



CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

WOMEN IN INDIA

Introduction:

According to 2011 census the total population of India is 121.01 crores. Even among them women population 58, 64, 69,174 (48.45 per cent). Even though in a majority of developed countries the sex ration tilts in favour of the females, in India it has always been in favour of the males.

The main reasons of this decline in sex ratio is the gross neglect of women's health resulting in a high rate of female mortality, preference to have a male child and a low socio-economic status of women. While poets and writers view with each other in enumerating Indian women's qualities which have been beautifully summed up thus: "Indian womanhood has withstood valiantly the challenges and ravages of time, economic depressions, invasions, social problems, religious upheavals and political turbulence. It has adopted itself to social changes and new developments in leadership demands. The ancient religious background has given India women a heritage of the finest spiritual values and ideals that human imagination has created - ideals of chastity and courage. Women as the bedrock of the home and family have carried forward over centuries these qualities strengthened them". But, despite all these qualities, she has never been given due regard in the society. On the other hand, our social attitudes have always been to suppress a woman and stress upon her that her activities should remain confined to fulfilling her duties as a wife and a mother only.

Indian women is a multi-faceted personality. She is the better half of man, his wife and companion. She is the procreator the mother of his children. She is the pivot around whom the whole household revolves. Hard working and dedicated, she has a

big share of duties and responsibilities. House-keeping, child-rearing, assisting in agriculture and industry, cattle-rearing, are all part of her duties. She is responsible for preparing food and caring for the husband and children. She takes care of food production, food processing, food preparation and serving, cleaning the household, carrying water sometimes from very long distances- gathering fuel and fodder for the cattle, washing clothes and utensils, sewing and weaving, looking after the health, nutrition, education and other social and material needs of the children, managing the household with her meager resources, and planning for her daughter's future are among her more heavy responsibilities. She exerts a great influence on the moral, social and mental development of her children. But, she herself continues to be under-developed and oppressed.¹

In India, rural women constitutes 75 per cent of the female population and of these at least 80 per cent of the rural women participate in economic activities, and this fact remains unnoticed in our census². Our women participate in agricultural activities like sowing, weeding, transplanting, manuring, harvesting, winnowing, shelling and storing of crops. Only the selling of crops, if there is any surplus or in the case of cash crops, is the responsibility of the male members of the family. Though women make a very substantial contribution to the family income through home-based activities yet this is treated as supplemental and hence goes unnoticed.

DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE

The Community Development Programme:

The community Development Programme was formulated soon after the independence on the basis of experience gained from number of earlier indigenous experiments. This programme was launched in 1952 with the help of American contributed funds for training personnel, supplies and equipment. The ford

foundation was associated with this rural development scheme from the beginning and its major contribution was the financing of the first fifty 'pilot' projects established on an experimental basis. These were soon judged successful and became the model for the extension of the programme throughout the community.

Formulation of The Women's Component:

As originally conceived, the programme has no special provision for the integration of rural women in development. In fact, there is some evidence to show that policy maker deliberately avoided committing themselves in connection with women's work. The planner thought that the Social Education Organization (SEO) entrusted with the task of community organization in each development block and would try to draw women into such community. Central activities as adult literacy, crafts, etc., other needs of women such as health care were provided by the women health visitors and midwives attached to the health services.

The Mahila Mandal Scheme:

The Mahila Mandal was conceived as an institution for bringing new ideas and skills to village women and the agents of Mahila Mandals were women workers known as Gram Sevikas who worked directly with the women at the village level. They were supervised by other women known as Mukhya-Sevikas, and sometimes, by the Social Education Organiser, if the post was held by a woman. The Government itself, in the first instance under took the establishment of Mahila Mandals in the developed blocks. The tasks assigned to the Gram Sevikas were two-fold firstly, they were expected to teach village women certain practical skills and secondly the Gram Sevikas were supposed to help them organize for collective action on their own behalf by starting and running their own Mahila Mandals. Thereafter, the women themselves would become responsible for instituting and running their own

programmes and the Gram Sevikas would play only a marginal role. They would become, basically resource people linking the local women's institutions with the larger organization of the Community Development Programme (CDP) which initially would provide equipment, personnel and access to other appropriate agencies from which the women required help.

The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was formed as a Government agency to look after the welfare needs of women. Through a system of grant-in-aid, the CSWB helped voluntary social service agencies to expand and improve their work but, at first, the focus was chiefly on urban areas. In 1954 the CSWB instituted the Welfare Extension Project (WEP) was first started in non-CDP blocks with an intention of bringing at least some service to as many villages as possible under the scheme. Each extension Centre two to five villages offered childcare, supplementary feeding for children and pregnant women.

