CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

AND

SUGGESTIONS
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

NGOs in India have long historical legacies as voluntary action has been an integral part of our national life and character. Before independence the NGOs were existing in our country but during that period their roles were very limited. After independence, the NGOs emerged as vital force of change to overcome many barriers. This led to a shift in their approach from philanthropic to constructive work for nation building. At this juncture, many new professionally trained young social workers from different academic institutions joined NGOs and this resulted in the growth of NGOs in India. When Planning Commission was constituted Subhas Chandra Bose first recognized that NGOs should be involved in India's economic growth. The idea led to the inclusion of NGOs in successive Five Year Plans. Moreover, the Planning Commission by involving the NGOs in their successive Five Year Plans, could understand the importance of NGOs in ushering rural development because they were capable to perform well. NGOs are comparatively small, flexible, innovative and participatory in nature and are more successful in reaching the poor at the ground level for their upliftment. The success of the NGOs in the area of rural development ensured a greater recognition in the Seventh Five Year Plan as compared to the Sixth Five Year Plan, where they were assigned a limited role. At this
stage the NGOs gained expertise and competence from traditional to non-traditional areas.

After Seventh Five Year Plan, the Planning Commission in consultation with the prospective NGOs working at the all India level formulated policy for NGOs to work in the rural development sector in every successive Five Year Plan. Thus it is evident from the study that one of the factors for the growth of NGOs in India is due to the involvement of the NGOs in the successive Five Year Plans.

Apart from the above there are various factors responsible for the growth of NGOs in India. The NGOs, by and large are influenced by the cultural and socio-economic factors of a society or a region. The NGOs are formed to encourage activities to preserve or sustain the culture of a specific society or region. If a society or a region is poor and backward, and afflicted with problems such as poverty, unemployment, poor health and lack of basic facilities, the NGOs emerge at this particular situation for the growth of the society or region.

In the context of conceptualization of NGOs, it is 'non-governmental' meaning it has freedom to operate, at least in ideal terms on its own principles and programmes. It is for this reason called Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which has gained considerable importance in national and international parlance. NGOs are voluntary, autonomous, non-profit organizations of the groups of citizens who establish these to address various problems and disadvantages of the society.
In many areas the NGOs are more popular and competent rather than the government agencies. In view of this, the research study is undertaken on NGOs and their impact on the rural people through the implementation of various rural development programmes. Thus for this study two districts i.e. South 24 Parganas and Nadia have been selected purposively from the state of West Bengal. The researcher has selected these two districts as he is familiar with the geographical, cultural, social and economic status of both the districts which are easily accessible for him to conduct the study. It is seen that out of these two districts, South 24 Parganas district is located nearer to Kolkata and many NGOs have availed of this opportunity.

It has been recorded that 202 NGOs are working in South 24 Parganas district and 64 NGOs in Nadia district and they are implementing various rural development programmes for the upliftment of the rural poor. Out of the total number of NGOs in both the districts a sample of 60 NGOs (South 24 Parganas - 42 and Nadia - 18) have been selected through random sampling for the study. In addition to this, 31 Panchayat members (South 24 Parganas - 25 and Nadia - 6) are also considered for the study where the NGOs are located to justify the collaborating efforts of the two agencies i.e. NGOs and Panchayats in the rural development sector.
It is evident from the study that there are four types of NGOs i.e. Local, Regional, National and International. Further, the NGOs are classified according to their geographical area of operation.

Two major agencies i.e. NGOs and Panchayats are working for the development of rural areas. It has been observed that there is very little collaboration and majority of them work in isolated manner. To strengthen rural development programmes and to achieve the desired goals, collaboration between these two agencies is essential. Comparing and analysing the NGOs status in both the districts, it is observed that the NGOs of South 24 Parganas district have a better position than the NGOs of Nadia district as they have maintained records and documentation in a systematic way. They have also adequate knowledge regarding collaboration with network based NGOs in the all India level and they have performed well. The study reveals that large network based NGOs are located in Kolkata and they provide training, expertise and guidance for the funding of projects which are facilitated by the NGOs of this district because they are closer to them.

