-99, Govt. of India, New Delhi.*

- Up to November 98.

Table 5.6 shows us that the year 1995-96 and 1996-97 has a maximum allocation of funds and target as 40.00 Crores and 2.22 lakhs where as the year 1996-97 has achieved as maximum, over all achievement is always less than the target. In Table 5.7 we find West Bengal has a less percent (32.09) of fund utilisation comparing to Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Nagaland and Andhra Pradesh during the year 1998-99. Andhra Pradesh has got a high percentage of fund utilisation where as Utter Pradesh has got the maximum allotment of funds.

Table 5.7
Financial Progress Report Under SITRA During 1998-99
(Upto November, 98-provisional)

| State/Uts | Opening Balance As on 1.4.98 | Allocation | Release | Total Funds Available | Total Utili- sation | % of Utilisation |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | NR | 313.140 | 164.488 | 164.488 | 272.554 | 165.70 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 21.26 | 16.334 | 12.285 | 33.545 | 2.270 | 6.77 |
| Assam | NR | 424.421 | 424.421 | 0.000 | NR | 0.00 |
| Bihar | 838.97 | 1025.866 | 0.000 | 838.970 | 44.699 | 5.33 |
| Goa | NR | 0.722 | 0.000 | 0.000 | NR | 0.00 |
| Gujarat | NR | 117.872 | 62.769 | 62.769 | 6.000 | 9.56 |
| Haryana | 60.82 | 69.346 | 21.567 | 82.385 | 4.980 | 6.04 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 9.82 | 29.204 | 11.728 | 21.548 | 5.830 | 27.06 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | NR | 36.144 | 9.770 | 9.770 | NR | 0.00 |
| Karnataka | 113.43 | 236.465 | 124.212 | 237.642 | 129.088 | 54.32 |
| Kerala | 29.09 | 106.101 | 55.733 | 84.823 | 36.470 | 43.00 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 172.23 | 520.012 | 277.825 | 450.055 | 87.080 | 19.35 |
| Maharashtra | 361.39 | 467.489 | 229.085 | 590.475 | 113.880 | 19.29 |
| Manipur | NR | 28.453 | 0.000 | 0.000 | NR | 0.00 |
| Meghalaya | NR | 31.878 | 0.000 | 0.000 | NR | 0.00 |
| Mizoram | 0.92 | 7.377 | 9.475 | 10.393 | 4.680 | 45.03 |
| Nagaland | 0.00 | 21.866 | 11.025 | 11.025 | 21.270 | 192.93 |
| Orissa | 171.86 | 358.223 | 75.644 | 247.504 | 77.530 | 31.32 |
| Punjab | 36.66 | 33.701 | 0.000 | 36.655 | 112.520 | 306.97 |
| Rajasthan | 117.22 | 179.556 | 27.177 | 144.394 | 821.460 | 568.90 |
| Sikkim | 4.05 | 8.299 | 1.837 | 5.887 | 3.640 | 0.00 |
| Tamil Nadu | NR | 276.884 | 109.828 | 109.828 | 166.409 | 151.52 |
| Tripura | 1.55 | 51.373 | 11.374 | 12.925 | 4.230 | 0.00 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 251.45 | 1129.024 | 966.494 | 1217.944 | 483.140 | 39.67 |
| West Bengal | 276.23 | 398.087 | 78.300 | 354.530 | 113.770 | 32.09 |
| A & N Islands | 2.45 | 3.998 | 2.100 | 4.550 | 1.950 | 42.86 |
| Daman & Diu | 0.54 | 2.170 | 0.000 | 0.540 | | 0.00 |
| D & N Haveli | 14.30 | | 0.000 | 14.300 | NR | 0.00 |
| Lakshadweep | 14.64 | 2.998 | 0.000 | 14.640 | NR | 0.00 |
| Pondicherry | 2.87 | 2.998 | 0.000 | 2.870 | 1.040 | 36.24 |
| Total | 2500.237 | 5900.00 | 2687.13 | 4764.455 | 2514.490 | 52.78 |

Source: Annual Report, 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.

*Daman & Diu does not require funds.

State government should take up the task of promoting development of appropriate toolkits for these artisan groups. They must interact with the Department of Science and Technology, NSIC, IIT for the 'development' of appropriate technology and designs for these improved toolkits. There are pockets where rural technologies have survived the onslaught of modern technological innovations by virtue of their sturdiness and locate specific utility. These should be identified and replicated elsewhere. A majority of rural artisans are illiterate and therefore they do not have access to documented literature. Efforts should therefore be made to prepare such literature with plenty of graphics and illustrations for easy comprehension by the rural artisans. It was proposed to strengthen and expand the programme for supply of improved toolkits to rural artisans in the ninth five year plan.

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP):

The National social Assistance Programme (NSAP) has come in to effect from August 15, 1995. It is now in operation throughout India. This programme represents a significant step towards the fulfilment of the directive principles in article 41 to 42 of the constitution, recognising the concurrent responsibility of the central and state governments in the matter. It provides social assistance to benefit the poor households in the case of old age, death of the primary breadwinner and maternity. It is a centrally sponsored programme to extend 100% central assistance to the states/UTs to provide the benefits under it, in accordance with the norms, guidelines and conditions laid down by the central government. It has mainly three components as (1) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS). (2) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS). (3) National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). The intention in providing 100% assistance is to ensure that social protection to the beneficiaries everywhere in the country is uniformly available without interruption and a minimum national standard is maintained thereby. States and UTS are however, to ensure that the central assistance does not displace their own expenditure in similar schemes.

They may also expand their own coverage of social assistance independently, where ever they wish to do so.

Table 5.8

National Social Assistance Programme NOAPS (Provisional) 1998-99

| State/Uts | O.B As on 1.4.98 | New Allocation | Release | Exp. Reported | Total No of Benf. | Total Release |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 283.27 | 4361.76 | 4136.66 | 2617.29 | 514467 | 4170.67 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 2.98 | 45.86 | 1.94 | 3.06 | 336 | 1.94 |
| Assam | 124.13 | 656.14 | 258.49 | 370.95 | 53087 | 264.80 |
| Bihar | 2784.16 | 6552.00 | 4047.87 | 4656.65 | 717519 | 5729.34 |
| Goa | 0.23 | 20.59 | 20.60 | 17.30 | 1758 | 23.17 |
| Gujarat | 546.48 | 514.80 | 242.86 | 104.72 | 2035 | 322.40 |
| Haryana | 35.33 | 352.87 | 208.50 | 105.63 | 15338 | 248.16 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 22.32 | 108.58 | 62.49 | 75.20 | 0 | 84.49 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 39.73 | 248.98 | 150.24 | 78.57 | 26337 | 152.63 |
| Karnataka | 760.26 | 2959.63 | 1841.35 | 1866.20 | 183045 | 2588.48 |
| Kerala | 633.06 | 1252.37 | 774.33 | 584.11 | 75923 | 1125.34 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 2038.81 | 4585.46 | 3685.11 | 4119.88 | 790651 | 4332.90 |
| Maharashtra | 1140.97 | 3996.72 | 2631.80 | 2137.84 | 251303 | 2682.75 |
| Manipur | 11.75 | 97.34 | 0.00 | 10.02 | 2227 | 0.00 |
| Meghalaya | 17.53 | 94.54 | 6.96 | 53.60 | 6577 | 13.9113.91 |
| Mizoram | 0.08 | 37.44 | 18.73 | 18.45 | 0 | 34.45 |
| Nagaland | 9.85 | 66.46 | 4.98 | 13.20 | 885 | 4.98 |
| Orissa | 1258.86 | 3120.62 | 1816.66 | 1788.36 | 309590 | 1918.92 |
| Punjab | 17.99 | 280.80 | 149.17 | 164.26 | 36500 | 149.17 |
| Rajasthan | 673.65 | 1404.00 | 592.33 | 517.61 | 130823 | 592.33 |
| Sikkim | 0.00 | 22.47 | 1123 | 10.80 | 0 | 26.97 |
| Tamil Nadu | 1331.70 | 3276.00 | 1834.15 | 2256.19 | 0 | 1924.75 |
| Tripura | 32.73 | 146.02 | 114.58 | 81.78 | 15480 | 137.68 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 3947.28 | 7956.00 | 5830.17 | 7104.31 | 922537 | 6276.69 |
| West Bengal | 1253.93 | 3312.50 | 1516.97 | 1507.98 | 340059 | 2192.79 |
| A & N Islands | 0.00 | 5.62 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Chandigarh | 3.86 | 12.17 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Daman & Diu | 0.30 | 2.81 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 |
| D & N Haveli | 0.22 | 1.87 | 1.87 | 0.90 | 203 | 1.87 |
| Lakshadweep | 0.00 | 0.94 | 0.00 | 1.51 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Pondicherry | 1.03 | 14.04 | 7.02 | 6.79 | 0 | 14.04 |
| Total : | 16980.20 | 45685.24 | 30055.99 | 30374.81 | 4396680 | 35104.54 |

Source: Annual Report, 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.

Table 5.8 shows us that during 1998-99 West Bengal has a little high performance in NSAP, which figures as 340059 beneficiaries expenditure is about 1507.98 lakhs. The NSAP is being implemented by the panchayats and municipalities in the delivery of social assistance so as to make it responsive and

cost effective. It provides opportunities for linking the social assistance package to schemes for poverty alleviation and provision of basic needs.

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) :

The Integrated Rural Development Programme aims at providing self-employment opportunities to the rural poor through assistance in the form of subsidy and bank credit to enable them to acquire productive assets and appropriate skills to cross the poverty line. Though the allocation for this scheme have not been increased appreciably in the last three to four years, certain innovative changes have been made in the guidelines for this programme in order to make a greater impact on income levels. But the success has been limited. The major constraint in the implementation of IRDP had been sub-critical investments which had adversely affected Incremental Capital Output Ratios (ICOR) and thereby undermined the viability of projects.

Investment levels under IRDP therefore should be stepped up considerably to make this programme viable. Recognising that the level of investment is the most crucial variable in determining the incremental income generated through IRDP activities.

The government intervention should be focussed mainly on providing inputs, infrastructure and linkages and marketing support. To make IRDP more effective in its impact it should be specifically targeted to the income bracket just below the poverty line which comprises prospective beneficiaries who have the requisite skills and knowledge, an easier access to credit and a better absorptive capacity to derive greater benefits from IRDP. In the selection of beneficiaries, the procedure of identification should be made more objective and transparent through a greater involvement of the gram sabhas in this process. To ensuring that benefits under the programme reach the more vulnerable sections of the society an ensured coverage of at least 50% for SC/ST, 40% for women and 3% for physically handicapped. A revolving fund is provided to various groups for purchase of raw materials and marketing, payment of honorarium to the group leader, and infrastructure development.

The programme focussed on women or in which women played a dominant role, under the IRDP, the earmarking for women is 40% therefore, felt that there should be a more durable integration of DWCRA with IRDP as DWCRA was an excellent vehicle for extending IRDP credit support for women beneficiaries. When land is purchased under IRDP it should be made in the name of the women beneficiaries with adequate financial assistance provided to them under the programme. In India land continues to be main productive asset in the rural areas. IRDP activities had been relatively more successful in land based activities. In recognition of the fact that IRDP had been relatively more successful in land based activities, purchase of land was made a permissible activity under IRDP in 1995-96. Under land based activities it is felt that besides providing a package of inputs for enhancing productivity of land there also exists a potential for diversifying in to other productive activities such as sericulture, aqua-culture, horticulture and floriculture which have a high value addition. Since a large segment of the rural poor are landless, assistance to them under IRDP had also been provided in the small business and service sector. 50% of the IRDP investments are concentrated in the secondary and tertiary sectors, based on local resources and local requirements. These include processing industries, handloom and handicraft. The success of IRDP activities in this sector has been dependent on the development of skill base for the poor, upgradation of technology, establishment of forward and backward linkages, availability of infrastructure and market.

To achieve better returns from economic empowerment of the poor, the IRDP should be linked with area development and sectoral development programmes. Under the revised strategy for IRDP it was also proposed to redesign the programme as a credit based self-employment programme with an element of subsidy rather than a programme based cardinally on the provision of subsidy and supplemented by bank credit. To enable IRDP beneficiaries to sustain credible levels to income generation, there should be a continuous line of credit available to the beneficiary from the banks. Consequently, the importance of recovering bank loans could hardly be over emphasised. In the context of economic empowerment related issue discussed in ninth plan.

Table 5.9

Physical Progress Under Integrated Rural Development Programme

During 1998-99 (Upto November, 98) As On 14-1-99

(No of Families)

| State/Uts | Coverage of Disadvantaged Groups | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| | Total Families | SC | ST | Women Beneficiaries | Handicapped Persons | % of Women Beneficiaries |
| Andhra Pradesh | 59799 | 21046 | 6020 | 23267 | 727 | 38.91 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 2810 | 0 | 2810 | 1428 | 0 | 50.82 |
| Assam | 7964 | 278 | 1809 | 1702 | 48 | 21.37 |
| Bihar | 84753 | 23231 | 13089 | 13187 | 155 | 15.56 |
| Goa | 602 | 3 | 0 | 323 | 0 | 53.65 |
| Gujarat | 22688 | 3651 | 6184 | 8351 | 260 | 36.81 |
| Haryana | 5881 | 2743 | 0 | 2746 | 102 | 46.69 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 3224 | 1314 | 155 | 1220 | 0 | 37.84 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 7457 | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | 0.00 |
| Karnataka | 42775 | 11672 | 2825 | 14821 | 365 | 34.65 |
| Kerala | 17770 | 6164 | 364 | 7601 | 155 | 42.77 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 45904 | 9644 | 12459 | 8740 | 77 | 19.04 |
| Maharashtra | 60068 | 11394 | 8797 | 21629 | 67 | 36.01 |
| Manipur | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Meghalaya | 1409 | 0 | 1409 | 572 | 0 | 40.60 |
| Mizoram | 1400 | 0 | 1400 | 525 | 33 | 37.50 |
| Nagaland | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Orissa | 35383 | 7475 | 10585 | 10792 | 35 | 30.50 |
| Punjab | 5335 | 2537 | 0 | 1848 | 74 | 34.64 |
| Rajasthan | 25205 | 6675 | 4431 | 8922 | 78 | 35.40 |
| Sikkim | 643 | 29 | 314 | 211 | 0 | 32.81 |
| Tamil Nadu | 92094 | 42868 | 1480 | 37989 | 1325 | 41.25 |
| Tripura | 600 | 80 | 262 | 188 | 1 | 31.33 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 211249 | 107092 | 1292 | 78943 | 352 | 37.37 |
| West Bengal | 46341 | 14473 | 2448 | 15413 | 239 | 33.26 |
| A & N Islands | 119 | 0 | 6 | 41 | 0 | 34.45 |
| D & N Haveli | 113 | 0 | 113 | 4 | 0 | 3.54 |
| Daman & Diu | 29 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 0 | 55.17 |
| Lakshadweep | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 50.00 |
| Pondicherry | 208 | 68 | 0 | 138 | 0 | -66.35 |
| Total | 781825 | 272443 | 78266 | 260618 | 4093 | 34.85 |

Source: Annual Report 1998-99, Govt. of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment, New Delhi.

Table 5.10
Financial Progress Under Integrated Rural Development
Programme
During 1998-99 (Upto November, 98)- As On 14-1-99
(Rs. In lakhs)

| State/Uts | Total Allocation | Central Releases (Upto date) | State Releases | Utilisation | Total Credit Target | Total Credit Acheived |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 7734.30 | 2264.52 | 2036.98 | 4985.35 | 21600.00 | 30.17 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 403.82 | 161.02 | 148.81 | 169.85 | 880.00 | 5.89 |
| Assam | 10492.72 | 1163.68 | 472.38 | 758.24 | 7000.00 | 9.679.67 |
| Bihar | 25336.66 | 3924.78 | 2661.67 | 6237.60 | 51000.00 | 19.99 |
| Goa | 17.82 | 24.43 | 36.51 | 44.68 | 44.00 | 119.45 |
| Gujarat | 2911.34 | 766.76 | 766.76 | 1906.07 | 7500.00 | 36.56 |
| Haryana | 1712.78 | 462.30 | 503.95 | 545.80 | 4200.00 | 23.22 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 721.32 | 185.48 | 167.76 | 227.47 | 2000.00 | 40.10 |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 892.74 | 247.41 | 0.00 | 539.24 | 1800.00 | 40.26 |
| Karnataka | 5840.48 | 1439.74 | 1431.87 | 2394.22 | 14000.00 | 30.67 |
| Kerala | 2620.60 | 733.91 | 690.19 | 1142.84 | 7000.00 | 36.89 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 12842.50 | 3607.42 | 3582.32 | 4728.52 | 31500.00 | 22.70 |
| Maharashtra | 11545.22 | 3497.66 | 2456.24 | 4358.81 | 28500.00 | 28.94 |
| Manipur | 703.42 | 40.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 500.00 | 0.00 |
| Meghalaya | 788.10 | 74.07 | 0.00 | 92.12 | 600.00 | 11.83 |
| Mizoram | 182.36 | 52.13 | 66.64 | 100.35 | 200.00 | 5.83 |
| Nagaland | 540.60 | 86.70 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 400.00 | 0.00 |
| Orissa | 8846.44 | 2386.83 | 2208.89 | 2853.36 | 20700.00 | 21.45 |
| Punjab | 832.40 | 317.99 | 219.96 | 454.31 | 2000.00 | 40.55 |
| Rajasthan | 4434.88 | 1131.11 | 1090.23 | 1943.05 | 14000.00 | 43.84 |
| Sikkim | 201.90 | 22.39 | 18.00 | 58.66 | 230.00 | 35.92 |
| Tamil Nadu | 6838.82 | 3258.66 | 2501.09 | 5067.63 | 18000.00 | 48.92 |
| Tripura | 1270.06 | 270.48 | 184.42 | 255.45 | 1100.00 | 33.19 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 27883.22 | 12068.49 | 11359.71 | 12757.71 | 65000.00 | 43.46 |
| West Bengal | 9831.06 | 1194.70 | 1254.59 | 2505.36 | 20000.00 | 20.25 |
| A & N Islands | 69.58 | 36.26 | ----- | 17.31 | 72.00 | 12.08 |
| D & N Haveli | 41.53 | 21.88 | ----- | 5.60 | 60.00 | 18.13 |
| Daman & Diu | 27.43 | 0.00 | ----- | 3.35 | 10.00 | 23.50 |
| Lakshadweep | 6.85 | 0.00 | ----- | 2.17 | 4.00 | 2.00 |
| Pondicherry | 56.83 | 29.93 | ----- | 31.63 | 100.00 | 14.04 |
| Total | 145627.78 | 39470.73 | 33858.97 | 54186.75 | 320000.00 | 30.65 |

Source: Annual Report, 1998-99, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Area and Employment.

