CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Women and Development have been the focus of attention for several decades from 1945 with the adoption of the United Nations Charter, which is the first international instrument to establish the principle of equality for men and women. It was however in 1975 that the United Nations set up the first world plan of action and proclaimed the first decade for women equality, development and peace. This was followed by various conferences and the adoption of resolutions. However, in spite of the efforts, the marginalization of women from the processes of development has been increasing and is causing a great deal of concern not only in India but the world over. Rural women's contribution to agriculture, animal husbandry and allied processes of production in addition to their household responsibility is significant. The FAO in its world economic profile of women shows that they make up 30 percent of the official labour force and work 60 percent of all working hours, receive 10 percent of world's income and own even less than 1 percent of the world's property (FAO 1980).

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that 'everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour sex..." The fundamental rights listed in the Indian constitution are based on this declaration and include right to equality, which covers the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex. Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children, legitimizing positive discrimination in favour of women and children. The Directive Principles of State Policy included 'The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing (a) the citizens, men and women,
equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood... (d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

However, these constitutional rights and directives have not guided the Indian state’s policy approach towards women. The first five-year plan is indicative of this. Policy on women in the country has shifted from welfare, to development, to empowerment, following the lines of the United Nations shifts in approaches to ‘third world’ development with reference to women. The period of 1951-74 was known as the Women Welfare Phase, which is reflected in the policy approach for women as seen in the first, second, third and fourth five-year plans of the Government of India. This phase recognized women only in their reproductive roles and as beneficiaries of development. Most of the schemes introduced in this phase were gender neutral but were male biased. The period of 1975-1985 was known as the Women Development Phase, which was marked by a growing awareness of women contribution to the development of a nation not only as beneficiaries but also as partners in development. It was during this phase that the DWCRA programme was formulated. From 1986 onwards it became the Women Empowerment Phase in which empowerment was adopted as the approach.

The efforts of the eighth five-year plan 1992-1997 shifted its focus from development to empowerment and in 1996 the final draft of the national policy for the empowerment of women was finalized. However the programme and policies reflects a paradox of people’s participation without power. The powerlessness is most acute and obvious in the case of women who are unorganized and oppressed. During the year 1991, the new economic policy and the structural adjustment programme was introduced. However this made the macroeconomic planning more gender blind and thus affecting women productivity and increasing their workload. Thus we see that the Indian State has moved from a focus on welfare, to development, to empowerment of women in its policy documents due to pressure from the United Nations, not discounting coordination with the
movement in India which forms an interest group (Desai 1998).

Over the years, however it was found that not much has been achieved to develop and empower women. Women, have for a long time been relegated to the periphery of developmental planning and its benefits. One of the major flaws in the strategies was the assumption that placing of women as sub-targets in the overall-target of poverty alleviation programme would be sufficient for the development of women. This assumption did not recognize that women are viable economic entities; neither did it recognize that along with policy measures to stimulate overall growth, specific measures are needed to ensure that women have access to fundamental rights.

One of the main reasons why development schemes do not reach women is due to the lack of a strong institutional base representing these most needy group-women, as well as the failure of the state machinery to implement development programme as envisaged in the planning. Enhancing women's economic productivity is an important strategy necessary for improving the conditions of the estimated 40 million households still below poverty line. Of late women contribution to the economy and their role in development, is being given due recognition, not only as beneficiaries but also as partners and agents of development and change. Therefore it has become imperative to study how women have integrated into the development process and what impact development and the implementation of various programme targeted at them have had in alleviating their poverty, and reducing their socio-economic deprivation.

Poverty can be defined as the deprivation of some section of the population in terms of income and consumption. Despite a steady decline in the incidence of poverty over the years, it still continues to be high and the absolute number of poor is very large. It is for this reason that poverty has been a special focus of the development efforts and special programmes to tackle the problem directly have been developed and implemented.
Women constitute more than half of the human resources of India and rural women constitute 77 percent of the female population (Jhamlani 1995: 61-64). Thus it is obvious that the prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and the development of its women. Poverty and women have become synonymous. The figures brought out by Planning Commission (Government of India 2000), shows that in India, the status of women in many states has been ranked either very low or low except in few states like Maharastra, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. In the northeast, the states of Manipur and Mizoram the status has been ranked comparatively better while surprisingly Meghalaya in spite of being matrilineal ranked low. The status of women is considered and ranked high only in the state of Kerala. This assessment has been worked out based on various women-specific development indicators in respect of health, education, employment, political participation, decision making.

There seems to be an almost universal agreement that one of the most common effects of development is to relegate women to the subsistence sector. Development has been a mixed blessing for women in rural areas. While mechanization and modernization have released women from the tedious and burdensome task, they have also in their wake pushed women out of their traditional occupation and sources of income.

Rural women in our country suffer from both economic and social invisibility. Economic invisibility stems from the perception that women are not relevant to the wage and market economy. Women's work is dismissed casually as housework. Social invisibility is a result of the general status of 'second class citizens' status usually accorded to women. In poor households it is generally the women who suffer greater deprivation and higher incidence of poverty. Women in the rural areas face a layer of structural and cultural constraints, which restrict their participation. Women have been excluded from community decision-making roles. They also suffer from other social deprivations, which reduce their access to development opportunities. The benefits of over forty years of planned development in India have occurred unevenly to men and women. Needless to say
that in spite of the major contribution in society women still suffer from unequal status as well as social, economic, political and cultural deprivation

When the efforts to ensure the coverage of the poor women under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) failed inspite of the central directives for creating reservations it became necessary to formulate a separate and exclusive programme for women. The Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) programme which was a sub-scheme of the IRDP was an attempt to translate the recommendation of various conferences, studies etc regarding the integration of women into the development processes. DWCRA was visualized as an integrated anti-poverty exercise for rural women’s development within IRDP strategies. As the programme focuses on women the development of children, health, family welfare, education, nutrition, can also be ensured. Issues related to the environment, land distribution, agricultural and other areas could also be addressed through the programme.

