Indian Society has its well established long tradition of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as they have been existing over centuries. They play various roles in accelerating the process of social and economic development in rural India. In view of the greater emphasis on growth of rural sector in India, it is observed that these organizations, operating at different levels provide the key to the success of integrated rural development programmes. Initially the role of NGOs was confined to relief measures for the victims of natural calamities, rehabilitation work among lepers, orphans, widows and untouchables. Over the years, they shifted their approach and brought under their influence in different areas which include health, skill training, self help groups, agricultural development, organization of the poor, child care, care of the aged people, education, environment protection etc as per the changing needs of the rural society. This was possible from the part of NGOs because they are small, flexible, dedicated and innovative, having local areas knowledge as well as participatory and effective motivation to reach the rural poor class. Considering the expertise and competence gained by the NGOs, the Planning Commission, Government of India, adopted policy to involve NGOs in successive Five Year Plans. Moreover, they act as an effective non-political link between the people and the government. During the course of functioning, the NGOs face various problems which require a continuous organizational support, planning, monitoring and evaluation, training, co-ordination and linkages at different levels to strengthen their rural development projects.

The research study is divided into nine chapters. Chapter one deals with the Introduction which reflects a brief outline about the role of NGOs, origin of NGOs, conceptual framework of NGOs, distribution of NGOs, classification of NGOs, characteristic features of NGOs, government policies on NGOs and review of literature. Chapter two highlights about the Research Design which focus on sample frame, hypotheses, objectives of the study, sources of data
collection, questionnaire designing etc. Chapter three narrates about ‘The Setting and ‘Historical Background’ of Sample Districts. Chapter four discusses about the Profile of the Sample Blocks where the sample NGOs are located and also highlight different problems related to ‘Panchayat Members and their Reaction’. Chapter five reflects about the ‘NGO as an Organization : Its Structure and Function’. Chapter six reveals the ‘Impact of Rural Development Projects’ which includes the opinions from NGOs and opinion from beneficiaries. Chapter seven represents ‘Problems of NGOs in Rural Development’ and the last two Chapters i.e. eight and nine draw the ‘Conclusions and Suggestions’ and ‘Selected Bibliography’ respectively.

In Context of selecting the research topic, my research guide Dr. Samita Manna, Professor in Sociology Department, Kalyani University cooperated with me. I am deeply indebted to my research guide, Professor Samita Manna for her invaluable guidance, constant encouragement and her personal interest for the completion of my research work.

My whole hearted thanks are due to Professor Madhu S. Mishra, Professor Kalyan Sankar Mondal, Professor P.K. Swain and Professor Manish Thakur of Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta for their unstinted support and cooperation in my research work under whom I am working.

Last, but not the least, I express my gratitude to the office bearers of the sampled NGOs, Panchayat functionaries/members of the Panchayat and Government Departments who gave generously their time and energy for providing information related to the study. Without their help I would not be able to reach my goal. So once again I show my sincere gratitude to all of them who are associated with me in relation to my work.

Lawrence Gomes
Research Scholar
Sociology Department
Kalyani University