In Table 5.9 we find the physical progress during 1998-99 where West Bengal has not performed well. Table 5.10 also presents us that West Bengal has a less percentage (25.48) of utilisation and only 20.25 percent total credit achieved.

Panchayati Raj Institutions and Women Empowerment :

Panchayati Raj, one of the most important political innovations of independent India is a channel for popular participation in development process. The Panchayati Raj System was instituted in 1959 which initiated a process of democratic decentralization in tune with Article 40 of the constitution. The most significant reason behind women participation in Panchayati Raj bodies was the implementation of 73rd constitution amendment. A positive aspect was that several women's group, government and NGOs started preparation in their own ways of mobilizing people and women towards political empowerment. Challenge has been much greater for women to get unleashed by the patriarchal forces. Character assassination was also the reason for women's lack of interest in politics (Chauhan A, 1998). Political empowerment is essential not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic process but also for realising the development goals for women. Decentralization process under 73rd constitutional amendments with reservation of seats for women is a big leap towards bringing the women in to the mainstream of panchayat raj. It is also felt that even if women are elected in large numbers, they may not be sufficiently effective to propound their cause unless they are adequately gender sensitive and politically educated (Sen A, 1994).

The Eighth Five-Year plan rightly emphasised on greater involvement of women in political process. The reservation of seats for women in panchayati raj is one of the significant achievements in women empowerment at the grassroot level. Instead of reservation the social blockade on women actually empowerment in political process is very negligible (Bhargava BS, 1992). Reservation of seat for women in panchayati raj is the main instrument of political empowerment for women. Reviewing women's political participation, women had a negligible impact on the political process that though they constituted a numerical majority, they were slowly acquiring the features of a minority group because of inequalities of status and power. To make women involved in politics, government took initiatives to set a quota for women in decentralised political institutions. It is noticed that if the hostile religious

fundamentalism, continues to grow the women's political aspect will probably be in jeopardy, because these forces divert attention from basic development issues important to women empowerment (Barbara,1997).

Achievements of these Programmes in Women Empowerment :

Achievements is the mixture of success and failure, every aspect has these two factors in the case of its achievements. Various government plans and programme in ensuring women empowerment has also both the success and failure. If not all but many of these programmes have a better sign towards its failure. This failure or less success whatever we say is mainly because of administrative problem and some technical lack in implementation, these problems varies state to state and even district to district. Mostly it is the political will of the Indian leaders working behind every success or failure. Many of the programme is doing well though the target of the programme is not achieved by any of the programmes but the rate of achievement is quite high in many cases. Lack of funds, lack of people, cooperation is also the main hinders behind not having full success, but these programmes have done well in respect of empowering women economically and politically. However, the status of women had declined gradually with the consolidation of private property in the course of historical development. The alienation of women from the social production was the downfall of the female sex and consequently rise of male supremacy over women. This so called women's inferior position is not natural, but the circumstances pushed the women in to dependency becoming mere domestic channel to keep the house in order and was exploited in all the socio-economic and political life. It is obvious that, with the beginning of the 19th century, situation had started changing. The primary role of women in our society is still considered as wives, mothers, child-bearers and rearers, whatever may be their level of education and professional career. Factors which are to be taken account of women's involvement in panchayati raj institutions relates to the social structure, religion and culture of the family. In political structure, nature of political party, process of political succession which support or oppose

the recruitment of women to political officers. So the socio-political environment determines the women's activities in democratic decentralization. Thus, reservation of women in panchayati raj institutions has to be meaningful to bring about development and empowerment of women.

Overall Assessment of Women Empowerment :

The Indian Constitution guaranteed to all women the right to equality and political participation but women's participation and their role in political life has not become a reality and that is why political empowerment of women by way of reservation is the need of the hour. Though the Constitution (article 14, 15 and 16) has granted equal rights to women but their voice is hardly given any weightage. How can they be empowered unless they have been allowed to put on an equal pedestal with men? How can they enjoy this equality until they have freedom? How can they enjoy freedom unless they have right in decision-making process and how they can take the decisions until and unless they are fully empowered? Reservation is the first step to empower women to enable them to enjoy rights and privileges (Narasimhan S, 1999). Major questions lingering in the minds of the politicians, administrators and social workers about women are whether it be possible to generate enough women power as per the reservation. Entire effort of empowering is to help them to exercise their rights in decision making at all levels and in every sphere of life, within and outside the household. Mere panchayati raj is not enough to empower women, they should be given a fair knowledge about the functioning of the political system as a whole and the interactions between the subsystem (Subha K, 1995).

Empowerment of women implies avoidance of crimes and atrocities against women and improvement in education and health. The empowerment of women and their status improvement in respect of education, health and economic opportunity is a highly important in itself. The world community cannot and should not miss the enhanced contribution that women can make to human development through their empowerment. Empowerment of women pre-supposes a drastic, dynamic and democratic change in the perception of and

expectation from women in our society. When women attains economic independence she naturally becomes the mistress of her body and decisions (Devasia L).

Empowerment of women is necessary for development, which implies a state of balance and equilibrium in factors related to human life which can be social, economical, political and even spiritual. If a human being is forced to live in an inhuman and degrading situation, development becomes unattainable. In the case of women equality, social justice and freedom have dynamic roles to achieve such empowerment. The eighth plan (1992-97) marks a further shift in approach to women's development from "development " to "empowerment ", seeking women to function as equal partners and participants in the developmental process. The strategy is in consonance with the provisions of the constitution which not only guarantees equality to women but also empowers them. Today, the women's concerns in all sectors have been flagged. The challenge lies in converting these concerns in to reality, so the empowering strategies would need to be further sharpened to make them effective and result oriented. Therefore, a need for comprehensive and holistic policy on women is felt by everyone. This would enable the country to fulfil the constitutional mandate of women's equality and objective of involvement in national development (Chaudhary M, 1996).

It is observed from the various government plans and programmes that a good response is coming out from women to get themselves empowered all the way. Even it is the new generation women who are able to come out of the social barrier and to involve in various public life. A move made by the women is a sign of positive attitude towards women empowerment. Lakhs of women are being self-employed and so they are able to be eco-independent by the advancement of governmental programmes. Education has a great role in this change among women. It is upwards trend which indicates successful positive attitudes of women to be empowered. Not only in employment but in political process also women are involving themselves so easily and emotionally which is an evidence of empowerment. Time is approaching very fast when Indian women will be fully empowered as compared to other advanced countries of the

world. Certain changes and suggestions is still required in government plans and programmes and in the machinery for its implementation. Empowerment is an accepted notion since the eighties, women empowerment can be known as gaining autonomy and control over one's life including social, economic and political empowerment. It is evident that the question of effective empowerment can not be ensured simply by amending the constitution. It is a challenge to women.

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CHAPTER - VI
DEMOCRATIC
DECENTRALIZATION,
DEVELOPMENT AND
EMPOWERMENT:
MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT
SCENARIO

DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION AND EMPOWERMENT :- MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT SCENARIO

Profile of the District :

History of Murshidabad District in Brief :

The district derives the name from the town Murshidabad, where the provincial revenue head quarters of Bengal under Murshid Kuli Khan, the *Dewan*, was shifted from Dhaka in 1704 A.D. Murshidabad was the town where from the British Empire ascended in India.

This district has a very rich history. It is even believed that Alexander retreated here from further invasion into Ganga Valley. In the Seventh century, Karnasuvarna – a city of the district was the royal seat of a powerful king of Bengal—Sasanka.

Sasanka became the King of Gour with his capital at Karnasuvarna, sometimes about 606 A.D. In about 638 A.D Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang, came to Bengal, shortly after the death of Sasanka. In the writings of Hiuen-Tsang Karnasuvarna was an important centre of learning. The Kingdom was shortly handed over to Bhaskara Varmana, the hostile King of Kamrupa. The early part of the Eleventh century, is commemorated by the excavation of the large Sagar Dighi Water Tank by King Mahipala.

Prince Mohammed Azim-ud-Din took the charge of the govt. of Bengal in November , 1697. In December, 1700 Murshid Kuli Khan, the new *Dewan* came to Bengal. He was the founder of an independent provincial dynasty of Bengal. Murshid Kuli Khan died on 30th June, 1727. His son, Suja-ud-Din Mohammed Khan, succeeded him. He also died on 13th March, 1739. His son sarfaraz ascended the *Masnad* (Throne) of Bengal. But Alibardi Khan, an Arab by descent, ascended the *Masnad* in April, 1740. After his death

his grandson Siraz-ud-Doulla came to the throne of Bengal and wanted to drive the Britishers out of the country. Siraz faced several encounters with British army before the final battle of Palasi on 23rd June, 1757, where he was defeated by Lord Clive.

Physical Aspects :

The district is a triangular tract of country, the apex being situated at North-Western extremity. On its North, district Malda, Bangladesh is in East separated by the River Ganga. On the South lie the districts Burdwan and Nadia. West of the district is surrounded by the Santhal Parganas and Birbhoom district. On land no barrier among these districts are available other than the flowing River Ganga. The River Padma has been causing heavy damage to the villages under Akherigunge, Charkuthibari and Kharibona G.P. For the last ten years this river erased many villages completely including major govt. buildings, schools and personal properties were washed out by the surging waters before the eyes of helpless onlookers.

Geographical Aspect :

The district Murshidabad lies between the latitude 23°43'30" and 24°50'20" in the northern hemisphere. The eastern most extremity of the district is marked by 88°46'00" east longitude while the western most extremity by 87°49'17". Temperature varies between 11.6°C – 36°C. Rainfall recorded in 1998 is 1593.10mm. The river Bhagirathi flowing from north to south dividing almost two equal portion of the district, eastern portion is locally known as "Bagri Anchal" while west is "Rarh Anchal" having the surface high and undulating, hard clay soil with drier climate, but the "Bagri" area is low lying and aluvial with a humid climate having a fertile soil. The Farakka Barage though has its important impact on Indian context and international as well, but the

construction of this barage has till date kept more than 10,000 hectares of land drowned in this district.

Area and Population :

Murshidabad district is divided in five sub-divisions: Lalbagh, Sadar, Kandi, Domkal and Jangipur, having 26 Blocks, and 25 police stations. Area covers 5449.12 sq. km. Population 4740149 (1991 census). Sex ratio – male : female is 51.46 % : 48.54%. Density of population is 797 per sq.Km. Murshidabad is the only Muslim dominated district in West Bengal consisting of more than 59% Muslim population. Major crops are Rice, Jute, Sugar cane, Oil seeds and Potato. Inhabited villages are 1939. Major towns are Behrampur, Lalbagh, Lalgola, Murshidabad, Jangipur, Beldanga, Farakka, Kandi, Salar etc. This district has 1613 Kms of surfaced road and 1908 Km is unsurfaced. Number of post office is 541 in this district. {Report,1996}

Education :

Literacy rate of this district as per 1991 census is 38.28%, male covers 46.42% and female 29.59%. Murshidabad has 2,799 primary schools, 161 junior high school, 245 high school, 28 high madrasa, 77 higher secondary school and has 1300 non formal education centre. Libraries are 157 in number, among them rural 147, sub-division – 09 and District Library is 01. This district has Degree College (gen) – 19, Degree Engineering College – 01, Degree Textile College – 01, I.T.I.-01, Polytechnique College – 01, BT College- 02, B.Ed. College – 01, B.PEd. College – 01 and one more Polytechnique College is likely to add the number.

Industry and Commerce :

Having no such industry, Beedi factories got a prominent place in industry. Manufacturing of beedi which may generally be called a crude cigarette made of Tendu leaf and Tobacco rolled into the shape of a tiny pencil. In West Bengal, Murshidabad tops the list among the beedi manufacturing districts. It is found well over 3 lakh people engaged in this trade including child and women. It is found that 80% is of women. More than 30 crore pieces of beedi is the production of this district per day.

Murshidabad had once been one of the best silk manufacturing centres in the world. From the middle of the 18th century the silk industry in Bengal began to loose its importance, and also decaying its ancestral heritage on the silk production.

Mostly people are dependent on agriculture, mainly as a small farmer and casual agricultural labour. A few Rice Mills and Rice puffing machines are also functioning well in their business. This district has more than 250 Banks (branch), and major co-operatives. Bank branches per lakh people is 153.87, Bank deposit per capita is Rs.1477 and credit per capita is Rs. 404 where credit to agriculture is Rs.89 and industry is Rs. 75 per capita. Value of agricultural product is Rs.1883. Village electrified – 93.43%. Total percentage of main workers is 30.05 in which male is 50.99 and female is 07.86. Total percentage of marginal workers is 1.46 in which male is 0.50 and female is 2.47. In the case of non-worker the rate is quite high as 68.49 in which male is 48.51 and 89.67 percent. Particularly women in district are mostly (90%) non-workers.

Table :- 6.1

Profile Comparison : Murshidabad, West Bengal and India

| Description | Murshidabad | West Bengal | India |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Area in Sq. Km. | 5324.00 | 88752.00 | 3065027.00 |
| Population | 4,744,149 | 68,077,965 | 83,8583988 |
| Male— | 2,439,342 | 35,510,633 | 435,216358 |
| Female-- | 2,300,809 | 32,567332 | 403,367,630 |
| Density of Population | 890 | 767 | 273 |
| Sex ratio per 1000 males | 943 | 917 | 894 |

Contd.

| | | | |
|---|--------|----------|-------------|
| No. of house hold | 855170 | 12514414 | 152,009,467 |
| Literacy Rate – (%) | 38.28 | 57.70 | 52.21 |
| Male – (%) | 46.42 | 67.81 | 64.13 |
| Female – (%) | 29.57 | 46.56 | 39.29 |
| Primary School per lakh people | 55.12 | 65.59 | 64.94 |
| Middle/high School per lakh people | 2.69 | 3.33 | 19.72 |
| Primary Health centre per lakh people | 1.74 | 2.09 | 2.34 |
| Bank Branch per lakh people | 3.87 | 5.53 | 6.65 |
| Bank deposit Rs. per capita | 1477 | 6345 | 6967 |
| Bank credit Rs. per capita | 404 | 2753 | 3816 |
| Credit to agriculture Rs. per capita | 89 | 129 | 408 |
| Credit to industry Rs. per capita | 75 | 1625 | 1876 |
| Gross irrigated area (% of GCA, in Hectre) | 20.22 | 27.63 | 38.45 |
| Value of agricultural product | 1883 | 1584 | 2370 |
| Telephone – per 100 people | 0.92 | 1.56 | 2.15 |
| Village electrified – (%) | 93.43 | 77.21 | 85.95 |
| % of main workers | | | |
| Total – | 30.05 | 30.23 | 34.18 |
| Male – | 50.99 | 50.66 | 51.00 |
| Female -- | 7.86 | 7.96 | 16.03 |
| % of marginal worker | | | |
| Total – | 1.46 | 1.96 | 3.32 |
| Male – | 0.50 | 0.74 | 0.61 |
| Female -- | 2.47 | 3.29 | 6.24 |
| % of Non workers | | | |
| Total – | 68.49 | 67.81 | 62.50 |
| Male – | 48.51 | 48.60 | 48.39 |
| Female – | 89.67 | 88.75 | 77.73 |

Source : Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), October 2000 and Census of India, 1991

Political Scenario :

This district has 07 Municipalities, 26 Panchayat Samities, 255 Gram Panchayats. A total of 4159, 700 and 60 seats are there in Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samity and Zilla Parishad respectively. Murshidabad district has 3182977 voters. Among them 1602645 male covering 50.35 % of total voters. Female number is 1580332 covers 49.65% of total voters besides

that this district has a number of 1787 service voter. Murshidabad has a mixed political culture. Comparing the overall percentage of women in PRI (36.27%) is higher than the percentage (35.13%) West Bengal.

Table - 6.2
Election Update : 1998
Dist. Murshidabad

| Gram Panchayat | Total Seat | CPI(M) | CPI | RSP | AIFB | INC | WBTC | BJP | Ind. |
|----------------|------------|--------|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|
| | 4159 | 1698 | 38 | 339 | 97 | 1326 | 255 | 274 | 132 |
| P.S. | 700 | 384 | 05 | 57 | 06 | 191 | 31 | 19 | 07 |
| Z.P. | 60 | 45 | 01 | 04 | 01 | 08 | --- | --- | 01 |
| M.L.A | 18 | 06 | --- | 04 | --- | 07 | --- | --- | 01 |
| M.P. | 03 | 02 | --- | --- | --- | 01 | --- | --- | --- |

Source : State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD), Kalyani, W.B.

Table : 6.3
Main Portfolio and Party Position, Panchayat Election : 1998
Dist. Murshidabad

| Portfolio | Total Seat | CPI(M) | CPI | RSP | AIFB | INC | WBTC | BJP | Ind. |
|------------------------|------------|--------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| Sabhadhi pati | 01 | 01 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sahakari Sabhadhi pati | 01 | --- | --- | 01 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sabhapati | 26 | 21 | --- | 01 | --- | 04 | --- | --- | --- |
| Sahakari Sabhapati | 26 | 12 | 02 | 04 | 04 | 03 | --- | 01 | --- |
| Pradhan* | 255 | 121 | 01 | 15 | 07 | 79 | 07 | 15 | 08 |
| UpaPradhan** | 255 | 101 | 04 | 24 | 09 | 73 | 15 | 25 | 01 |

Source : State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD), Kalyani, W.B.

*Election not held for two seats.