Failure of the Mahila Mandal Scheme:

The evaluation of women's programme has been cited in numerous studies and reports since 1950's and a variety of factors have been attributed for its failure³. These evaluations have used basically three different approaches to the problem. The earliest of them focused on the socio-cultural factors such as the ignorance and isolation of village women that inhibited them from beginning involved in Mahila Mandal activities.

International Aid to Women:

There are two major aspects to the role international aid agencies. (i) The Ford Foundation in the overall conceptualization of the programme and in the training of village workers. (ii) The role of project aid given for specific types of work concerning women. Viz., the ANP of the United Nations International Children's

Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the effects of American influence upon the training of woman workers are discussed below. Because of American aid and the adoption of the American approach for women's work, it is not surprising, that the training for it was also entirely American. Ford Foundation grants the costs of training women workers at selected Home Science Colleges whose principals have been trained in American methods with the help of foundation, sponsored travel grants in the USA, American text books were used for the training in India, and likewise American equipment for demonstrating home science techniques. The earliest criticism made by the outside observers was that much of this training was quite inappropriate for India. For example, there was little point in demonstrating the use of pressure cookers and refrigerators when both devices were ridiculously beyond the financial reach of rural women.

Of course, as they acquired experience of village life, trainers and workers adopted their training to suit Indian conditions but because of the emphasis on home management techniques, the initial impression given to rural women was that of irrelevance. This was one of the reasons why the programme could not originally attract rural women. The failure of the women's programme lies in the adoption of a middle class model biased towards home economics and welfare. This was due to the result of the policy makers university-dimensional view on the role of women as home maker and neglect of their contribution in macro productive work outside the home, whether remunerative or otherwise. They regarded women as weaker disadvantaged and dependent members of the society, and the kind of help they planned for them consigned them even more definitely to the restrictive sphere in which they were believed to live and work. Their disadvantaged status was provided for through welfare measures that attempted only to treat the symptoms of women's

inferior status, while they ignored its causes. The Mahila Mandal as an agency for implementing these plans reflected their shortcomings by becoming an organization for channeling welfare aid-not an instrument for mobilizing women for development⁴.

The adoption of welfare rather than development approach to women's problems ensured the failure of the programme. The success of welfares is dependent upon the availability of financial resources with which to carry on these services. But the government simply did not have enough resources to continue its support to such welfare programme of the magnitude or for the length of time required. Perhaps the policy makers hoped to circumvent this problem by stating their intention to make the Mahila Mandals independent, Self-sustaining Organizations supported by communities of local women.

To rehabilitate such women and their dependent children. Government launched a scheme in 1977 to provide vocational training-Cum-employment and residential care so that these women could become economically independent. This envisages training of short duration not exceeding a year. The expenditure for this scheme is shared by the Central Government, State Government and the employment organizations. Voluntary agencies registered as societies/trusts, District Rural Development Agencies, Panchayats and other local bodies are eligible for assistance under this programme. Since the inception of the scheme, 473 training course benefiting 16,450 women have been sanctioned for support training and employment programmes for women (STEP) .This scheme was launched in 1987, with the aims to upgrade the skills of poor and asset less women and to provide training and employment on a sustainable basis in the traditional sectors of agriculture, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, animal husbandry, social forestry, wasteland development, etc. Since, inception of this programme, it has provided an employment opportunities

to lakhs of women. To train women belonging to weaker section of society and provide them employment on sustained basis, the Government of India has launched an employment and income generating production units programme in 1982-83. This programme was implemented through public sector undertakings, Corporation autonomous bodies and Voluntary Organizations.

With an aim to develop a new sense of awareness among women, particularly those in rural areas, and empower them to become active participants in the process of social transformation and regeneration, the Government of India implemented Indira Mahila Yojana. The scheme visualizes an integrated deliver of services to women and children.

The Government has finalized a proposal to Set-up a national resource centre for women which act as an apex body for promoting and incorporating gender perspectives in policies and programmes of the Government. A pilot project to test the concepts and methodologies underlying the National Resource Centre has been successful implemented recently.

Rural development is the top most priority of the age and hence a matter of global concern. The Concept of Rural Development in its true scientific meaning has gained momentum only during the past few years. Development has been described as a genetic term meaning, growth evolution, stage of inducement or progress. It is because, most of the population resides in rural areas. Women constitute nearly half of the total rural population. According to 2011 Census, the total population of India was 121.01 crores of which rural population accounted to 83.30 crores. among the total rural population 52.91 crores (51.52%) were males and 49.79 crores (48.48%) were females.