III
In view of studying the historical background of the sample districts i.e. South 24 Parganas and Nadia, it shows that both the districts’ geographical set up and socio-economic status are almost identical. Both two districts have rivers, agrarian economy, traditional craft of different kinds, festivities, religious and tourist places. It is also seen that both the districts are located
nearby the Indo-Bangladesh border. Besides, the Sundarban region of South 24 Parganas district has many creeks, canals, and mangrove vegetation. The region is socially and economically backward than the other areas of South 24 Parganas and Nadia districts.

IV

Studying the profiles of 20 sample blocks of South 24 Parganas district and 9 sample blocks of Nadia district, it has been observed that 8 blocks which are under the Sundarban region of South 24 Parganas district are most backward than the other sample blocks. Some of these Sundarban blocks are in the interior areas and also far from the city Kolkata connected by means of rivers, creeks and canals. In these interior and backward blocks, NGOs have emerged to take up challenging tasks and to implement various rural development programmes for the uplift of rural poor people.

Panchayat Members and Their Reaction: Considering the socio-economic profile of the Panchayat members, 74.2 percent of the Panchayat members are elected from the middle aged groups of 31-40 years and 41–50 years. Very few are in the age groups of below 30 years and above 51-60 years. In terms of sex-wise distribution 67.7 per cent are males but the rest are females. Excepting 1 case, all of them are married. The academic qualifications of the Panchayat members are secondary standard and below secondary level which represent 48.4 per cent and 25.8 per cent respectively. Very negligible numbers of persons have passed primary, higher secondary and graduate levels of education. The main occupations of
the Panchayat members are business and agriculture which represent 35.6 per cent and 32.2 per cent respectively. While 16.2 per cent female Panchayat members are housewives only. Very marginal section of population is involved as medical practitioners, tailors and labourers. In context of monthly income of the Panchayat members, 35.5 per cent earn Rs. 2501 to Rs. 5000 whereas 29 per cent earn Rs. 5001 to Rs. 7500. The rest draw monthly income up to Rs. 2500 (25.8 per cent) and as many as 7500 (9.7 per cent). The study points out that majority of the Panchayat members are elected from middle and higher income groups.

The Panchayat members have implemented various rural development projects from their target areas to improve the socio-economic life of the rural people. 59.2 per cent Panchayat members have emphasized on infrastructural development like road construction, Indira Awas Yojana Programme, guard wall construction, primary school construction etc. Further, 20.8 per cent have prioritized on social development which include old and widow pension, relief, ICDS programme, pulse polio, street lighting etc. Apart from these, 16.7 per cent have implemented economic development programme which comprise SGSY programme, loan facilities, national rural employment guarantee scheme (NREGS) etc. Thus very few have undertaken environment development measures which involve social forestry, smokeless chullah and arsenic free tube-wells.

In-order to implement these rural development programmes, the Panchayat members have faced various problems. 36 per cent problems are focused on low financial allotment, 22 per cent on political interference and
resistance of opponent groups to solve the common problems. Further, Panchayat members acknowledge some other problems like selection of beneficiaries, delay in implementation of the projects, non-cooperation of the people, interference of Panchayat samiti in the panchayat area etc.

To solve these problems, 48 per cent members have suggested more financial allocation by the government, 26 per cent members need cooperation of the opponent groups and participation of people mobilized by NGOs for solution of common issues. A very few demand proper selection of beneficiaries, proper assessment of BPL households, quick disposal of projects etc.

The co-ordination between NGOs and Panchayat members play a crucial role to achieve success in rural development projects. It is evident from the study that the co-ordination between these two agencies is not up to the mark in various rural development programmes. Excepting a very few, all of them are working in an isolated manner.

The NGOs have implemented number of rural development projects for the development of rural poor class. To undertake various rural development projects NGOs have to understand local needs, problems and available resources. Their capacity to involve local people and to secure their participation is also another major role of NGOs. The members of the NGOs
also develop new strategies and approaches for rural development without incurring large expenditures.

While examining the rural development projects which are implemented by the NGOs, majority (61.6 per cent) of them are interested in social sectors which include health, awareness generation, low cost latrines, creche programme, welfare for the disabled, anti-trafficking programme, charitable dispensary etc. 31.7 per cent have given importance on economic development which involves self help groups, SGSY programme, skill training, income generation etc. Only 6.7 per cent organizations are concentrated on environment development programmes like smokeless chullah, social forestry, solar energy, environmental awareness etc.