** Election not held in three seats.

Table : 6.4

**Woman Position in Top Government Body at all the Three Levels
Dist. Murshidabad :1998**

| Description | Total Seat | Male | Female | Male (%) | Female (%) |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Pradhan | 255 | 183 | 72 | 71.76 | 28.23 |
| Upa Pradhan | 255 | 184 | 71 | 72.15 | 27.84 |
| Sabhapati | 26 | 18 | 08 | 69.23 | 30.76 |
| Sahakari Sabhapati | 26 | 18 | 08 | 69.23 | 30.76 |
| Sabhadhipati | 01 | 01 | 00 | 100 | 00 |
| Sahakari Sabhadhipati | 01 | 01 | 00 | 100 | 00 |

Source : *State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD), Kalyani, W.B.*

**Present Administrative Orrganisations, Murshidabad district Zilla
Parishad.**

(Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats)

1. Sri Saehhidananda Kandari

Sabhadhipati

2. Sri Santosh Halder

Sahakari Sabhadhipati

3. Sri Vivek Kumar

I.A.S

Executive Officer.

4. Sri Ashok Banerjee

W.B.C.S

Addl. Execitive Officer.

5. Sri Sachhidananda Kandari

Karmadhaksha, Artha, Sanstha, Unnayan-O-Parikalpana

Sthayee Samiti.

6. Sri Sujay Halder

W.B.C.S

Secretary.

7. Sri Karti Ch.Mandal

Karmadhaksha: Purto Karya-O-Paribahan.

8. Sri Golam Panjaton

Karmadhaksha: Bon-O-Bhumi Sanskar.

9. Sri Badaruddin Seikh

Karmadhaksha: Krishi,Sech-O-Samabay.

10. Sri Kabir Molla

Karmadhaksha: Janaswastha-O-Paribesh.

11. Sri Yadul Islam

Karmadhaksha: Bidyut-O-Achariracharit Sakthi.

12. Smt. Minoti Mukhopadhyay

Karmadhaksha: Khadya-O-Saraboraho.

13. Sri. Mona Mondal

Karmadhaksha: Motsya-O-Prani sampad Bikash.

14. Sri Noor Mohammad

Karmadhaksha: Siksha, Sanskriti, Tathya-O-Kriya.

15. Smt. Kanon Ghosh

Karmadhaksha: Sishu-O-Nari Unnayan,

Janakalyan-O-Tran.

16. Sri. Ujjal Das

Dist. Accounts Officer.

17. Sri. Chanchal Bhattachariya

Statistian

18. Sri. Mihir Sarkar

Executive Engineer(R.D).

19. Sri. Jyotirmoy Chakraborty

Dist. Engineer.

20. Sri. Rupok Kr. Mondal

Asst. Engineer(R.D).

Socio Economic Status of Women Members in Panchayat :

Knowledge of the socio-economic background of a community is an indispensable pre requisite for the understanding of the thought or behaviour of its members. This holds good for all human communities, and more so in the case of rural communities, woman in particular which are intrinsically more traditional in their structure. Religious traditions tend to be observed with rigidity and family as well as caste status play an important role. Generally all members of rural communities, even more in the case of rural woman for whom every step in life is ritually prescribed, leaving a rather small margin for personal choice. In the course of time the phrase came to be constructed in a literal sense with the understanding that a woman deserves independence, that she ought not to do anything on her own initiative right from her childhood, youth and even in her old age. Thus, woman came to occupy an increasingly dependent position in the family, unexposed to social pressure outside the home, the power of family influence tends to get intensified in her case. In today's world family prestige and status are judged according to that of senior male members because they play an important part in the occupational, religious and legal system of society.

Woman in rural areas of district enjoy an ascriptive status, it is necessary to study the status of father and husband in order to appreciate the social position of the rural woman. In spite of the change that is affecting the social structure of rural communities women are still very much under the power of the family. The rural family which is in most cases an agricultural household, is characterised by a greater closeness among its members and thus is more liable to be influenced by hereditary traits and family culture. The social, economic and political involvement of the family is the atmosphere in which the thought and aspirations of the woman are nourished and given the shape. However, the traditional influence of the family is now gradually being offset by other forces at work in rural society. These forces have come into play with the setting up of democratic organisations such as that of Panchayati Raj. The structure of Panchayati Raj has incorporated the ideal of equality in development, riding over

traditional barriers of caste and class to make way for freer participation and greater social mobility among rural communities, particularly in the areas where Muslims are in majority. Given the traditional past in which rural woman have grown up and the process of social change generated by these new channels of development, it is of interest to view the new role that woman Panchayat members are to play.

In order to view the social, economic and political influence we have to look in the husband/parental background and personal background. We can have focus on husband/parent's education, occupation, type of family, economic status and engagement in socio-political activity by the family members.

Education :

Education did not figure high in the socio-cultural life of the land owning class. But the education of parent/husband help to throw light which influences the thought, social aspirations and performance of a family members especially the life. After the compulsory education has become one of the Directive Principles of the constitution, more people are using the facilities of achieving a minimum level of education. The education of the parents/husband is an indication of the process of social change that is taking place in the respondent's families.

Table : 6.5
Educational level of Parents/Husbands

| Sl. No. | Level of education | No. of Parents | (%) | No.of Husbands | (%) |
|---------|--------------------|----------------|------|----------------|-----|
| 1 | Illiterate | 22 | 45.8 | 04 | 20 |
| 2 | Primary | 12 | 25 | 03 | 15 |
| 3 | Secondary | 10 | 20.9 | 05 | 25 |
| 4 | Higher Secondary | 04 | 8.3 | 06 | 30 |
| 5 | Graduate | --- | -- | 02 | 10 |
| 6 | Post Graduate | --- | -- | --- | --- |
| Total | | 48 | 100 | 20 | 100 |

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.5 shows that above 45 percent of illiteracy among parents are evident in which most of them are mothers. In the case of husband, higher secondary level is an average but illiteracy does not go away, in no case any post graduate is found, which indicates the women belong to a high literacy family are not involving in Panchayat. Table 6.5 presents no post graduate among the respondents. Illiteracy here also does not lag behind 20 percent husband are illiterate and only 10 percent are graduate. The average literacy in middle standard women are mostly found as elected woman Panchayat members in the area surveyed.

Fathers'/Husband's Occupation :

As this district is mainly based on agriculture and having very less number of people in any service, mostly people are engaged in cultivation or small business.

Table 6.6

Main occupation of father and husband

| Sl. No. | Occupation | No. of Fathers | No. of Husbands |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Cultivation | 02 | 08 |
| 2 | Service | --- | 04 |
| 3 | Business | 01 | 07 |
| 4 | Professional Practice | 01 | 01 |
| Total | | 04 | 20 |

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.6 shows that only 20% of husbands are engaged in service. Most of them are in cultivation or small business, only 2 has professional practice of quack doctors. The main occupation of the fathers of the respondents alongside that of the husbands merely for comparison sake. It appears no significant change in the occupational status. There are identical number of cultivators on both sides, which shows that in village woman are generally married to the same social class of people. The other aspect of note is that some respondents claim

the status of cultivators but all are not daily wage earner, most of them have own agricultural field and other activities also.

Type of Family :

In type family structure, it is easy to distinguish between the joint and nuclear family. The joint family is associated with a traditional, agricultural society where conservatism with religious orthodoxy and family status tend to dominate over individual interest. The small family, more a development of a mobile, industrialised society permits of a greater degree of flexibility and self-expression among its members. The collected data reflects more than 92% family is a nuclear type which indicates a trend of development in ideas and overlooking the religious orthodoxy to some extent. A close view on this, finds some family with higher education and sound economic status has two establishments, one at village another at towns where the husband/father is engaged in service or business or for the better education of their children. One or two woman members are found working in socio-political activities as her husband is staying at town for service, giving more freedom to wife to be activated in such matters, they seem to be more empowered socially.

Economic Status of the Family :

Through an investigation of the main sources of income, the economic status of the family has been studied. In rural areas of this district it is quite impossible to accept these people to talk about their income in actual figures. This problem mainly comes to interview woman panchayat members who in most cases are not quite conversant with family income, and who find it hard to make monetary assessments. Woman are always careful to disclose the real state of one's income or possessions and one may resort to evasive responses.

Table 6.7
Annual family Income (Approx.)

| Sl.no. | Level of Income (in Rs.) | No.of Families |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Up to 25000 | 06 |
| 2 | Up to 50000 | 11 |
| 3 | Above 50000 | 07 |
| Total | | 24 |

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.7 indicates an average standard of annual family income of Rs.50,000 (approx). Only 06 families has below the level i.e., upto Rs.25,000 only 07 families has above Rs.50,000 annual income. It shows no such woman member has come out of any high eco standard families, most of them are lower middle standard which is clearly depicted in Table No. 6.2 where the main occupations of father and husbands are identified.

Engagement of Family Members in Socio-Political Activity :

Our survey finds that 17 members had no family members involved in social activities that shows us the non involvement of these family members in any social activities. They keep themselves busy in their daily life not having much exposure to the public life. Whereas 07 members has little or more social involvement. The presence of this group of family where from the woman proves the effectiveness of the status in opening the door to any woman who can work for the development of woman and the community at large. The opportunity of being a Panchayat member can serve as a means of encouraging the growth of leadership among woman who have proved their worth in some way.

The number of political participation among family members seems rather high, because of political awareness among people and party based activities in West Bengal under Left-Front Govt. Out of 24 woman members 22

has their family members involved directly or indirectly in politics. And it is for this reason reservation of seat for woman have been filled mostly by their woman, a few percent of woman may be illiterate but got the chance to be elected as because of caste reservation or muscle power which indirectly influenced the political leaders to opt for these choice. The foregoing data and analysis on the socio-political involvement of family members permits broad generalisations which can indicate the level of political influence in the family. It has been focussed that the involvement of family members is mainly political while motivation for social service is secondary and even identical.

Table 6.8
Political Involvement of Family Members

| Sl. No. | Involvement | No. of family | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | High | 06 | 25 |
| 2 | Medium | 11 | 45.83 |
| 3 | Low | 05 | 20.83 |
| 4 | Nil | 02 | 08.34 |
| Total | | 24 | 100 |

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

Table 6.8 shows that 25% belong to such families having high level of political involvement, whereas a maximum 45% has medium level of involvement and very less 20.8% has not involved directly in politics but it is not to be wrong to identify these families as passive participants in politics. It cannot be denied that education does contribute towards the growth of political involvement among individuals in a rural community.

This district having illiterate masses are at a disadvantage and a look up to the educated minority for help. This disparity arises from economic status also be leveled if the task of education could be undertaken with greater seriousness so as to allow the more disadvantaged groups to use the facilities available for the gaps.

Personal Background of Respondents (Women Panchayat Members):

This para examines the particular socio-cultural situation in the life of the individual respondent, which may or may not have helped her to fulfill the role she is called to play through membership in democratic decentralised institutions.

The tradition in rural area, which continued for such many long years was upbringing of a girl towards marriage as soon as she reaches maturity. Early domestic burden and even unhappy widow existence was considered to be burden unless these women proved to be meaningful and useful asset of the family.

The rural socio-cultural picture is now in the process of change. Though women education, marriage at advanced age, small family is no longer frowned upon, but this district bearing old cultural heritage is still footing on the same old track. The probe in to the personal background of the respondent also seeks to find out the extent to which the changing social pattern helps women in the social and domestic role they have given to play as members in Panchayati Raj system have been studied.

Age :-

From the collected data the mean age of the respondents is 35 years which indicates the initiative of the women at this age group. It is seen that 25% of the respondent falls between 18 – 25 years, 45% of them falls up to 35 years and nearly 37% falls up to the age of 45 years, which clearly indicates the involvement of middle aged women. Of course it is obvious that higher age group women are not interested to be involved in politics but because of family position they got the chance to be elected on behalf of their family members but at the lower age women they are involved in politics since their schooling and they come forward on their own potentiality, since the high percentage of

middle aged up to 35 came as the wife of some active politicians. Though 45 percent tends to be more involved in politics but it must be recognised that, a fairly sizable group of younger women has also emerged. There it is found a sign of change from the traditional attitude which tended to keep younger women a way from the public life of village.

Marital Status :-

As found earlier young girls were inevitably oriented towards child marriage. Present social structure is changing but this area still has, though not child marriage but early marriage. Here we got 79 percent respondent are married, they married at early age which caused most of them having 3-4 children, among the married respondents widow member is 2, and count for only 8 percent of the total sample, who have been the victims of political riots. Those who are married at higher age are generally more educated than the average respondent. Thus one finds that the respondents are mothers with domestic burden as housewife.

Education :-

The educational level of the respondent can be viewed from the table below :

Table : 6.9

Educational Level of Respondents (Women Panchayat Member)

| Sl No | Level | No. of Respondent | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| 01 | Illiterate | 03 | 12.7 |
| 02 | Below secondary | 07 | 29 |
| 03 | Upto Higher | 12 | 50 |
| 04 | Secondary | 02 | 8.3 |
| | Graduate | | |
| | Total | 24 | 100 |

Source : *Compiled from the data collected through Field Survey.*

The Table 6.9 brings out the spectacular rise in literacy and education among the respondents up to Higher Secondary level, but yet 12.7 % of them are still marked as illiterate, only 8.3% came up to graduation. The largest group among the respondent came from the middle class family even the 02 graduate respondent also belongs to middle class eco standard family having a outward positive thinking of the family member and are to be married at latter age. Illiteracy still found 01 from the daily wage earner family, another 02 are old aged. Though most recent studies on the status of women tend to decry the low status of women measured among other factors, by low figures of progress in literacy and education, the present study strikes a note of optimism and appreciation at the progressive change observed in the educational level of rural women within the space of a generation.

Political Involvement :-

Collected sample of 24 women Panchayet member as respondent, divulged their political interest and involvement as most of them contested the election for the first time, only 3 member was elected earlier also, which falls under 12.5 percent. There also a clear opinion among certain women members that during her first tenure she was not spread from household job by their family head but now she is quite free from domestic burden. Most of the women members falling 87.5 percent does not know much about politics, neither they involve nor given the chance to understand the tricks of politics it is their male partner or even party who guide them to sign on the papers. They opined that they are interested and they can run the show if they are allowed to do so, they are do not hide to say that they are not being respected by the society much better after they became the Panchayat representatives, by the common people and at home as well. This social respect causes their upliftment and so called social empowerment to some extent, if not up to the desired level. These women respondent mostly 80% now has been able to come out from religious

orthodoxy and found themselves not much suppressed by family members because of political reservation for women at Panchayat tiers.

By way of summerising the findings in the socio-economic background of women Panchayat members of the area surveyed in district Murshidabad. It appears, while participation in the Panchayat structure is open to all, education and family involvement in politics seems to have become a qualification at the point of entry. It also has been seen husband's education and political affiliation is an important component of the factors which make for the influence of the women members where husbands do not figure, as in the case of widow and unmarried girl, even a low standard of education is enough to enable such women to be member and to act on behalf of her political party leaders. This survey has shown the dominance of traditional symbols of status in the selection of women representatives at Panchayati Raj institutions, it has also highlighted the positive effect of the statute in involving women in varied castes, socio-economic classes, education and personal abilities to make a definite contribution in the rural set up.

Murshidabad Zilla Parishad and Various Programmes :-

Food for work (FFW) Programme was the first governmental effort for job assurance of the people living below poverty line. This Programme was working for the year 1977-78 to 1980. During this period two major post flood reconstruction was done under this Programme.

After Panchayati Raj came into effect; National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) started from 15 December 1980 and was continued up to the year 1988-89. This programme was divided into two parts 'Normal' and 'Big'. In normal sector a total Rs. 11 crores 27 lakh and 12332 metric ton food grain was used, 79 lakh mandays was created. In Big sector Rs. 4 crores 27 lakhs and 1637 metric ton food grains was used, 79 mandays was created with NREP and other programme. Rural Landless Employment generation Programme was launched in 1983- this programme was also came to a halt in 1988-89.

Table : 6.10

Achievement of IRDP in Murshidabad district

| Year | Person Benefited | Male | Female | Male % | Female % |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1992-93 | 16,977 | 10,080 | 6,897 | 59.37 | 40.63 |
| 1993-94 | 13,358 | 10,720 | 2,638 | 80.25 | 19.75 |
| 1994-95 | 15,445 | 12,665 | 2,780 | 82.01 | 17.99 |
| 1995-96 | 13,627 | 10,607 | 3,020 | 77.84 | 22.16 |
| 1996-97 | 9,091 | 5,751 | 3,320 | 63.40 | 36.60 |
| 1997-98 | 6,802 | 3,808 | 2,994 | 56.99 | 43.01 |
| 1998-99 | 4,507 | 2,454 | 2,053 | 54.50 | 45.50 |
| Total | 79,787 | 56,385 | 23,702 | 67.62 | 32.38 |

Source : DRDA, Murshidabad.

Scheme converted into – Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY).

Table : 6.11

Achievements of TRYSEM in Murshidabad District

| Year | Target | Fund allocated (Rs. In Lakh) | Person benifited | Male with % | Female with % |
|--------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1994-95 | 1006 | 28.17 | 957 | 697 (72.83) | 260 (27.17) |
| 1995-96 | 1010 | 25.25 | 1455 | 1094 (75.18) | 361 (24.82) |
| 1996-97 | 1116 | 25.00 | 1650 | 766 (46.48) | 884 (53.52) |
| 1997-98 | 800 | 18.11 | 1089 | 626 (57.48) | 463 (42.52) |
| 1998-99 | 650 | 13.12 | 720 | 564 (78.33) | 156 (21.67) |
| Total | 4582 | 109.65 | 5871 | 3847 (66.06) | 2124 (33.94) |

Source : - DRDA, Murshidabad

Scheme converted into : - Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY).

A total of Rs 7 crore 95 lakh and 8160 metric ton food grain consumed in RLEGP, causing 33 lakh 40 thousand mandays. From the year 1989-90 this two N.R.E.P. and R.L.E.G.P together reemerges as Jawhar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), its three part as Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Million Wells Schemes (MWS) and JRY. The first two parts were executed under Zilla Parishad and 80% of the third scheme was executed by the Village Panchayat with 20% support from Zilla Parishad. Up to 1994-95 total Rs 61 crores 14 lakhs was allotted but Rs 59 crore was expended creating 1 crore 32 lakhs mandays.