In the above conditions several development programmes have been launched to improve the socio-economic conditions of the rural women during the Sixth Five Year Plan period namely "Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), a Sub- scheme of Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1982-83. The main objective of this programme is to provide income generating activities for women, which will have a positive impact on the economic activities and nutritional status of the family. It also attempts to provide an organizational support in terms of a delivery system for the assisted women, So that they can become effective recipients of goods and services available in that area. The scheme was implemented in 50 Selected districts of India on a pilot basis and later on extended to 240 districts all over the country.

Review of Literature:

Various studies have been undertaken to study the role and status of women in India and participation of women in rural development programme.

R.C. Aggarwal observed that in India, women have played a dominant role in national construction during the last decade. They are closely associated and integrated in to the social and economic development of the Country, and are actively participating in the planning and implementation of various national programmes.

Anitha Anand in her book "Employment and Education" Stated that rural women contribute, both directly and indirectly towards productive tasks in a rural Society in India, women mark up to 80 to 90 per cent of the agricultural labour force and produce 44 per cent of the total food.

Brachlaus pointed out that in developing countries there are hardly any project to train women in modern techniques of production, or to inform them about market and credit facilities inspite of the fact that women play an important role in economic

activities. Gandhiji observed that “Women is the companion of men gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in minutest details of the activities of man and she has the same right of freedom and liberty. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have.”

The Declaration of 1975 as the International Women’s Year the United Nations decade for women by the International Community is perhaps the most important development which resulted a turning point. It may be recalled at this juncture that discrimination against women violates the principle of equality of rights and respect for human dignity is an obstacle to the participation of women. an equal terms with men in the political, Social, economic and cultural life of their countries. hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficulties the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity.

Gopinath and Kalra studied the economic activities and work pattern of village women in Gujarat. Their study shows that women are typically involved in agriculture, domestic and community related activities. Although not reflected in field crop data, women in households with cattle invest considerable time in caring for the cattle and in dairy production.

Government of India reported that, women contribute largely to country’s economy which is mainly agriculture based. Although distribute justice has been categorically underlined in all the development plans, the needs of women have not been adequately addressed.

S.P.Jain stated that a majority of women in rural areas attend to domestic work and those who are engaged in free collection of goods(Vegetable, roots, fish,

fire wood, cattle feed etc.) and providing services (Sewing, Weaving, maintenance of kitchen gardens, orchards, poultry etc.). The number of rural women in the age group 15-49 years, engaged in domestic work is estimated at 43.8 million, and those engaged in free collection of goods and services is 26.6 million.

Mencher in a study of predominantly landless household in a sample set of villages in Kenda in Tamil Nadu regions demonstrated that women work for long and hard hours, contributing all of their incomes for household's maintenance in the context of substantial poverty.

Majumdar while the economic role of upper class women within agricultural societies are confined to processing and storage of agricultural products within the home, the landless lower class women are engaged in work labour and suffer from over extended work days, poverty, malnutrition and perpetual insecurity.

Nayak, J.T. stated that, man and woman are born equal and both play vital role in the creation and development of their families in particular and the society in general. Woman is not only a bread distributor but she is also as bread winner. She is working shoulder to shoulder with men. The greatest contribution of the Indian women like her counterpart in other parts of the world is through home, husband and children.

Netranji rightly observed that "in order to awaken the people, it is the women who has to be awakened once she is on the move, the household moves, the villages move and the community moves and through the women's efforts the children are made healthier and became good citizens. In order to encourage the women into the mainstream of the development several areas of interventions have been identified for their upliftment.

Recent studies and experiences of Non Governmental organizations (NGO's) "Various studies by Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)" (Ahmedabad, Shramashakti, 1988) working with rural poor women have revealed. (a) Women are engaged in more occupations than their men, (b) By measures of hours and days women work more than men, (c) Such women have a natural gift of adaptability to all kinds of situations and occupations. They tend to under-value personal disadvantages for the benefit of the family, (d) receptivity to new ideas, technologies, employment, training and secular social concern for others in similar situation are more pronounced in women than men.

According to Pushpa Joshi (compiled) "Centre for Women's Development Studies" (New Delhi, Navjivan Press, 1988) Women in poverty remain unrepresented not only on traditional institutions of power but also on the statutory bodies of local government and decision-making process. Trade unionism has hardly penetrated the hard core of the unorganized sector making poor women, politically invisible.

Rajmal Dev Das reported that rural women in our country share abundant responsibilities and perform a wide spectrum of duties in running the household and the family (like child care, collection of fodder and fuel, cooking, washing and sewing), as well as attending to farm activities, dairy, animal husbandry and extending a helping hand in rural artisanship and handicrafts.