The evolution DWCRA programme is indicative of the growing awareness in the variety of roles they perform in their community. DWCRA aims at improving the status of women through literacy, skills improvement and enhanced income earning capacity. It focuses on participatory planning and stresses on empowering women through participation in economic and social activities. DWCRA is a scheme of direct intervention on women poverty. The ultimate objective is to create self-reliance and self-sustaining groups of poor rural women. It aims at empowering rural women through coordinated and planned group action. It also hopes to serve as a point of convergence for welfare and development efforts of the state.

The DWCRA scheme was introduced in 1982-83 in 50 districts of the country as a centrally sponsored scheme of the department of rural development. Until 1996, it functioned together with UNICEF. From 1994-95, it has been extended to cover all the districts in the country. Since the inception of DWCRA,
1, 87,495 groups have been formed and 30.86 lakhs women have benefited in the country. New components viz. childcare activities (CCA) and information, education and communication (IEC) have been added to the programme in 1995-96 with a grant of Rs. 1.50 lakhs per annum for each district. Being a sub-scheme of IRDP, integration with IRDP and TRYSEM was made to provide the women's group with access to financial resources and training.

The implementation and the operationalization of the scheme require a clear understanding of the concept, process and concerns, which are discussed in detail in chapter III. The components of the scheme is an intermix of both programme and process. In Meghalaya, the area of our study, the Department of Community and Rural Development is the nodal department of the Government of Meghalaya for the implementation of DWCRA. The major responsibility to implement and monitor the scheme is entrusted to the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) located in all the seven districts of the state, which works through the thirty-nine community development blocks. In Meghalaya the DWCRA scheme was started in two districts i.e. West Khasi Hills and East Khasi Hills with effect from 1985-86. It was then extended to all the districts.

Meghalaya came into existence in January 1972. Ever since it achieved statehood, the general observation has been that the programme of rural development has failed to achieve the desired objectives as the focus was on achieving quantitative targets. This has led to the limited participation of the community, as being mere recipients of rural development programme. The developments in the rural, industrial and agricultural sectors continue to remain insignificant. The literacy rate is also comparatively low. The state is endowed with a vast potential of resources, which remains untapped. The poverty situation in the state is relative in nature. People have access to land, possess small assets but the productivity of their land remains low. Rural development remains one of the most challenging tasks in Meghalaya. Some people claim that the basic problem is political; others state that there is lack of administrative coordination. Others state that the entire structure of rural development in Meghalaya has not
been adequately adjusted to suit the needs of the unique cultural and traditional geo-socio set up of the people of the state.

**Women in the Northeast and Meghalaya**

The northeast region is made up of numerous ethnic groups with distinct social, religious, cultural backgrounds. No accurate generalizations can be made about the people of this region. However when addressing question related to the status of women there is some degree of similarity cutting across ethnic differences. Like in many parts of the country and the world women in this region are discriminated against. Important indicators of development like education and nutrition levels are lower than those of men. Some common identified aspects of the status of women in this region are that (i) women in traditional tribal communities occupy positions of enormous ritual significance, which allows them a liberated lifestyle; (ii) Most of the women participate in religious and cultural activities.

However these spaces created by religion do not lessen or cancel male domination and women oppression in other spheres. Women all over the northeast participate in a wide range of productive economic activities e.g. weaving, in addition to performing the entire domestic task. Tribal societies are different in many ways from the more advanced and urbanized societies. They have within them inbuilt forces and mechanism, which help them maintain social equality between man and women. The tribal societies having smaller concentration of population found it necessary to maintain social, cohesion and unity within the tribe. It was therefore important that both men and women contribute maximally to the maintenance and extension of tribes. Ethnographic studies on the tribal communities and the village survey monographs on peasantry in the northeast India indicated that in a traditional set-up the women have an important role to play. However, the commercialization of agriculture, forestry and the introduction of new technologies have disrupted the traditional division of labour. Women are being moved away from participation in productive activities, depending mostly on the men folk for whom the focus of such new technologies is on. This has limited
the women's role to mere labourers and not producers. In spite of the various achievements being made, new forms of discriminations against women have made an entry along with the development process. Rapid destructions of forest have created additional hardship for women in rural areas. They have to spend more time walking longer distance to fetch water and fuel. Women in this region are not aware of their rights. They have limited access to education, which decreases their chances of employment in the service sectors. The problems in this region is not lack of women's participation in economic activities as has been pointed out, but the problems has been and continues to be the inability to control the fruits of their labour.

**Concept of Development**

Development by definition is the act or process of developing or growth within the framework of available resources (Seers 1972). Sachs (1994: 1-2) defines development as a 'weapon in the competition between political systems'. According to Weinder development is a state of mind, a tendency, a direction, rather than a fixed goal. It is the rate of change in a particular direction (Mishra and Sharma 1983:46). In addition to some of the views given above, development has also been talked about by various social reformers and social activists like Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekenanda, to name a few as well as by academicians like Robert Chambers (1993), R.P Mishra (1985), J Harris (1982), Gunnar Myrdal (1968) and many others. Gunnar Myrdal (1971) argues, in his Asian Drama that ‘traditional societies could not modernize unless they altered their traditional beliefs and values to suit the demands of development’. This was viewed oppositely by scholars like Robert Chambers (1983) in his book “Putting the Last One First”, for whom traditional institutions must be strengthened and focused upon for development to occur. John Harris (1982) refers to development as the capacity of advance technology to increase the productivity of labour. Trude Scarlett Epstein (1977: 91) stated that development is a process by which poverty is alleviated, inequality reduced and the opportunities for self fulfillment of all individuals are increased. FAO Report
(1980) declared that 'the purpose of development is individual and a social betterment, development of endogenous capabilities and improvement of living standards of all people, in particular the poor'. Development according to some authors has two sides, the first is the development of the capacity of the people to work continuously for their own welfare, the second is the alteration of the institutions so that human needs are set at all levels through the process of improving the relationship between the expressed needs and the means to attain them (Rao 1987: 8-9). Most of the views on development in the discussion above are those belonging to scholars whose focus is on the development of rural areas in the third world countries. These definitions in brief belong to different groups: the academicians, reformists and social activists who have done so within the general theoretical framework of the concept of development.