Besides JRY, Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was launched in 1993-94. This scheme is being executed as the Programme JRY. It can be said that without TRYSEM, DWCRA IRDP only Rural Employment Schemes in this district has created 2 crores 71 lakhs mandays expending 91 crores os rupees. Table 6.10 shows that in the scheme IRDP instead of a target of 40% reserve for women average 32.38% only has been achieved from 1992-93 to 1998-99. 79787 persons has been benefited including 23702 women. Table 6.11 presents us the data that average 33.94% covered by women whereas in this programme also 40% was reserved for women. From 1994-95 to 1998-99 total fund has been released as Rs. 109.65 lakh and 5871 person has been trained including 2124 women. Table 6.12 shows that in no year the women beneficiaries has covered the percentage of 30% as targeted for them. A maximum of 29.32 has been achieved, a minimum of 16.64 also is in the table. It is agreed by OC development, district Murshidabad that suitable women group or person is not coming out in this scheme because of this religious orthodoxy and illiteracy. As so the Govt target is not being fulfilled.

Table – 6.12
Achievements of JRY, EAS, and JGSY in Murshidabad district

| Year | Project/Scheme | Fund in lakhs | | Total fund | Expenditure (Rs. in Lakhs) | Mandays (in Lakh) | | | Male % | Female % |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|---------|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------|-------|--------|----------|
| | | Opening balance | Alloted | | | Male | Female | Total | | |
| 1995-96 | JRY | 158.48 | 1286.98 | 1445.56 | 1445.46 | 14.95 | 5.40 | 20.35 | 73.46 | 26.54 |
| | EAS | 89.44 | 325.00 | 414.44 | 376.75 | 4.20 | 1.74 | 5.94 | 70.70 | 29.30 |
| 1996-97 | JRY | — | 510.60 | 510.60 | 259.04 | 2.82 | 1.17 | 3.99 | 70.68 | 29.32 |
| | EAS | 37.69 | 450.00 | 487.69 | 343.14 | 3.78 | 1.51 | 5.29 | 71.45 | 28.55 |
| 1997-98 | JRY | 251.56 | 403.81 | 655.37 | 381.01 | 3.69 | 1.42 | 5.11 | 72.21 | 27.79 |
| | EAS | 144.55 | 706.75 | 851.30 | 257.05 | 2.46 | 0.97 | 2.43 | 71.72 | 28.28 |
| 1998-99 | JRY | 274.36 | 359.63 | 633.99 | 526.19 | 4.75 | 1.66 | 6.41 | 74.10 | 25.90 |
| 1999-00 | EAS | 594.25 | 600.25 | 1194.50 | 473.93 | 4.36 | 1.69 | 6.05 | 72.06 | 22.16 |
| | JRY | 112.69 | 141.00 | 253.69 | 169.72 | 1.44 | 0.41 | 1.85 | 77.84 | 22.16 |
| | EAS | 722.87 | 572.99 | 1295.86 | 832.39 | 8.22 | 1.64 | 9.86 | 83.36 | 16.64 |
| | JGSY | — | 700.29 | 700.29 | 226.50 | 2.27 | 0.05 | 2.32 | 97.84 | 2.16 |

Source : - OC development, Murshidabad Zilla Parishad

Table – 6.13
Achievements of DWCRA in Murshidabad district

| Year | Target group | Achieved | Person benefited | Expenditure (in Rs) | Fund given @ |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1993-94 | 50 | 31 | 465 | 349600.00 (23 paid) | 15200 |
| 1994-95 | 156 | 08 | 120 | 182400.00 (12 paid) | 15200 |
| 1995-96 | 100 | 02 | 30 | 15200.00 (01 paid) | 15200 |
| 1996-97 | 52 | 85 | 1168 | 465000.00 (31 paid) | 15000 |
| 1997-98 | 100 | 114 | 1543 | 810000.00 (54 paid) | 15000 |
| 1998-99 | 50 | 32 | 445 | 420000.00 (28 paid) | 15000 |
| Total | 508 | 272 | 3771 | 242200.00 | |

Source : - DRDA, Murshidabad.

Scheme converted into : - Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)

Table 6.13 presents us the achievements of DW CRA a *cent* percent women project, here also we find in no year the target was achieved, total 508 group was targeted where only 3771 women in 272 group has been benefited costing expenditure of Rs 2,42,200 lakh. These are the main Schemes/Programmes were executed in this district along with many other small sub schemes. It is seen from this table that during the year 1994-95, the target was 156, but achievement was only 8, whereas during the year 1997-98, target was 100, but achievement was 114 and 1543 person were benefited.

Analysing the achievements in development during 1947-1978 a long innings of 31 years was not as much as was achieved in 22 years during 1978-2000. Villages in this districts has been developed People's awareness has been increased because of the process of democratic decentralisation.

Table : 6.14
Panchayat Election : 1993, Murshidabad district scenario

| Tier | Total Seat | Contesting Candidates | | | Won | |
|------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | Male with (%) | Female with (%) | Total | Male with (%) | Female with (%) |
| G.P. | 5245 | 13569 (70.44) | 5694 (29.56) | 19263 | 3402 (64.86) | 1843 (35.15) |
| P.S. | 761 | 1980 (70.26) | 838 (29.74) | 2818 | 509 (66.88) | 252 (33.12) |
| Z.P. | 52 | 182 (68.16) | 85 (31.84) | 267 | 25 (48.08) | 27 (51.92) |

Source : - State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, Kalyani, West Bengal.

Table : 6.15
Panchayat Election : 1998, Murshidabad district scenario

| Tier | Total Seat | Contesting Candidates | | | Won | |
|------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | Male with (%) | Female with (%) | Total | Male with (%) | Female with (%) |
| G.P. | 4159 | 9666 (67.69) | 4612 (32.31) | 14278 | 2676 (64.34) | 1483 (35.66) |
| P.S. | 700 | 1525 (66.47) | 769 (33.43) | 2294 | 421 (60.14) | 279 (39.86) |
| Z.P. | 60 | 176 (67.17) | 86 (32.83) | 262 | 40 (66.66) | 20 (33.34) |

Source : - State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, Kalyani, West Bengal.

Table : 6.16
Crime against women registered in District Magistrate Office
(Women Cell), Murshidabad

| Year | Social (%) | Econo- mical (%) | Political (%) | Total | Religion | | | Total |
|-------|----------------|------------------------|------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| | | | | | Hindu (%) | Muslim (%) | Others (%) | |
| 1995 | 76 (66.6) | 38 (33.4) | --- | 114 | 65 (57) | 49 (43) | --- | 114 |
| 1996 | 105 (67.3) | 51 (32.7) | — | 156 | 74 (47.43) | 82 (52.57) | — | 156 |
| 1997 | 75 (56.8) | 57 (43.2) | — | 132 | 69 (52.3) | 63 (47.7) | — | 132 |
| 1998 | 95 (65.98) | 49 (34.02) | — | 144 | 75 (52) | 69 (48) | — | 144 |
| 1999 | 117 (63.24) | 68 (36.76) | — | 185 | 139 (75.1) | 46 (24.9) | — | 185 |
| 2000 | 167 (62.3) | 101 (37.7) | — | 268 | 188 (70.14) | 80 (29.86) | — | 268 |
| Total | 634 (63.46) | 364 (36.44) | — | 999 | 610 (61.06) | 389 (38.94) | — | 999 |

Source : *Women Cell, District Magistrate Office, Berhampore, Murshidabad.*

Comparing the Table 6.14 and 6.15 it is observed that womens involvement in Panchayat election 1998 has been increased as to the election 1993. In Z.P. 31.84, P.S. 29.74 and G.P. 29.56 percent women contested in Panchayat Election, but in 1998 Election, 32.83 in Z.P., 33.43 in P.S., and 32.31 in G.P. has contested the election and own in percentage of seat as 35.66 in Z.P., 39.86 in P.S., 33.34 in G.P., which indicates more than the reservation (33%) quota women awareness, willingness and involvement has been increased. It is also noticed that in Table 6.16, data of crime against women clearly indicates that among Hindu women, awareness of reporting the case in District Headquarter

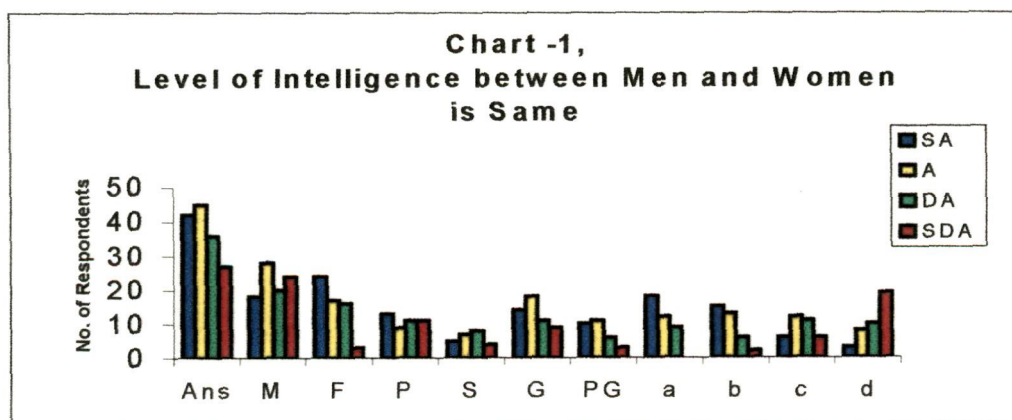
has been constantly increased whereas though this District has a majority of Muslim, but Muslim women awareness has not been increased in average 61.06 percentage cases has been reported by Hindu women and only 38.94 percentage by Muslim women which clearly indicates that awareness among Muslim women is yet to be increased.

Data Analysis:

The informations collected from 150 respondents – both men and women of various categories have been analysed, to find out their views on women empowerment. Among the total 150 respondents, 60 percent (90) are male and 40 percent (60) are female; 26 percent (39) belong to the age group of 18-25, 24 percent (36) belong to the age group of 26-35, 23.3 percent (35) from 36-50 age group and the rest 26.7 percent (40) came from the age 51 and above. In terms of the level of education, 29.3 percent (44) are at primary, 16 percent (24) are at secondary level, 34.7 percent (52) are graduate and 20 percent (30) are the post-graduate.

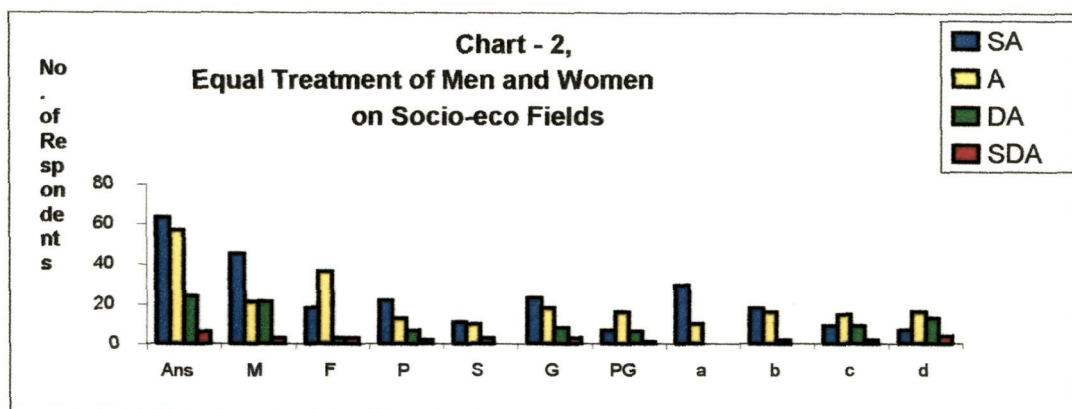
The socio-economic and political variable wise attitude of the respondents show the following findings:

[M= Male, F= Female, SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, DA= DisAgree, SDA= Strongly DisAgree. Age Group 18-25=A, 26-35=B, 36-50=C, 51 and above=D; Primary=P, Secondary=S, Graduate=G, Post-Graduate=PG.]



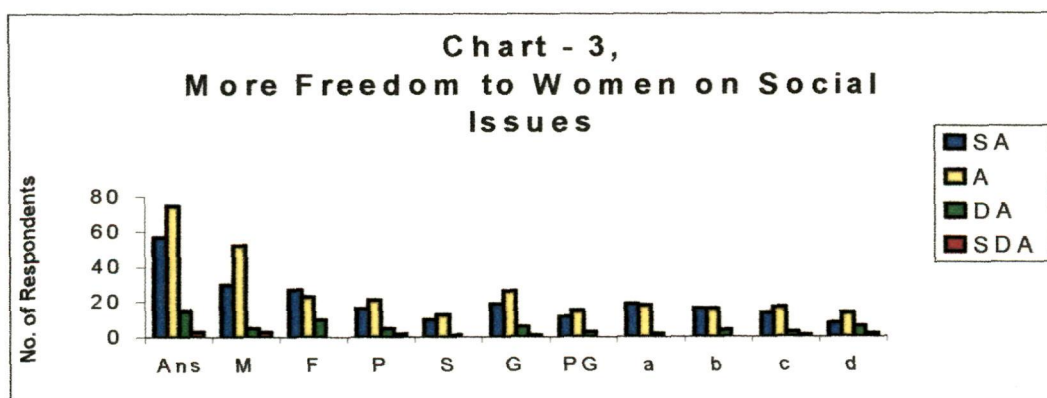
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

In Chart 01, we find 28 percent (42) of the respondents has a strong positive view towards the level of intelligence of women, 30 percent (45) also has a positive idea upon women but 24 percent (36) has a negative view and 18 percent (27) have strong negative view towards women on the same questions. It is found that among the respondents who hold negative view 19.3 percent (29) belong to the age group of 51 and above with a low level of education but those who hold positive view 14 percent (21) respondents are post-graduate and most of them at lower age groups.



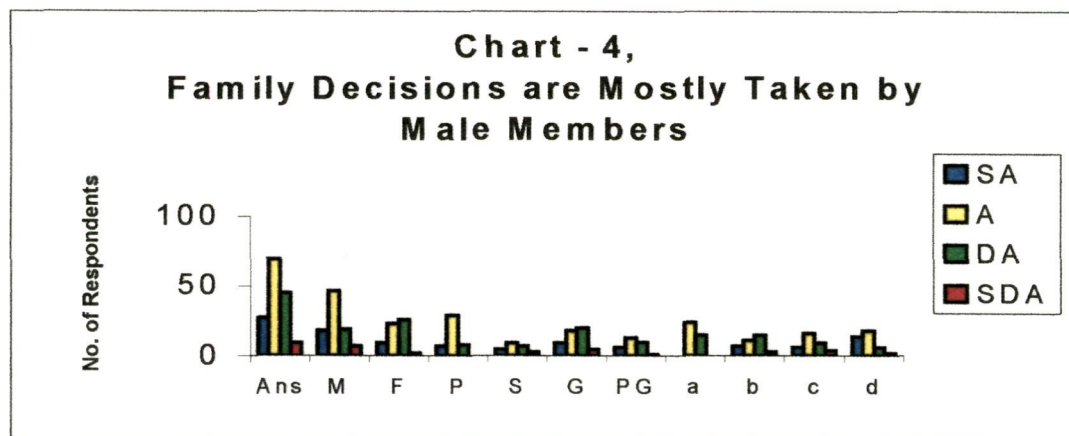
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 02 shows that 42 percent (63) of the total respondent have strongly agreed on equal treatment of women in socio-eco fields, 38 percent (57) have also agreed to the same question but 16 percent (24) have not agreed and left over 4 percent (6) respondents have strongly disagreed. Among 30 of the respondents with negative DA/SDA view on equal treatment of women, 27 came from the age group above 50 years, out of 120 respondents who favoured equal treatment of women, 54 are women and 73 of them are below the age of 35 year indicating the favourable attitude among new generation people.



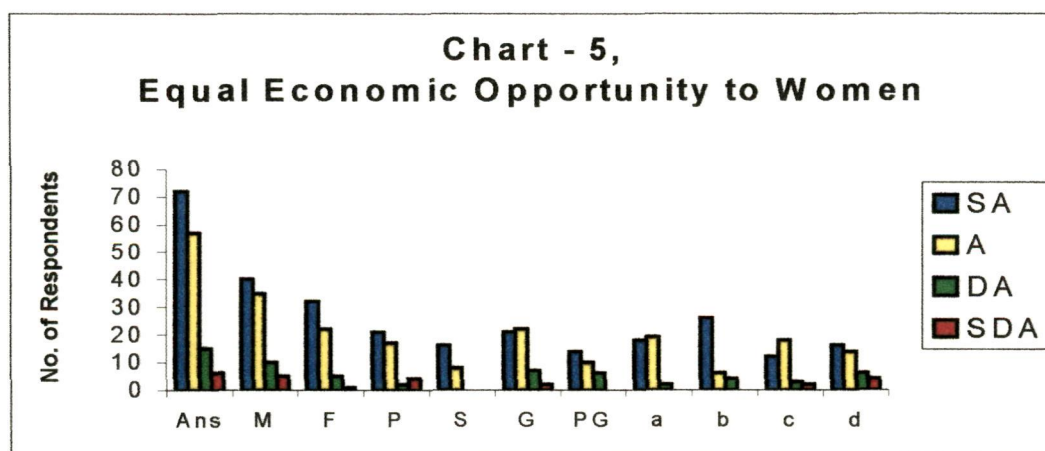
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 03 shows that 38 percent (57) of the total respondents strongly agreed for more freedom of women in social issues and with 50 percent (75) respondents also agreeing; but 10 percent (15) respondents did not agree, whereas, only 2 percent of them strongly opposed the idea. Mostly old aged respondents have opposite idea but the respondents belonging to younger age favoured the idea of more freedom for women.