It is observed that in-terms of planning, implementation, selection of beneficiaries, monitoring etc related to rural development projects are done by NGOs themselves in many cases. There is need of more decentralization of their efforts and people’s involvement so that the people can work in a self reliant manner.

Evaluation is the nerve centre of rural development organizations which direct the organizations to perform effectively. It is seen that many NGOs are giving importance on internal evaluation which are done by themselves with their limited knowledge. External agencies like academic institutions, research institutes, training institutions etc are also invited to rectify their mistakes and to strengthen their organizational works.

The beneficiaries are attached to various rural development programmes launched by NGOs who are poor households and belong to
below poverty line level households. 25 per cent are marginal farmers, 20 per cent are labourers, 16.7 per cent are below poverty line families and 13.3 per cent are small farmers. The remaining percentages are scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities, women, children, old aged people etc.

Co-ordination among NGOs and between NGOs and Panchayats are very much important to ensure deserving results in the rural development sector. During the course of field study, it has been observed that the NGOs which are located at the village level, collaborate with each other but in the NGOs forum level this collaboration is missing due to various reasons like lack of institutional arrangements from village, block, district and state levels, lack of people leadership, lack of proper planning, groupism among members etc. While studying the co-ordination between NGOs and Panchayats, it is observed that excepting very few, the co-ordination between these two agencies is also not up to the mark. These agencies are working in isolated manner. Panchayat members are not free to work independently with the NGOs because they are controlled by partymen. Not a single programme was planned jointly by these agencies in rural areas for the upliftment of rural people. Only CINI, a national based NGO of South 24 Parganas district is working successfully, jointly with Panchayats in the health sector.

VI

While analysing the socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries, majority (70 per cent) of the beneficiaries are youth and adults having their ages 30 years to 40 years. According to sex-wise distribution, 66.7 per cent
beneficiaries are females but the rest are males. Majority of them are women, as NGOs consider women as the most vulnerable group for development, so there is a growing emphasis on gender dimension by the donor agencies and the government also. In view of marital status, 86.7 per cent are married but the rest are unmarried. Regarding occupation of beneficiaries, 38.3 per cent are involved in agriculture, 26.7 per cent are engaged in business but others are housewives, labourers, service holders etc. In respect of annual income of the beneficiaries, 41.7 per cent annual income is around Rs. 20,000 and 30 per cent earn Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 but they all belong to below the poverty line. In context of land ownership status, 58.3 per cent beneficiaries are landless agricultural households, 38.3 per cent are marginal farmer households but the rests are small and medium farmer households. In view of religion and caste-wise distribution, 70 per cent of the beneficiaries are the Hindus and 30 per cent are the Minorities i.e. the Muslims and the Christians. Among the Hindu religious group, again 38.3 per cent are Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. It is evident from the study that majority of the beneficiaries are benefited in the rural development projects of NGOs who are poor and below the poverty line.

25 per cent of beneficiaries have stated that their income levels have increased and 16.7 per cent have realised that it has also opened the avenues of self employment opportunities. Such results are only available due to implementing skill training and availability of loan facilities through SHGs organised by NGOs. It has been observed that in some cases if husbands are incapable to earn, their wives having some vocational skill run
their own business independently by the support and guidance of NGOs. 11.7 per cent have said that self help groups or SGSY programmes have encouraged them to start their own business or enterprise by easily providing loan from SHGs or SGSY programmes. Before the formation of SHGs / SGSY programmes the women were only housewives but now they have started business to raise income for their families by easily getting loan from SHGs or SGSY programmes. Further, they have been liberated from exploitation, domestic violence and patriarchal domination of the society after the formation of SHGs or SGSY programme. It has been observed that in many areas women SHGs are taking up challenging task in different social issues prevailing in the society. 10 per cent beneficiaries have been inspired with the rising income of the families and uplifting educational programme of NGOs. 10 per cent acknowledge that health awareness programmes generate consciousness of various diseases, before that they were ignorant about it. This in turn helps to take up preventive measures to maintain proper health because it plays crucial role in the socio-economic life of the families and also reduces health expenditure. 5 per cent specifically women attain privacy and security for going to toilets due to the provision of low cost latrines provided for their families.