In sociological parlance the term development has been used to differentiate two broad types of societies. On the one side, "the prosperous industrial societies and on the other side all those societies (very diverse in other respects) which are predominantly rural agricultural and poor. Secondly the term development has been used to describe the process of industrialization and modernization (Desai 1983: 30).

Development as a term has also gained much currency in the literature pertaining to social dynamics. It has been synonymously used with modernization. There are however some scholars, especially those with Marxist perspective who believe that these terms should be abandoned and have put forth various arguments to support their contentions. The term 'development' has sometimes been applied to mean economic growth processes and 'modernization' to mean various socio-cultural processes concomitant with them (Pandey 1985: 79). At some places modernization is treated as a state of development and at others 'development' is subsumed within modernization'. On the other end of the pole there were those like Robert Chambers (1983) who opposed this idea of modernization and development, stating that it is an ideology based on 'successful westernism', which asserts that development and modernization of third world
countries is possible when these societies adopt the structural and psychological traits found in western societies. It is thus obvious that the term development and modernization with all its weaknesses and contradictions continue to remain a vague concept. But on the other hand there are those who want to retain the terms as valid concepts like Gunnar Myrdal, Karl Marx, C Wright Mills and Smith.

The 'classical economist' and policy makers of the West traditionally defined development as growth per capita GNP. In the initial stages economic growth was expected to result in the concentration of wealth mostly in the hands of capitalists. This wealth was expected to get diffused to the middle and even lower levels of the industrial hierarchies through a process of trickle down. This would trigger prosperity and the process of social change and improved social services. This course of development in western countries influenced the development of conceptual framework adopted by the policy makers and planners in the formulation of policies and strategies of development in the third world countries. When the trickle down effect did not occur, disillusionment regarding the concept of development surfaced in these third world countries. Development in other social sciences which are beyond the realms of economics referred to development as the contemporary transformation of traditional or underdeveloped societies in the direction of the economic and other structural features of highly developed western nations. The term development was also used to analyze the underdevelopment of third world nations and the development of first world nations. The idea of development in sociology, social psychology anthropology, political science had their roots in European social economic and political philosophy (Pandey 1985: 79).

Some scholars make a strong distinction between social development and economic development. The tendency, however has been to see social development as an element of economic development. In recent years, especially since the seventies, development among the neo-classical economist has been redefined as 'growth with social justice i.e. equitable distribution of resources and social
improvement began to be considered as an interacting aspect of development. Gradually this push in interpretation of development began to be translated into national policies and strategies of development in third world countries.

The term change and development are interrelated. Social change is defined as a change in the social structure or in particular social institution or in relationship between institutions (Bottommore 1975: 297). With regard to the determinants of development, a survey of literature reveals that one set of theory maintains that the force of change leading to development is the result of internal indigenous forces and the other states that it is the result of forces (exogenous) originating outside the system. Most of the changes in underdeveloped societies are a result of exogenous forces and are the product of western technology, introduced in most cases by conquest (Ibid: 308).

The interest among social scientist in social development has led to the emergence of two major perspectives to explain social and cultural changes. They are the functionalist-evolutionist perspective and dialectical perspective.

*Functionalist-evolutionist* perspective: The theory holds that there is a process of change towards recognizable set of characteristics of becoming more alike. This means that developed nations will start to resemble each other and whatever difference there are will be eventually eliminated. These countries will serve as a model. The functionalist evolutionist perspective attempts to discover the general trends in the development of all human societies by formulating a series of stages through which all human societies must pass. The underdeveloped countries will progress towards this model as soon as they have eliminated political, cultural and institutional obstacles, represented by use of terms such as traditional societies or feudal systems. Certain economic, political and psychological process can be singled out as allowing the most rational mobilization of national resources and these can be categorized for use of economic planner. To all this, is added the need to coordinate certain social and political forces in support of a development policy and to devise an ideological basis, which organizes
the will of various nations in the task of development (Pandey 1985: 79). The various school in the functionalist-evolutionist perspective define development as the movement of the under developed social system towards the model of developed social systems.

**Dialectical perspective** This is a radical approach to development and underdevelopment having a close affinity with the Marxist perspective. They seek to explain social development in terms of changes in the social structure and processes within society. The dialectical perspective has associated development with the development of capitalism on a world scale. These perspectives have been successful in creating awareness among advanced capitalist countries and mobilize support for national liberation struggles in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The dialectical perspective emphasizes three interlinked assumptions, which explains the process of development and underdevelopment (1) theory of dependency (2) the development of underdevelopment thesis (3) world systems theory. These scholars made a distinction between dominant and dependent countries. These scholars have defined social development in terms of liberation from dependency and establishment of colonialism. They believe that the development of underdevelopment have a dialectical relationship that is the development of the developed countries causes the development of the underdevelopment of under developed countries. Thus development above has been viewed from two perspectives the non-Marxist which is welfare or capitalist oriented and secondly, the Marxist or egalitarian oriented perspective.

The United Nations has stated that 'the ultimate purpose of development is to provide increasing opportunities to all people for a better life, it is essential to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing, social welfare and to safeguard environment'. Development from this welfare perspective tantamount to the improvement in the levels of living or as Weber puts it 'as the typical chance for a supply of good external living conditions and personal life experience'. In conclusion development in a modern sense refers to the planned, directed and stimulated upward movement of the entire social
systems economic and non-economic in the direction of overall desirable goal of a given society.

**Rural Development**

*Rural development* began to grow as a popular idea with the independence of third world nations from their colonial master and the growing concerns of planners and administrators for the development of rural areas. However, this commitment was politically motivated. The adhocism of planning and half-baked implementation strategies have raised the basic issues of what is required to be developed in this area. This has brought in the problem of conceptualizing rural development. The concept of rural development has emerged as a response to the various challenges faced by developing countries.