Roma Majumdar observed that the task force after analyzing the present situation regarding women's development programmes suggested that the key components of all training programmes for development administrators should be as follows:

1. The understanding to key concepts of the goals underlying development policies of the country.

2. Articulating the multiple roles of the administrators such as informant, co-ordinator, promoter, mobiliser, linkage builder, educator, monitor etc. Examining their perceptions and biases regarding women through a process of dialogue and exposure to realities.
3. Broadening the possibilities for women's involvement in various types of development activities by questioning the established framework.

Sharma in his analysis of women's work in Northern India records women's agricultural expertise. He notes that women spent much effort on milch animals and the value of women's work in this area is considerable and can hardly be called a side activity.

Tinker, I, in his book "the adverse impact of Development on Women," Stated that women are a part of labour force. She produces not merely goods and services, but is a prime source of accelerating human race. Thus, from the point of view of increasing labour force as well as of involving themselves in production and service activities. Their active and positive participation cannot be over looked. But throughout the world, the rural women have been under-represented in the development process

N.J.Usha Rao in her book "Women in a Developing Society" mentions that the Mahila Mandals were formed to act as a nucleus of Centre around which a number of activities for women were organized to improve the socio-economic status of the rural women. A number of voluntary agencies both local based as well as branches of central organization like All India Women's Conference, National Women's Council, Bharatiya Gramina Mahila Sangh, Indian Council for Social work etc., have been rendering useful service in the welfare women.

U.N report of International Conference on Women's Decade. 1985 also reported that besides familial roles, women participate in a number of economic activities.

Veenakumari in her article "Socio- economic Status of Women in India" has stated that, the orientation of a society as a whole regarding the desirability that women should play an equal part in the country's development was taken as a very important Pre-condition for the advancement not only of women but the country as a whole.

The importance attached to development of women can be gauged from the fact that it is included as one of the agenda items of the World Conference on Agrarian Reforms and Rural Development held in 1979. It formed part of the declaration of principles and programme of action adopted by the Conference. The principle relating to workers emphasis that women should participate and contribute on equal basis with men in the social, economic and political process of rural development and share fully in improved conditions of life in rural areas.

Studies on DWCRA Programme:

During the decade of Eighties, a special programme for the rural women was launched on a pilot basis i.e., Development of Women and children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). Its primary ambition is to provide income generating through correlative efforts. Government of India sponsored for evaluation studies by four institutions. These institutions have conducted studies on DWCRA programme with limited geographical coverage. The conclusions differ from one another. Some other important studies are discussed below.

The Centre for Regional Ecological and Science Studies in Development Alternatives (CRESSIDA) had undertaken a study of DWCRA in Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal. The main findings of the study are as follows:

1. The performance of Sikkim in the field of DWCRA is not very impressive in the qualitative terms but quantitatively the progress in the state has been much better than in the neighbouring states of Tripura and West Bengal.
2. The slow progress in Tripura has been attributed to inadequate ground work at the policy and implementation levels.
3. In west Bengal, while the scheme has made little progress in Bankura. The study team report has appreciated the approach west Bengal Government in the implementation of the programme. The schemes selected those for which capital investment is low.

The study also pointed out that complicated technology is not required. Dependence on outside market raw materials, maintenance of equipment and outlet of products are to be minimized.

Punjab State Institute of Public Administration (PSIPA), 1985 Chandigarh has undertaken an evaluation study and concluded the failures of DWCRA in Punjab is due to non –release of matching financial allocations by the State Government during 1983-84 official red-tapism and dominance of white women groups in Mahila Mandals of Punjab enthusiastic official machinery and lack of involvement of voluntary agencies are also responsible for poor performance of DWCRA programme.

Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Rajasthan undertaken another study in Bauswara, Alwar Districts of Rajasthan and observed that DWCRA helped in incremental income, acquisition of new skills and access to credit.

National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) in its evaluation study (1988) covering Bihar, Manipur, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu conducted and observed that:

1. It was found that a large percentage of DWCRA beneficiaries were in agriculture and allied activity sector
2. A majority of DWCRA respondents were prompt in repaying the loans. Further, a very high percentage requires the loan from the income generation by schemes. The factors identified for delay in repayment of loans were delay on the part of the Block Development Officer (BDO) followed by bankers.
3. In DWCRA individual preference for choice of schemes was not given due weightage. The calls for careful identification women in schemes to be given to them.

