Chapter VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS
In the realm of development, either in rural or urban areas, it was often quoted by scholars that the voluntary institutions play vital role in ensuring the development. Hence, other than the planning and financial aspects, the role of institutions was of paramount importance in facilitating delivery mechanism. Thus, at the operational level, the facilitating factors provided by the institutions certainly cornered the importance. This in background, government had been placing highest importance to the institutions and mechanism thereof while implementing several development programmes.

In this context, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or Voluntary Organisation/Agencies (VOs or VAs) were emerging as strong institutions at grass-root level in facilitating appropriate development programmes for the poor and the needy. A few of these institutions had emerged very strongly in view of their penetrative and promotional work among them. These institutions were characterized by appropriate behavioral skills, dedication, demonstration of perfection in execution of development programmes and scores of other positive factors.

As a result, a few of these institutions were emerging to play wider and crucial role in rural development. A few of such institutions were DHAN Foundation, Sadguru Foundation, Action Aid, CASA, Social Service Centre etc. Among them, the Social Service Centre, operating under the aegis of Eluru Diocese, located in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh is rendering wider gamut of rural development services in both West Godavari and East Godavari districts. The present research investigation was done to understand the impact of various socio-economic development, welfare and empowerment programmes implemented by the Social Service Centre on rural folk. Keeping the context of study, the concept of rural development, role of NGOs in rural development, findings and conclusion of the study and the emerging suggestions based on the outcome of the study were provided.
**Concept of Rural Development**

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are envisaged.

Whatever the case may be, the Govt. of India (2010), given broader scenario of rural areas, has identified specific strategy to develop rural areas and thus the very structure of rural development consists of the following strategies:

- Provision of basic infrastructure facilities in the rural areas e.g. schools, health facilities, roads, drinking water, electrification etc.
- Improving agricultural productivity in the rural areas.
- Provision of social services like health and education for socio-economic development.
- Implementing schemes for the promotion of rural industry increasing agriculture productivity, providing rural employment etc.
- Assistance to individual families and Self Help Groups (SHG) living below poverty line by providing productive resources through credit and subsidy.

In very broad terms, India’s economic development is inextricably linked to that of India’s rural economic development. Rural India has around 70% of India’s billion plus population. Rural India consists of approximately 638,000 villages inhabited by more than 740 million individuals. The core problems of widespread poverty, growing inequality, rapid population growth, growing and rising unemployment all find their origins in the stagnation and often retrogression of economic life in rural areas. Most social and economic indicators consistently show that rural areas compare unfavorably with urban areas. It is at
the rural level that the problems of hunger, ignorance, ill health and high mortality are most acute. Therefore, if development is to take place and become self-sustaining, it will have to be rooted and concentrated in the rural areas.

**Role of NGOs in Rural Development**

Although NGOs have recently emerged into the development limelight, they are not a recent phenomenon. They were the earliest form of human organizations. Long before the governments, people organized themselves into group for mutual protection and self help. New trends emerged in NGO activities from 1950 to 1960 when they started working in fields of development. In contrast, the concept of people’s participation does not have a long history. It reflects partly the failure of the “trickle down” model of economic development advocated after World War II. In 1980’s NGOs became a major phenomenon in the field of development.

The development experience of 1970s and 1980s have raised more and more critical questions concerning growing awareness about the widening gap between very few rich and the vast majority of poor in developing countries. This has also given a momentum to search for a more adequate and appropriate strategy for improving conditions and lessening the gap. So, these strategies constitute basic elements of the development of a number of NGOs throughout the world, which call for people’s participation. Recent, global transformations and the search to a variable new option for supporting grass-root development presently provide quite significant opportunities for a rapid development of NGOs in the decade of 1980s in following consideration:

- Growing interest among donors and national governments in strengthening the development roles of institutions outside the public sector.
- The demonstrated capacity of some non-governmental organizations to reach the poor more effectively than public agencies.
➢ A sharp decline in public development resources, necessitating a search by
government for more cost effective alternatives to conventional public
services and development programs.

➢ Ability to carry out programme on national scale and influence national
policies and agencies.

Today, the NGOs address every conceivable issue and they operate
virtually in every part of the globe. Though international NGOs activity has
grown steadily, most NGOs operate within a country. According to an estimate
nearly 25000 NGOs now qualify as international NGOs where as the number was
less than 400 a century ago.

Given the development of Indian NGOs, and the apparent limitations of
government poverty reduction programs, there is a widespread agreement among
development scholars that NGOs play an important role in helping to alleviate
poverty, complementary to that of government, both in terms of providing
additional resources and in making government programs more effective.