Rural development has always been defined with reference to the development of rural areas with certain specific objectives. There is no universally acceptable definition of the term rural development and it has been understood in different ways as a concept, a strategy, a discipline, a process, a slogan, propaganda, a philosophy, as rural industrialization to create rural transformation, a structural changes in the socio-economic framework and as a mechanism. The concept of rural development was born in the context of agriculture and remained so for a long time, co-terminus with agricultural development.

The early missionary period of 1860-1920 AD of pre independent India saw rural development in the lines of rural reconstruction and rural transformation (Ao 1999: 1-7). The concept of rural development in the 19th century was marked by western influence. It was seen as an expression of humanitarian impulse with limits on vision and technology. It was welfare oriented in approach and was emulated by India and other third world nations. The focus was on infrastructure building and charity for the poor, based on dominant Christian values.
There were two dominant views on rural development in India, during the period of 1920-1947 (Nahar and Chandani 1995). The first was the Gandhian and Tagorian view focusing on self-reliant village communities and micro planning. The second view was that of rural development through effective utilization of science and technology.

Scholars like Vu Quoc Thuc (1963: 51); Alain Biroue (Ibid: 52) defined rural development as the gradual increase in agricultural production, accompanied by equitable distribution of the fruits of development. James H. Copp (1972: 515-523) has defined rural development as a process through collective efforts with the ultimate target of rural development being people and not infrastructure.

USAID (1973) defined rural development as a strategy aimed at income redistribution and programmes to benefit the majority of rural poor. It placed strong emphasis on expansion of non-agricultural work opportunities, building institutional and administrative capability at the local level. The World Bank sector paper (1975: 3-11) defined rural development as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people who are mainly rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who earn their livelihood in rural areas and includes small farmers, tenants and the landless. Similar views were held by the United Nations (1975) and the Asian Development Bank (1979) which state that rural development is a strategy conceived as a means of achieving rural-urban integration within the context of the national development processes and rural investment through the injection of capital, focusing on farm development increased agricultural production through cooperation, extension, functional literacy community development, education and health (UNADI 1975).

Framework of the study

One cannot fully explain the success or failure of the implementation, of the DWCRA programme, only by focusing on the nature, performance dynamics or character of the beneficiaries groups or other factors operating in the environment.
in which the programme has been initiated. The explanation to this question, regarding the nature of implementation of DWCRA programme is also to be found in factors operating in the management environment or programme management. This can be defined as the handling of a set of tools to take action for the achievement of certain goals and access the suitability of a programme or programme (Blakenberg 1991: 27-28). It includes decision making about problems to be solved, the character ad size of the programme, the groups to be reached, the selection and set-up of organizational structures field implementation and operation of the programme.

*Implementation* has been traditionally viewed as synonymous with executing a particular programme. Today, it has been examined in a wider context to include the processes of interaction between various parties, setting of goals and the actions geared towards achieving them (Pressman and Widavsky: 1973:15). Implementation can be operationally defined as the executive phase in a broad process of decision-making and introduction of the programme.

Berman (Pressman and Widavsky 1973:15) and Elmore (1978: 185-228) have identified three models of interaction that will provide a theoretical framework from which explanation for the nature of implementation can be made. They are the ‘enforcement’ model’, ‘the bargain model’ and the ‘harmony model’.

In the enforcement model, the policies and programmes are developed at the central government level and implemented by the lower levels of the state government. In this situation, policies and programme are developed are the highest level i.e. the central level and it is decreed that the lower levels of the government bureaucracy and the implementing agencies should faithfully execute the policy or programme according to the wishes of the initiators.

The second type of interaction is the “bargain model”. The bargain model is the negotiation and interaction between the parties involved. This is characterized by a higher level of interaction and a conflict type of interaction
between the parties who formulate and those who execute negotiation between parties.

The third type is the 'harmony model', which lays emphasis on consensus building and accommodation between policy makers at the central level and implementers at the lower level. Here the emphasis is on consensus building and accommodation between policy makers at the central level and implementers at the lower level. The programme that is going to be implemented should satisfy the needs of all parties involved. Here the element of 'participation' in decision-making and introduction is present. The goal of the central authorities here is to reach a consensus about a particular programme as desired by the parties that are involved in implementation. Thus implementation takes place in such a way that does not violate the civil servants sense of what is reasonable and just and at the same time takes into account the interest groups needs. The harmony model is an ideal and hardly found in operation especially in a society that consist of a variety of sub-systems each having its own priorities, needs, perception and strategies.

Programme management could be defined as the handling of a set of tools to take action for the achievement of certain goals and to access the suitability of the programme. It includes decision making about the problems to be solved, character and size of the programme, investment to be made, need for the programme, selection of beneficiaries, organizational set-up, field implementation and operation of the programme. In programme management a distinction is made between organization and basic decision-making. Organization refers to the executive elements in programme management like the set up of an organizational structure, the day-to-day activities in field implementation and the operation as well as the various parties involved in the implementation and operation. Basic decision-making refers to the assessment and selection of problems solving options in programme management like whether a particular programme fits with the system of the target group, reviving a defunct programme decisions regarding the economic feasibility of the programme and
decisions regarding general approaches towards development. (Blakenberg 1991: 28).

*Programme environment* refers to the structure of the socio-economic and political processes. It also includes the transformation process in society where the programme has been launched thereby directly or indirectly influencing the character of the programme itself. Under the socio-economic and political structure certain social groups are dominant which leads to social fragmentation. The transformation process on the other hand refers to the fundamental changes in society which inspite of having no direct relation with the programmes, influences the direction like erosion of traditional social systems, land holding system, growing market orientation of various economic sectors and social classes, marginalization of women, emphasis on the development of strong economic sectors and the like. The programme environment thus refers to the complex structure of social, economic, political and transformation process in society in which the particular programme or programme is introduced, thereby directly or indirectly influencing the character of the programme or nature of implementation (Blakenberg 1991: 20). In programme environment distinction is made between socio economic and political structures and the transformation process. The socio-eco political structure refers to the basic characteristics of a society that has no direct relation with the programme but nevertheless influences its character e.g. dominance of certain groups, current political system, social fragmentation or cohesion. Transformation process refers to the fundamental changes that take place in the structure of a society that have no direct relation with the programme but nevertheless influences its character in particular during the programme formulation.