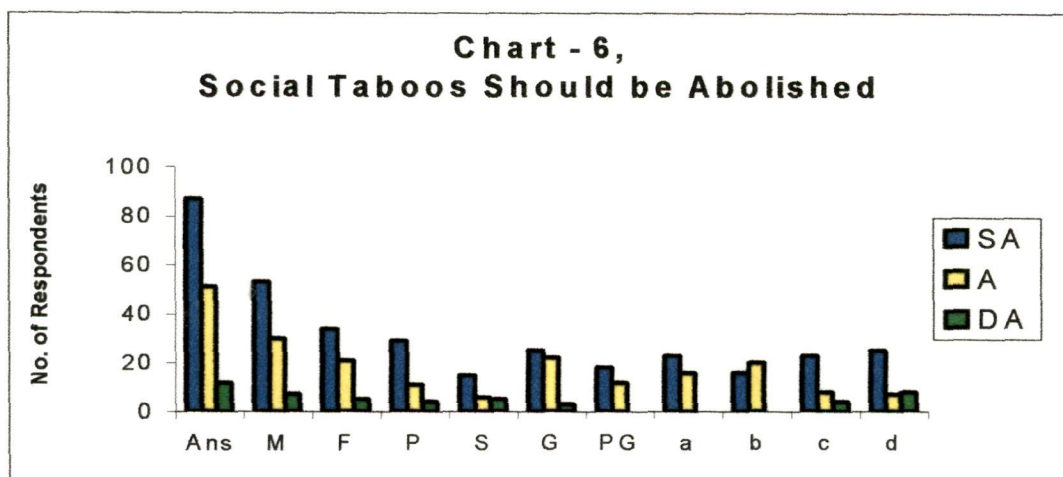
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

From Chart 04, it is found that 64 percent (96) respondents have agreed that, family decisions are taken by male members; 30 percent (45) did not agree and only 6 percent (9) has strongly disagreed. Most of the respondents with negative view have high level of education and come from low age group females, these women bear the capability of shouldering the responsibility in family decisions. But 32 female respondents belonging to old age group and low level of education showed their preference towards male members in respect of family decisions.



Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

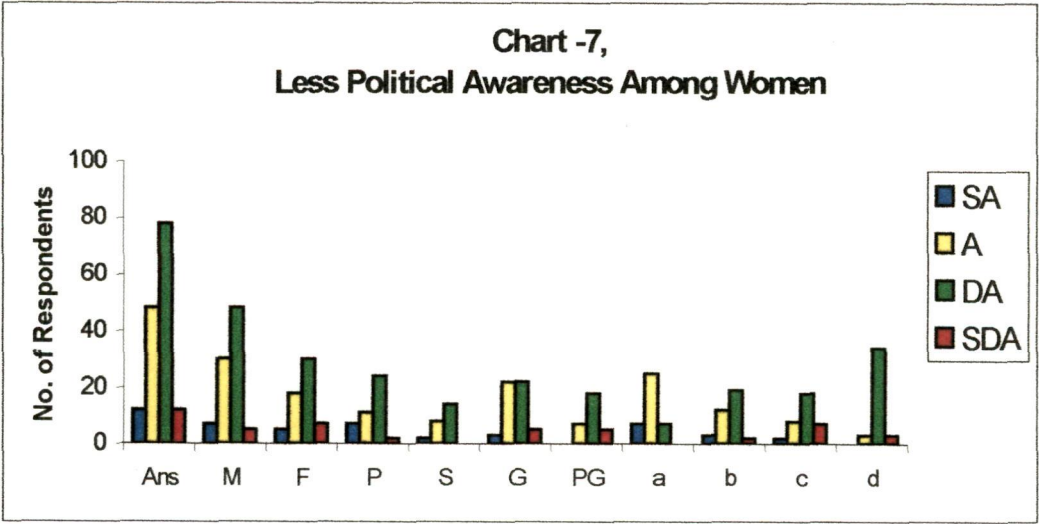
On the question of equal economic opportunity to women, Chart 05 shows that 86 percent (129) respondents have opined in favour, 10 percent (15) have not agreed and only 4 percent have strongly opposed the question. It is noticed that more educated and low age group female respondents have showed their opinion in favour of equal economic opportunity for women. 43 graduates and 24 post-graduates have favoured for equal economic opportunity; while 69 respondents below 35 years of age showed their favourable attitude towards the question.



Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

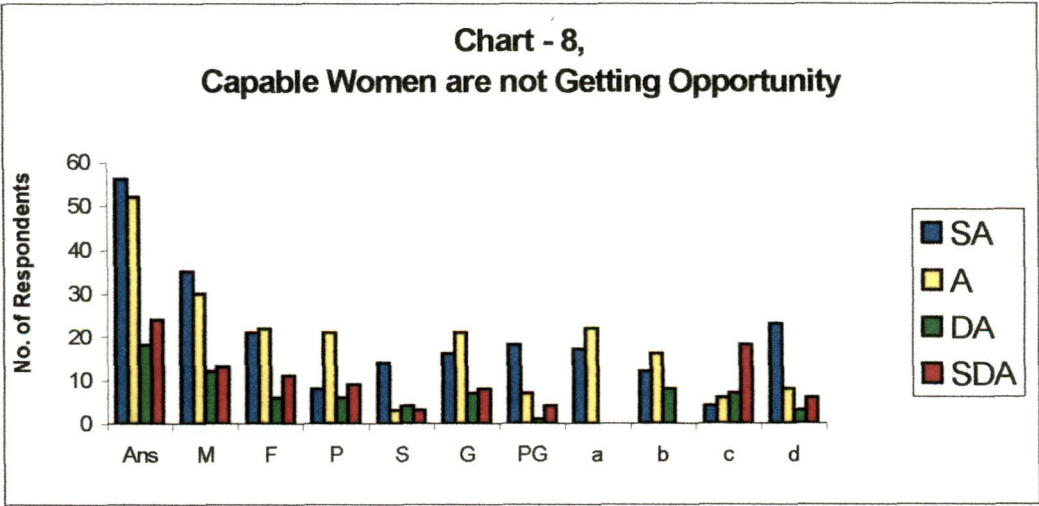
In Chart 06, 92 percent (138) respondents have agreed on abolition of social taboos, whereas, 8 percent (12) of the total respondents show an opposite view. Here, cent percent post graduate and 47 graduates want abolition of social taboos. It is also noticed that respondents with religious orthodoxies and low level of education still believe in social taboos but mostly women respondents and educated respondents realise the bad impact of social taboos on social development and women empowerment in particular.

Chart 07 reveals the opinion on political awareness of women. Among 150 respondents 40 percent (60) showed a negative position but 60 percent (90) respondents have a positive position; of them, primary and secondary level respondents are more in number and 62 of them are at the age above 35 years.

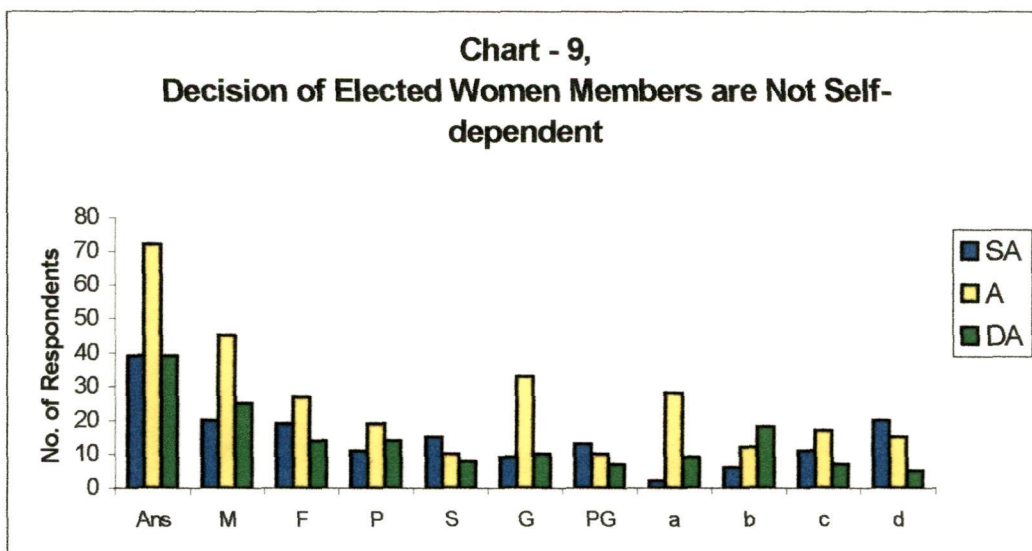


Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

From Chart 08, it is found that among 150 respondents, 72 percent (108) respondents have agreed that women are not getting opportunity, 28 percent (42) of the total respondents do not agree with them. in this chart, it is found that, graduate and post-graduate respondents are more in number to agree with the view that women are not getting opportunity, these high percentages respondent make us clear that if the women are given the opportunity they can utilise it. Respondents, who belong to the other categories, are mostly at the age above 35 years but only 8 are at the age group of 26-35 years.

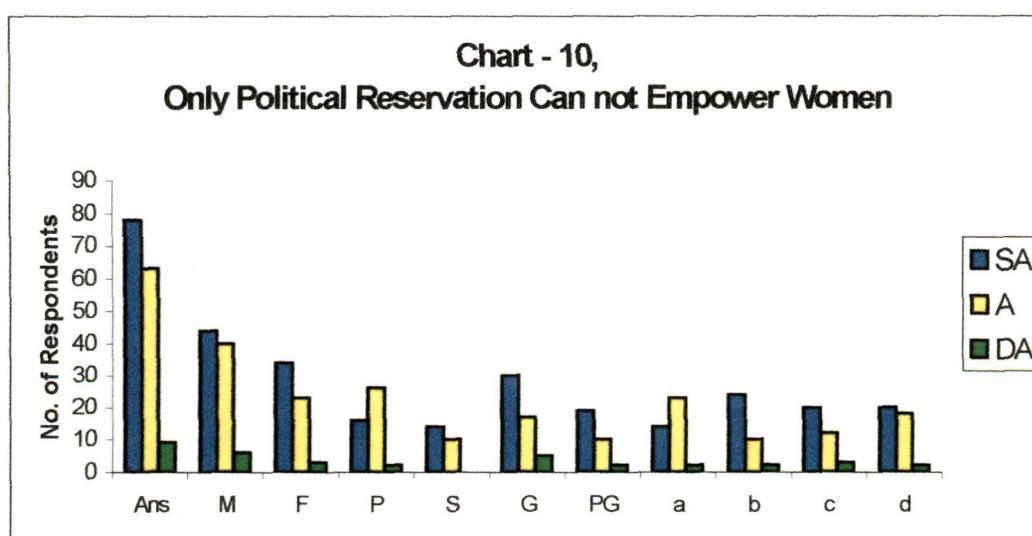


Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*



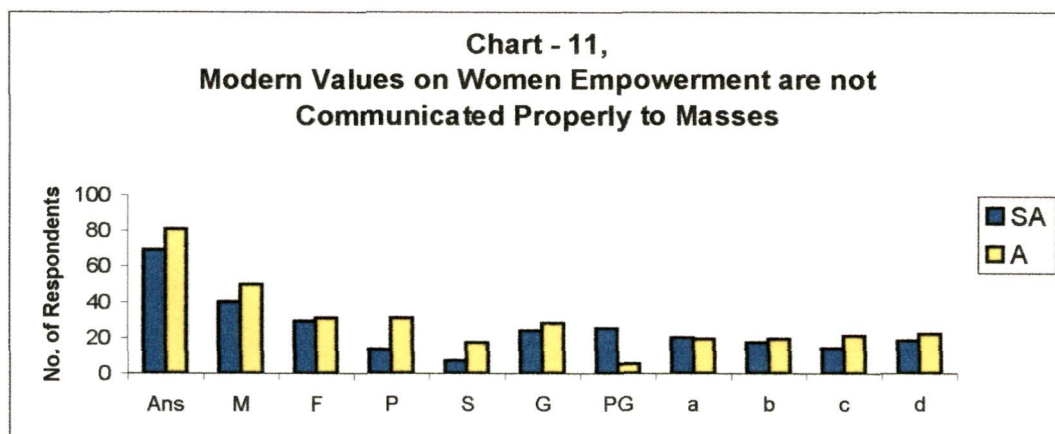
Source: *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey.*

The distribution in Chart 09 shows that, 74 percent (111) of the total respondents shared on the dependents of elected women Panchayat members on party leaders or family heads, in this, 23 post-graduate and 43 graduate respondents with age mostly 30 and above shown that women Panchayat members are dependent, whereas, rest 26 percent (39) respondent aged below 35 years and under graduates disagreed to the view that women Panchayat members are depending on family heads or party heads.



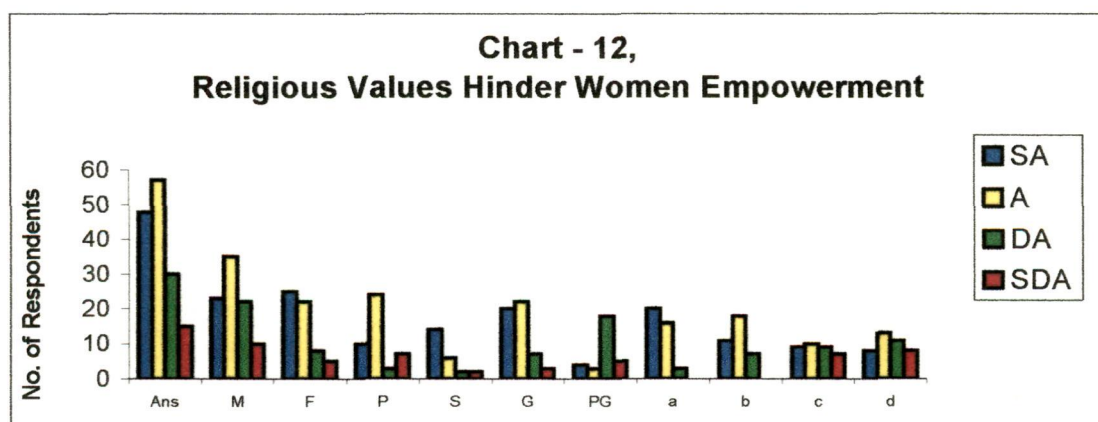
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

From Chart 10, the findings show that 94 percent (141) of the total respondents believe that only political reservation cannot empower women. These 141 respondents represent all the age groups and all educational levels. Only 6 percent (9) have disagreed with the other 141 respondents. These 94 percent respondents are of the view that besides political reservation women should be given more socio-economic opportunity to be empowered.



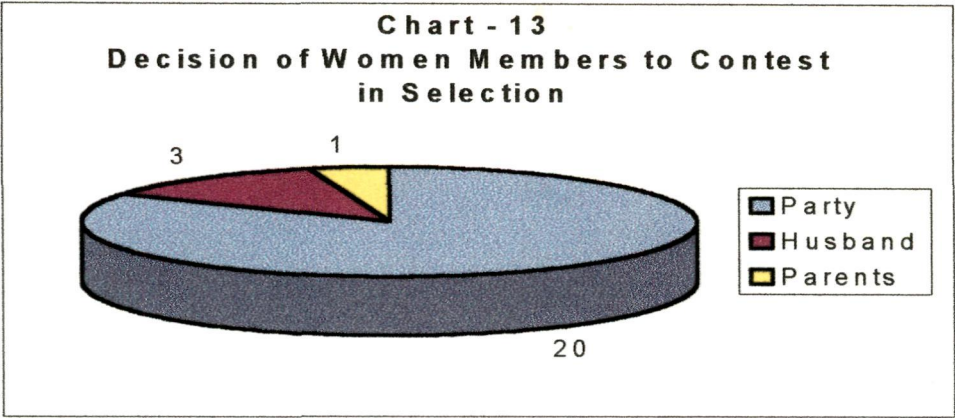
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 11 reveals that all the 150 respondents agreed or strongly agreed on the statement that modern values on women empowerment are not properly communicated to the mass. In this respect, it is learned that everyone is aware that the modern values are not reaching to the rural people. Government and Non-Government Organisations are to take initiatives to make the rural mass aware of modern values or latest government policies on women empowerment.



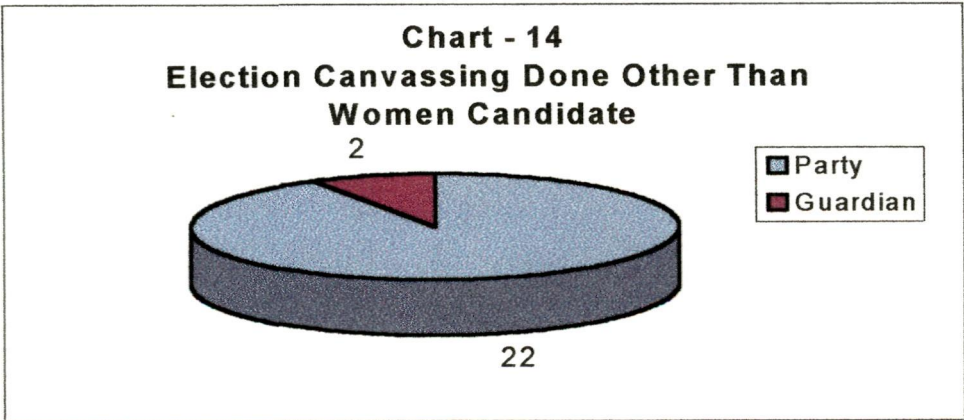
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 12 shows that 70 percent (105) of the total respondents believe that religious values come in the way of women empowerment. These respondents belong to all age groups but as far as level of education is concerned, mostly half of them are at primary or secondary levels, few old aged higher educated respondents do not believe in religious hindrance.



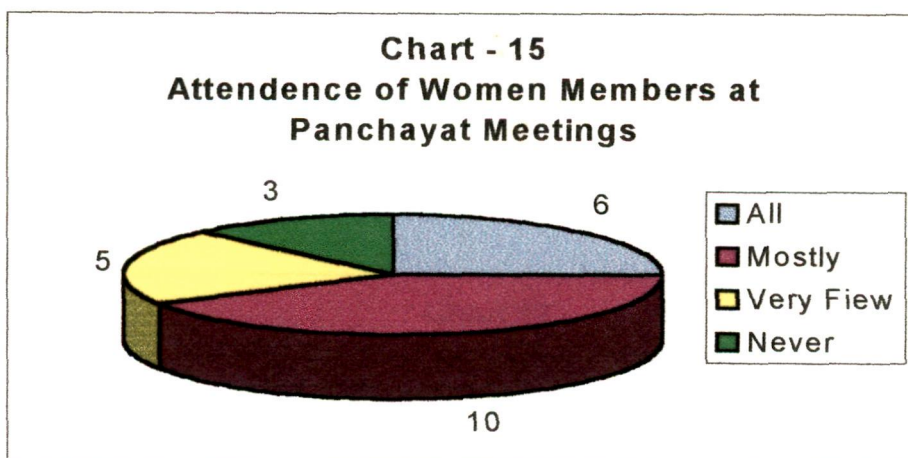
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Further analysing the collected 24 women elected representatives as our respondents, we find in Chart 13 that none has taken self decision to participate in election, 83.3 percent respondents (20) participated on Party decision and only 02 were decided by Husband/guardian, which indicates political noninvolvement or less awareness among women and dependence on male members of the family or political party.