Having understood the important role of NGOs in India and their
qualitative and quantitative service to the society, it is also essential to understand
the unique services provided by them, especially in rural areas. Some of these
NGOs have emerged as large scale institutions to cater to the needs of more and
more needy people. The quality of their work encompasses wide gamut of
activities. In view of their quantum of service and qualitative outputs they have
been emerging as strong institutions at district and regional levels. As a result,
these institutions provide an ample opportunity of studying the rise of institutions
of development from grass-roots level to regional level to national level.

Study of such institutions provides an opportunity to understand the ability
of institutions to mould their actions and initiatives to the requirements emerging
from the society. Moreover, government agencies can not alone meet the
requirements of development that are emerging from different sections of the society. As cited elsewhere, Voluntary Agencies or Non Government Organisations have been emerging not only as a additive providers of service to the society but also as a strong and reliable agencies to reckon with to ensure poverty alleviation and all round development activities. Further, in the context of achieving Million Development Goals, the quality and quantity of NGOs’ services assume more importance.

In this context, a few of the NGOs have been emerging to provide comprehensive service to the society with their own mobilised funds, with the support of government agencies and in collaboration with government or private agencies. These institutions provide an ample opportunity to study their systematic approach adopted for the development of poor and rural areas and also institutional mechanism adopted to ensure success. Thus, large scale organisations of this kind provide an ample opportunity to study their comprehensive efforts placed by the NGOs and their replicability elsewhere so as to reduce the burden on government agencies.

One of the leading NGOs in southern part of India is Social Service Centre operating from Eluru, the district headquarters of West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh. Social Service Centre has emerged as comprehensive service provider to the needy across the districts of West Godavari and East Godavari.

The Social Service Centre (SSC) Eluru was established in 1977 to take up human development programs for the benefit of the poor the marginalized and the under privileged in the society irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Social Service Centre organizes programmes in entire West Godavari district (46 mandals) and Konaseema region (16 mandals) of East Godavari district. Various programmes organized by the Social Service Centre are as follows:
1. Animation program (Women empowerment):
   - Upland Area 1983 to 2001 in 15 mandals of West Godavari District.
   - Konaseema after killer cyclone of 1996
2. Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP):
   Narsapuram and Mogalthur areas after Tsunami 2004 in 3 Mandals
3. Tsunami Rehabilitation program:
   - Konaseema after the Tsunami in 2005 in 3 mandals exclusively for the fishermen community.
4. HIV/Aids awareness Program:
   Across the diocese supplying hygienic food with the help of CRS (Catholic Relief Services)
5. Integrated Tribal Development:
   Started in Polavaram mandal and two other adjacent mandals which scheduled as Agency area by the Government.
6. Child labour project:
   Started at Ramannapalem but integrated into the child line project later.
7. Child line:
   Started in 2007 and still going on in collaboration with Government of AP.
8. Premanvitha:
   Started in 2005 and still going on in collaboration with Government of AP.

Since the organisation was conducting several programmes on par with the government agencies and had wide range of outreach in terms of quality and quantity, the outcome entitles to study the impact aspects with a specific purpose of identifying the new insights. Consequently, the present study of “Impact of Voluntary Organisations on empowerment of weaker sections: A Study of Social Service Centre, Eluru, AP”, was taken up with the following objectives:
i. To study the organisational structure and pattern of programmes conducted by Social Service Centre;

ii. To study the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries of Social Service Centre;

iii. To study the impact of Social Service Centre programmes on selected beneficiaries;

iv. To study the perceptions of Social Service Centre beneficiaries on various issues pertaining to socio-economic outlook; and

v. To study the innovative measures undertaken by Social Service Centre.

The study was conducted in three distinct areas (Delta, Upland and tribal areas) of West Godavari and East Godawari Districts of Andhra Pradesh, India in view of specific operation of Social Service Centre programmes. A sample of 450 beneficiaries of Social Service Centre was adopted for understanding the impact of the programmes. Further, in order to ascertain the specific impact of the Social Service Centre programmes, a control sample of 150 beneficiaries, with 50 beneficiaries drawn from each of the specific area selected in the study area, who had exclusively accessed similar programmes operated by either government agencies to a large extent and other NGOs to some extent were selected.

**Findings of the Study**

The study was conducted among 450 beneficiaries of Social Service Centre who were drawn from the specific beneficiaries of Socio-economic development programmes (SEDP), Welfare Programmes (WP) and Empowerment Programmes (EP). These findings were consistently compared with Control Group beneficiaries to confirm the impact aspects. The principal findings of the study were:
Respondents from delta area had shown better social and economic status in view of better economic opportunities available to them when compared to upland and tribal areas.

