

CONCLUSION

'Social Welfare Administration' as an important area of New Public Administration has attracted the attention of the scholars, public policy makers, bureaucrats as well as entrepreneurs and voluntary organisations. To understand the term both conceptually and operationally one may logically argue that the operationalisation of social welfare administration varies from country to country because of the variation of the nature of politics, political ideologies, culture, human values, social factors, financial abilities and more specifically, the stage of their social and economic development. The more developed countries consider social welfare as an insurance of minimum standards of living for their subjects. While low developed countries regard social welfare as providing basic needs to their population. In fact social welfare means making well-being of the people, the ultimate aim is to bring about development of human beings and the arrangements of providing the basic necessities of life. Unfortunately, however, in India, social welfare is used in restricted sense to provide services to the under privileged, disadvantaged and backward sections of the society. Social Welfare as a universal tool has been pursued by the countries irrespective of their stages of development to alleviate the sufferings of mankind in every part of our globe.

To adumbrate, the quantum and quality of social welfare programmes have not been uniform and vary from government to government. However, all governments irrespective of their ideologies are wedded to provide minimum welfare services to their people through certain objective oriented programmes which include child and women welfare, family welfare, youth welfare, welfare of the handicapped, welfare of the minorities and weaker sections of the society etc. However, this list is by no means exhaustive. Additional burden of social welfare services has always been inevitable due to the increasing areas of responsibilities emerging out of the complexities of the new millennium.

The Government Agencies, Non-Government Organisations and Voluntary Organisations engaged in the delivery of welfare services determined the methods and techniques to be employed according to the needs of their clients and the situations and the shapings of their problems. Generally these organisations use

the recognised social work methods of case work, group work and community organisation for social welfare and research and evaluation and administration to appoint themselves about the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of their programmes and bring about necessary modification in their policies for rendering better services for the development and welfare of the concerned section of the society. However such method and approaches to welfare services are likely to be modified in the light of experience gained over the years. Social welfare services as provided and implemented in different parts of the globe can be classified on the basis of the emphasis they lay on certain particular aspects and the beneficiaries they cover into the familial, the residual, the mixed economy and the controlled economy models. However, these models are likely to undergo changes with the shifts in the structure of Governments, the political and economic ideologies and the thinking about the better utilisation of financial resources. Great Britain had been and still has been playing the pioneering role model of a welfare state. Despite heavy reductions of welfare programmes by Thatcher's administration, the more developed countries such as, the U.S.A., Canada, Sweden and other Scandinavian countries have the distinction of being the ideal models for providing the welfare services and security measures to their citizens. The erstwhile Soviet Union and even the present Peoples Republic of China experiencing socialist open economy model had been and still has been obliging to restructure the welfare services to strengthen the edifice of socialist construction.

Social Welfare in the name of the Public Welfare Development had been pursued by the benevolent kings and the emperors in the Pre colonial India. The colonial India also witnessed development activities, may be in the restricted sense to liquidate illiteracy, ignorance, prejudiced customs and religious superstitions. However both in pre colonial and colonial India did experience little efforts in the execution of welfare programmes. The development of social welfare in the post independent period has been phenomenal in terms of provision of administrative machinery, financial outlays and expansions of social Welfare programmes for numerous sections of disadvantaged, downtrodden and under privileged people. Despite efforts undertaken by the Indian State one may logically argue that these are far short of emerging requirements. Ideologically argued, the deficiencies and adequacies afflicting the social welfare to be given a higher planning priority, the planning machinery for welfare services at the state and district level are to be

strengthen and the administrative infrastructure at the state, district and the local level are to be streamlined. The decentralised grass-roots structure should have to be equipped in order to promote capacity building and there should be strong sense of co-ordination of partnership between different structure laying at different tiers both at the governmental and non-governmental level. If the welfare strategies, policies and programmes are structured and implemented under a collaborative and public participatory scheme the development of social welfare would certainly contribute to the upliftment of the weaker section of the society. Centre, state and local governments would thus play their respective roles in carrying out their on going welfare programmes more effectively to the maximum benefits of the population concerned and devise and design more programmes for the disadvantaged and under privileged section of the society to achieve the goals of welfare State.

Indian polity is wedded to the concept of welfare state as is reflected in the Preamble to her Constitution, constitutional provisions relating to directive principle of state policy and such other provisions. Thus, ever since her inception, the Indian state has launched multitude of welfare programmes for the development and well being of weaker section of society. But it took quite long to establish an independent ministry of welfare to formulate policy and over see the implementation of programmes contained therein and to co-ordinate the welfare activities of other segments of the government and those of voluntary organisation. The initial initiative to set-up an administrative structure for social welfare was begining in 1964 with the establishment of department of social security as a sequence to the Renuka Ray committee. It was redesignated as Department of Social Welfare in 1972 and put under the control of Ministry Of Education and Social Welfare. The status of the department of social welfare was raised to that of a separate Ministry in 1979. Its nomenclature was changed that of Ministry of Social and Women Welfare in 1983 and the Ministry of Welfare as such specially dealing with welfare was created on 25th September, 1985. The Ministry of Welfare does not encompass every considerable welfare activity due to the multifaceted and multi-dimensional complexity of welfare concern. The Ministry of Welfare has to contend itself with the administration of welfare programmes of other ministries relating to different aspect of welfare. It is not out of place to mention that the welfare needs of a multi-cultural multi religious, multi-lingual, multi-national and multi-regional polity like

India must bound to differ in the context of backgrounds, aspirations, reflexes and responses resulting in the creation of intricacies of procedures, processes, methods, techniques and administrative structures and also in the recruitment of the man power employed in dealing with the formulation and execution of welfare policies and programmes. Certain discrepancies, inconsistancies and lacunae are inescapable in such an intricate and complex administrative apparatus and mechanism.