In the present study the programme management is emphasized to explain the nature of implementation and its impact on women but the influence of the programme environment is also given due attention. The management aspect of the DWCRA programme has been mainly gathered through field research. The programme cycle was utilized as an analytical instrument to analyze the case
studies. The programme environment as influencing programme management is discussed in general terms.

The DWCRA programme to be analyzed in this study forms part of the national programme and the state government has only a limited influence on the decision-making, but the field implementation is largely delegated to the lower levels. The same type of relation can be observed between the state government and the lower level governmental institutions such as those functioning at the district, the block and village levels. The general lines of planning are developed at the national level and to a certain extent at the state level, but the execution of plans is mainly the task of the lower levels. The central authorities rely on the special departments and agencies of the state government as far as field implementation is concerned, but most of the basic decisions are made at the centre. The state governments and its specialized agencies are involved in the task of translating the broad guidelines into practical arrangement but it may be mentioned that no attention has been paid to the role of the beneficiaries in implementation. They are only expected to accept and utilize the programme whether it suits them or not.

This model will be used to understand the implementation of decision-making and introduction of the DWCRA programme in which equal emphasis will be given to the programme management and programme environment. In this study the programme cycle is used to identify the factors in both programme environment and programme management, which are influencing the nature and results of implementation of DWCRA. The programme cycle includes the following components:

*Programme identification:* It is the general setting of the problem of environment leading to the demarcation of problem area. Initiators of a programme, generally the authorities central or state, carry out the identification.
**Programme formulation:** It is a stage where inventory of various alternative solutions for the problem identified and of the parties to be involved in the decision-making are prepared. Here objectives and resource constraints are analyzed, cost benefit analysis is made and constraints of programme are identified.

**Programme appraisal:** Here evaluations of the findings of identification and formulation take place in order to make a deliberate choice for one specific programme proposal and decisions to be taken to go ahead in the programme implementation.

**Programme implementation:** It is the phase in which the programme proposal as formulated and selected in the foregoing three phases is carried out. Here a detailed design is developed in which arrangements are made for the organizational set-up of the programme, a description of the responsibilities of various groups and institutions involved, the procedures to be followed and the formulation of the scheme of assistance. Tasks are distributed among specialized parties that are expected to carry out the programme according to the decisions as taken in the foregoing phases.

**Programme operation:** Programme operation is the phase after the introduction i.e. when the programme is already functioning. In order to guarantee its satisfactory functioning, arrangements are made and carried out for the operation of the previous phases. This is the main reason why the phase of operation is considered in the analyses. The most important element of programme operation is day-to-day management, including aspects such as personnel and financial administration, supply of material tools and labour. Monitoring and evaluation also form part of the phase of programme operation.

**Review of Literature**

The prosperity and growth of a nation depends on the status and development of women as they constitute not only half of the total population but also play an important role in influencing the growth of the other half. Especially
in the case of rural women their contribution to agriculture, animal husbandry and allied processes of production in addition to their household responsibilities is significant. Needless to say that in spite of their major contribution in society women still suffer unequal status and social, cultural, economic and political deprivations.

A brief review on how women were integrated into the development plans and programme in India shows that in the past, planners and policy makers' alike-perceived women as basically peripheral to any important socio-economic progress.

Before exploring new phenomena it is necessary to look into various aspects already studied. An attempt has been made to present a brief resume of research findings related to the objectives of the present study. The subject of women and the development process has been studied by social scientists for the past two decades mainly so because of the large scale exploitation faced by women the world over and the very specific nature of women related programmes and their inherent problems. The review of literature presented covers the writings related to women and rural development and the DWCRA programme.

Viswanathan Maithili (1994) in his review of Women and Country Experiences and the different women related development programmes in countries of Mexico, Africa, and Indonesia has brought to light some of the following points and remarks. He has concluded that the participation of women in economic activity is directly related to the level of development and the type of economic system of the country. He states that inferior planning of women's production activities, delaying adequate baseline studies and expecting women's production activities start only when the women component is ready to absorb them. Lack of awareness, among beneficiaries about programme, leads to poor management of programme activities. Women specific programmes have failed due to lack of recognition of women's actual role as active farmer and producers and thereby limiting her access to resources. It has been a common experience
that women's programme in developing countries have repeatedly and systematically translated production objectives into sewing handicraft. They have failed in part because the tasks have been excessive difficult and unfamiliar to the women and in part because they have little economic potential. The reasons for success of a women related programme was stated as a close cooperation with the programme personnel and experts, the integration of the women components in the main stream of programme objectives and the solicited active participation of the specific target groups in the planning of new programme activities. It has been pointed out that 'the recent experiences in implementing women's programme in developing countries show that programmes fail when participants are expected to perform 600 many complex tasks and when welfare oriented organization attempt to development production oriented programmes'.

Jette Bukh (1980:24-26) noted that the disintegration of traditional lineage (communal ownership of land) and family structure in Ghana has left a major part of rural subsistence responsibilities in the hands of women. They have to work under several constraints of a patriarchal structure resulting in their agricultural output suffering from both low productivity and low nutritional value.

According to Ester Boserup (1970) half of the women of the Uorulsa tribe of Nigeria are primarily engaged in commerce whereas in Ghana women account for 80 percent of village and town trading. The introduction of technological and scientific methods of farming has often contributed to the marginalization of women development programmes. The agricultural assistance scheme, training modern farming techniques and the acquisition of machines generally have been concerned with men in mind'.

Tahrunnessa Abdullah (1980: 52-54) in studying women and rural development in Bangladesh explains, 'Given the chance, women and families will respond to new economic opportunities and will participate in income earning programme'. Once women are contributing regularly to family income, they will begin to have more decision making influence in matters of family planning. She
is of the opinion that introduction of technology has made women lose their jobs, thereby the status as she gets marginalized as all traditional processing activities go to men and machines.