Social Service Centre, Eluru was quite visible in the memory of the respondents drawn from all the three distinct areas of the study area in view of their committed work for several decades.

The organisation was quite well appreciated in view of its tailor-made programmes to the clientele group and also the ability to grasp the needs of its clientele group.

The psychological traits of the staff of Social Service Centre appeared to be biggest asset to the organisation in view of the appreciation they received for their services, acumen and also the behavioral aspects.

It appears that, more than organizing appropriate and specific programmes for its clientele group, Social Service Centre was quite emphatic in its efforts to place appropriate personnel for fulfilling the task. Thus, the well designed efforts of the Social Service Centre were carried to its clientele group through their well trained and well behaved staff and this had been their one of the strong points.

The participation in Social Service Centre programmes enabled the respondents to access several of psychological, social and economic advantages.

While accessing the advantages from different programmes, the delta area respondents had fared better when compared to respondents from upland and tribal area respondents. This differentiation may be done to several geographical issues like better connectivity, infrastructure development and other related issues.
Across the study area, the Social Service Centre respondents fared quite better, in reference to several and social and economic traits, when compared to control group respondents.

As in the case of distinct staff of Social Service Centre, the beneficiaries of the organisation had also shown several distinctions in terms of expenditure at household level. There was a dynamics of travel towards sustainability among the beneficiaries and controlled expenditure at household level among the respondents selected from all the areas. Whereas the control group expenditure was more on immediate needs and social functions etc.

The ability of the organisation to attract the attention of all the people cutting across the caste and creed enables to understand that Social Service Centre was operating on egalitarian principles. This itself was the greatest strength of the organisation.

The Social Service Centre could place the best of the manpower of the organisation as far as concerned at the cutting edge level. This was possible to derive the result from the fact that every beneficiary selected for the study, either Social Service Centre or Control Group, agreed to the fact that, they played committed role in ensuring the outreach through the committed workforce. This enables the researcher to understand that, before ensuring the implementation of the programmes, the Social Service Centre ensures appropriate human resources development among its members. This indeed was the best performance of the organisation.
The results had also shown that the beneficiaries of Social Service Centre, who were selected on the basis of different programmes under the implementation of Social Service centre, who were drawn from different programmes, had shown that the organisation was meticulous enough to draw such beneficiaries who fits into their specific needs. For instance, they were concentrating on downtrodden or low profile beneficiaries while selecting the beneficiaries under the category of Socio economic development programmes (SEDP) when compared to beneficiaries under the categories of welfare and empowerment programmes. This itself denotes that the organisation was careful enough to select the beneficiaries under different programmes. This was indeed the greatest strength of the organisation.

The gamut of impact on various factors that resulted to the beneficiaries shows that the organisation was careful enough to provide the tailor-made results to the beneficiaries. For instance, the results obtained in socio-economic development programmes show that the beneficiaries could access the enhanced income. Whereas the beneficiaries of welfare and empowerment programmes could access the benefits of strengthening the security aspects and personality skills respectively. This denotes that the organisation was careful enough to provide the respective needs of the beneficiaries. This was further confirmed by the fact that the beneficiaries of Control Group could access the respective results at a lower level when compared to the beneficiaries of the Social Service Centre. This was, in fact, the greatest advantage the organisation derived from its planning aspect. Hence, it may be confirmed that the organisation was quite successful enough to identify its beneficiaries in a judicious manner and also provide the requisite skills.
Another important fact in this regard was the distinct results that were obtained through different programmes. The beneficiaries of socio-economic development could access the enhanced income, the welfare programme beneficiaries could access better security aspects in terms of food and other aspects and the empowerment beneficiaries could access the aspect of strengthening their personality traits to excel themselves in the society was not a mean target achieve. Towards this, the organisation might have established wide network of understanding the beneficiaries, read the requirements of its beneficiaries and then provide the tailor-made solutions to them. This was possible when the organisation i.e. Social Service Centre, makes an elaborate attempt to understand the factual situation at the grass root level. Thus, the Social Service Centre credited itself with the gigantic task of understanding its own beneficiaries. Such exercise would definitely result in ensuring the required results. It may be mentioned that Social Service Centre was quite successful enough as far as this component was concerned.