Like central government, the state government also has the department of social welfare under different nomenclatures for reasons of their creations at a particular point of time. The needs and aspirations of the clientele to be served by them. Welfare being a state subject has attracted attention by the state governments. The social welfare deparments in the various steps are organised in different division to cater to the development and welfare needs of the particular sections of the society such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, the handi-capped, women and children and such other dis-advantaged group. They had their field offices at the district and tehsil levels out of but not at the block level. This welfare related offices are located in different places at the district head-quarters causing inconvenience and hardship to those who are to approach more than one office for their different needs. It is therefore suggested that all district level offices connected with the welfare of the scheduled castes and backwards classes and other economically weaker section should be located in a close proximity for the convenience of beneficiaries. Mechanism below the level of the state government for administration of social welfare has been unfortunately poor. Although both the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts and the Rural and the Urban Acts of the state legislature provide for welfare programmes to be undertaken by local government. They have not been taken up except by a couple of municipal corporation for the lack of financial capacity. The local government are to be empowered so that they can play an effective partnership role along with the central and state department and agencies. Strategies so far taken by both Union and state governments and programmes so far adopted for the welfare and development of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes have been apparently proved encouraging, however programmes at the implementational level get stumbled due to lack of sincerity on the part of the political mandarins, bureaucracy at various levels, lack of participation at the grass root level and the inability to identify the basic issues involved in the programmed implementation level. The inadequencies of

innovative schemes and planning have been the principal reasons for which the entire development issues relating to schedule castes and scheduled tribes get stranded. The suggestion is that the development needs should be identified according to the order of priorities. This is important and urgent because that the condition of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes continues to be pathetic inspite of numerous constitutional safeguard and exclusive programmes for their welfare. For millions of those belonging to weaker sections either with small land holding or without land escape from the vicious cycle of poverty is still a distant dream turning to be reality. The over-all degradation has been on the rise and gets accentuated despite claims to the contrary and both the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes in different region of the country are simmering with discontent. This is evident from the demand for a separate Kamtapur state initiated by a section of Rajbanshi scheduled castes of the area under study. In fact the claims of the state, in utter disgrace of their traditional rise and virtual forced displacement for making room for the so called developmental projects have made. The scheduled castes of the area has become restive. The assertions of considerable sect of Rajbanshis for a claim of their own state and the rationality of their demand, if any, would be dealt with in the closing paragraphs of the conclusion.

Some general suggestions may be made for improvement of the present impasse and alleviating miseries of these backward communities in general. Primarily, a positive development culture has to be evolved out and the building up of a strong public opinion to work as custodian of the protection of interests of the scheduled castes and tribes has been essential. Some broad suggestions may be put as under. a) The governmental agencies and the public institutions should be made more responsive and accountable while dealing with the implementation of the development programmes for the scheduled castes and the tribes; b) Voluntary agencies and the non-governmental organisations who worked at the field level should be tied with the governmental agencies to make the operational part of the programme as such; c) It has been urgently a necessity of bringing about a change in the general psyche and social attitude of the people on the issue that attempt at improving the general condition of the scheduled castes and tribes is a responsibility and certainly not a concession to be provided to these communities. It is not simply a kind of generosity rather it is definitely a question of entitlement from which, over the years the scheduled castes and tribes have been deprived of;

d) Another important issue arising out of some of the developmental schemes aim that ameliorating the lot of the scheduled castes in so far as some such schemes tend to further segregate them from the rest of the population. For example, under Indira Abas Yojana, houses or house - sites being provided to the scheduled castes under various schemes are generally located away from the main village which impedes their coming closer to people belonging to other caste. Similarly hostels that are being opened exclusively for scheduled caste boys or girls tend to keep them away from students belonging to general castes. It is suggested that the programme meant for social and economic advancement of the scheduled castes be implemented in such a manner that they in the process, also ensure the absorption of the scheduled castes into the main stream of the society; e) Adequate legal measures and existing enacted, laws meant to control the alienation of land from scheduled caste and scheduled tribes should be enforced; f) Distribution of lands to the landless scheduled castes populace under the auspicious of the government and other nonland subsidies to be provided in an even manner to the scheduled castes community; g) Adequate arrangement should be made for ensuring basic education of the scheduled castes; h) Local innovative measures are to be initiated to plug the leakage in delivering the benefits to the scheduled castes; I) The functioning of the financial and development corporation for the benefit of the scheduled castes should have to be much more transparent and made active; j) The National Commission for scheduled castes and tribes and the Commissioner should undertake a comprehensive evaluation of development programmes for scheduled castes and tribes to effect mid-term corrections.

Nearly sixteen percent of the total population of India constitutes scheduled castes population. The concentration of scheduled castes population varies from state to state. A little more than sixteen percent of the scheduled castes population in the country reside in the urban areas and bulk of the urban scheduled castes population reside in the slums without basic amenities such as drinking water, links roads, sanitation, electricity and such other basic needs of life. The scheduled castes in India are basically ruralites. The bulk of them are agricultural labourers, partly or wholly of 'bargadars' (share croppers) or other type of insecure tenants. The scheduled castes agricultural labourers constitute nearly 49 percent of the total scheduled caste workers. For the scheduled castes cultivator, the all India percentage

is nearly 29 percent, of the total scheduled caste workers 28.17 percent are cultivators. The Majority if not almost all of them are only marginal landless and naturally are in the poverty group along with the land less agricultural labourers. They together form about 77 percent of the total scheduled castes workers. In addition there are traditional occupations such as handicrafts specially bamboo, cane and dokra, weaving and fishing. A considerable portion of the population are engaged in the occupation of daily wage labour, riksha and van-puller as well as serving in domestic household works. These occupations are all in the unorganised sector providing a kind of alternative employment to the scheduled castes. However, such occupational profile of scheduled castes is linked with very low economic and social status. While doing this job a considerable portion of workforce has to commute to the nearer urban centers. These working people are still far below the general population in educational accomplishments. It has to be considered that mere expansions of educational institution have been found insufficient. Economic distress and compulsion to rely on school age children to earn income or look after younger children discourages many parents for enrolling their children in schools. There has been a strong correlation between social status and possibility to stay in the school. Thus the economic aspect has preceeded all other factors in identifying the reasons behind wastage and stagnation. It has also been observed that in every state the literacy level of scheduled castes lacks behind the literacy level of the non-scheduled castes and non-scheduled tribes population. Thus it shows that the educational backwardness of scheduled castes is on account of their peculiar socio-economic conditions and its solution requires a systematic efforts directed towards the scheduled castes and cannot come about through educational development and they are to suffer from the dual handicap of social disability and economic deprivation - social disabilities arising out of the stigma of being low caste and the economic deprivation arising out of exploitation and denial of opportunities for centuries.

As regards literacy level of the scheduled castes it has been noticed that the literacy rate among the scheduled castes is much below the all India average. The rate of literacy among scheduled castes is at present nearly 22 percent while the all India average is nearly 46 percent (excluding scheduled castes and scheduled tribes). Among the scheduled castes populace there are some communities who have hardly any literate among them. The precentage of literacy among scheduled castes women, at present

is a little more than 11 percent as against nearly 31 per cent among other women (excluding the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes women). Education has been treated as one of the prime instrument for improving the condition of the people. Despite efforts the level of education of the scheduled castes has not been satisfactory till date.

Most of the scheduled castes families have still been much below the poverty line. Their percentage in the over all poverty groups in the country is very high. Majority of them are engaged in low wage and even obnoxious and degraded occupations. Their skill base is rather weak. While reviewing the present arrangement for formulating a strategy for the welfare of this deprived section of population one can well observe that even after the celebration of the golden jubilee of independence this disadvantaged section of the population remained segregated socially and exploited economically and is looked downed upon by the advanced sections of the Indian society. Notwithstanding this extremely adverse situation, the scheduled castes contribute significantly to the sustenance and growth of the production systems of the country, for example the largest single group amongst agricultural groups are the scheduled castes. The scheduled castes women occupy a large share of agricultural labourers. Handicrafts are mostly the contribution of the scheduled castes. They have a considerable share in the fishing activities and such others activities of social needs. It has, therefore, been a sorry state of affairs that these people who give so much to society gets so little in return. In fact, they are the last rung in the production ladder and invariably adds the maximum value of the final products, however, that is always forgotten. To be precise, they constitute the main the bed-rock on which our society and economy rest.

In spite of the Constitutional directives and a number of legislative and executive measures taken by the government, the conditions of the scheduled castes have not improved much till Sixth Five Year Plan. The only funds available for the development of scheduled castes were under the backward classes sector of Annual Plans. During Sixth Plan a new approach was evolved to ensure flow of benefits from the general sector to these people. The central Ministries and the state governments were required to quantify funds from the identifiable programmes and orient them as far as necessary to the needs of the scheduled castes communities. Relaxations were allowed in the

norms of minimum needs programmes and a concerted strategy of Special Component Plan was drafted. Such plan is designed to channelise the flow of benefits and outlays from the general sectors in the plans of states and central Ministries for the development of scheduled castes both in physical and financial terms. In other words, the Special Component Plan aims at identification of schemes in the general sectors of development which would be of benefit of scheduled castes. Accordingly, the scheduled castes development corporation in the states were envisaged to interface between poor scheduled castes entrepreneurs and financial institutions in respect of the schemes of economic development. The main function of these Corporation was mobilisation of institutional credit for economic development of schemes for scheduled castes entrepreneurs by functioning as catalyst, promoters and guarantors. The strategy of Special Component Plan was made more intensified during Seventh Five Year Plan. These include assignment of specific responsibilities to collectors in the implementation of Special Component Plan programme, communication of disaggregated physical and financial targets to district and block level authorities.

In order to bring the scheduled castes to the general level of the population it is necessary that they have higher per - capita expenditure earmarked for them in the Special Component Plan by the state. In addition to Special Component Plan, Special Central Assistance and Scheduled Castes Development Corporation there are central and centrally sponsored schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Welfare. The needs of the day is for special thrust on certain important areas from the point of view of scheduled castes employment Economic development, literacy and social development emerge as the areas of thrust considering the conditions of scheduled castes economic development. Economic support to scheduled caste along with the positive social attitude towards them should be given due consideration. Special attention has to be paid to realise the policy of growth with equity. It is matter of concern that despite strategies and programmes no positive infrastructure has so far been created and made operational to materialise the principle of equality and opportunity to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.

In the present study the adoption of welfare measures for Rajbanshis (a dominant variety of scheduled castes in West Bengal) has been viewed under perview of public policy in the planned process of social change and development. In order to sustain growth with equity and justice as well as maintainance of social order in the society,

public policy has been framed in accordance with the needs and basic requirements of the people and the area under study. The primary objective of the welfare measures is to achieve a state of physical, psychological, social and economic wellbeing of the people. In both the Public Policy and welfare measures emphasis is being given to protect the rights of the community and the study through the creation of distributive justice. The principle of such justice is based on the preservation and maintainance of happiness, want satisfaction through resource allocation to the individual and community. In order to achieve : "equal social worth" (Marshall, 1950, p. 101), it is necessary that citizens may be guaranteed certain social rights as well as the traditional civil and political rights. Indeed the emmergence of welfare measures in the society is a manifestation of social justice. The phenomenon of social justice demands a holistic reality in the distribution of benefits among the members of society. It deals with the regulation of wages, profits, protection of personal rights through a legal system of allocation of housing, medical, educational facilities and such other basic amenities of life. These welfare benefits and measures are considered as the "natural extensions of traditional liberal values" (Rawls, 1971, p. 204) and being provided not merely to aid people but to enlist their health and co-operation in social welfare programmes in terms of recognition of the worth and the dignity of the individual through the media of social policy.

The social policy of the institutionalised control of the service, agencies and organisations to maintain or change social structure and value. Social policy is concerned with the public administration of welfare, development and management of social welfare social services and social problems connected with poverty and backwardness. Welfare measures include the steps towards relief or measures for the prevention, or avert a crisis or a contingency like ensuring civil right, prevention and control of attrocities, payment of minimum wages to poor or the measures indicated for the amelioration of the conditions of the aged and other disadvantages sections of the people. These measures are generally parmanent image. The development measures on the other hand are those aimed at the enhancement of the economic status through a variety of measures for improving the social economic condition of weaker sections. Both welfare and development measure are complementary to each other.

Thus it should be logically stated that policies and programmes for the welfare and development of a scheduled castes community of a district cannot be considered in isolation from the policies and programmes for social development. In the conceptual framework of social development, there is a dichotomy between 'right of freedom' and 'right of equality'. The sovereign, secular, socialist democratic republic like ours symbolises, by amenities, a finest example of welfare state tending to emphasize individual freedom. The Indian state however, also protects private property and freedom of private economic enterprises, therefore, it tends to be characterised by gross inequalities on income distribution or even equal opportunity. In such a society, the goals of freedom and equality can never be achieved in absolute sense. There have always been a conflict between the principle of equality of opportunity enumerated in Art. 16 (a) and the fact that millions of citizens are socially and educationally backward and the duty of the state is to provide them facilities to improve their education so that they could utilise the equality of opportunity accorded in the constitution of India. Under such circumstances, for protective discrimination towards weaker section, government is committed to fulfil the promise of Directive Principles Of State Policy of Art. 46 which specially laid down that "states are protect with special care; the education and economic interest of the weaker section of the people and in particular of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

As it has been stated that the basic purpose of the welfare measures is maintenance of social order and achievement of equality with social justice. Social welfare as a concept may be viewed from two angles : a) social problems; b) the way in which society responds to this problems. The provisions of welfare rights involves a corresponding obligation on the part of the society as a whole and of its various members to provide the necessary goods and services or to support those institutions which can provide them (Plant, 1998, P. 73). In the main body of the thesis it has already been stated that there is hardly any study which focussed on the administration and implementation process of the welfare and development of scheduled caste at a micro scale. The different Commissions on weaker sections have pointed out that the overall progress in social policy was not commensurate with the expenditure. The existing policies for providing services to the scheduled castes on the basis of constitutional provisions is not satisfactory. The Indian Council of Social Welfare

(1981) recommended for a scientific approach in the planning and implementation of services to scheduled castes and tribes. Thus, in order to achieve the means and goals with a given situation and to evolve, extent and stabilise the pattern of welfare service for weaker sections. There is a need for sound administrative infrastructure for proper implementation of plans and programmes related to social policies.

The present study has objectively shown the emerging issues of social policy implementation for Rajbansi scheduled caste and implementation of different ways of meeting social needs and resolving social problems through a sound mechanism of social administration. The study has identified the progress of welfare measures in the area of eradication of poverty and generation of social service and facilities for scheduled castes in the district. With a view to find out the gap between policy predicament and policy implementation, an attempt has been made to screen the theoretical model and practical approach of welfare and development of the scheduled castes of the district. The study concentrated on the implementation of administration of scheduled castes welfare services at the local level. Such study suggests that despite attempts no suitable framework of action of social welfare and social policy was framed. Therefore, to identify the gap between policy predicament and policy implementation process, the present study brings out the final results of the problem relating to adoption of welfare measures for weaker section and related development programmes connected with policy planning and programming administration of welfare measures, and implementation of strategic delivery system, monitoring and evaluation of anti poverty programmes along with the reaction of target groups (beneficiaries) on specific issues of poverty and backwardness. The general findings of the study may be delineated as under.

In accordance with the operationalisation of policy objectives, strategies and approaches for the welfare and development of Rajbanshis, a dominant scheduled caste variety, the district administration of Cooch Behar is engaged in administering family based economic development programmes such as IRDP, TRYSEM etc. and infrastructure based scheme like TRYSEM, IAY, MWS and some other social service based programmes. These welfare measures along with certain others specific schemes are covered under different general and specific schemes and programmes sponsored by District Rural Development Agency, Zilla Parishad, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled

Tribes Financial and Development Corporation and other field level governmental agencies. The present study reveals that both the beneficiaries and the government officials have recognised the urgency of the proper implementation of the programmes of eradication of poverty, education, employment generation. In this context a little less than the majority of the respondents have supported and acknowledged the importance of programmes of the individual welfare as well as community welfare covered under SCP and SCA. The present study shows that the official have been associated in planning, programming and implementation while community political leaders were engaged in identification of beneficiaries and helping them in getting assistance of welfare and development programmes.

The principal objective of the special Component Plan has not been simply to uplift the scheduled castes population from poverty line, it has also given emphasis on the total human resource development by way of uplifting the different aspect of socio-economic levels of the life of the scheduled castes. The district of Cooch Behar has a tremendous potential if the different schemes and programmes such as IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, TRYSEM, different self employment Programmes are implemented in a proper manner. An integrated functioning to draw action plan in action implementation can relief the scheduled castes from tradition ridden society. The above programmes are to be treated as comprehensive socio-political efforts rather than segmented welfare efforts. In all these sectors, honest political will, active participation of the society, dedicated public administrative machinery can only make the programmes a success and can satisfy the aspiration of the scheduled castes. However, the programmes and schemes to be drafted for a society like Cooch Behar should be in congruence with the socio-economic necessities of the district while making and implementing the development programmes a culture friendly and history tested approach must be taken into account. Such an approach has been urgently called for to solve the present problem and to plan for the future. The so called target achievement oriented planning may serve the interest of the present, but has little bearing on the future. This has been shown in the chapter - IV of our study. Thus, experience suggest the lack of proper perception has created understanding gaps with the peoples representatives and public mechanaries cells of coordination are to be created through the popularly represented three tier structure of Panchayat Raj, District Scheduled Castes Welfare Committee along with representatives of development oriented new bureaucracy can only catter the interest

of the scheduled castes in an integrated decentralized manner. A proper match between the political executive and the non-political executive can act faster with more responsibility and accountability. The programmes and the schemes should have to be made clear to the people and the necessary papers relating those programmes and schemes should have to be drafted in vernacular such an arrangement will dispell doubts of non functionings and pin-point responsibility and accountability.

A base line survey for identification of problems and formulation of data banks on scheduled castes and other backward classes has been important and essential and it should be reflected in the annual District Census Handbook. Regarding the different policy options, the experience of the study indicates that credit policy, housing policy and employment policy have received the importance in order of priorities over other policy options utilised for the development of backward classes. No single strategy for the welfare and development of Rajbanshi scheduled castes was found predominantly important. Majority of the respondents among local politicians, representatives of different tiers of Panchayat Raj structure and government officials engaged in development activities at the micro level have recognised the importance of SCA and SCDC and SCP and multiple strategy for the development of weaker sections. The importance of economic development as a strategic approach has frequently been recognised by the above mentioned respondents. It has also been recognised that the respondents among the beneficiaries (Rajbanshi scheduled castes) preferred both land based and non-land based activities for their socio-economic upliftment.

With the introduction of Special Component Plan (1980), greater allocation of fund and corresponding increase of Rajbanshi population, the need and importance to strengthen the administration was felt. The study reveals that allocation of funds and expenditure incurred on different anti poverty programmes have been increasing over the years. Corresponding with magnitude of poverty and backwardness, the total grant of central government and state government have also increased. It has been found that highest expenditure has been incurred on the infrastructure based schemes (JRY, IAY and MWS). It is very striking to note that welfare and development programmes for weaker sections have been covered under the expenditure of anti poverty programme. The allocation of financial outlay of different schemes of welfare

measures of backward classes and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is generally made on the basis of criteria of population of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes and backwardness of the state. Regarding the timely availability; adequacy and proper utilisation of funds, it was found that most of the officials, politicians had shown their ignorance and unawareness regarding the matter of financial allocation and utilisation of funds for the welfare and development of Rajbanshis in particular and scheduled castes in general of the district. This may be perhaps due to non involvement, non availability of information in the reasonable period or due to dispersed worked of organisation in the formulation and implementation of welfare measures for target groups. The study observes the lack of the delegation of power and authority to the lower level functionaries. In some cases there have been clashes of conflict in power of authority. Consequently lower level officials have to face many difficulties in the implementation process of welfare programmes for the target groups. The field survey suggests that due to dominant role of political power structure, paucity of field track and lack of communication regarding the schemes and programmes, fruits of development have not been percolated to the weaker sections of the society. Some lower level officials reported that there is power without responsibility and responsibility without power creating role conflicts in the matter of policy and plan. Sectoral planning and project approach have failed to generate the desired impact on the programmes on scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and such other backward classes. Such a situation calls for a sound administrative structure of welfare measures in favour of rural poor.

Since independence, government of India has been assuming responsibility of welfare measures aimed at achieving a state of physical, mental, social and economic well-being of our people. In order to achieve social justice, equality and freedom from wants, state has taken the responsibility for providing special benefits, prevelages and protections to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and other backward classes of the society. The fulfilment of policy objectives and translating the policy, strategies and approaches into action, administrative system plays a vital role in accelerating the process of welfare and development of weaker sections. Thus, the common understanding is that in the operation of welfare measure, the structure and process of welfare administration are struggling hard due to the multiplicity of organisation and their role (protective, treatment and rehabilitation) and dual approaches such as static approach based on the classical theory of administration (Bennis, 1960) and

community participation approach, management by objectives (Drucker, 1954). Therefore, based on this premises and approaches of social welfare administration, it has to be investigated factors and forces which are in operation in the structure of administrative process in the welfare and development of Rajbanshis - a scheduled caste variety in Cooch Behar.

The study reveals that despite theoretical assurances of decentralisation of administration, district Cooch Behar has been engaged in the task of development administration under the indirect control and supervision of the district level bureaucrats such as District Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate (Development), Project Director, DRDA, District Planning Officer, Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Project Manager SCDC, District Panchayat Officer, Head of Sectoral Departments responsible for Anti-poverty Programmes. For development administration at local level in each Panchayat Samity (coterminous of block) is headed by Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO is assisted by Assistant Block Development Officer and other Extension officers engaged in different fields to carry out the welfare and development of weaker sections. At the village level, panchayat secretary - the government representative at the lowest rung of state administrative ladder - provides assistance to the grass-root level people representatives in the implementation of rural development programmes.

The study reveals that identification of beneficiaries and programme implementation have received the highest impetus to the administrative tasks of the department and organisation. Monitoring and reviewing the programmes were also considered as the second most important task of the organisation. The study shows that officials were more engaged in regulatory work of administration of anti-poverty programmes and political leaders remain engrossed in campaigning works of the programmes for weaker sectors. Communication and co-ordination have to play a key link in administrative process. Due to complex nature of administrative organisation, the problem of communication and co-ordination is increasing day by day. The study reveals that the arrangements had been made to communicate the weaker sections about the programmes of welfare about the development and welfare through group meetings, gram sabha and village committees. Besides this, BDO, ADOs and Panchayat Secretary are expected to communicate and help the weaker communities

to take advantage from different schemes or programmes. Formal meetings is most commonly used methods by officials and informal meetings are the means adopted by non-officials/community leaders. The study reveals that majority of officials provide information, about plan, programme, scheme either through correspondence or holding the formal meetings. The community leaders or the people representatives sort out the difficulties of beneficiaries through personal contact. The present study considers the district planning and co-ordination committee as a forum of co-ordination. Co-ordination is also done through other institutions and agencies such as DRDA, ZP, SCDC and District level Review Committee, Tribal Development Authority and twenty point programme committee. Co-ordination at the top is done by the District Magistrate on behalf of the Sabhadhipati of Zilla Parisad, who gives instruction to all the departmental heads and calls up meetings to maintain operational links between DRDA and other departmental agencies and institutions. Thus officials have equally recognised four methods of co-ordination such as district level meetings, DRDA meetings, Panchayat Samity meetings and informal cordial meetings. The study reveals that nearly fifty per cent of the officials at the district level and less than twenty percent officials at the block level have faced certain problem in controlling and supervision due to lack of horizontal coordination with different departments and non cooperation of financial institutions. ADOs supervise the works of Panchayet Secretaries, officials of DRDA also supervise the work of anti poverty programmes through inspection and visit. Additional District Magistrate (Development) is supposed to take responsibility of supervising, the problems relating to development programmes for weaker sections. State Planning Board has been entrusted the task of maintaining the administrative linkages with different departments, agencies, institutions and cooperations. The study reveals that officials often maintained linkages through departmental meetings, commissioner of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes Welfare Department and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Development Authority and Planning cell. At the local level, District Magistrate Additional District Magistrate, Additional Project Directors, DRDA, Project Director, SCDC and Deputy Director, Social Welfare maintain the administrative linkages through quarterly and monthly review meetings and personal contacts. During field study, it had been found that in the operation of certain schemes or programmes at grass root level, no direct organisational linkages were reported amongst social welfare Department, Directorate of Women and Child Development, DWCRA and SCDC for the Welfare and Development of backward classes and weaker sections.

Local representatives and political mandarins have shown their poor knowledge and critical views relating to the problem of administrative system in the existing organisational structure.

The role of the Non-government organisation and the voluntary agencies has been scarce at the grass root level dedicated to the welfare and development of scheduled castes. Most of the respondents viewed them as extremely limited in scope and coverage. Majority of the respondents have viewed the involvement of elected representatives and community leaders in the policy formulations and programme implementation for the development programmes. One fifth of respondents were found critical about the role of elected members and community leaders in the welfare and development of weaker section and backward classes. In fact peoples' representatives at the micro level have been given little role to play in formulating plans and implementing programmes. Since there is no effective coordination principle and the existence of continuous intervention of the state and district administration, the work of Panchayat Raj Structure at its different tiers proved meaningless. Most of the elected panchayats are found to be critical about the cooperation between the officials and non-officials. This lack of co-operation is perhaps due to lack of delegation. For more distribution and devolution of power to local institutions it may be suggested that beside creating consciousness, awareness, education and motivation the political leaders at the grass root belonging to scheduled castes and tribes should be invited to Panchayat Samity in different forums of planning, programming and execution of various welfare and development schemes.

The study reveals that illiteracy and unawareness on the part of the target groups, administrative factors in programmes execution apathy of officials and non officials in the follow of programme as well as poverty - low per capita investment in the anti-poverty programmes were the main reasons for the slow progress of the programmes of welfare measures for backward classes. The cumulative importance of other factors such as lack of coordination between different departments, agencies and institutions, political interference, role of middle man, have also found impediment in rapid growth and development of the programmes of welfare measures for scheduled caste in the areas under study.

Implementation strategy provides a frame of reference and general guide line

to policy makers for achieving specific objectives. A suitable strategy for the welfare and development of weaker sections proves to be helpful in identification of constraints, in administering the plan and programmes of the target groups. In the district of Cooch Behar, for the implementation of welfare measures quantification of Special Component Plan (SCP), Scheduled Caste Development Corporation (SCDC) and Special Central Assistance was done by District Rural Development Agency, Zilla Parishad and the various sectoral departments keeping in view the objectives laid down by government of India. Regarding the administrative functioning of the district, the field level experience reveals that majority of respondents have expressed the inadequacy of organisation in terms of effective administrative structure, inadequate role performance of field officials and mode of coordination and control mechanism. Whereas thirty five per cent respondents expressed that the existing administrative structure was not conducive for planning, coordinating and implementing welfare programmes and were of the view that with the corresponding increase in financial outlay and due to introduction of new strategies the administrative staff at field level for implementation of the programme have not been increased in proportion to the increasing needs and requirements for effective utilisation of resources. It may also be suggested that there is an acute need for restructuring of district administration and micro level planning at block level.

The study reveals that role performance of the functionaries proves to be favourable to eighty per cent officials and critical to forty-nine per cent non officials. This shows that the positive role of officials was greater than non-officials or local political mandarins. Despite the promise of the implementation of the mechanism of development from below such as rural empowerment and decentralisation, the reality is that the local representatives are yet to be empowered in the practical sense of the term. The officials in many of the cases were found to be apathetic towards welfare programmes specifically meant for scheduled castes. The study also shows that administrative role of officials has been confirmed as coordinator, supervisor and controller. But in the performance of executive role non-officials were confined only to attending meetings, articulate officials by their leadership role whereas officials performs their activities in the preparatory work of the execution of schemes covered under anti poverty programmes for weaker sections. The study reveals that thirty five per cent of the officials were really engaged in the actual work of implementation after generating peoples participation and reviewing the welfare and

development programmes for weaker sections. During field survey, it was found that there is a wide gap between the role performance and role achievements on the part of officials and non officials (local, political representatives) due to variety of factors. In this context, the present study reveals that lack of coordination and procedural rigidity are the two major administrative factors responsible for non-implementation of development programmes for scheduled caste of the district.

While Public delivery system is considered as one of the important strategies to combat rural poverty, the basic objective of the delivery system is to percolate the benefits to the weaker sections of the society through different development programmes. Our study reveals that more officials (fourty percent) as compared to non-officials (eighteen per cent) have evaluated the prevailing delivery strategy as effective. As such, the major focus of welfare service delivery system should be on how to enhance the delivery systems for the target groups. In this connection thirty five per cent respondents are of the view that in the new frame-work of the social welfare policy for target group, a sound mechanised delivary system should be evolved while one fifth of respondents supported for better linkages and structural changes in policy direction. On the other hand twenty two percent respondents have been of the view that a concerted effort and integrated action by a number of functionaries is required for proper management of the delivery system. As, such, every effort should be made to strengthen block level planning by imparting training for field staff in the democratic deconetralisation process as envisaged in the 73rd Constitutional Ammdement Act, 1992. Twenty five per cent of the respondents have been found to be very emphatic towards reorganisation of work system and changing attitude of public service officers and community leaders to make sure that delivery system truely respond to the major concern of the scheduled castes population. They have been on the view that amount of loan should be increased and portion of subsidy should be sanctioned at the time of repayment of loan for the betterment of the weaker and socially backward people of the district and to check the malpractice or to prevent exploitation by the middlemen.

Regarding the effectiveness of organisation dealing with the welfare and development of the scheduled castes this study lays stress on for strengthening block level administration for proper implementation and modification in monitoring strategy. A Special Development Officer at the block level and a special Assistant at

the village level for looking after the work for the development of scheduled castes and tribes should be appointed. As regards the problems and constraints faced by the officials and non-officials (political leaders as peoples representatives) in the implementation of plan and programme for scheduled castes and tribes of the district, the study shows that the attitude and aptitude of field staff and lack of co-ordination between different departments have been the major problems. Delayed sanction of funds as well as managerial capacity of field staff have also affected the policy implementation of development programmes for weaker sections. The study has identified manifold administrative bottlenecks highlighted both by officials and non-officials. These are : a) political interference; (b) lack of peoples participation; c) no follow up programmes; d) frequent transfer of field staff and lack of administrative vigilance; e) no direct control of the Zilla Parishad on the field level departments of the government and f) vested interest. It is suggested that political support, administrative vigilance and intervention are the potential factors to overcome administrative bottlenecks altogether and to improve the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes and tribes of the district.

In the present study, monitoring and evaluation have been viewed to lessen the gap between the target fixed and the result achieved. Monitoring is an essential concern of administration in planning and implementation of project and programmes; whereas evaluation, i.e., post implementation is concerned with impact, assessment and accomplishment of objectives of the programme. The study reveals that the general and specific machinery of sectoral departments are engaged in planning, implementation, review and evaluation of programmes for the development of the weaker sections. At the district level, District Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate responsible to act as Project Director DRDA and different departmental heads are directly responsible for programme evaluation. With the help of Block Development Officer and Additional Development Officer at the block, the verification of physical and financial targets have been made in accordance with the budgetary provision sanctioned for block administration. For physical verification, the reports of the Panchayat secretary are discussed in the monthly meeting of the block. A monthly progress report is also placed before the district level committee. In this appraisal, the physical and financial targets are fixed.

With the canvas of the present study, problems of poverty and backwardness

have been viewed under the domain of public policy operated in the stratified Indian society through action and interaction of target groups. The main components involved in action are actors and objectives of organisation. After examining the organisational structure, support system and infrastructural facilities for implementation for monitoring and evaluation of different schemes and programmes, it is necessary to look into the operative mechanism at grass roots level after ascertaining the reaction of the scheduled caste people about local administration, role of village politics and participation of officials and non officials including the community leaders in the development programmes for weaker sections.

Our experience suggests that majority of the rural population of the district of Cooch Behar belong to scheduled caste, one third of them are remained below the poverty line, thirty four percent are small farmers, fifteen per cent are agricultural labourers and rural artisans, nearly twenty per cent are marginal farmers. Thus the scheduled castes (most of them belonging to Rajbanshi community) in the villages of the district of Cooch Behar may be considered as poorest among poor. Based on the survey of two Panchayat Samities (Cooch Behar - II and Mathabhanga - I) of the district of Cooch Behar, thirty six per cent of the scheduled caste families have been identified below the poverty line. They belong to the category of small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, non agricultural labourers and rural artisans. Nearly thirty five per cent of the scheduled caste families of these two Panchayat Samities have been brought under different development programmes essentially meant for weaker sections. The over all picture of target and achievement (at least in paper and pencil) reveals a progressive trends from the late 80s till date. In certain schemes/programmes sponsored by the Central and state government and carried through Zilla Parishad, nearly ninety per cent targets have been achieved while in area development schemes such as JRY, IAY and schemes for small and Marginal Farmers sponsored by DRDA. The achievement of targets has been lagging behind as scheduled. The study carefully observed that in most of the schemes/programmes, more emphasis has been laid on their formulation and execution with a view to achieve quantitative rather than qualitative results. Even at the time of desired quantitative achievements, great difficulties were felt by field agencies in receiving credit support from financial institutions. The infrastructural facilities have been found totally lacking in the village for generating self employment programmes. In the socio-cultural set up of the district, the target and achievement approach seems to be not conducive for

change and development. There has been an urgent need for reviewing and apprising the different development programmes and there should be a proper harmony and consistency with regard to economic and social upliftment for weaker section.

The socio-economic ingredients of the Rajbanshi families have been found to be weak. Illiterate small marginal farmers and labourers belonging to this category of families have been living in poor conditions with small assets at their disposal as experienced. The average size of the family so studied has been not less than five per cent. The study reveals that despite efforts, the socio-economic status of the majority of the scheduled caste has not improved. Most of the respondents have been found under debt. It is striking that inspite of institutional credit system, one third of the respondents of the two Panchayat Samities often borrow money from money lenders, framers and relatives for productive and social purposes. Regarding the administration of anti-poverty programme the study reveals that target groups have a little information and knowledge about the variety of development programmes exclusively implemented for the benefit of weaker sections. It has also been found that the illiterate populace of the weaker section often come into the clutches of agents (middle men) who for the sake of self interest would serve the interests of officials in the fulfilment of physical and financial targets. During the whole course of the field study, it has been observed that while giving helps to the target groups, hardly any care was considered whether the incumbent was worthy to it or able to earn substantial income. Majority of the respondents pointed out that benefits derived by them are inadequate, quality of assistance is substandard and quantum of benefit has been less than their requirement. Thus inadequacy of resource and low per capita investment are some of the principal bottlenecks behind the non-achievement of target to provide welfare service to the weaker sections.

The Present Study shows that the affiliation of the respondents in different social organisation and association has been extremely limited. Most of the respondents do not have complete faith in political parties, but they concede political parties as powerful factor in contesting panchayat election. It has been observed that lack of communication and procedural rigidity are the principal hindrances in the policy implementation of the scheduled castes of the district of Cooch Behar. In the absence of follow up the programmes and physical verification of assets, it has become

difficult to assess the impact of the anti-poverty programme. Thus adequate systems of social assistance and such other social help measures to be extended to the weaker section under arrangement should be so designed to meet subsistence needs for food, clothing, fuel, light and house-hold sundries.

A decentralised planning and development policy is urgently called for the successful operation of schemes and projects of welfare for scheduled castes in the district. The programme operation must be target oriented rather than so called 'people oriented'. The theory of relative deprivation of poverty has not yield good results, however it has succeeded in encroaching the derived benefit of poorest among poor to other relative poverty groups. The so called 'dependency syndrome' has crushed the aspirations of rural poor and their motivation to work. They have been still struggling hard for their substantial living. Moreover legislation by way of enactment for the protection and safeguard of the scheduled castes in general seems to be symbolic. Lessons of the last half century shows that legislative support to act as a liver for the upward mobility for backward classes without sensitive political and sympathetic administrative support failed to achieve the desired result. The so called commitment of eradication of poverty by the end of 20th century has still remained unattended. However the micro level experience of this study reports that poverty level among the the weaker sections and backward classes are increasing but basic requirements are still denied to the deprived sections of the rural masses.

The recent trends of liberalisation and the advent of open economic model as well the underline pressure capitalism have raised doubt and put question as how far the economic/capital growth may influence in improving the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled castes and other weaker section of the society. While reporting on the deliberation of the G - 15 Nations, (The Times of India argued November 8, 1995) that " while globalisation has benefited some countries, extreme poverty and the creation of a burgeoning underclass of unemployed with no prospect for promise for the future has emerged as a great challenge in the developing world. Under the first changing perspective of political economy, there has always been the possibility to increase the rates of poverty and alter the distribution of national resources. All this will go against the spirit of much avowed distributive justice". This further, in long run will compell the government to create a link between power structure and social order arising due to globalisation of the economy and privatisation

of public enterprises in the changing social and cultural milieu. In order to restore social justice and to perpetuate a common link in the society, polity and economy, the operation of institutionalised mechanism has to ensure a fair play of redistribution of surplus resources towards the well being of the poor.

The power structure has also been accentuated under the influence of new economic policy. Under such circumstances the new technological innovation and emerging changes between the forces and relation of production result the possibility of the birth of a new hierarchy. Manifestation of power relations may lead to exploitation and further force the governmental control over the expectations and commitment of the general mass. In such a situation a dual power structure may evolve and may be operated in the dynamic inter-relationship of successful implementation of radical changes affected by the new economic policy. Such a dual power structure does not only create contradictions but also help in weakening of power incongruity, generating inequality and exploitation. This in turn will inject interventions in the society by enforcing the rules and regulations based on social equity and sustainable social order. Under this new circumstances influence by new economic policy and policy of democratic decentralisation (affectuated to 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, 1992, 1993), the primary responsibility has been befallen upon the policy makers, planners and administrators and as how to erect the internal mechanism of social structure and to modify the basic structure of delivery service system. The structural and contextual factor to achieve the objectives of distributive justice call for a process of institutionalised action of utilisation of rural economy, natural resources and human resource development. Besides this, it has also forced the power structure either to modify the basic structure of delivery system or to rebuilt a progressive broad based social structure for accelerating the goals of welfare. Under this circumstances active effort has been warranted. To establish a more comprehensive and integrated system of administration leading towards active involvement of scheduled castes and other weaker sections and making them self dependent through sustained efforts of development.

Keeping in consonance the depiction made above, and attempt may be made to place some suggestions for the use of policy makers, planners, administrators and grass root level workers for future restructuring the welfare and development programmes in changing circumstances. These suggestions are mostly based on the

field observations and gathered through participant observation method. It is hoped that the suggestions and recommendations brought fourth by the micro study in planning, programming and implementation of welfare and development programmes for weaker sections, specifically for the scheduled castes Rajbanshis of the district, may also be applicable in identical situations in other parts of the state.

Primarily, for the successful policy formulation and implementation of development oriented welfare programmes, it is necessary that a sound social administrative system must work with commitment. The existing administrative set up at the district, block and village levels should be strengthen in accordance with this pattern - a) different departments in the district should be grouped into three broad heads : (i) development of resources and production activities; (ii) social services and welfare activities; (iii) physical and infrastructural activities; (b) the post of social welfare officer for scheduled caste of the district should be created along with the existing district project officer for scheduled caste and tribes; (c) there should be an additional block development officer at the block level to look after the welfare of the scheduled castes; (d) a new post of village development officer for weaker sections should be created.

An effective and efficient administrative structure has been of high order to support the public service delivery system for weaker sections. In view of structural deficiencies, the bureaucratic system should be organised on functional lines to facilitate proper command and co-ordination. The major structural defect has been the non existence of effective peoples participation. The local community leaders, elected representatives belonging to weaker section should be invited in different forums of planning, programming and execution of various welfare and development programmes schemes. Such a participatory management policy, if pursued, people of the weaker sections can well be motivated. Thus it seems necessary that for better implementation of welfare and development programmes, some effective linkages and structural changes in policy directions are required to reorient the district administration in the light of work load owing to varieties of schemes and programmes covered under SCP, SCA and SCDC etc. In short, for proper management of delivery system, every effort should be made to strengthen block level planning. There has also been the urgency for preparing a separate district area plan in which programmes for welfare and development are being carried out for weaker sections and backward

classes. The authority responsibility of project planning, implementation and monitoring should be decentralised as much as possible and linkages with village, block, district level, panchayat and voluntary organisation should be strengthened. The need for conducting Base-Line Survey for identification of weaker section and it should be reflected in the Annual District Census Hand book.

With the constitutionalisation of both rural and urban local government (73rd Amendment Act, 1992) the development and upliftment of weaker section should be a special agendum in different forum of Panchayat Raj institutions to enable them fullest participation in the process of nation building. The principle of devolution of power in its actual sense that is administrative, legislative and financial devolution should be directed to Zilla Parishad and the process of decentralisation ought to be viewed in a right perspective for the safeguard of rights and privileges of weaker sections and backward classes. The multiplicity of programmes and diversified agencies should have to be restructured in the field administration to fulfil the policy objectives of welfarism. There has been an urgent need for unification of the extension set up/field staff working at grass root level under different agencies/departments. The unified structure so set-up should be provided proper incentive and infrastructural facilities for co-ordinating the work of different programmes such a unified organisation committed to bring desirable change should play a role effectively in generating a conducive climate of social development so as to achieve the goals of distributive justice. In the back drop of social dynamics, the demand of social justice and equal social worth of individual on the stratified Indian society has to be inculcated in the minds of policy makers, administrators and political mandarins. To realise the goals, it is urgent that the weaker section be guaranteed social rights, civil and political rights and above all economic empowerment.

Suggestions for improving the basic quality of life and protection of weaker sections based on universal principle of human rights demand a holistic reality in the improvement of action oriented plans and programmes which include, adequate and timely financial resources, creation of infrastructure for communication, employment generation, extension of formal, non formal, vocational education, necessary support of social services and welfare relief through co-operative venture. Since co-operative society, specifically the development oriented credit co-operative society has been

proved to be most relevant organisation, such societies be created to organise the rural poor specially weaker section. This disadvantaged marginally placed an excluded groups have to be oriented towards conscientisation so as to enable to participate in the building from below the local organisations for expressing and pressing their demands. The 'Street Level Bureaucracy' should come forward for strengthening such organisation. What is urgently needed is to develop group of people of sacrificing type in each village accountable to the marginally placed people at the micro level. This can well be characterised that " Neighbourhood Decentralisation." Above all, the weaker section of the society should have to be politically strengthened to establish their leadership in a society like ours where the hegemony of dominant economic class has been established and has been more concretised even after the golden jubilee celebration of India's independence.