Katzir (1983:45-61) in his studies of a Middle Eastern peasant group indicated that by developing free enterprise system controlled by women, it would provide new roles and considerable economic power within their households. Harris (1982) assessed that the income-generating programme has increased economic independence for women.

Report on the Quick Evaluation Study of DWCRA in Meghalaya (Government of Meghalaya 1990) in which the working of the scheme at the district level, extent of support given to the beneficiary group, extent of economic activities taken up and impact of the scheme on the economic condition of the beneficiaries were assessed for the West Khasi Hills and East Garo Hills districts. It reported that the financial gains to all the DWCRA beneficiaries was negligible, too much paper works hampered progress of the programme. It also reported that the unsatisfactory performance of groups was due to the group still being in the formative stage and lack of proper awareness and skills.

Naidu and Vikram Singh (1994-95) have tried to examine the process of group dynamics in relation to DWCRA in realization of socio-economic benefits in the districts of Andhra Pradesh and Haryana. The implications of their finding reveal that "women can be engaged in more than one activity to fetch more income and only members who are in genuine need can devote more time to the programme and this is a crucial factor for the success of DWCRA programme.

Singh and Goel (1994: 23-25) in studying the bottlenecks in the implementation of DWCRA programme in Udaipur have reported that the identification of trade in DWCRA groups was done without conducting a baseline survey. Implementing agencies made no efforts to provide supporting facilities like childcare service, education, immunization etc. The overburdened gram
sevak, inadequate provision of backward and forward linkages, lack of stress on marketing facilities and lack of knowledge in maintenance of records.

Reddy et al (1994: 19-22) in a study of the working of DWCRA in Cuddapah district have identified the major hurdles and offer suggestion for successful implementation of the scheme. They have noted that the activities carried out among DWCRA groups were both traditional and non-traditional activities, but indicated that traditional ones failed due to lack of marketing support, competition from medium and large-scale units and heavy investment. Political interference led to groups becoming defunct and the administrative machinery was inadequate. Lack of sufficient training and supervision by authorities were also identified as hurdles in the successful implementation.

Sithalaxmi and Jothimani (1994: 5-10) analyses the organizational behavior exhibited by women involved in DWCRA in Perujan district of Tamil Nadu and how these 14 identified factors influenced the ‘active’ status of groups. The factors associated with the active status of groups were linked to personal attributes, characteristics of groups and external factor. The authors concluded that the participation of women in active groups appeared to have raised the image of women in the family and they were consulted or given sole responsibility of taking decision on various familiar aspects.

Prasad (1995: 65-87) has documented cases of the successful DWCRA groups from which lessons for future implementation could be learnt. She also examined the contributory socio-economic factor that influenced the successful implementation of income generating activities as well as scrutinizes the various issues in operation of DWCRA units to identify the efficient management factors influencing success. She had identified several common factors like homogeneity, leadership assured and regular income from scheme, awareness of repayment procedures, systematic planning for training, marketing and support from officials as attributes for the success of these groups.
Sundaram and Singh (1995: 96-99), in assessing the modalities of operation of the DWCRA programme have also identified the various constraints and bottlenecks in the implementation of DWCRA from the beneficiaries’ group organizers and official point of view.

Sitha Laxmi et al. (1995: 87-90), have in their study assessed the impact of dissemination of health messages to 100 selected DWCRA beneficiaries in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. According to the findings, in spite of health having been incorporated as a component of DWCRA, this has been neglected with the focus being mainly on income generating activities (IGA).

Yerram Raju and Firdausi (1997: 113-122) in their evaluation study of the DWCRA programme in the 3 districts of Andhra Pradesh have presented their findings to the study related to group formation, group dynamics, impact of the scheme on the economic development and social cohesion among the women members and on employment generation, the role of the implementing agencies, marketing mechanism and extension services. The study highlights the needs for disassociating the scheme from IRDP and for allowing it to blossom as a self-help group programme.

Rajakutty (1997: 85-112) states that a critical analysis of the DWCRA scheme implementation is rather limited has in his study of DWCRA made a critical examination of the performance of the scheme with specific reference to its implementation and status of the group. He is of the opinion that the concept and philosophy of the scheme has not been well understood at the implementation level and that target chasing and claiming central assistance lack of orientation among programme staff, inadequate staffing poor follow up, insufficient linkages are reason for re-defunct status of groups. His findings aims at cautioning the policy makers and implementing agencies on the lacunae and pitfalls of the scheme as its being implemented and to force them to have a look as to what extent the concept once practice are at convergence.
The Report of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) report no.2 (GOI: 1994), which deals with the status of DWCRA across the states, have come out with revealing information on the performance of DWCRA programme. It reports that a third of the groups formed are defunct and the revolving funds have not been utilized in many groups. The general problem of DWCRA scheme brought out report on non-posting of Assistant Project Officer (APO), Mukhya Sevika (MS), Gram Sevika (GS), inadequate supervision, and follow up monitoring of the group besides none-use of revolving fund in large number of groups, ineffective use of IRDP assistance, inadequate investment loan and lack of efforts to revive defunct groups and on recovery of the revolving fund money.

Reddy and Renuka (1994) attempted a critical review of the DWCRA programme, in which they commended on the DWCRA programme as one, which would gain greater success if the assistance provided to the group was enhanced to enable them adequate investment to start a potentially viable IGA otherwise this meager investment was a factor to defunct group. Lack of guarantee for providing additional resources to group from banks, the lack of attempt to combat the forces of the middlemen role in marketing the good produced by groups, political meddling, lack of supervision on part of gram sevika due to over burdened responsibilities, lack of commitment in part of supervision staff, lack of publicity about the DWCRA programme were problem faced in achieving the objectives of the scheme.