There are also drawbacks in the rural development projects implemented by NGOs. 16.7 per cent have identified that there are no linkages between market outlets and the sale of finished products. 11.7 per cent beneficiaries have opined that it is difficult to maintain records due to lack of proper education. Some of them have also mentioned about poor loan facilities(11.7%) and lack of skill training(10.0%). Besides, there are
also other weaknesses like no capacity building power for SHGs, lack of veterinary support, no provision of loan facilities after completion of training etc. The NGOs should review these weaknesses and would try to strengthen the rural development programmes in-order to create greater impact upon the beneficiaries.

VII

The NGOs have faced series of problems to implement various rural development projects which propagate slow progress in the rural development sector. It is found that problems faced by different categories of NGOs are almost similar nature.

While studying the board members problems, 36.7 per cent have no time, 23.3 per cent have talked about a second line of leadership, 13.3 per cent have acknowledged about lack of experience among board members and 11.7 per cent have mentioned that there is no interest and team spirit to take up challenging task in voluntary works.

In dealing with the beneficiaries, the organizations have experienced various problems. 35 per cent have mentioned that the beneficiaries have more expectation from NGOs. Further, 30 per cent have observed illiteracy, poor participation and lack of consciousness among the beneficiaries by which it becomes difficult to organize them. In addition to these, 23.3 per cent have remarked high rate of poverty among the beneficiaries and no proper measures are taken to implement need based projects.

Considering the problems related with the staff of the organizations, 30 per cent have said about poor salary, 25 per cent have reported that they have no experience in village development work and there is no scope for
training facilities. 11.7 per cent have mentioned that the staff or personnel are not sincere, punctual and qualified. Moreover, 5 per cent staff or personnel have shown their desires for shifting in other organizations for better assignments.

In view of dealing with the problems of Panchayat members, 41.7 per cent have shown a feeling of non-cooperation attitude towards NGOs. Besides, 23.3 per cent have said that they have no interest in social development. 11.7 per cent have shown their jealous and 8.3 per cent Panchayat members have poor knowledge in rural development.

The internal problems experienced by the organizations mainly are financial constraint identified by 56.6 per cent. 21.7 per cent mention that lack of knowledge to sustain projects and lack of technical personnel in their organizations are also considered as important aspects.

In context of external problems of the organizations, 38.4 per cent have mentioned non-cooperation of government agencies towards NGOs. 23.3 per cent have stated political interference in NGOs work and 16.7 per cent have mentioned that lack of co-ordinations among NGOs which also become difficult to take up rural development works effectively. 13.3 per cent have stated lack of cooperation from academic institutions or professional bodies regarding technical advice and guidance to strengthen rural development works.

Considering infrastructural problems of the organizations, 35 per cent have stated that their organizations have no permanent office building of their own. 21.7 per cent have mentioned lack of sufficient furniture in their offices and 18.3 per cent have stated that there is no computer facilities. 13.3 per
cent have specified devoid of training hall, equipments and teaching aids which create hindrances to undertake various training programmes of the organizations.

Lastly it can be concluded that the hypotheses which have been drawn in Research Design, Chapter two are tested in this research study and the results are depicted in the following discussion:

**Results:**

**Hypothesis i:** It is evident from the data that the organizations having more funds are capable to undertake more projects whereas organizations who have less funds implement less number of projects which are closely related. It is also seen that regional based NGOs and national based NGOs are financially strong and they are running more projects than the local and international based NGOs because they are financially weak than the former. Hence this hypothesis is accepted on the basis of data and field study is concerned.