In response to socio-economic development programmes, the beneficiaries could access the benefits like enhanced income and other related advantages. This was further confirmed by the fact that the control group beneficiaries could not access similar results. This shows that the beneficiaries under this aspect were targeted for the specific task and consequently the results were also placed at higher level. This in fact, was the advantage of the organisation.

Similarly, with reference to welfare programmes, care was taken by the Social Service Centre, based on the conclusions drawn from the results, to select only those beneficiaries who were deprived of the basic minimum needs. As a result, the organisation could achieve the best results. Thus, it was once again confirmed that the Social Service Centre was sensitized enough to identify the appropriate beneficiaries.
As far as empowerment programmes were concerned, the Social Service Centre had shown meticulous selection process in different areas of its operation. For instance, since the empowerment process was more essential among the younger generation, it made a point to select younger generation and though it was achieving cascading results. This indeed was a strong point as far as Social Service Centre was concerned.

Thus, the participation in community based institutions (CBOs) were largely confined to economic activities. For instance, the institution of Self Help Group was quite a common phenomenon in Andhra Pradesh in which the study area is located. As a result, the participation in these institutions was more evident. Further, it may be observed that the participation in these institutions was more in Delta area when compared to other areas. Since the Self Help Groups are associated with some or the other economic activities, the respondents had shown tendency towards participations in these institutions. Similarly, the institutions of Cooperatives and specific Occupational Groups were directly related to their economic occupation and hence the participation in these institutions was also more.

The tendency to participate in community based institutions was more dominated by the economic pursuits of the respondents and this was usual syndrome in the study area as well.

Hence, it may be observed that the tendency of participatory approaches to development was quite evident and this shows that the organisation was quite successful in ensuring the installation of the perception on the need for participatory development.
The welfare programmes beneficiaries excelled in terms of achieving the ability to overcome the difficulties they face in their day to day activities. Though varied impact was observed from area to area yet the basic fact was that the beneficiaries in this regard could excel their endeavor to overcome these aspects. This was possible only due to the excellent services provided by the organisation.

Another significant observation that was found among all the categories of beneficiaries was that there was a remarkable improvement in the life-standards of the beneficiaries after accessing the benefits through Social Service Centre. This itself proves the fact that the organisation was careful enough to provide backward linkages while implementing the various development programmes for its beneficiaries.

The organisation could still do better services had there been specific focus on the following items:

- Adult Education Programmes should strictly be implemented in sample Villages to improve literacy and improve educational standards of the semi – illiterates.

- Poor widowed and divorced women should be preferred first to provide any programmes relating to the socio – economic status.

- It is essentially needed that the respondents should be afforded with agricultural loans at low rate of interest beside providing, required agri – inputs at subsidized rates, since majority of them depend on agriculture it is also suggested that the respondents who depend on petty business for livelihood, should be provided loans at low rate of interest.
➢ The people should be provided with more income generating schemes to these poor Villagers, so that their income sources will be increased for a better standard of life.

➢ The people who depend on livestock for livelihood should be afforded with loans at low rate of interest, to purchase live stock / animals.

➢ Permanent homes should be provided to the people below poverty line.

➢ The poor should enhance their savings and the S.S.C should motivate the people towards more savings

➢ The people should be motivated and educated towards the utilization of facilities provided, through DWACRA besides CBO. If needed that the rules and regulations are to be relaxed and should be in reach of the poor Villagers.

➢ The people should be motivated in such a way that they should obtain loans for the income generating purposes, such as, agriculture, cottage industries, handicrafts etc.

➢ People below poverty line should be motivated and enhanced in this regard, it can be suggested that people below poverty line should be motivated and encouraged to improve their living standards through S.S.C. and other such groups.

➢ Policy makers should take initiate measures to support and encourage social service centers under NGOs besides providing financial assistance for the socio – economic upliftment of the people below poverty line.
The study thus revealed that the benefits accrued to the beneficiaries of Social Service Centre were more than what expected from a regular government sponsored development programmes. This also leads to the fact that the Social Service Centre excelled itself in ensuring the right reach of benefits to the right beneficiaries. This fact was further established by the fact that the Control Group beneficiaries who had accessed the similar programmes could not reach the benefits that were ensured through Social Service Centre programmes.

As cited elsewhere, the organisational strength of the organisation was quite evident in every bit of benefit that was accrued to the beneficiaries. The staff of Social Service Centre was meticulous enough to read the perceptions of it beneficiaries and regulate their needs in a sophisticated manner. More than this, the quality and quantity of services that were rendered through the organisation were also quite well appreciated. Even the control group beneficiaries have established themselves that the benefits accrued to them were not of the order that the Social Service Centre beneficiaries could achieve.