It is quite clear that the above studies touched on various aspects related to the DWCRA in India, but were mostly in a general way covering the problems of women and the implementation of the programme but did not touch the impact of DWCRA on specific categories of people. i.e., the Scheduled Caste women and Scheduled Tribe women and how far this programme has helped them to generate income and employment.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

An attempt is made to have a micro level study in selected villages of the Peapully Mandal of Kurnool district. Various aspects relating to the socio- economic background of the selected scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, backward castes and other caste women. Fruitfulness of the programmes already effected and reasons for the failure in safeguarding the benefits occurred through this free frame estimation of the number of beneficiaries who could generate additional income and employment

especially for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe. Backward Caste and Other Class women through each scheme and to suggest suitable ways which can really generate income and employment to the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Backward Caste and Other Caste Women in Peapully Mandal of Kurnool district with following objectives.

Objectives of the study :

1. To analyse the functioning of DWCRA programme in Kurnool District.
2. To examine the socio-economic conditions of the selected Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Backward Caste and other rural women who were covered under DWCRA.
3. To study the impact of the DWCRA programme on the standard of living Of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Backward Caste and other caste Women in Peapully Mandal.
4. To assess the number of rural women who could generate more income and employment through DWCRA programme.
5. To suggest the suitable measures at the effective implementation of DWCRA for development of women.

The present study is based on the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Backward Caste and other Caste women purposefully selected for the present study. The beneficiaries who were provided assistance under DWCRA during the year 2003-2010 were selected for the study. A well structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the beneficiaries of DWCRA. Personal visits were made to the

selected villages to make on the spot study of various socio-economic conditions of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Backward Caste and other Caste women

The secondary data was collected from annual reports, action plan of lead bank, reports of various studies and government publications. The basic literature relating to rural poverty, status of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe women and various aspects of rural development programmes and strategies was collected from various books and journals. Data also collected from various offices like the DRDA, Mandal offices, Legislatives, State Government and Research Institutions.

Sampling Design:

For the present study a medium developed Mandal was selected, from this mandal four villages were selected where the DWCRA programmes were implemented. From each scheme 40 beneficiaries belong to Scheduled Caste; Scheduled Tribe, Backward Caste and other Caste were selected.

For the purpose of arriving at the effectiveness of the DWCRA the information regarding the income and employment generated before the implementation of DWCRA programme and after implementation of DWCRA programme was collected and compared to find out whether the beneficiaries could be generated additional income and employment.

TABLE 1.1**SELECTED VILLAGES OF PEAPULLY MANDAL**

S.No.	Name of the Mandal	Name of the Selected Villages
1	Peapully	Kalachatla
		Mettupalli
		Vengalampalle
		N. Rangapuram

Source : Primary data

Caste wise and scheme wise distribution of sample beneficiaries are presented in Table 1.2

TABLE 1.2**CASTE-WISE AND ACTIVITY-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BENEFICIARIES**

Mandal	Caste-wise	Activity-wise	No. of women beneficiaries
Peapully	SC	Stone cutting	40
	ST	Bamboo Basket	40
	BC	Lime Bricking	40
	OC	Leaf Plate making & Toys making	40

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.2 shows the caste-wise and activity-wise distribution of the selected beneficiaries in the Mandal. The data shows that 40 beneficiaries belongs to scheduled caste who were engaged stone cutting were selected and 40 beneficiaries belong to Scheduled Tribes engaged by Bamboo Basket and 40 beneficiaries belong

to backward caste from Lime Bricking activity and 40 other caste beneficiaries belong to Leaf Plate making / Toys making were selected.

Survey:

A household survey was conducted to study the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries and to find out the extent of income and employment generated from the given assistance under DWCRA.

Tools of Analysis:

Based on the objectives of the study, simple percentages were calculated and tabulated to bring out a systematic analysis.

LIMITATIONS:

The present study is mandal specific and time specific. The field data collected pertaining to the DWCRA for the period of 2003-2010. The quality and reliability of the data were ensured by repeated visits to the beneficiaries. The conclusions arrived at and the inferences drawn are applicable to the selected beneficiaries in the mandal during the period of operation of the programme.

REFERENCES:

1. See Ghadially (1988) Government of India (1974, 1980, 1988). Pp. 1-2 and Jefferely (1979) for excellent detailed discussions on these very vital issues.
2. On the role of women in Development, one can see the works of Acharya (1984), Boserup (1970), Gupta (1986), OECCD (1985) and Rogers (1979).
3. PEO Report, "Report of the Study Team on Community Projects" and M.J.Coldwell, R.Dumant and M.Read, "Report of a Community Development Evaluation Mission in India" Government of India, Ministry of Commerce, Development and Coöperation, New Delhi, 1959. '
4. Punach Development palling for women in women and National Development, pp. 14-21.