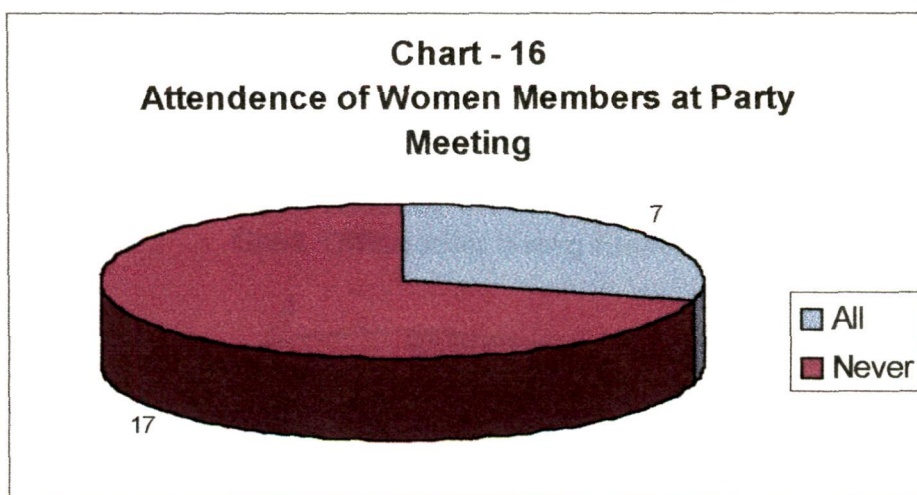
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

It is found from the Chart 14 that election canvassing was done by Husband /guardian only in the case of 8.4 percent (2) and rest 91.6 percent (22) was done by Party indicating dominance over election functioning by the party.



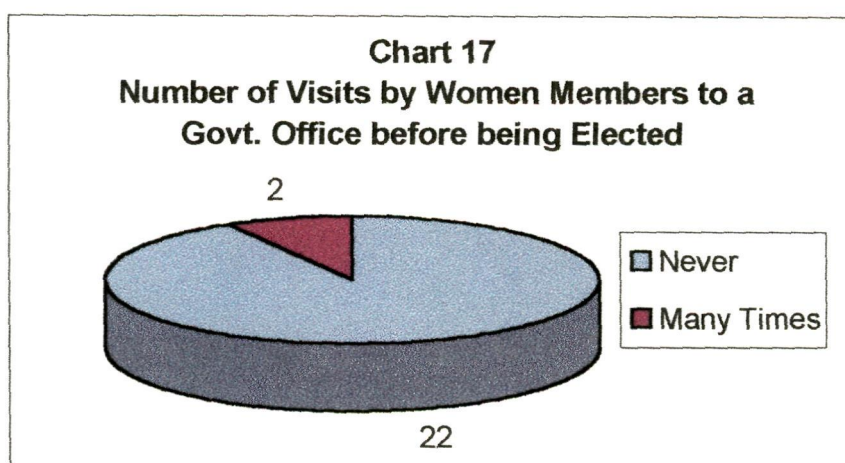
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 15 shows that 6 members had attended all the Panchayat meetings, 41.6 percent of them (10) has attended mostly but 20.8 percent (5) has attended very few whereas 15.5 percent (3) has never attended body meetings. It indicates male supremacy over women members not only at home but also in Panchayat bodies. Panchayat functions are done by the party or family head, which indicates a controlled political empowerment of women.



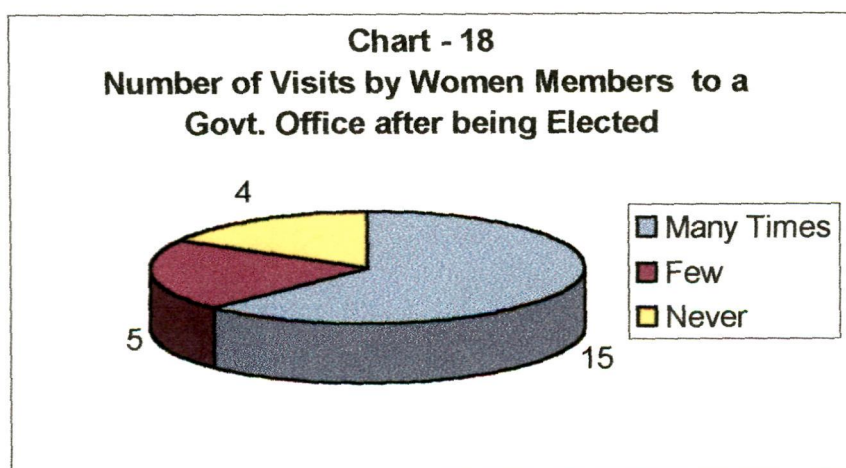
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey.*

In Chart 16 we got the Picture that in the case of Party meetings 25 percent (6) respondents had attended cent percent Party meetings whereas 70.8 percent (17) had never attended any such Party meetings, which clearly shows us that decisions are taken by Party only. Here it is not only women Panchayat members are not willing or interested to join party meeting but are not given the chance to join by the family, as they considered the decision of the male members of the family is the decision of the women member.



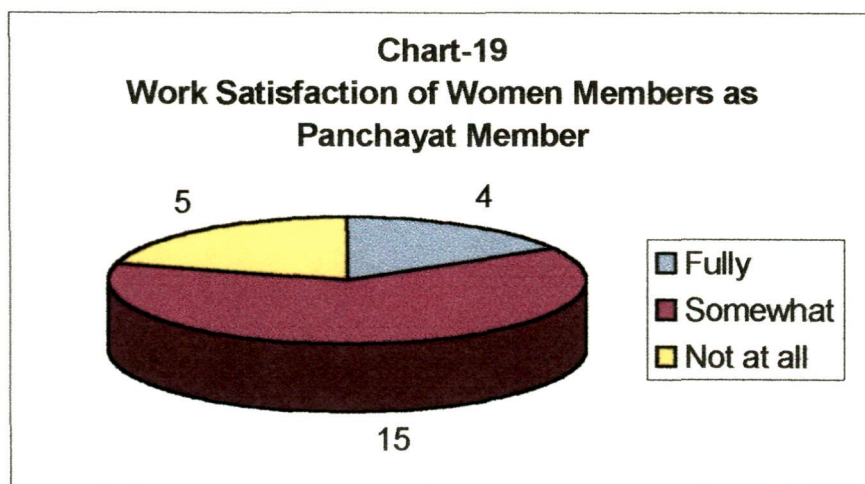
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

In Chart 17 the number of respondents is 91.6 percent (22) who never visited to a Government office before being elected but only 8.3 percent (2) has done so which indicates women's non attachment with Government functionaries



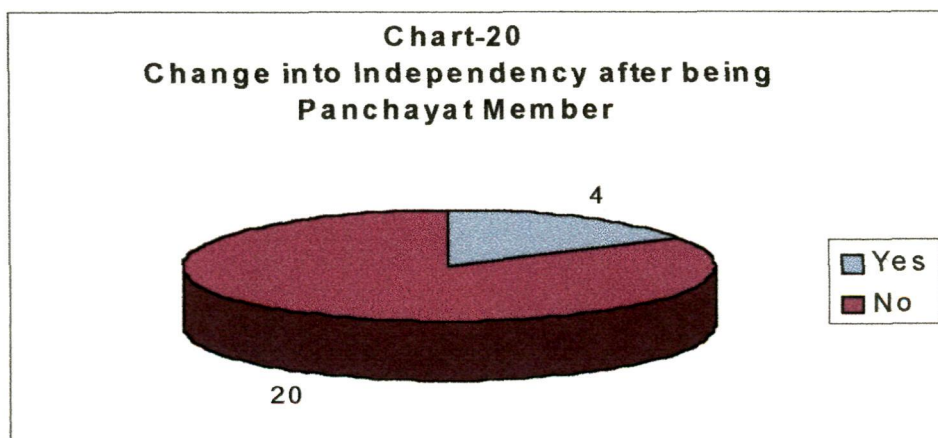
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 18 shows that after being elected 16.6 percent respondents (4) never visited to a Govt. office where 20.8 percent (5) has visited 3-4 times, and 62.5 percent (15) has visited many times as required. This chart reveals an upcoming tendency to visit the government office by women after being elected as Panchayat members.



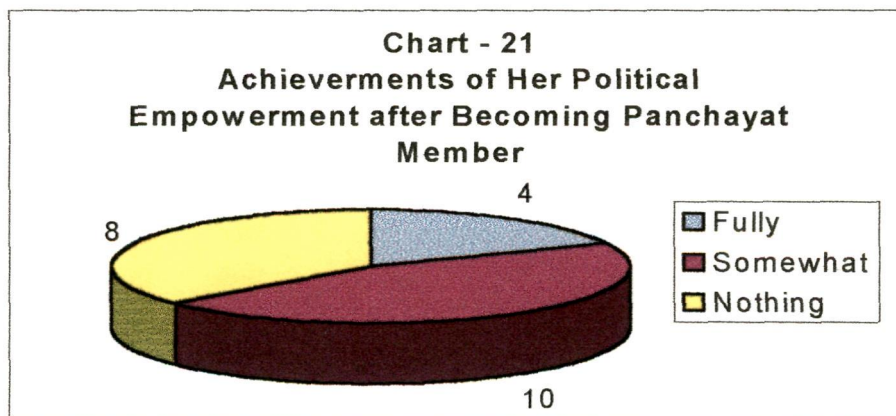
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

Chart 19 shows us that out of total 24 women elected members as respondents 16.6 percent (4) has work satisfaction, 62.5 percent (15) are somewhat satisfied and 20.8 percent (5) not at all satisfied with their performance. Here it indicates that women members are not getting opportunity to utilise their full empowerment in decentralised governance as self-decision makers.



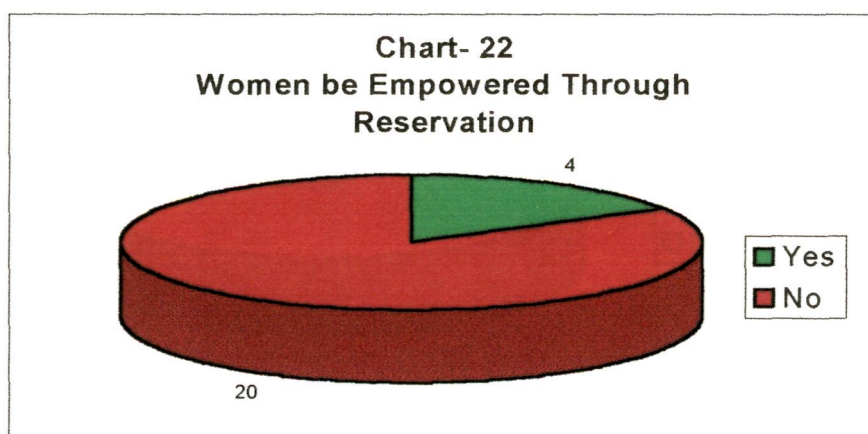
Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

In Chart 20, only 4 respondents has agreed that their economic independency has changed after being elected but 83.4 percent (20) has not such change. This is observed that only political reservation is not enough to empower women particularly in their economic spheres of life.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

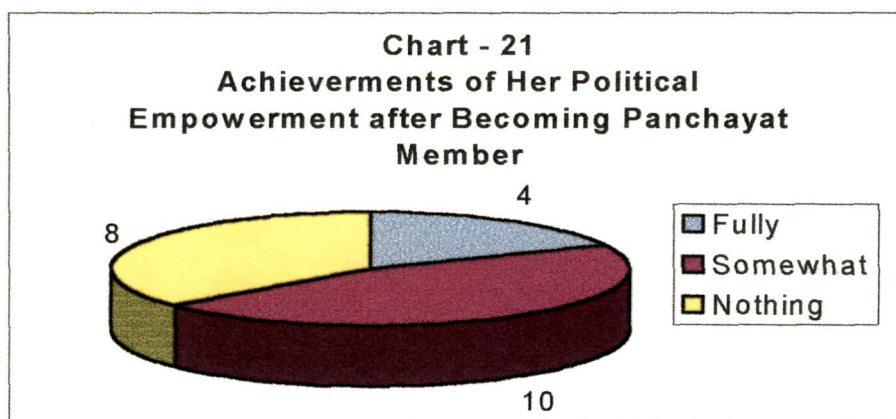
Chart 21 shows that 4 respondents finds her politically empowered, 13.8 percent of them (10) feels somewhat empowered but 33.4 percent (8) feel they do nothing but working on behalf of Party /guardians.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

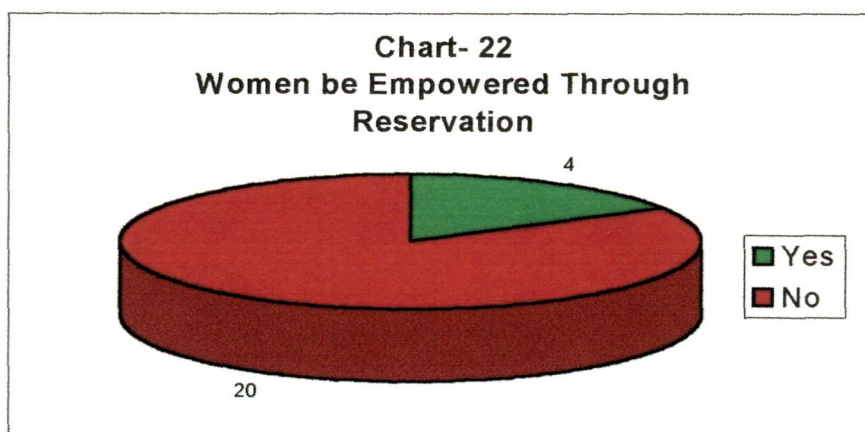
In Chart 22, the distribution shows that 83.4 percent respondents (20) feels women empowerment is not possible through only reservation in Panchayati Raj, 16.6 percent (4) of them feels it is a onward step and can be possible. A high percentage women members feel reservation is not the only means for women empowerment.

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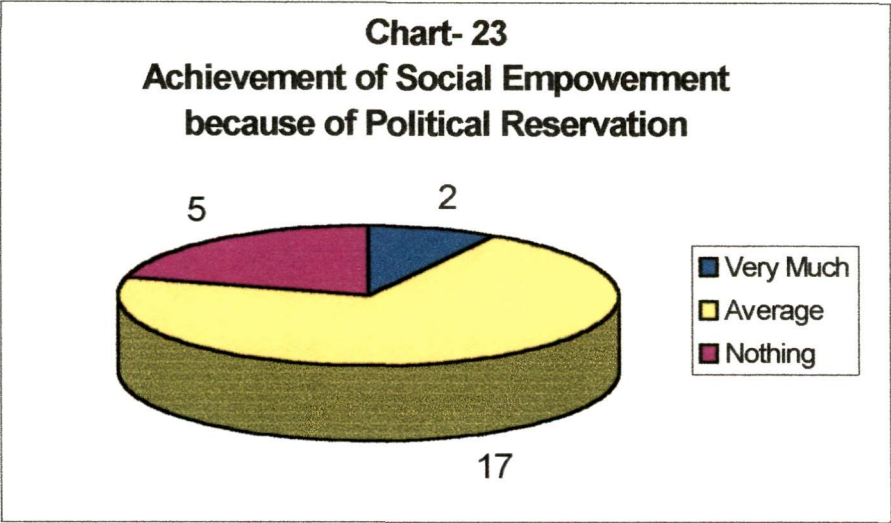
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

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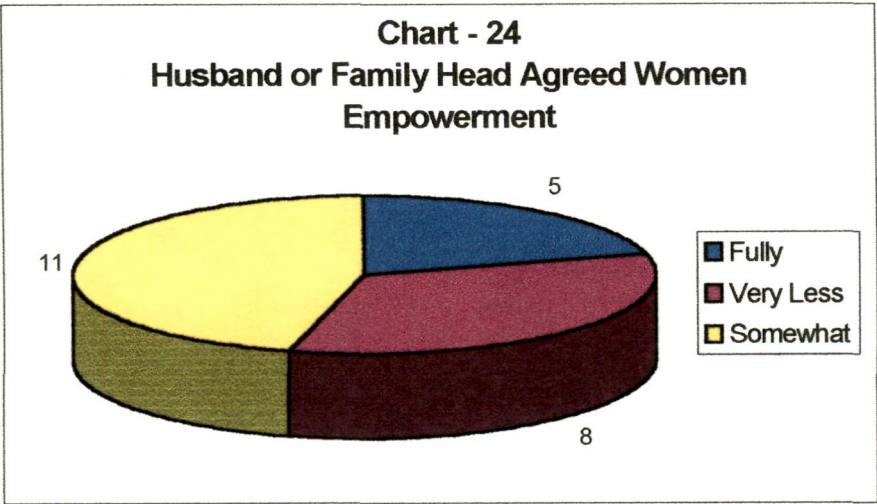
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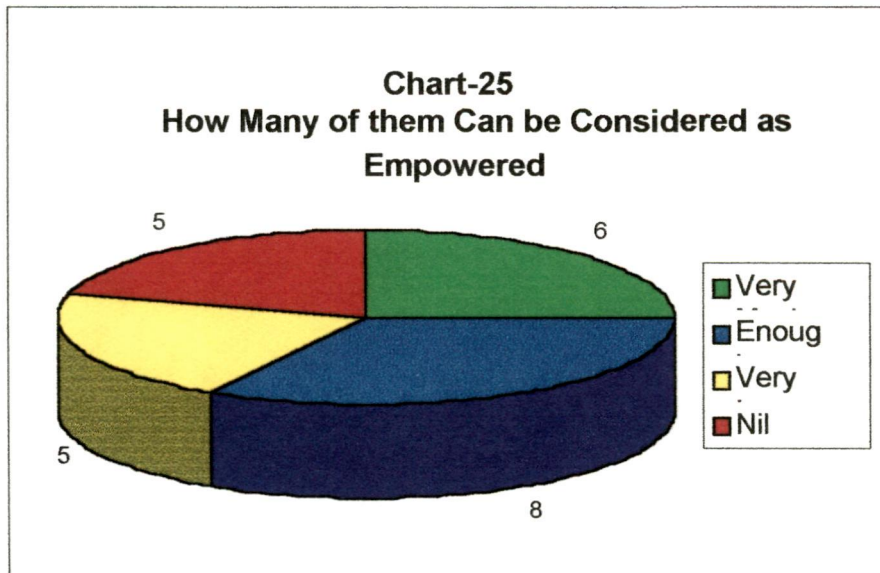
Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

Chart 23 shows only 8.4 percent (2) respondents feel them socially empowered, 70.8 percent (17) show a range of average and 20.8 percent (5) have no such empowerment. Though only 8.4 percent of the total respondents are socially empowered but the maximum of them are not acquired such social empowerment. It is evident that only reservation in Panchayati Raj bodies will not enliven the process of women empowerment. Women empowerment is the overall development, requires full support all the way.