Sivasankariah and Ramappa (1993: 11-16) have delved into the impact of DWCRA programme in Anatapur district of Andhra Pradesh. They have analyzed the socio-economic background of DWCRA beneficiaries and the extent to which DWCRA has had in the generation of Income and employment as well as the backward and forward linkage support afforded to the DWCRA programme in terms of technology and marketing. The findings revealed that the trades identified by the DWCRA groups were related to agriculture, which could exploit the locally available resources, traditionally practiced in the district and involved less risk and less investment. They also found that the mode of identification of
beneficiaries revealed that they were neither identified in relation to the proportion of total female population nor to the total work force. The study revealed that women are still lagging behind in their entrepreneur abilities due to some social epidermal like male chauvinism, compulsory responsibilities of domestic affairs on women and more particularly non-awareness of the opportunities offered to them. The authors have suggested that women in rural areas should be educated and made to understand the significance of the programme, which in fact improves their economic and social status. The organizers should educate the women about the importance of the programme to elicit a better response. They also indicate that the study revealed the lack of formal authority for coordination at the district level. They suggested that the powers of the BDO and PD of DRDA should be clearly demarcated to get satisfactory results of the programme. The various employment generation programme need to be brought under the control of one single agency so as to avoid problems relating to coordination.

Another study by Thangamuthu and Manimekalai (1989: 23-26) also revealed that the selection beneficiaries of under DWCRA were found to be inadequate and not widespread. The beneficiaries were mainly from the same community who happened to be relatives and this as due to the reluctance of rural women in understanding the programme.

Manimekalai and Rajendra (1993: 5-9) in their attempt to study the achievement of DWCRA in Tiruchirapalli district have highlighted the physical and financial progress of the DWCRA programme and the problems faced by the organizers in the implementation of the programme. The study attempted to study the extent of employment generation under DWCRA, the trades created and the number of women assisted. They also examined the pattern of identification of beneficiaries and the block-wise coverage of beneficiaries. In analyzing the performance of DWCRA they attempted to find out the operational problems faced by administrators in identification of beneficiaries. Their findings revealed that the success of DWCRA programme depends mostly on the income that it
generates and the availability of raw material in required quantities and the marketing facilities for the products produced.

Prasad (1997: 10-14) in a case study initiated in Srikutam district of Andhra Pradesh made an in-depth analysis of the economic characteristics of the group members, the dynamics of group formation, aspects of the economic activity of the group i.e. jute products making unit related to training, financial assistance, processing and marketing. The thrift and credit as well as social activities of the group were also studied in details. The findings revealed that factors such as homogeneous background of beneficiaries, economic compulsion and lack of mobility contributed to stability and sustainability of the group. The selection of economic activity seems to be guided by the availability of raw materials and ensured market channels. Beneficiaries when provided adequate skill training could venture into non-traditional economic activities. The institutional tie-up for supply of raw material and marketing of products as well as transformation of the unit into training cum-production center ensured job security and regular gainful employment. Adequate supervision and guidance from official and convergence of services encouraged group growth and their participation in the political process.

The Government of Meghalaya report on the State Level Review cum-Orientation Workshop on DWCRA (GoM 1990) in which a review workshop on the status of DWCRA in Meghalaya was held. It was with reference to the districts of East Garo and West Khasi Hills of Meghalaya where DWCRA programme was initiated. This review brought to light the implementation problems of the DWCRA and made recommendations related to enhancing the credit linkage of DWCRA, training of functionaries for promotion of the programme and financial support to enable smooth implementation.

Dutta (1997: 1-19) in his study of DWCRA programme in West Bengal districts attempted to study the extent of coverage and the fund utilization pattern of the DWCRA groups for carrying on their IGA. He also made detail
analysis of the DWCRA linkage programme and review the infrastructure provisions in the programme. His findings revealed that factors such as inept attitudes of the government functionaries, lack of initiative on part of the *Panchayat* members, inadequate infrastructure were reason for low coverage of the DWCRA programme in certain districts. Lack of guidance, marketing support and financial linkage were factors leading to non-utilization of the funds thereby resulting in dormancy of the groups. He was also of the opinion that the DWCRA programme was receiving low priority in the overall set up of development administration, which was functioning in a patriarchal society. The lack of convergence of other programme with DWCRA also led to low sustainability of DWCRA groups.

Ghosh, (1992: 32-36) made a quick study at Birbhum district in West Bengal to assess the impact of DWCRA on women. This study was limited to IGA of a group at Ganganpur and Parkar, which was engaged in *bidi* rolling and cotton khadi yarn respectively. In his findings it has been stated that training was crucial to enhancing group functioning and increasing the output of the groups IGA.

Though DWCRA has been in operation since 1982-83, till date no systematic study has been made to assess the status and performance of the scheme whether in terms of the nature of the group formation and dynamics or impact of the scheme on women or in terms of the nature of implementation of the programme concurrent evaluation exercise as is being done for other schemes like IRDP, JRY, TRYSEM, has not been attempted for DWCRA. It can also be seen from the review of literature that most of the studies taken up are sporadic micro-level studies taken up by some academic institutions, which are largely in the nature of success stories/case studies. This also observed by Prasad *et al* (1990).

These evaluative studies of DWCRA have focused on two aspects:
a) The status of the group and its working and related aspects like group formation, group dynamics, impact of activities on groups, factors contributing to successful groups, characteristics of a good group.
b) Secondly implementation of the DWCRA programme has mainly focused on bottlenecks linked with implementation or problems of implementation.

Again these studies mainly emphasize the phase of execution of the programme without referring to the planning itself, which forms the basis of any programme and influences implementation to a great extent. The emphasis is due to the strength of the idea that planning was a task performed by the high level agencies whereas implementation was seen as the faithful execution by lower administrative level. Thus these studies have neglected the process of interaction that takes place between planners and implementers.

The literature also reveals that in studying the DWCRA programme implementation very little attention has been given to the environment in which the DWCRA programme has been introduced. Though it is known that the nature of the existing socio-economic structures and other infrastructure are of crucial importance to understand why certain problems in implementation of the programme occur.

In studying the DWCRA programme, literature also indicate that factors used for explaining the satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance of DWCRA programme and its impact on the socio-economic status of women are only related to a particular aspect or particular phase of the programme either in the management of the programme or in the programme environment.

