Chapter 11:

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
CHAPTER XI

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Based on detailed survey for the purpose of Rural Development in Birbhum District, I observed the following main findings and based on these main findings of my research I have come to a conclusion and proposed the following suggestions for further development:

11.1 MAIN FINDINGS:

Main findings of my research are as follows:

1. Uneven topography, drastic climatic conditions, nature of soil, devastating floods and severe droughts are the major drawbacks of the district.
2. The rate of literacy is generally satisfactory but the drop out ratio is high due to poor economic condition.
3. Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary, and Technical Schools are inadequate in number.
4. Medical facilities in rural areas are not very satisfactory.
5. There is a general trend of shift in occupational structure from primary to tertiary.
6. The percentage of non-worker is quite high.
7. There is a general inequality in the distribution of social amenities.
8. Loss of crops by devastating flood during rainy seasons and unavailability of water during hot summer also lead to decrease in gross production.
9. As there is an extreme need for rice, so rural people have no interest in cultivating any other crops, other than paddy.
10. There are agricultural co-operatives, but not at all effective to meet the need of the cultivators.
11. Panchayat should take more initiative in the distribution of seeds, manures and fertilizers at a lower rate to cultivators.
12. Natural fertility of soil has decreased due to excessive use of chemicals.
13. The cultivators have no idea regarding cultivation of land according to fertility of the specific soil for want of proper soil testing facilities.
14. In agricultural fields abrupt flow of large amount of water from the river valley projects results to loss of water and fertilizers due to overflowing and seepage.

15. Rural poor people are not aware of the 'Black Zone' areas of the district and are still randomly using the underground water and intern facing acute shortage of drinking water.

16. Water borne diseases have become more prevalent due to use of untreated surface water which is highly polluted.

17. Population exerts more pressure on agricultural land which are getting fragmented and are unsuitable for modern agricultural systems.

18. Poor communication system that effect the transportation and finally exert a negative impact on agriculture.

19. Inadequate distribution of electricity in the remote fields is a great hindrance regarding use of modern scientific machines.

20. Land reforms and enhancement of agro-based small scale and cottage industry, is developing the socio-economic status to some extent of the rural poor.

21. Proper distribution and utilization of natural resources maintaining the ecological balance is not promising.

22. Participation of the rural people and inter-relationship with respective Panchayats should be more flexible.

11.2 CONCLUSIONS:

The following conclusions have been drawn, based on indepth study:

1. Both floods and droughts are the major problems of the district.

2. The main reason for flood is that the rivers are becoming shallow because of silting, from rain-fed rivers, which require proper watershed management and small check-dams.

3. There is a general trend in transforming wet-lands and ponds into agricultural fields instead of utilizing them for rain water harvesting, drainage catchment and recharging ground water.

4. A general apathy towards participation of local people in different activities of Panchayat is seen.
5. Irrigation facilities are inadequate and are not based on sustainable procedures.

6. Level of underground water is low for want of recharging and misuse.

7. The floods controlled by large river valley projects are ineffective.

8. Emphasis on the maintenance of water bodies is very much required for pisciculture along with agriculture e.g. composite fishery.

9. Generally, the agricultural practices are not sustainable due to traditional procedures, use of excessive chemical-fertilizers and pesticides.

10. General awareness among cultivators regarding use of modern technology in agriculture is not very high.

11. Drainage, sewage and sanitary systems are not conducive to hygiene and agricultural needs.

12. The Panchayti-Raj institutions are playing an useful role in infusing in the minds of beneficiaries a sense of awakening and in helping them in sustaining the benefits of the Land Reform programmes undertaken in the state.

13. A cohesive and comprehensive scenario of the changing dimensions of rural developmental process including problems of infrastructure and poverty alleviation is evaluated by sustained efforts of the government, Panchayats and other voluntary agencies.

14. Rural Development is possible to certain extent if the rural urban relationship is modified and corrected as far as possible.

15. Rural development gives special emphasis on rural poor, not merely for improving their level of living but also to bring about a greater degree of their involvement in the developmental process.

11.3 SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings of my research, I proposed the following suggestions.

1. To reduce the impact of floods, the rivers should be frequently dredged and watershed management must be more effective.

2. Conservation of water bodies must get more priority in rural development planning. The transformation of wetlands and ponds to agricultural fields should be restricted and rather be utilized for rain water harvesting also.
3. Irrigation facilities should be made adequate by constructing more canals.
4. There should be more scientific approach in controlling floods and droughts by the River valley projects along with watershed management.
5. Farmers should be motivated to use modern scientific and sustainable technologies in agriculture.
6. Treated sewage water and sludge can be used for agriculture as these contain ample amount of organic manure and trace elements.
7. In rural areas of the district, deep water cannot be used, because it contains excessive minerals (Ca, Fe, HCO₃) which inhibit fertilizer dissociation and reduce productivity of crops.
8. More emphasis should be given on basic needs like, education, health and hygiene.
9. Extensive local level management providing flexible modifying programmes with circumstantial changes is highly essential.
10. Felt needs of local communities may be cultivated and integrated systematically with the National Planning Priorities of the country.
11. Land, Labour, and Capital if more effectively be mobilized by the Panchayat, may reduce poverty and improve the socio-economic condition of the rural poor in a continuing basis.
12. Random deforestation to meet the local need should be restricted to maintain ecological balance, on the other hand fire-wood cultivation should be encouraged to save the forests.
13. Extent of decentralization, development of man power and high skill will reduce the socio-economic crisis, and will certainly improve the standard of living of the rural people.
14. The Panchayats should take more initiative in motivating the farmers regarding the use of modern sustainable agricultural technologies, providing better hybrid seeds, seedlings, bio-fertilizers and organic fertilizers.
15. The Panchayat should make the rural farmers aware of the different government subsidies and financial grants offered to them to improve rural development.
16. Only rice growing farmers of this district should be motivated to cultivate wheat, vegetables, fruits and practice horticulture and floriculture so as to utilize same amount, rather less water (a critical resource) and get better yield and earn their living. This change of cropping pattern will also reduce methane generation, which is a major green house gas.

17. There should be controlled distribution of water according to the cultivated crops, utilization of plastic pipe lines, drip irrigation or sprinkler systems wherever possible.

18. For unemployed poor, short time training courses in production centre’s for imparting Rural Biotechnology is essential, where they can be trained in composite fishery, nursery management, vermin-compost, low cost food preservation, integrated pest and fertilizer management, apiculture etc.

19. The short term training courses have immense possibility in uplifting the socio economic condition of the rural poor of the district by providing direct and indirect employment to men and even women particularly in animal husbandry.

20. For rural development to make the implemented programmes successful, the local co-operative banks, branches of Nationalized Banks, Panchayats should come forward to provide micro-level credit with due follow up systems.

21. The participation of the rural women in panchayats should be encouraged as it is not only for ensuring political participation in the democratic process but also for realizing the developmental goals for women.

22. To increase agri-horticulture employment without increasing the risk of fluoride and arsenic pollution emphasis should be, on surface-water irrigation, i.e. by harvesting rainwater in small check dams, using water directly and indirectly through recharging at shallow levels, deep water is hard water and totally unfit for agriculture.

23. Solid waste management at village level by ladies of self-help group at every village market to make composts for providing organic manure for agriculture at a much low price, should be encouraged.
24. Development of community Bio-gas plant in every village along with government toilets for human use which will generate gas for lighting and cooking and also provide manure for agriculture is essential.

25. “Farmers Club” with assistance from NABARD can be organized to have agricultural input at right price and also to provide modern technical assistance to the rural farmers.

26. The beneficiaries of the Land reform schemes come from the poorest rural people of the society without any asset base at all, so small farmers get land but want of micro-credit, cannot utilize the land properly or even they give back the land to big farmers and become landless again. This practice should be noticed.

27. The most logical approach of rural development should be mainly based on management of natural resources by scientific and sustainable basis considering the whole eco-system.

28. In Birbhum there are five out of fifty-one “sati peeths” along with other tourist spots like Bakrshwar, Santiniketan, where there is a great demand for ordinary red hibiscus and marigold throughout the year, so quite a few marginal farmers can earn their livelihood by simple floriculture with very little amount of water utilizing less fertile soil.

29. More over the cultural aspects (Joydeb-kenduli mela, Pathar-chapuri mela and Poush mela) and the religious spots (Kankalitala, Nalhateshwari, Nandikeshwari, Phullaratala and Suratheswar temple, Bakreshwar, Tarapith) should be properly developed and maintained encouraging tourism and helping the non-worker poor sections to earn their livelihood. This will certainly aid in rural development of the study area to some extent.

An indepth study on various aspects of Rural Development of Birbhum District revealed that proper and sustainable development of agriculture, forestry, horticulture and agro-based industries are the prime need for overall development of the district. All these will also certainly ensure, Micro-Level Rural Development in West Bengal.