Source :- Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey

In Chart 24, only 20.8 percent respondents (5) feel that their husband / family agrees to women empowerment, 45.8 percent of them (11) feel somewhat their case is upcoming but 33.4 percent (8) feel no change in attitude of their husband / family. It is evident from this chart that still male members at home do not favour women empowerment.



Source :- *Compiled from the Data Collected through Field Survey*

In Chart 25, we came to a conclusion that 25 percent (6) of the respondents can be considered empowered in the degree of very much 33.4 percent (8) respondents can be said enough, 20.8 percent (5) very less and 20.8 percent (5) has been nil degree of empowerment. Though nil degree of women empowerment still exists, but there is a possibility for upcoming trend as 25 percent of the women Panchayat members (respondents) found them empowered.

To sum up, it can be said that this district is still lagging behind expected empowerment. Though the religious influence is coming down but still it can not be denied that religious faith hinders the process of women empowerment. There is a high expectation among women of new generation to gear up the process of empowerment and besides various Governmental Plans, self awareness is witnessed to enliven the idea. Though it is a long time to come but there is not only a possibility but certainly will gather the momentum.

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CHAPTER - VII
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
AND CONCLUDING
OBSERVATIONS

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Summary of Findings :

Democracy, a political regime found in modern states, is a decision-making process which can only exist when public contestation, inclusiveness and responsible government are present, maintained by rule of law. Much is made of defining 'democracy'. Having been abused by politicians and the media, there is also an intellectual legacy of confusion as a result of an argument on democracy as individual behaviour and national policies. If not a unanimity but a consensus, that democracy is essentially a decision-making system, with certain absences of restriction on free expression, and developed form of citizenship. The word 'democracy' is an extensive and abstract concept, which takes on different concrete forms, in different countries and at different historical moments. Here, democracy implies the participation of the largest possible section of the masses in determining and fashioning their future under a given set of conditions. The democratic process is superior to many other feasible ways by which people might be governed. The idea and practice of democracy are justified by the values of freedom, human development, and the protection and advancement of shared human interests. The idea and practice of democracy is also presuppose three kinds of equality : The intrinsic moral equality of all persons, the equality expressed by the presumption that adult persons entitled to personal autonomy, and political equality among citizens as this is defined by the criteria for the democratic process.

The democratic process does not and cannot exist as a disembodied entity detached from historical conditions and historically conditioned human beings. Its possibilities and limits are highly dependent on existing and emergent social structures and consciousness. Because of the daring democratic vision, it

invites us to look beyond and break through the existing limits of structure and consciousness .

Indian democracy is not paradoxical; a part of its economic development preceded the establishment of its political system. The latter in this sense was not an artificial "graft" on a totally backward socio-economic environment. Under these conditions, the Indian elite gradually gained the experience of a Parliamentary democracy, which was designed to meet its interests, firmly established its national legitimacy. Democratic functioning in India referred solely to the flexible mode of relations established within the different components of the bloc. This specificity of Indian democracy provides the basis for understanding the gradual deterioration and the present crisis of the political system in India.

The word 'decentralization' relates to the devolution of powers resulting from the creation of bodies separated by law from the national centre in which local representatives are given formal power to decide on a range of public matters. A decentralized local body would have a separate legal existence, its own budget and the authority to allocate substantial resources on a range of different functions, and decisions would be made by the representatives of the local people, who constitute the body. Decentralization can be believed as diffusion of power from the centre, the most common diffusion is territorial. More commonly, decentralization relates to the division of functions. Some democratic central government choose to devolve numerous functions to local government; other may retain many for themselves. In the twentieth century there has been a good deal of movement of functions in the form of decentralization. A democracy having considerable decentralization of structure and function with the lowest levels of government active in operating numerous services may still be highly centralized in many senses. Decentralization could be applied in an authoritarian state, even in democracies. The reasons for decentralizing functions are pragmatic and bureaucratic. Local autonomy should not be sacrificed to demands of centralizing national state, it is a basic democratic value and any encroachment on it is undemocratic. It is not easy to

asses how much power remains in the hands of local leaders, which may vary with changing circumstances and with the functions concerned. At grassroots, local political leaders may act as brokers between the locality and the central authorities.

The urge for decentralization is for the most part a reaction to the centralizing tendencies of the contemporary world, circumstances decide whether it is a democratic reaction or not. Decentralizers are not necessarily democrats even when they press for regional self-determination; decentralization may be a device of planners for effective economic management of regional investment policies. This is not to deny that efficient and healthier democracy may some times result from some forms of decentralization. Decentralization does not necessarily contain any democratic connotation, the term 'democratic' is used to impart a special meaning. Democratic decentralization possesses two virtues; it is consistent with the democratic trend and it is also technically the most efficient method of formulation and execution of local projects. It is democratic in the sense that the source from which the power is decentralized has its democratic base and the body to which power flows is also democratically organised. The decentralization of government administration and securing people's participation through democratic institutions at the grassroot level is the emerging political culture among developing countries. Decentralization at present is a common and distinctive feature and effective in providing for meaningful people's involvement in the local governance system. Decentralized governance is however, a semi-dependent organisation, having some freedom to act without referring to the centre for approval, but its status is not comparable with that of a Sovereign State. The powers and the existence of local government, flow from a decision of the national parliament or a state legislature and can be curtailed or cancelled when the former or the latter so decides.

Development is not merely a growth in available goods and services, it is meaningful only when the same is consistent with the aspiration of the people who are supposed to get the benefit. People who are at the focus of

development should be enhanced with individual capacity and their organisational ability for rapid development. "Development" can be called as a process by which people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems. It is also a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations. Mobilisation of community resources to supplement efforts of the government is to achieve the goals of development. It is an inevitable extension of the national effort and commitment to bring the masses into main stream of developmental process, and that is possible only through the process of decentralization, in which plan formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are done at local level. Local leadership also plays a vital role in organising the community members and mobilising social action for development. Involvement of the local people in development schemes is expected to result in better planning and decision making, if the people are given the overall responsibility for planning and deciding their own development because the local people have a better awareness of their needs and preferences.

Today, development is emerging as the goal of humanity, and thus centres round the development of mankind toward the satisfaction of basic human needs. Development is an all-pervading activity. A real distribution of power is undergoing a revolutionary change, an ability for performance and ability is based on knowledge. Power must be used by whoever is in its possession for the attainment of development. Development is no longer synonymous with economic development, it has social and political ramifications also. It is a multi-dimensional process, which includes the development of socio-economic conditions of the people, and ensures their participation in the process of development for complete utilisation of physical and human resources for better living conditions. It also enhances both the capacity and capability of administrative and socio-economic development.

The focus on empowerment has given a new emphasis to the building of economic and social capabilities among individuals, classes and communities. Empowerment is also invoked in the context of economic weakness and insecurity, particularly of marginalised, unorganised and other disadvantaged group, classes and categories. Empowerment is about social transformation; it is about radical social transformation and about the common people rather than advantaged persons. The concept of empowerment implies formal rather than substantive power and it involves an external upper level agency to grant power rather than people below seizing it in the course of struggle. It is a part of the political philosophy of the new economic globalisation, requiring full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and the well being of our society. Empowerment to Gandhi is ending untouchability and acquisition of religious and political rights by the untouchables. Thus, empowerment can be thought as the process in which powerless get empowered. The term is often used to mean a variety of different things- from individual self-realisation and self-assertion to participation in projects in a functional sense, to the control over decisions regarding all aspects of one's life and livelihood to change the social and economic institutions that embody the basic and unequal power structures in society. The process of empowerment involves not just an improvement in physical and social conditions but also equal participation in decision-making process, control over resources and mechanisms for sustaining these gains. The central thrust of the process of empowerment is the dynamics of power which can be defined as one's capacity to influence or control others. If capacity is legitimised it becomes authority, and so the term empowerment can be known as the achievement or gain of authorised power in various aspects. Empowerment as a social process challenges the fundamental imbalances of power distribution and relations, it is a process of redistribution of power, and a process aiming at social equality. The process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control

over the sources of power, may be termed as empowerment. Empowerment means gaining autonomy and control over one's life, the empowered become agents of their own development, are able to exercise choices, and are capable of challenging and changing their subordinate position of society. Women empowerment is seen as a process whose outcomes would lead to renegotiation of gender relations; enhance women's access and control over human, material, financial and intellectual resources; legitimise women's entry into non-traditional spaces and create new spaces; and support systems to sustain the process of empowerment.

During British Rule in India, the village committees which were characteristic of agrarian economics existed but it is noticed that, even with our history of village as basic unit of administration, the national movement's commitment to Panchayats did not find a place in the draft of Indian Constitution except in the form of nonjustifiable reference in Part IV of the Constitution. The dawn of Independence afforded an opportunity to undertake a crusade against poverty, ignorance and disease which had by then assumed colossal proportions. To that end, the government initiated the Community Development Programme which was inaugurated in October 1952. Those at the helm of affairs realised that real progress in rural development could not come about without an agency at the village level. The Programme had a reasonably good start, but was short lived. There was also a growing impression that democracy, though working well, has not developed its roots firmly in the process of decentralization. Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1958) recommended that public participation in community works should be organised through statutory representative bodies. Later, the National Development Council (NDC) affirmed the basic principles of democratic decentralization and left it to the states to work out the structures suitable to each state. Thus, Panchayati Raj, an agent of democratic decentralization, was born after 12 years of Indian independence.

The appointment of the Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977 marked a turning point in the concept and practice of Panchayati Raj with the initiative of

West Bengal government to give a new life to the process of decentralization in 1978. During this period the following features were observed: —

- (a) a high level of political perception among the rural people; (b) the emergence of a new, youthful, rural leadership; (c) a substantial devolution of powers and resources to the local bodies; and (d) the participation of political parties creating large scale enthusiasm among the villagers. The institutions of local government held out a promise of effective cure against the twin ailment of stagnation in the community development programme and the dangers to democracy. It was increasingly felt that, if these institutions were properly developed and strengthened, they would not only provide a firm base to our democracy but would also accelerate the process of development. The logic of decentralization was so powerful that it has almost been universally accepted. It is now a well recognised dictum that since local resources are to be harnessed, local needs are to be consulted and local knowledge is needed, a large degree of decentralization is essential for the success of development.

The 73rd constitution amendment act reshaped the structure of decentralised governance in India with special features as (a) formation of gramsabhas. (b) uniform three tier Panchayat system (c) reservation on rotation for SC/STs (d) reservation of 1/3 seat for women in all three tiers. (e) devolution of powers and responsibilities for development plans. This amendment has brought a new dimension to decentralization for better development and women empowerment.

In the context of decentralization and development, West Bengal presents a model which could be usefully emulated. The empowerment of the people, democratic decentralization are the main planks of the three tier Panchayati Raj system in West Bengal. Before the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act came into force, West Bengal had amended the relevant Panchayat Act in 1992 to make provision for reservation of 1/3 rd seats for women as well as SC/STs. West Bengal Panchayat Act was also amended in 1994, 1995 and 1997. In fact, people's participation in decision making, grassroots planning and

programme implementation has supposedly the moving spirit and the motive force behind the successful developmental effort in West Bengal. It has been observed that through Panchayat election, power has been decentralized and the organised force of the village poor and middle class has carried out the task of establishing the power of poor curbing the power of the administrative officers in the villages. The performance of decentralized governance in West Bengal since 1978 has also led to the emergence of a new generation of leadership in rural West Bengal.

The doctrine of democratic decentralization led to the system of Panchayati Raj which opened an important avenue for women to come forward and demonstrate their abilities and capabilities. Women have acquiesced in a secondary status in social life, economic activities and decision making. A number of socio-economic constraints limit their work productivity and political efficiency. Low level of women's education which in turn affects the attitude of man and woman's consciousness of their own rights and privileges dictates a low status of women (Sabri, M.A., 1998). In India the goal of empowerment is particularly critical for women who have been deprived of powers within the family by main-stream religious and social traditions. Women cannot hope to exercise public power so long they are powerless over their own lives because of forced subservience to family members or party heads (Saxena, K., 1994). In our society many cultural and religious barriers are there to women's equality outside the realms of government action. Rights cannot be achieved unless the status of women is improved, that can be called empowerment, which means vesting of power to the powerless. It is not to confine only to socio-economic status but to political empowerment also. Despite their vast numerical strength, women occupy a marginalised position in Indian society because of many socio-economic constraints. Women's role in political process has virtually remained unchanged, despite the rapid growth of their informal political activities. Hectic activities started at the central level towards strengthening grassroots democratic organisations and achieving the goals of real democratic decentralization.

People's participation in the political and economic process has not been successful in ensuring women's participation. The demand for reservation for women in adequate proportion in the various representative bodies has been persistent. Women empowerment is one of the major objectives of the third generation of Panchayats in India. The 73rd Amendment is a milestone in the way of women assuming leadership and decision making positions. But it must be remembered that a change cannot be brought about overnight and by legislation alone. As the reservation for women in PRI was full of excitement and happiness but also bewilderment and anxiety.

Democracy will not be meaningful in a traditional society like India without the full involvement of women. The involvement of women in PRIs is considered essential not only for ensuring their political participation in the democratic process but also for realising the developmental goals for women. Women in general, are shrouded in silence, hopelessness and passivity. They are averse to participation in the political process right from local bodies to legislatures. There has been a perceptible change in the situation with the enactment of the Constitution 73rd amendment (Mandal, 1997). The magnitude of politicisation is low among rural people. Many of them have not yet crossed their primary schooling. It may be one reason for political apathy. Even the attitude of rural society towards women is very orthodox. Not being economically self sufficient political empowerment also lags behind and even capable women also want to be aloof due to caucus politics as they are scared of character assassination.

Although women are elected representatives of Panchayats, they feel neglected. Maximum number of women member said that they don't understand politics so the meetings are attended by their husband or party head. They also agree that lack of time is also the causes of not attending the meetings. Lack of political education and physical inferiority is also the hurdle to their political ability and empowerment. Bureaucracy has not been cooperating in empowering the women, as they feel superior to the elected members. Though in some cases

women are aware about the village problems but they do not know how to prepare the village plan for solving these problems. Economic independence is a precondition for political empowerment of women. In many cases not only women members are dependent but their family is totally dependent economically on the party. So the decision of party head is the decision of that member.

In many cases it is found that besides economic dependence illiteracy among women members and their family, particularly that of the poor and S.T., S.C. family, keep them aloof from political empowerment. Women, being the subject to exploitation, illiteracy, poverty and social tradition would not be able to express herself as empowered. Political parties and government officials fear that women would be reluctant to participate in politics unless allowed by the family. Basic education and political education is also necessary to them or else if the women come forward as per the 73rd Constitution amendment, it would be along the patriarchal whip, under the command and guidance of the males, as proxies, signing on the dotted lines (Mishra, 1997). The proxies owe their primary loyalty to their family, their role in politics merely an extension of their role as housewives. Some proxy women are forced into politics by their family against their own wish, their involvement in politics is not a means of self-actualization and self-expression. Proxies do not enjoy any real power, their presence is indeed counter productive to the cause of women's empowerment. However, the presence of women by their family connections should be treated as an inevitable part of the initial stage of the process of empowerment.

Concluding Observations:

Keeping in tune with the theoretical framework and the field survey on women empowerment, the findings show that due to socio-economic hurdles women are not fully empowered, but a glowing lamp is found in the process of women empowerment. About 90 percent of women in Murshidabad district are still dependent on a male bread earner. The remaining 10 percent women who are economically independent is restricted either by family or society. Majority of

women have their family a history of politics. In the cases where both husband and wife are in politics, there are two consequences—a positive one is that the woman has more exposure and support but the negative one is—if they belong to the same political party there is merely comparison but women are discriminated, even if she is capable, the credit goes to the husband. —

It is universally acknowledged that women at best can provide “supportive service” to males in their exclusive domain of politics. It is found in the district of Murshidabad that majority of women Panchayat members irrespective of party affiliation, are not only unanimous but also vociferously complain of non-cooperation, neglect, hiding of facts and assignment of no work at all. Even at higher level women member voice such allegations of neglect before their counterpart. Even women member of higher level Panchayat bodies i.e., Zilla Parishad, complained against male tendencies to use women counterpart as cosmetics. Leaving a few all members at village level depend upon male guardians or party heads where the guardians are dependent on party heads.

It is likely that the quantitatively increasing number of women would contribute meaningfully in highlighting the specific issues of women and qualitatively perceptible changes in political goal as a result of women's perspective and priorities would be forthcoming. Some field investigations have revealed that induction of women has resulted in improvement in health measures, domestic planning, social awareness, economic mobility and overcoming social and religious orthodoxies.