**Hypothesis ii:** The availability of resources of the organizations, infrastructural support and human resource or manpower extensively vary according to strata of the NGOs. The infrastructural support of the organizations includes land, building, equipments, vehicles, computer machines, furniture etc. While the human resource or manpower of the organizations involves professional skill holders, experienced and qualified staff, technical personnel etc. The availability of these two components again closely depend upon finance. The NGOs with higher human resources or
manpower manage to take up more projects than the NGOs having less human resources or manpower. It has been pointed out that regional and national based NGOs have more human resources or manpower and are capable to execute more projects rather than the local and international based NGOs which have less human resources or manpower. It was noted that a national based NGO named as Child-In-Need Institute (CINI), located in village Amgachia of South 24 Parganas district has largest fund, manpower or human resources and infrastructural facilities etc. This organization is performing well rather than all other NGOs and has gained good reputation both in India and abroad specially in the area of health sector. Thus hypothesis ii is accepted.

**Hypothesis iii**: The smooth functioning of rural development projects depends upon the degree of people’s participation ensured by NGOs. The NGOs indicated that the peoples’ participation were seen in the areas of mobilising and motivating the people for acceptance of projects, sharing of volunteers, financial contribution to a certain extent, selection of beneficiaries, survey of the area to identify needs, arrangement of meeting to present their problems and needs, sharing of local leadership etc. for various projects. Thus it is difficult to quantify the degree of people’s participation in different projects undertaken by the organizations. It has been observed that of all the projects, SHGs or SGSY programmes have shown good responses and people’s participation. In this programme, women take active part and they are the centre stage of development. In the form of formation of groups they take challenging tasks to fight for the evil causes of society. Under
such situation, they interact with one another, discuss economic and social issues and find out different ways for solution. Finally they are involved in building up of collective action, handling of finance independently, liaison with financial institutions, record keeping, close link with government administration etc. When there is any domestic violence in the village they resist it collectively and take concrete decision by organising meetings in the victims houses. It is encouraging to note that a women’s organization undertaking SHGs in the village Rekha of Diamond Harbour – II block, South 24 Parganas district planned to close down the country liquor shops in the village by their active participation and government support. Another women organization named as Madhavpur Women In-need of Mandir Bazar block, South 24 Parganas district is also worth mentionable. One of the SHGs has taken up auction or lease of Khia ghat by paying Rs. 1 lakh to Government of West Bengal but earlier such lease or auction of Khia ghat was possessed by a single person. This was possible because the self help group (SHG) had developed confidence and cooperation with the associated banks. The annual income from this Khia ghat is Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs. It has been pointed out that people’s participation is greater in SHGs rather than other projects. During the course of field study it is also observed that some women are associated with SHGs and they are managing their families successfully without the help of their husbands and two such case studies 4 and 7 in chapter VI have been referred.
SUGGESTIONS

Finding out the results of the study the following suggestions are streamlined to activate NGOs and Panchayat members in different rural development sectors.

1] The NGOs should act as agents of change and must decentralise its efforts considering that they themselves should be people's organizations, they should help the development of the grass root organizations and become self reliant through local leadership and they should not attempt to operate projects directly.

2] Academic institution or independent agency should be committed towards building capacities of NGOs both in terms of institutional and sectoral terms. They should design and develop various approaches to enhance the capacities. This includes organising training in the areas of project formulation and report writing, accounting and financial management, account and transparency, human resource development, networking and removal of other knowledge gaps in rural development for providing much more intensive support in terms of handholding. All these initiatives must be taken in a planned manner to instill a comprehensive support package to NGOs, capacity building has no top or bottom line and no end and should not become end in itself.

3] Research and academic institutions should provide ideas, tools and thoughts that are grounded in NGOs values and conceptual frames.
State of-the-art paper, programme evaluation and policy report can inform the NGOs about their roles and impact. Therefore, NGOs should collaborate with research and academic institutions, which deal with relevant policy issues and help to strengthen each others work.

4] Development of database of NGOs should be maintained by government agencies and it should be periodically updated including details of experience, skill areas and geographical coverage. Such database information would be useful for everyone, particularly in terms of efforts towards integrated planning by government, academic institutions to take up research work on different NGOs' issues and finally NGOs may develop their contacts and linkages to work with mutual understanding.

5] Monitoring and evaluation should be given priority by the organizations and these should not be undertaken by the organizations themselves only but by the support of external agencies i.e. professional bodies, research institutions, training institutions, academic institutions etc. Further, understanding the tools which are necessary for designing and maintaining, monitoring and evaluation system with specific indicators to sustain the programmes should be given priority.

