CHAPTER - III

STATE AGENCIES AND THEIR ROLE
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The role of State agencies occupies an important place in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes in the rural areas of India. Their function is to translate the broad statement of goals and objectives envisaged in the programmes into action. Effective functioning and tactful coordination of the implementing agencies is therefore as critical as formulating a sound programme design to bring about successful implementation of rural development programmes. The guideline of Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) programme also sought to involve various agencies such as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Line departments, District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA), Banks and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for its implementation.

This chapter deals with the roles and functions assigned to implementing agencies according to SGSY programme guidelines as well as the actual practice in Churachandpur district of Manipur. The implementing agencies, their roles and functions as per the SGSY programme guidelines are shown in table 3.1. However, in practice, the programme guidelines were not strictly followed. In the implementation level, Village Authorities (VAs), Line departments like District Industry Centre, Agriculture department, Veterinary department and Horticulture department, DRDA (Churachandpur) as well as Bank and NGOs were involved. The agencies and the role played by them in the implementation of the programme in Churachandpur district are shown in table 3.2.
Table 3.1. Implementing agencies and their roles as per SGSY programme guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Roles</th>
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<tr>
<td>Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)</td>
<td>To approve the list of BPL households</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To identify potential swarozgaris</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To monitor the performance of Swarozgaris especially in repaying bank loans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gram Panchayat</td>
<td>To approve key activities identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panchayat Samiti</td>
<td>To review bank loan recovery performance by Swarozgaris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zilla Parishad</td>
<td>To review overall performance of SGSY programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line department</td>
<td>To identify key activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To plan and create infrastructure required for key activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To prepare project profile for identified key activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To give training and technical guidance to the Swarozgaris</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRDA</td>
<td>To organize SHGs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To organize training programme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To coordinate with other implementing agencies and oversee the whole process of SGSY programme implementation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To monitor Swarozgaris and ensure that they come out of poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>To identify and plan key activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To identify SHGs &amp; individual Swarozgaris</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To provide technology support &amp; quality control of the products Swarozgaris</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>To form, nurture and monitor the progress of SHGs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To give financial assistance in terms of bank loans</td>
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</table>
Table 3.2. Agencies and their roles in the implementation of SGSY programmes in Churachandpur district of Manipur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Roles</th>
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<tr>
<td>Village Authorities</td>
<td>Issues BPL approval certificates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line departments</td>
<td>Identifies SHGs</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRDA</td>
<td>Organizes and forms SHGs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organizes training programme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifies SHGs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinates with Bank, Line departments and NGOs and oversee the whole process of SGSY implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>Identifies SHGs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Issues bank loans to SHGs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Organizes and forms SHGs</td>
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<td>Trained SHGs</td>
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III.1. Village Authorities

According to SGSY programme’s guideline, PRIs are expected to play an important role in the entire stages of the programme’s implementation. The Gram Sabha is to approve the list of households belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL). The potential Swarozgaris are to be identified by a three member committee including the sarpanch in each village at the beginning of each year. The Gram Panchayat is also expected to monitor the performance of the Swarozgaris and ensure regular repayment of loan by them. The Panchayat Samiti is to approve the key activities that are identified for the blocks and is also expected to review bank loan recovery performance of SHGs. The Zilla Parishad is also expected to review the performance of SGSY. Though, these elaborate roles given to different levels of Panchayat for SGSY programme’s implementation can be examined in the valley districts of Manipur where PRIs exist, it cannot be done in the hill districts due to the absence of Panchayat system.

Unlike in the valley districts of Manipur (Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur), there is no Panchayat system in the hill districts of Manipur namely Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Ukhrul and Tamenglong. The hill districts of Manipur have Village Authorities (VAs) as a local self-government system at the village level. It may be mentioned here that in contrast to the Panchayat system that has different institutions at the village, block and district levels, the VAs in the hill areas of Manipur is a single-tier local self-government system. At present, VAs in the hill areas of Manipur works within the powers and functions given in the Manipur (Village Authorities in Hill Areas) Act, 1956. Under this act, the VAs have administrative, judicial and developmental role
in the village society. Important powers and functions related to administrative and developmental role of the VAs are as follow:-136

1. General administration of the village and maintenance of law and order.
2. Settlement of land disputes.
3. Fixation of jhum sites, distribution of community jhum land and deciding the timing of agricultural operations.