Political empowerment of women is considered not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic process but also for realising the developmental goals for women. Participation of women in PRIs involves (a) women as voters, (b) women as member of political parties, (c) women as candidates, (d) women as elected members of PRIs taking part in decision making. —

It is observed during field survey that (i) women are not independent voters, (ii) a majority of them are illiterate, (iii) a majority of women

make their voting choice on the choice of their family members. Lack of sufficient participation of women in politics and at the decision-making levels, are themselves the results of their poor social and domestic status and their exclusion from certain positions and levels of power. Mere physical participation in the formal political institutions like elections, social movements or demonstrations is not enough for their empowerment.

Our study also reveals that women empowerment is not in a zero shape in this district. Few women member of village level and more in higher level of PRIs is quite empowered all the way to social-economic and political fields. They are observed as having educational standard upto matriculation or more, home atmosphere is enough liberal, political attachment of family members, free from religious orthodoxies and more important, that these women were involved in political climax at their school or college life. These women are not totally dependent on male but even can decide better than their male counterpart. Though some of these women are troubled by social constraints, upto the extent of divorce but their empowerment does not allow them to pull back. Most of these women are employed.

It was found during field survey that most of the high performer women were:

- (a) educated upto matriculation or above,
- (b) they are close to urban areas,
- (c) from well to do families, having a good source of income,
- (d) with husband or father holding a prominent social/ political status,
- (e) having muscle power,
- (f) free from religious orthodoxies,
- (g) political involvement during their schooling,
- (h) this number measures 20% of the sample.

Women having low performance are generally:-

- (i) less educated or illiterate,
- (ii) confined to rural set-up,
- (iii) from families having social respect and old patterned high social prestige.
- (iv) having lesser degree of political influence of family member,
- (v) religious minded families,
- (vi) daily wage earner or housewife,
- (vii) poor economic condition of family,
- (viii) from lower caste,
- (ix) first time involvement in politics,
- (x) have no political education

Our experiences show that this was not always true that women are not empowered. In several instances, we learnt that women had overcome initial hurdles and were able to manage well. It is true, of course, that a reservation policy alone is not enough. Various other support mechanisms are required for the empowerment of all the women.

Suggestions:

It must be admitted that today most of the rural women are not in a position to shoulder the heavy responsibility that has been entrusted to them by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992. This unpreparedness can, however, be tackled along the following suggestions :

First:- There is the basic problem associated with illiteracy, which afflicts our society. This rate is higher among women. This is quite impossible for illiterate or very low educated women members to act as decision-makers and executors in a government machinery. A qualifying educational standard should be fixed to be a candidate in PRIs, so that the hurdles of illiteracy among women member can be averted. The literacy programme in the district has failed to reach

its goal but the process must continue to uphold the interest among women to be a literate.

Second:- Besides the educational standard, a political education is also a must for person involving in decision-making process in PRIs. Without the political education women representatives are being bypassed by party leaders or male members at home. At least a provision should be made for these women member to have political education which can enlighten their practical experience in PRIs. Any formal or informal education centre can take the responsibility.

Third:- The need to generate an awareness among the rural masses about empowerment is to be stressed. People in general and women in particular have to be made fully conscious of their rights and responsibilities. The mental set up of the male population in rural areas has to undergo a change to facilitate acceptance of women empowerment in all the socio-economic and political aspects.

The elected members whether men or women would require to be trained to enable them to discharge their functions in an effective manner. The need in this district is more for women because of their lower literacy and less exposure to public affairs and dealing with various agencies. This training should be continuous and spread over different phases rather than once for all. Women members have to be provided with subsequent training related to specific aspects of their functioning.

This task is best performed through a process of political mobilization. It is necessary for the government to implement its plan and programmes and to communicate all its policies to the rural mass not in a sealed files under official cupboards. Government can activate the process of awareness generation through mass media as well as audio-visual camps in every village. Government can develop useful packages in local language and to communicate them honestly at the grass root levels.

Fourth:- It is suggested that the women working as gram sevika can be used as an instrument for creating women awareness among Muslims. They can be projected as examples to the orthodox families and the Muslim women section can be taught in a better way by these employed gram sevika.

Fifth:- Economic independence is a pre-condition for political or social empowerment of women. It may be realised that a major constraint for women specially those coming from poorer families is the utter lack of time. As they have to look after their household work or daily wage earners on public work. It is not easy for a low income women to establish social respect. Efforts can be made to increase the women personnel for work among rural women as Anganwadi workers, gram sevikas etc. A specific suggestion is that these members should be given a handful honorarium.

Sixth :- It is specifically suggested that a moral education is also required to maintain women empowerment at a right direction. It is to avoid capricious activities of women which disrupt the social norms causing domestic life unstable. This moral education also will prevent the young women from their character assassination to uphold the social prestige in public.

Seventh:- There is a need for continuous research, monitoring and follow up. Mistakes are likely to be made in operation. It is not only the government but voluntary agencies also can play an important role in women empowerment.

The NGOs working for empowerment of women should encourage and activise women of various sections belonging to different castes, communities and religions, so that the cake of political empowerment will not be distributed only among the influentials ---- relatives, wives, widows and daughters of formal political leaders. Women are political instruments of rural development and women empowerment will hasten the pace of rural development. It is imperative to state that the indicators of empowerment of women include personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, equality of opportunity, access to quality education, and technological empowerment besides the socio-economic and political empowerment.

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Annexure-1

Title :- “ Democratic Decentralisation and Empowerment : A Study of Women of Murshidabad District in West Bengal (1978-1998)”.

SURVEY SCHEDULE

Section-A :- Back ground

1. Sex : M/F 2. Age : 3. Occupation : 4. Education :
 5. Annual Family Income :
 6. Marital Status : Unmarried/Married.
 7. Head of the family: Myself/Father/Brother/Mother/Husband/Son/Daughter/Sister.
 8. Religion :
 9. Caste :
 10. Property possession :
- I) Land II) Livestock III) Bullock cart/Tanga IV) Bicycle
 V) Moter byke/Scooter VI) Four Wheeler VII) Radio VIII) T.V
 IX) Telephone X) Any other.
11. Who take decision in your family ? Myself/Father/Husband/Anyother (Specify).

Section-B :- Exposure to Media.

- 2.1 Do you listen to Radio ? Regularly/occasionally/Not at all.
- 2.2 If yes, why do you listen to Radio ? For entertainment/For News/Both News & Entertainment.

- 2.3 Do you view T.V.? Regularly/Occasionally/Not at all.
- 2.4 If yes, why? For Entertainment Only/For News/Both
- 2.5 Do you read news paper ? Regularly/Occasionally/Not at all.
- 2.6 If yes, why ? For Lottery news/ For News/ Both.
- 2.7 Please name three national Political Leaders.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.8 Please name three national Political Parties.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.9 Please name three regional Political Parties.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.10 Please name three regional Political Leaders.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.11 Please name three national problems in terms of your priority.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.12 Please name some of the problem of your local area.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

2.13 Whom do you consult when you face any problem ?

1. Family Head
2. Religious Head
3. Political Party
4. Any other (specify)

Section-C: Empowerment (Social, Economic, Political)

SOCIAL

3.1) In your family who takes the important decision ?

- I) My Husband II) My Self III) Father IV) Brother
V) Mother VI) Sister.

3.2 How much are you consulted ? I) Fully II) Partially III) Not at all.

3.3 If not at all, why ?

- I) Because I am a woman and only the males are capable of taking decisions.
II) Because I do not understand how to take decision.
III) Because I am not interested.

3.4 If you feel you should go outside to the market, or to relatives house can you go? I) Yes II) No

3.5 If yes, can you go alone ? I) Yes II) No

3.6 If no why ?

- I) Because I am a woman and women cannot go alone.
II) Because our family heritage does not permit.
III) Because my H/F/B/M/S does not permit.

3.7 If you feel like purchasing anything can you ? I) Yes II) No

3.8 If yes, is it I) Independently II) Consultation with H/F/B/M/S.

3.9 Who takes the decision regarding the education of your children ?

I) Myself II) My husband III) Parents IV) Both myself and my husband.

3.10/ If you are married, who did select your groom ?

I) Myself II) Guardians III) Guardians in consultations with me.

3.11/ What, according to you, should be the best way to select groom for girls in your family?

I) Opinion of the girl should be given priority.

II) Guardian Should have exclusive authority to decide on the groom.

III) Only the male guardians should have authority to decide.

IV) If neither the girls nor the guardians have anything to do with, everything is determined by God.

3.12 Religion has made us learn that salvation of women lies at the foot of their husbands.

I) Strongly Agree

II) Agree

III) Undecided

IV) Disagree

V) Strongly Disagree.

3.13 I have total faith in religion.

I) Strongly Agree

II) Agree

III) Undecided

IV) Disagree

V) Strongly Disagree.

3.14 My religion nowhere makes discrimination between men and women.

I) Strongly Agree

II) Agree

III) Undecided

IV) Disagree

V) Strongly Disagree.

3.15 All religions should be adopted to the requirements of modern times.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided
IV) Disagree V) Strongly Disagree.

ECONOMIC

3.16 Are you :-

- I) Employed II) Businesswomen III) Daily wage earner
IV) House wife.

3.17 If employed, your earnings remain with

- I) Your self II) Bank
III) Husband/Father/Mother/Brother/Sister/Any other.

3.18 If in Bank, who transacts business

- I) Myself II) Husband III) Father IV) Brother V) Mother
VI) Any other.

3.19 If anyone else other than you, why ?

- I) After so many works at home I do not get time.
II) I do not understand the Bank transaction
III) My husband /Father/Mother/Brother do not like I should go to the bank.

3.20 How the earnings that remains with you are decided to spend?

- I) I decide myself.
II) I only keep, decisions on spending are taken by my Husband/Father/Mother/Brother.
III) Partially I decide partially my Husband/Father/Mother/Brother.

3.21) / How do you go to your work place ?

- I) Myself II) My Husband/Father/Brother/makes me reach.

3.22) / How do you feel in work place ?

- I) Quite comfortable II) Scared.

3.23) / If scared, do you feel shy because you are woman?

- I) Strongly agree II) Agree III) Disagree IV) Strongly disagree.

3.24) If you are in business, Do you run the business independently ?

- I) Yes II) No.

3.25) If No, with whom do run ?

- I) Husband II) Father III) Mother IV) Brother V) Anyone else
(specify).

3.26) If run with H/F/M/B/S/Anyone else, how much of the business you decide.

- I) Equally II) Fully III) Not at all.

3.27) / If yes, whom do you consult about your business ?

- I) Mine II) My Husband/Father/Mother/Brother/Sister/Anyone else
(specify).

3.28) Why do you consult ?

- I) Because I am a woman and cannot take right decision.
II) Because only the males can take right decisions.
III) Because, I feel I may get cheated.

3.29) If you are a wage earner how do you decide under whom you would work ?

- I) Myself II) My Husband/Father/Mother/Brother.

3.30) If not yourself why ?

- I) Because I am woman and women cannot decide.
 II) After completing household activities not possible for me to decide.

POLITICAL

3.31) Do you participate in voting ?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------|
| a) Parliamentary election :- | I) Regularly | II) Occasionally | III) No |
| b) Assembly election :- | I) Regularly | II) Occasionally | III) No |
| c) Panchayat election :- | I) Regularly | II) Occasionally | III) No |

3.32) Why do you cast your vote ?

- I) Because as a citizen it is my duty.
 II) Because my guardian asks me to vote.
 III) Because others casts so I do.

3.33) How do you decide to vote for a particular party/Candidate ?

- I) On my own
 II) My guardian decides and informs me.
 III) Others in village decide and inform me.

3.34) Have you been a candidate in any election ?

- ✓ I) Yes II) No

3.35) If yes, Why ?

- I) I feel women should more and more come forward and take part in politics.
- II) My husband/male guardians could not contest because of reservation for women.
- III) The leaders of my locality asked me to contest.

3.36) Have you won the election you contested?

- I) Yes II) No

3.37) If yes, what is the frequency of your attending the meeting of body you represent/represented?

- I) Regularly II) Occasionally III) Not at all.

3.38) How do you go to attend the meeting?

- I) I arrange for myself.
- II) My Husband/Guardian makes me to go to attend the meeting.
- III) The leader of my village/Locality/Party accompanies me.

3.39) If not at all, why?

- I) Because I do not understand the intricacy of politics.
- II) Because my Husband/Guardians acts on behalf of me.
- III) Because I feel comfortable in household activities.

3.40) How do you take decision in the meetings of the board you represent?

- I) I do not take decision because I do not attend the meetings.
- II) Decisions are taken by my Husband/Guardians and communicated to me.
- III) Decisions are taken by party leaders and communicated to me.
- IV) Decisions are taken by myself.

3.41) How much have you been able to do for the locality you represent ?

- I) Much enough II) Moderate III) Not at all.

3.42) Which are the main issues/problems that you feel to Addressed in your area ?

- I)
II)
III)

3.43) Do you think that the power of women has increased by their representation in the elected bodies ?

- I) Very much II) Moderately III) Not at all.

3.44) Do you think that the provision for reservation of women in local bodies has empowered women ?

- I) Very much II) Moderately III) Not at all.

3.45) If very much, how ?

- I) Women are treated at par with men.
II) Women can take decisions on vital issues.
III) Women are no more subjected to male domination.
IV) Any other (specify).

3.46) If not at all, how ?

- I) Inspite of reservation women are dictated by their husband/father/guardians.
II) Women do not understand the intricacies of politics.
III) Women are not fully conscious of their position and rights.

IV) Women members are not spared from looking after the house front.

V) Any other (specify).

3.47) Are you satisfied with the way you are as the elected representative of your area ?

I) Fully satisfied II) Somewhat satisfied III) Not at all satisfied.

3.48) If not, why ?

I) My decision are not given any value.

II) I cannot protest against any decision/action, which goes against my conscience.

III) I cannot go against the decision of my husband/guardians/political leaders.

IV) I am representative in name only.

3.49) What according to you should be done to ensure women's genuine political empowerment ?

I) They are to be educated.

II) They are to be given freedom.

III) They are to have economic independence.

IV) Any other (specify).

3.50) In order to ensure women's empowerment, all relevant policies and action undertaken by the Government/Local bodies are to be communicated to all sections of the people.

I) Strongly agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree

V) Strongly disagree.

Annexure-2

Title :- “Democratic Decentralisation and Empowerment : A Study of Women of Murshidabad District in West Bengal (1978-1998)”.

SURVEY SCHEDULE

Section A :- Background

1. Sex : M/F 2. Age : 3. Occupation : 4. Education : .
5. Annual Family Income :
6. Marital Status : Unmarried/Married.
7. Head of the family: Myself/Father/Brother/Mother/Husband/Son/Daughter/Sister.
8. Religion :
9. Caste :
10. Property possession :

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| I) Land | II) Livestock | III) Bullock cart/Tanga | IV) Bicycle |
| V) Moter byke/Scooter | VI) Four Wheeler | VII) Radio | VIII) T.V |
| IX) Telephone | X) Any other. | | |
11. Who take decision in your family ? Myself/Father/Husband/Anyother (Specify).

Section-B :- Exposure to Media.

- 2.1 Do you listen to Radio ? Regularly/occasionally/Not at all.
- 2.2 If yes, why do you listen to Radio ? For entertainment/For News/Both News & Entertainment.

- 2.3 Do you view T.V.? Regularly/Occasionally/Not at all.
- 2.4 If yes, why? For Entertainment Only/For News/Both
- 2.5 Do you read news paper ? Regularly/Occasionally/Not at all.
- 2.6 If yes, why ? For Lottery news/ For News/ Both.
- 2.7 Please name three national Political Leaders.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.8 Please name three national Political Parties.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.9 Please name three regional Political Parties.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.10 Please name three regional Political Leaders.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.11 Please name three national problems in terms of your priority.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.12 Please name some of the problem of your local area.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 2.13 Whom do you consult when you face any problem ?
1. Family Head

2. Religious Head
3. Political Party
4. Any other (specify)

Respondent Other than Women Panchayat Member

SOCIAL :

3.1 Men and women possess same level of intelligence.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.2 Men and women should be treated equally in all the fields social, economic and political.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.3 In our society, women are still dominated by men.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.4 Women are to be thought to be fit for household activities only.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.5 In terms of intelligence women are less equipped and hence, they should remain confined to the household activities.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.6 / Socially, women in our society are not independent in terms of marriage.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.7 In terms of child rearing.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.8 In terms of household planning.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.9 In terms of any social programme.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.10 In terms of their education.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
VI) Strongly Disagree.

3.11 Women should be given more freedom on social questions like

- I) Marriage II) Education III) Child rearing IV) Household planning

3.12 Women in our society does not have economic independence.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.13 Economically, women are fully dependent on their husband/guardian.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.14 All the decisions on family matters are taken by the male guardian because of their economic independence.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.15 All the decisions on political issue are taken by the male guardian because of their economic independence.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.16 Women in our society are not independent to opt for any profession of their choice.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.17 Women are less equipped to take any profession of their choice.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.18 Women should be given equal opportunity for their economic independence.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.19 No meaningful development is possible unless women are empowered economically.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.20 Social taboos that come in the way of women's economic empowerment should be abolished.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

POLITICAL

3.21 Women are not fit to take part in politics.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.22 Women are fit for household activities only.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.23 Though women caste their votes they do on the advice/dictate of their husband/guardian.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.24 Though women became candidates for election (in the local bodies) they became so because their husbands/guardians do not get that for some technical reasons.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.25 Women elected representatives are representatives in name only.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.26 Women elected representatives take part in the decision making process on the dictates/advice of their husbands/guardians.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.27 Women are no less equipped in politics than their male counterparts.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.28 Since women are not economically independent they cannot be independent politicians.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.29 Women have the capability but they are not provided the opportunity.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.30 Due to social & economic dependence women cannot become good and active player in politics.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.31 Mere Constitutional reservation will not solve the problems of women empowerment unless they are empowered socially and economically.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.32 Due to the inherent difference of faculties between men and women they can never be equal.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.33 ✓ Lack of proper communications of modern values come in the way of women's empowerment.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.34 ✓ Religious values hinder the process of women empowerment.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

3.35 ✓ Women have proved to be good politicians.

- I) Strongly Agree II) Agree III) Undecided IV) Disagree
V) Strongly Disagree.