6] The NGOs must emphasise on training of leadership skills in the villages so that a local leadership could be developed and NGOs could move to next generation leaders subsequently reducing dependence on old and feeble board members and individuals. Besides, developing
local leadership, the NGOs can build strong local base and sustainability of the organizations depending upon proper leadership which in turn will create a road map between the people and government. Moreover, such leadership training will also help to change the leadership pattern in the villages and better functioning of PRIs (Panchayat Raj Institutions).

7) The NGOs forums should be well structured from village to state levels. Proper representation of all NGOs, designing of proper planning among themselves, feeling of oneness, managerial skills, regular interactions and necessary linkages are to be developed between government, donor agencies and member organizations.

8) To ensure better co-ordination, building up of mutual understanding, appreciation, acceptance, trust and shared learning between the Government, NGOs and Panchayat Raj Institutions at the block and district level, it is necessary to facilitate regular interaction and dialogue between the Government, NGOs and Panchayat Raj Institutions. Besides participatory development at the field level by harnessing strength of all agencies should be considered. Based on this concept GO – NGO – PRI forums should be initiated for forming a standing committee under the chairmanship of District Magistrate or Additional District Magistrate (Development) with equal representation of NGOs and Panchayat Raj Institutions followed with the co-ordination of District Rural Development Cell, Department of Rural Development, Government of West Bengal.
9] The government should develop a procedure and guidelines to involve NGOs in various government programmes. The criteria and procedures of involvement of the NGOs will facilitate meaningful public–private partnership. The guidelines should focus on selection criteria, procedures, terms and conditions of partnership.

10] Development of code of conduct and standards of excellence or accreditation for various NGOs, are to be assessed and measured by an independent body for effective co-ordination and networking.

11] The human resources of the organizations should be well equipped with skills and knowledge in the rural development sector to perform better results. They should be encouraged with frequent training facilities in-order to remove the gaps and weaknesses so that they can manage the projects for running smoothly.

12] The application procedure for grants should be more simplified and a system should be developed for quick processing and sanctioning of projects. Moreover, it will be easier if the mechanism is decentralised at the district level, so that the time can be reduced for processing the application and disposal of funds.

13] The NGOs should ensure necessary linkages in its on going various rural development projects keeping in view on its weakness and gaps in-order to strengthen the plans or programmes and to fulfill greater impact on the beneficiaries.

14] Exposure of NGOs work by means of seminars or workshops should be organised in co-ordination with academic institutions and government agencies in-order to know their failures and success of
the programmes, to share their experiences and knowledge, to develop feeling of unity and togetherness etc. Some case studies should be presented in different seminars and workshops to generate motivation and expertised knowledge for the NGOs.

**Panchayat Members:**

1] The Panchayat members act as development actors in its own constituency and should have thorough ideas related to socio-economic status of the concerned area so that they can plan their own schemes or projects under priority basis.

2] The Panchayat members are elected leaders in their own constituencies and should work irrespective of caste, creed, religion, and political colour to promote greater people’s participation. They have greater opportunity to keep regular touch with the people, to address their problems and to fulfill their needs.

3] There is a need of psychological orientation which can be provided to the Panchayat members in the areas of team work, group decision making process, to develop better leadership qualities and to make interaction within larger groups.

4] Adequate training facilities should be provided to encourage Panchayat members. These programmes should be a continuous process to remove gaps and deficiencies in the areas of rural development.
5] Provision of training facilities should be conducted in local language and should be offered by competent training institutions which have necessary infrastructural supports.

6] There is a need to establish a core committee in Panchayat members' constituency for close monitoring and assessing the works done in order to draw future strategies.

7] Exposure visits are essential for the Panchayat members to the areas of successful NGOs who are working in close collaboration with the Panchyats to develop an insight in the area of rural development.

8] Empowerment of women representatives at the Panchayat level is very much essential so that they can fight separately for their concerns and issues.

9] Women representatives should develop their alliances with the nearest gram Panchayat women representatives, women SHGs, women organizations etc to get mass support and counter threats at various levels prevailing in their respective dominant societies.