Subsequently, a notification for VAs came up in 1971 that stressed their developmental role more visibly.137 According to this notification, the VAs are to review all the developmental works within the village and report to the Block Development Officer (BDO). Moreover, the VAs have been found to be involved in the identification or selection of beneficiaries for some poverty alleviation programmes such as Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc.138 This section examines how far the VAs are involved in the implementation of SGSY programme.

In the implementation of SGSY programme in Churachandpur district, it was found that issuing BPL approval certificates to the villagers who intend to form SHGs was the only role played by VAs. However, the manner in which BPL approval was

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137 Vide Para 5 of Letter No.4/2/71 dated the 19th July, 1971 issued by the Chief Secretary to all the Deputy Commissioners, Manipur, p.33.
granted indicates that the approval of BPL households was not taken seriously by VA members. It was seen that although most of the VA members (about 84%) were ignorant about the basic concept of BPL as well as survey conducted by any government agency in the villages, they issued BPL approval certificate without taking into consideration the eligibility of the villagers. Justifying this, the Secretary of Saidan VA stated that ‘it does not matter whether villagers belong to Above Poverty Line (APL) or BPL as long as they benefitted from any rural development programmes’. Another reason why BPL approval certificate was not taken seriously by VA members can be explained in the context of their experience with the implementation of other poverty alleviation programmes such as IRDP, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) etc. About 68 per cent of VA members revealed that the poor villagers they had recommended to benefit from these programmes were hardly considered by higher authorities. The Chairman of Rengkai VA said, ‘the list of recommendations given by VAs to block and district officials were hardly considered to be beneficiaries for poverty alleviation programmes, instead other villagers who have close proximity to the concerned Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) get the benefit of poverty alleviation programmes, including SGSY’. Further, about 78 per cent of VA members revealed that they were not included in any meeting or consultation related to SGSY programme.

Therefore, examination of VA’s role in the implementation of SGSY programme reveals that their involvement was very limited due to the absence of clear-cut

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139 Interview Schedule administered to Secretary of Saidan Village Authority, Saidan Village, Churachandpur, dated 12 April 2008.
140 Interview Schedule administered to Secretary of Rengkai Village Authority, Rengkai Village, Churachandpur, dated 12 April 2008.
demarcation for their role in the programme implementation. State government or DRDA did not issue any notification to them regarding their role in SGSY implementation. They came to know about the programme and their role in its implementation only when villagers approached them for BPL approval. Further, they were found to be nonchalant in their attitude about their role in the SGSY programme implementation. Their ignorance about the programme guidelines had also led them to identification of BPL households without following them.

III.2. Line Department

Line departments are those government departments at the State level having the responsibility on specific thematic sectors such as Agriculture, Industry, Horticulture, Water supply etc. They may be divided into several smaller departments depending on the size and administrative convenience of the State and can therefore vary across the State. At the district level, each line department has a district level head for e.g. District Veterinary Officer for the District Veterinary Department, Superintending Engineer for the Rural Water Supply Department and so on. The line departments were involved in the implementation of IRDP. Also, with the SGSY programme, the involvement of line departments was envisaged for the programme implementation. The role they are expected to play according to programme guidelines and the extent of their involvement in SGSY programme implementation is examined in this section.

According to SGSY programme guidelines, line departments are expected to collaborate with other implementing agencies for the identification of key activities and
preparation of project profile for each economic activity. They are also responsible for the planning of infrastructure required for making key activities successful. In addition to these, once the bank has sanctioned the loan, the line departments must ensure that all facilities including technical guidance are provided to the Swarozgaris. They should also ensure that the quality of training imparted to the Swarozgaris should be satisfactory. The line departments are also expected to verify whether the Swarozgaris have the necessary skill required for taking up economic activity and take steps to train them. They should assist the DRDA in ensuring that the Swarozgaris are duly trained at the appropriate institutions. It shall also be their responsibility to monitor the progress of the Swarozgaris and see whether they are able to derive the expected levels of income or not.

The line departments involved in the implementation of SGSY programme in Churachandpur district are District Industry Centre (DIC), Agriculture department, Horticulture department and Veterinary department. One official each from these four line departments were entrusted to involve in the implementation of SGSY programme in Churachandpur district. It was observed that in Churachandpur district, there were no key activities identified under SGSY programme and as such studying the role of line department in identification of key activities did not arise. SHGs had a total say in choosing economic activities they performed. Based on the activities chosen by SHGs, skill upgradation training programmes were organized by the DRDA where line departments were involved in imparting trainings to SHGs. On questioning officials from line departments whether the quality of training imparted was satisfactory or not, majority of them (75 %) revealed that they were not satisfied with the quality of training
imparted to SHGs. They revealed that the topics of training imparted to SHGs were decided by officials from DRDA. Besides, the programme guidelines also entrusted line departments to verify whether SHG members have the necessary skill required for taking up economic activity and if not, take steps to train them. In this respect, it was found that in Churachandpur district, line departments were not provided much space to give inputs in the planning of training programmes for SHGs. Officials from line departments involved in the implementation of SGSY programme revealed that though they were more aware about issues related to economic activities that fall under their department, they could not perform their roles properly due to the lack of opportunities. They alleged that officials from DRDA monopolized everything.

Further, according to the guidelines of SGSY programme, for each key activity identified, there should be a project profile indicating the various aspects such as training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing needed to make key activities successful. The project profile should also indicate how many people could be covered in a block under each key activity. In Churachandpur district, majority of the officials from line departments (75%) involved in SGSY programme implementation revealed that they did not prepare a project profile. These officials responded that they were not aware about this issue and were not asked by higher authorities to write a project report. Out of the four officials involved in the programme implementation, only one official from the veterinary department prepared a project profile. However, the official from the veterinary department who prepared the project profile reported that the amount of investments required and other items mentioned in the project profile were not followed.
up. The official who prepared the project profile stated that while the investment required for piggery according to the project profile was estimated to be Rs. 1.5 lakh, the average amount of bank loan and subsidy a SHG with piggery as economic activity received was found to be only Rs. 75,000 which was too less. It was not even sufficient for the creation of proper infrastructure for the economic activity. Thus, preparation of project profile seems to be just a perfunctory exercise in the programme’s implementation. On questioning if separate infrastructure fund envisaged in the programme was used to bridge the needed infrastructural gap, all officials from line departments responded negatively saying that they were not aware about it. The line departments are also expected to monitor the progress of SHGs i.e. whether the SHGs are making progress and are able to derive the expected levels of income as per the programme guidelines. However, none of the officials from the line departments involved in the implementation of SGSY programme performed this task due to lack of awareness.

Therefore, analysis of the role of line departments in the implementation of SGSY programme in Churachandpur district shows that there is a gap between the roles for line departments envisioned in the programme’s guidelines and the actual role played by them in the field. As against the expected involvement of line departments in almost all the stages of the programme’s implementation, it was found that they were involved only in the initial stage of the programme’s implementation due to lack of action from the DRDA in terms of co-ordination and lack of awareness among the officials from line departments who were involved in the programme’s implementation.
III.3. District Rural Development Agency

The DRDA was established in the beginning of the sixth five year plan (1980-85) when direct attack on poverty was contemplated at the hands of the government. DRDA was devised as an administrative structure to oversee the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes at the district level. In general, the roles and functions of DRDA are as follows:—

1. DRDA is visualized as a specialized and professional agency capable of managing poverty alleviation programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) on one hand and to effectively relate these to the overall effort of poverty eradication in the districts on the other hand.

2. DRDA is to enhance the quality of implementation through overseeing the implementation of different poverty alleviation programmes and ensure that necessary linkages are provided.

3. DRDA is expected to coordinate with the line departments, PRIs, banks and other financial institutions as well as the NGOs and technical institutions with a view to gather the support and resources required for poverty reduction effort in the district. It shall be their endeavor and objective to secure inter-sectoral and inter-departmental coordination and cooperation for reducing poverty in the district.

4. DRDA is also expected to closely monitor the implementation of different poverty alleviation programmes of the MoRD in the districts through obtaining periodic

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reports as well as frequent field visits. The purpose of the visit should be to facilitate the implementing agencies in improving implementation process, besides ensuring that the quality of programme implementation is good. This would include overseeing whether the intended beneficiaries are receiving the benefits under different programmes.

5. DRDA shall keep the Zilla Parishad, the State and the Central government duly informed of the progress of the implementation of the programmes through periodic reports in the prescribed formats. Special report, as and when called for, shall be provided.

6. It shall be the duty of DRDA to oversee and ensure that the benefits specifically earmarked for certain target groups (SC/ST, women and disabled persons) reach them. They shall take all necessary steps to achieve the prescribed norms.

7. DRDA shall take necessary steps to improve the awareness regarding rural development and poverty alleviation particularly among the rural poor. This would involve issues of poverty, the opportunities available to the rural poor and generally infuse a sense of confidence in their ability to overcome poverty. It would also involve sensitizing the different functionaries in the district about the different aspects of poverty and poverty alleviation programmes.

8. DRDA will strive to promote transparency in the implementation of different poverty alleviation programmes. Towards this end, they shall publish periodically the details of different programmes and their implementation.
9. Keeping in view the substantial investment that are being made in poverty alleviation programmes, DRDA shall ensure financial discipline with respect to the funds received by them, whether from Central or State governments. They shall also ensure that accounts are properly maintained with respect to the funds allocated to banks or implementing agencies in accordance with the guidelines of different programmes.

10. DRDA shall also coordinate and oversee the conduct of the BPL Census and such other surveys that are required from time to time.

11. DRDA shall also carry out or aid action research or evaluation studies that are initiated by the Central or State governments.

12. DRDA shall deal only with the poverty alleviation programmes of the MoRD. If DRDA are to be entrusted with programmes of other ministries or those of the State governments, it should be ensured that these have a definite anti-poverty focus. Entrusting of any programme to DRDA, other than poverty alleviation programmes of the MoRD will have to be done with the approval of the Secretary, Rural Development department of the respective State(s). They should examine such request in consultation with the MoRD, Government of India. In such cases, it must be ensured that adequate provision is made for requisite staffing needed for proper implementation of the programme.

DRDA was set up in all the districts of Manipur when the government extended IRDP to all the blocks of Manipur in 1980-81. Since then, it has been coordinating and monitoring the implementation of different poverty alleviation programmes in all the
districts of Manipur. The extent of the role played by DRDA may differ from one programme to another depending on the nature of the programme and the role assigned to them in the programmes guidelines.

According to SGSY programme’s guidelines, DRDA is at the helm of the programme’s implementation. DRDA is expected to coordinate every aspect of the implementation of SGSY programme. The DRDA is supposed to organize SHGs and their skill upgradation programmes through training programme. DRDA is also to coordinate with the technical institutions for technology and training, with the bank for planning all the elements of key activities and credit mobilization, with line departments for infrastructure and technical follow-up and also coordinate marketing activities. DRDA is also entrusted to examine that the anticipated income as stipulated in the guideline is realized enabling the Swarojgaris to cross the poverty line.

In Churachandpur District, the first step taken by the DRDA in the implementation of SGSY programme was issuing a notification to the villagers through local newspapers, block level officials and Integrated Child Development Programme (ICDP) to form SHGs. Thereafter, one Assistant Project Officer (APO) was specifically entrusted by the DRDA to oversee and manage SGSY programme implementation in Churachandpur district. Under the leadership of APO, along with officials from line departments, bank and ICDP, several villages were visited and meetings with the villagers were also conducted in order to spread awareness about SGSY programme. At this stage, APO also went for door to door campaign to educate the villagers on the need to form SHGs under SGSY programme. Further, the APO also guided the villagers who
intended to form SHGs on how to proceed with the necessary paper works such as drafting and filling up application forms. ICDP workers like Aganwadi also played an important role in mobilizing villagers especially women to form SHGs. DRDA also coordinated survey and grading exercises in order to identify SHGs to be assisted under SGSY programme. The criteria to be possessed by a SHG according to DRDA are as follows:

1) Number of members in SHGs should be from 10-20.
2) SHGs should have regular meeting preferably weekly.
3) Participation of members in a meeting should be 70 per cent of the total SHG members.
4) SHGs should have bye-laws and the members should be aware about the bye-laws.
5) SHGs should have a bank account.
6) Fifty per cent of internal loan availed by members should be spent on consumption purpose and fifty per cent on production purpose.
7) SHGs should maintain simple basic records such as minute’s book for group meetings, attendance register, loan ledger, cash book, members’ contribution books etc.