In studying the implementation of DWCRA programme, the management of the programme, the organization aspects, and financial arrangements recruitment of personnel, selection of beneficiaries, supply of material, coordination and communication have not been studied. Neither have any of these studies focused on the influence of the socio-economic structure like, exploitation, deprivation land
and ownership pattern, commercialization and process of economic change on the performance or implementation of DWCRA programme.

Thus it is clear that there are no studies in which all the factors in the programme management and programme environment are combined to provide an explanation for the nature of implementation of DWCRA or to lead better insight into the process of implementation.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study have been to explore and investigate the areas of women and rural development with a focus on the DWCRA programme implementation. The study has investigated and gained insight into the nature of implementation of the DWCRA programme in the state of Meghalaya and its impact on the socio-economic status of women in rural areas. It is not the study of the status of women in rural areas but a study to find out the extent to which women have fully or systematically contributed to the development process. Given this broader frame the specific objectives of the study are:

i) To identify the factors contributing to the performance and non-performance of the DWCRA programme in the State of Meghalaya,

ii) To study the various factors that explain the nature of implementation of the DWCRA programme and,

iii) To analyze the impact of implementation of the DWCRA programme in empowering the women of a matrilineal society.

Methods of study

With a view to achieving the objectives of the study we have drawn both upon the secondary and primary data. The primary data were collected from the DWCRA beneficiaries, officials of the government of Meghalaya and financial institutions involved at different levels of implementation of the DWCRA programme from 1985 till its merger into the SGSY in 1999. The data were collected through a detailed interview schedule designed and personally administered by the researcher. To supplement the findings in the field survey,
detailed discussion was also held with each category of respondents, i.e. government officials, bank officials and beneficiaries. Discussion was also held with the central government officials who were involved in the programme at the early stages of implementation.

Secondary data were obtained from books, journals, articles in collection, plan documents of the Government of India and the Government of Meghalaya, other available government publications, documents, brochures, the official records and publications of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, concerned State Government departments, DRDAs, block offices and financial institutions.

The inquiry is further supported by 14 case studies from the six districts of the state. The analysis of the programme management is based on fieldwork and the analysis of programme environment is mostly dependent on secondary material. Pre-testing of the schedule was also carried out. Pilot visits were made to prepare a detailed inventory of the socio-economic background of the 14 villages taken up as case study areas where the DWCRA programme was implemented.

The total size of the sample was 200 respondents. Of them there were 140 beneficiaries who were included as parties to the implementation of DWCRA programme. They were from selected DWCRA groups of six districts in the state of Meghalaya viz. East Khasi Hills district, West Khasi Hills district, East Garo Hills district, West Garo Hills district, Jaintia Hills district and Ri-Bhoi district. 14 DWCRA groups each having a membership of 10 beneficiaries operating in the villages located within the blocks of the district were selected for the present inquiry from the entire state of Meghalaya. Of these, two groups each were selected from the West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Ri Bhoi district and west Garo Hills district and three groups each were selected from the East Khasi Hills and East Garo Hills District. The reasons for inclusion of additional groups in the East Khasi Hills and East Garo Hills districts were due to the non-inclusion of the South Garo Hills district in the study. The basis for selection of the DWCRA
groups was the year of reference and their performance. Every attempt was made to select the blocks within the district having the highest number of active DWCRA groups. Within the selected blocks, the DWCRA groups selected for study were among the oldest and, most progressive. Another 60 respondents included the state and central government officials, DRDA officials, block officials, village level officials and non officials, members of various committees at the state, district and block levels who were party to the DWCRA programme implementation.

Case studies of the groups involved in the implementation of DWCRA programme were drawn to provide the analysis of implementation, utilizing the analytical tool of 'programme cycle' and assessment of impact on programme implementation of the rural women. The analysis of the nature of implementation of DWCRA programme was done with the help of the programme cycle model. The programme cycle consists of a series of successive plans and phases each leading to the next. They are

1. Programme identification
2. Programme preparation
3. Programme appraisal
4. Programme implementation
5. Programme operation

This model is utilized to understand the process of decision-making, implementation, interaction and introduction of the DWCRA programme.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter of the study discusses in detail the issues of women development in general and Meghalaya in particular. It focuses on how women have figured in the development planning and policies of the government leading to the introduction of the DWCRA programme whose implementation is sought to be analyzed in this study. The theoretical dimensions of the concepts and policies of development in
general and rural development in particular have also been dealt with in this chapter.

The second chapter contains a brief profile of the land and the people of Meghalaya that includes basic facts about the state of Meghalaya, its physical features, socio-economic profile, and resources.

The chapter entitled DWCRA, concepts and concerns looks into the background and phases of development planning and policies, which paved the way for the identification, formulation and introduction of the DWCRA programme which is a centrally sponsored development programme for women in the country in collaboration with UNICEF.

Chapter four deals with the DWCRA programme implementation in the state of Meghalaya. It provides a detailed account of the introduction of the DWCRA programme in the state. The chapter has been further divided into the following sections:

*Set-up and implementation:* this section includes a detailed outline of the methodology of assistance and approach to group formation, release of funds and committee set up, delegation of responsibility and authority, training, guidance, monitoring and research, utilization of funds, infrastructure and inputs supply, subsidy and activities.

*Performance:* Details of the overall performance of the programme implementation in the state which includes aspects of planning and funding, physical and financial achievement district wise from the period 1985-86 to 1999-2000. An inventory of the progress of the DWCRA programme in the six selected districts of the state has been given which will provide a comparative picture of the nature of implementation of the programme in different programmes environments, programme management and setting within the state.
Chapter five includes the implementation and impact analysis of the DWCRA programme based on the analysis of the programme cycle and the data collected from the field and discussion held with various groups of implementing officials and non-officials. It has been divided into the following sections, (i) identification of beneficiaries and selection of programmes, (ii) implementation and operation of the DWCRA programme with its sub-headings of parties' involvement in implementation and monitoring activities (iii) financial assistance and (iv) the impact of DWCRA programme implementation on women together with the condition governing the impact. Chapter six closes the study with a summary of findings based on collected data.

References:


