

Preface

The 'much hyped' rural development still holds the key position in the socio-economic development of our country. For, a vast section of the population is still residing in the village of whom an overwhelming majority are in inestimable poverty and whose future is so appalling. However, a strategic development programme adopted in the late seventies was a comprehensive one. And, it was an integrated anti-poverty approach, called the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The basic aim was to raise the level of living of the poor people in the rural areas on a lasting basis by providing necessary inputs they required.

The Programme had been in existence for more than two decades (1978-79 to 1998-99) and merged ultimately with a newly emerged holistic anti-poverty Programme i.e., Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana.

Under the backdrop of situation, it is considered appropriate to carry out an appraisal on the Working of IRDP and one of its sub-components i.e., Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DW CRA) in some selected areas of Cooch Behar District, West Bengal. The inexorable thrust is, however, to make a diagnostic evaluation of the Programme to understand whether the 'alternative development approach' of Left Front Government and the implementation of the Programme had been proceeding towards right direction and, whether the overall development of rural West Bengal was ensured uniformly or not. Towards this direction, our present study has been carried out.

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