The above cited discussion reveals that the beneficiaries of Social Service Centre could achieve better results through their participation in the programmes of Social Service Centre. The fact was further proved by using several statistical techniques.

It may further be observed from the facts provided in the results or impact of the programmes on the beneficiaries of Social Service Centre, it was emphatically revealed that they could access better position by virtue of their strength in perception based issues. This indeed was a great achievement of Social Service Centre. An individual, who assess the immediate possible situations and equip himself/herself to explore the opportunities need to be strong in perception based issues and this was where Social Service Centre scored much better achievement when compared to government or other programmes of similar nature.
Whatever the case may be, the study findings point out that the beneficiaries who were accessing the Social Service Centre programmes could access better benefits and strengthened their outlook in their own professional life. This psychological and social strength was indeed the greatest achievement on the part of Social Service Centre.

Another important factor of greater importance was that Social Service Centre could achieve better results in backward areas like Upland and Tribal areas. This was indeed not a mean achievement. Across the results that were observed in different areas, it had been felt that the beneficiaries of Social Service Centre were much ahead in terms of achieving better results when compared to control group beneficiaries. The important aspect in this regard was the noticeable self-assertion expressed by the beneficiaries of Social Service Centre. In other words, the Social Service Centre was enabling its beneficiaries not only to access the benefits but also enabling them to place in such a position of self-assertion so that the needful could achieve with the help of self-efforts as well as the local conditions as well.

To sum up, the study concludes that the benefits accrued to the beneficiaries of the Social Service Centre were of greater importance and value-studded when compared to the benefits accrued to the beneficiaries under the government sponsored programmes who were selected as control group of the study.

Another social factor was that, though Social Service Centre was Christian faith based service oriented organisation, it clientele group consists of religious groups of various nature. This also denotes the distinct service rendered by the organisation in this regard. Thus, Social Service Centre was recognised as an institution of repute which was not associated with any religion, caste or creed.
However, given the premise of the study and positive observations of impact of Social Service Centre on its clientele group yet there were certain lacunae which need to be focused upon to enhance its operations and impact. These are as follows:

**Suggestions**

Keeping in view the outcome of the study, especially in reference to the positive outcome emanating from the services rendered by the Social Services Centre, the following suggestions were expressed.

- The quantum of services that were rendered in delta area, which was already well focused upon by other organisations, need to be re-oriented keeping in view the specific needs of the area and also the profile of the beneficiaries concerned.
- The organisation was rendering quite good services in upland and tribal areas of its jurisdiction but it needs to strengthen its focus more since the problems and prospects of development faced by the beneficiaries were quite distinct and varied when compared to delta area beneficiaries.
- The organisation was quite successful in meeting the needs of those beneficiaries who had dire consequences yet the need for empowerment programmes were felt quite emphatically in this regard. Hence, the organisation needs to re-orient its programmes as per the requirements of the beneficiaries of the requisite areas.
- Though the organisation had been fulfilling the needs of the beneficiaries concerned in different areas it needs to play more curial role with the government agencies so as to strengthen the efforts in an enhanced manner.
- The strength of the organisation lies in its ability to provide suitable programmes to the suitable stakeholders and hence the quantity of its services need to be canvassed more among its stakeholders irrespective of
its physical strength. In other words, the organisation needs to work more in close association with government agencies.

- Given the reputation the organisation gained in its operational area, people themselves have raised their expectations and these needs to be fulfilled by undertaking more programmes. Social Service Centre in this regard may need to evolve more collaborative strategies. Otherwise, there may be a dichotomy of raised expectations among the stakeholders and lack of delivery system.

- Since the Social Service Centre was well entrenched in its activities through its infrastructure facilities as well as the outreach through its programmes, it needs to expand its activities so as to reach more stakeholders, especially under the premise that it was not associated with particular caste or creed.

To conclude, the Social Service Centre could achieve better impact on its beneficiaries by virtue of its specific and exclusive services yet the organisation was limited in its operations. Hence, the organisation needs to expand more. Given its strength of working closely with the people and the amount of voluntary force that it had created more could be expected from it. On the other hand, the organisation provides ample evidence in terms of its ability to recognize the needs of its stakeholders, designing appropriate programmes, providing timely services as well. This also was a clue to the government agencies to rope in its services in wider range of activities. The strength of these organisations do not vest with its own operations but also with its association with government agencies. Hence, the endeavour, based on the outcome of the study was, there should be more close liaison between the Social Service Centre and government agencies so as to strengthen the broader concept of egalitarian development as well as rural development.

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