Further, DRDA helps SHGs to establish linkage with bank. According to APO, though the bank is one of the implementing agencies for the SGSY programme in Churachandpur district, they did not cooperate with SHGs establishing linkage with them. In this matter, they had to intervene on behalf of SHGs and negotiate with bank officials from time to time.
Also, skill upgradation in the form of training programmes was organized by the DRDA, Churachandpur. APO revealed that training programmes were organized at least two times in a year and DRDA employed the service of officials from line departments, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Bank and NGOs in Churachandpur district. DRDA failed to monitor the performance of SHGs to see whether the anticipated income as stipulated in the guideline was realized by SHGs. Under the DRDA’s initiative, selected SHGs from Churachandpur district also participated in ‘Saras’ (an exhibition organized by Ministry of Rural Development) where SHGs were given the opportunity to showcase and sell their products. DRDA also organized ‘melas’ from time to time at the district headquarters in an effort to promote marketing for SHGs.

Therefore, assessment of DRDA’s role in the implementation of SGSY programme implementation revealed that although the DRDA is expected to coordinate every aspect of the implementation of SGSY programme, it was found that officials from DRDA were involved with much enthusiasm only in the group formation stage and in organizing skill upgradation programmes through training programme for SHG members. Their involvement in terms of coordinating with other agencies involved in the implementation of SGSY programme was not satisfactory. Further, it was found that they were least bothered about the progress of SHGs. Their involvement was found to be limited to formation of SHGs, identification of SHGs, organising training programmes for SHG members and in paperwork related to marketing.

III.4. Bank
The involvement of bank for the efficient implementation of poverty alleviation programmes have been emphasized by the policy planners since the introduction of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the late seventies. With IRDP, they played an important role by financing the beneficiaries in the form of extending bank loans to them. With the introduction of SGSY programme, the role of bank in implementation of poverty alleviation programmes was further enhanced. In addition to giving bank loan to beneficiaries, the involvement of banks in all stages of the programme’s implementation i.e. identification of key activities and SHGs as well as planning for all elements of key activities are envisaged in the implementation of SGSY programme. The bank is also supposed to have the final say in the selection of beneficiaries according to the programme guidelines.

In Churachandpur district, it is observed that the availability of banking infrastructure has been decreasing over the years. In the 80’s, all the sub-divisional headquarters had banking facilities, however due to the increasing deterioration of law and order, ethnic conflicts and insurgency problems, four sub-divisional headquarters have been deprived of banking facilities. As on 2008, only four bank branches existed in the entire districts. Three bank branches are found in the district headquarter and one branch is in Loktak.

In the implementation of SGSY programme in Churachandpur district, State Bank of India (SBI), Churachandpur branch was involved. With respect to the identification of key activities under SGSY programme, the bank did not have any say as SHGs were
given a free hand to choose key activities. Bank officials were involved in the identification of SHGs for SGSY programme. They were a part of the team that conducted surveys in the villages of Churachandpur district along with the DRDA and line departments. Further, bank officials were also involved in assessing the SHGs who intend to avail loan from the bank SHGs. The purposes of this assessment were to see whether the intended SHGs have been functioning effectively and are capable of taking up economic activity. To determine this, officials from SBI involved in the implementation of SGSY programme came up with certain criteria to assess the functioning of SHGs which are given below:\textsuperscript{142}

1. SHGs should maintain book keeping and financial account such as minute’s books, attendance register, loan ledger, cash books, member’s contribution registers etc.

2. Number of members in SHGs should be 10 to 20.

3. Regular meetings should be conducted by SHGs and the frequency of meeting should be preferably weekly.

4. Attendance of SHG members in all meetings should be more than 90 per cent of the members.

5. Savings should be utilized by SHGs as internal loan and should be accompanied by good recovery performance from SHG members.

6. SHG members should know the basic concept of SHGs.

7. At least 2-3 members in a group should be literate.

8. SHG members should be aware about SGSY programme’s objective.

\textsuperscript{142} Data collected from Field Officer on 12.04.2008, State Bank of India, Churachandpur, Manipur.
According to the field officer from SBI, Churachandpur branch, involved in the implementation of SGSY programme, a survey was conducted in the villages to examine and find out SHGs that fulfilled the given criteria for availing financial assistance from bank. The official further stated that only SHGs that fulfilled the given criteria were considered eligible for availing financial assistance from bank in the form of bank loan and subsidy. However, at the ground level, several SHGs who availed bank loan and subsidy revealed that they were not aware of any survey conducted by the bank officials in their village and that their group’s functioning was also not assessed by bank officials. These SHGs maintained that they got bank loan through bribes as well as middlemen who worked on their behalf.

Further, although SGSY programme guidelines envisioned multiple credits for the SHGs until they come out of poverty, it was seen that 45 per cent of SHGs under study got bank loan only once. SHGs who did not get loan for the second time revealed that though they repaid the first loan they could not get loan again. But bank officials insisted that they were not aware of those cases. The amount of bank loan the SHGs got was also found to be too less to pursue the economic activities full time. The explanation given in this regard by the officials from the bank was that since default rate in repayment of bank loan was too high in the district, they were being cautious and could not give much to SHGs.

Therefore, it was found that officials from the bank were involved in identification of SHGs for SGSY programme and extending bank loan to SHGs to take
up economic activities. However, it was found that availing and sanctioning of financial assistance was beset with corruption.

III.5. The role of NGOs in the implementation of SGSY programme

Many NGOs have been working closely with government of India for the development of rural areas. The growth of NGOs in India was more pronounced around the sixties when several individuals noticed that government programmes seemed to be inadequate to deal with the deprived sections of India. These group of people therefore, started working with the landless, tribals, bonded laborers and many other social groups that were being discriminated against by the policies of the state and social structures. Till around 1980s, there was little effort to recognize the importance of NGOs by the GoI. Further, there was no attempt by the GoI to define their role for development. It was only in the sixth five year plan (1980-1985) that the government identified new areas where NGOs could participate, thus paving the way for their role in the development process. The areas identified were as follows:-

1. Optimal utilization and development of renewable source of energy including forestry.

2. Family welfare, nutrition, education and relevant community programs in the field.

3. Health.


5. Social welfare programs for weaker sections.

6. Implementation of minimum needs program.

7. Disaster preparedness and management (i.e. floods, cyclones, etc).
8. Promotion of ecology and tribal development.

9. Environmental protection and education.

The GoI envisioned a more active role for NGOs in the seventh five year plan (1985-1990) i.e. to aid in making communities as self-reliant as possible. NGOs were expected to show how indigenous resources could be used more profitably and how human resources in the rural areas that were grossly underutilized could be used for their own development. NGOs were likely to have more advantages over government in addressing issues that the government often failed to comprehend. The seventh five year plan (1992-97) documents had also envisioned voluntary efforts for better implementation of poverty alleviation programmes and minimum needs programmes.\textsuperscript{143}

At the end of the seventh five year plan, one important poverty alleviation programme for rural areas namely SGSY was conceived. In this programme, the rural poor were sought to be organized into self help groups (SHG) through social mobilization. Against this backdrop, SGSY’s guidelines emphasize the role of NGOs in facilitating the process of social mobilization among the poor. The programme guideline recognizes the importance of bringing in NGOs who are considered to be better equipped than government agencies to facilitate social mobilization.\textsuperscript{144} They are expected to be involved in the formation and nurturing of the SHGs as well as in monitoring its progress. Their service can also be utilized for provision of technology support and quality control of the group products.


from economic activities. In this way, NGOs are expected to contribute for the implementation of the SGSY programme.

In Churachandpur district, though the NGOs were not officially engaged by DRDA for SGSY programme’s implementation, they played an important role in the process of formation and nurturing of SHGs due to their involvement with SHGs movement in Churachandpur district. In fact, secular NGOs were found to be pioneers in starting SHGs movement in Churachandpur district and later on churches and government also came to form SHGs. Their role in spreading awareness about SGSY programme to villagers and in the formation of SHGs under SGSY could not be overlooked in Churachandpur district. NGOs such as Nazarene Christian Mission (NCM), Rural Women Upliftment Society (RWUS), Donbosco Social Service (DSS) and Good Samaritan were found to have played an important role in disseminating information about SGSY programme to the villagers. About 43 per cent of members of SHGs came to know about the programme through them. NGOs such as RWUS and DSS were also involved in training programmes organized by DRDA.

Further, in Churachandpur district, training programmes for SHGs have been organised by several NGOs from time to time. They organize these training programmes as a promoter of SHGs or as ordinary NGOs for the purpose of receiving funds from financial institutions like NABARD and government. In this way, SHGs promoted by NGOs have advantage over other SHGs in availing knowledge about the concept and functioning of SHGs. In fact, SHGs promoted by NGOs were found to be better versed
with the concept and functioning of SHGs than other SHGs. Mention may be made here that most of the groups claimed to benefit more from the skill upgradation training given by the NGOs than the one given by the DRDA.

### III.6. Assessment of the overall performances of implementing agencies

The foregoing discussion shows that in Churachandpur district, there is marginal success in evolving an effective and responsive delivery system for the rural poor who are supposed to benefit from SGSY programme. This is evident from the actual roles played by the various implementing agencies as against their elaborate roles laid out in the SGSY’s guidelines.

Though active involvement of all the implementing agencies in the entire process of SGSY’s implementation is a prerequisite for the success of the programme, the extent of their involvement was not satisfactory. All the agencies involved in the implementation of SGSY programme such as VA, Line departments, NGOs, bank and DRDA did not fulfill the tasks they were entrusted to do. In many issues, they did not even start the task. Some reasons responsible for this situation are lack of awareness among implementing agencies about SGSY programme and their roles in its implementation and lack of actions from DRDA in terms of coordinating with the different agencies involved in implementation of the programme. Due to their lack of awareness about the programme and their roles entailed in it, many agencies did not perform the tasks expected from them. Further, due to lack of action from DRDA, implementing agencies like line departments and NGOs were not at all involved in
monitoring the progress of SHGs. The involvement of NGOs in other aspects of SGSY’s implementation such as formation and nurturing of SHGs were solely from their own initiative, not DRDAs.

Further, it is evident that line departments were not consulted properly for the skill upgradation training programmes and for preparation of project profile. Though the line departments were entrusted to verify whether SHGs have the necessary skill required for taking up economic activity and if not, take steps to train them according to the programme’s guideline, it was found that in Churachandpur district, they were not given the opportunity to do so. They were not included in planning the training programmes for SHGs. As a result, the quality of training imparted was not satisfactory according to the line departments and project profiles were not prepared for majority of the economic activities.

Also, due to the absence of Panchayat system in Churachandpur district, several functions important for the successful implementation of SGSY programme could not be performed.

The elaborate roles of implementing agencies prescribed in the SGSY’s guidelines and their actual role in the field shows that there is a marginal success in evolving an effective and responsive delivery system for the rural poor. The reason can be that only at the programme level changes were initiated but not at the organizational and administrative levels, particularly at village and block levels. Though a systematic
process of implementation was laid out in the programme guidelines, however, in Churachandpur district and for that matter in the entire hill areas of Manipur, absence or minimal presence of the key implementing agencies and infrastructure hampers the implementation of SGSY programme. By simplifying the procedures and rules of the delivery system, proper rapport can be promoted between the delivery system and the target group, which in turn will be instrumental in alleviating poverty in the rural areas.

Thus, a study on the roles of implementing agencies involved in the implementation of SGSY programme in Churachandpur district shows that though some works were done by a few officials, the active involvement of different agencies in a coordinated manner was absent due to lack of accountability among them. The partial involvement of all the implementing agencies appears to be quite limited in the whole process of implementation. The role of the implementing agencies in the implementation of SGSY programme as a whole therefore shows that it falls short of expectation.