CHAPTER -1

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India lives in its villages. Unless we reconstruct, improve and develop them, India will perish. Gandhiji said, "If India is not to perish, we have to begin with lower rung of ladder. If that was rotten, all work done at the top or at the intermediate level was bound to ultimately fall." Gandhiji maintained that the blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. His plea was for radical decentralization and liberation of the villages from exploitation. The village is the fundamental unit for the development of our country and the state, because the root has to be strong for growth of the tree. The same feeling have been echoed by Rabindra Nath Tagore when he said that the status of Mother India has been reduced to that of the maid servant due to draining of resources from villages to cities. (Singh: 2001)

Democracy, in form and spirit, makes a difference of fundamental nature. People's participation is sine qua non for successful democracy. Participatory democracy ensures progress and prosperity with pride and pleasure. Decentralization, as one of the techniques of administrative reforms for democracy and development, is on the global agenda. In India, democratic decentralization has been conceived since the independence. More importantly, for rural development people's participation has been emphasized as the local people have the knowledge of their requirements. The success of rural development programmes depends as much on people's initiative and participation as on the involvement of the government agencies.

Democratic Decentralization:

Democracy has two basic concepts – rule by the people and self-rule for the individual. As a corollary to this accepted norm of democracy there is the much talk about concept of democratic decentralization. It demands that the share of the people should be extended in decision-making. This necessarily involves decentralization of the making of decisions touching the local areas and regional communities by the people at the top. Decentralization is of crucial importance for
achieving goals of poverty eradication, socio-political uplift and long-term people centered development.

Democracy is basically a decentralised system. A centralised administration however efficient it may be can never excel the basic idea of democracy, i.e. government by the people. Democratic decentralization underlines a state which is more responsive to local needs and aspirations and produces systems of governance that are more effective. The case for democratic decentralization is also predicated upon the notion that greater participation in local political affairs will improve the quality and reach of government services, particularly ones aimed at improving the lives of poor and politically marginal groups in society. In the context of poverty reduction, access to the resources and benefits that governments provide is associated with systems of governance that empower poor and vulnerable groups in society.

Democratic decentralization is the development of cordial relationships between central and local governments and between local governments and citizens. It addresses the power to develop and implement policy, the extension of democratic processes to lower levels of government, and measures to ensure that democracy is sustainable. Democratic decentralization incorporates both decentralization and democracy as village level local governance. (Biju: 1998)

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) represent a mechanism for democratic decentralization. It is argued that rural development (RD) and the poverty alleviation programmes can be best achieved through democratic decentralization.

Recognizing the importance of democratic institutions at the grass-roots level, the Indian Constitution laid down in Article 40 of Part IV of the Directive Principles of State Policy that the state would take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as might be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. The Panchayati Raj institutions became a state subject under the Constitution. The Balwantrai Mehta Committee was appointed in 1957 to study the Community Development and National Extension Service programmes, especially from the point of view of assessing the extent of popular participation, and to recommend the creation of institutions through which such participation could be achieved. The Committee recommended the constitution of
The history of rural development in India is the history of agricultural development. In India, during the 1950s, the desire of the Government to develop the local areas as per the local needs led to the launching of the Community Development Programme. However, the failure of the programme to achieve the stated objectives led to the formation of Balwantrai Mehta Committee. The Committee was constituted to examine the reasons for the failure of the programme and to recommend measures for realizing the principles of democratic decentralization. Consequent upon the recommendations of the Committee, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were introduced as institutions of local self-government. The PRIs were to be so organized as to facilitate not only participation of the rural masses but also to enable them to participate in the micro-planning and implementation of the various developmental schemes.

Since the Balwantrai Committee many committees have been constituted to recommend the measures for making PRIs more responsive and productive in discharging its socio-economic responsibilities. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment...
Act aimed at achieving democratic decentralization, devolution of power, financial autonomy. It also provided space for participation of the women and the marginalized sections in the decision-making process at the grassroots level. (Goel, Rajneesh: 2009)

Development of Panchayati Raj under different committees since independence:

(i) Balwantrai Mehta Committee:

The National Development Council appointed a Committee on Plan Project to look into this problem. This Committee appointed a study team in 1956 under the Chairmanship of a senior legislator, Balwantrai Mehta, to review critically Community Development Project and National Extension Service and suggest measures needed for effecting economy and improving efficiency in their implementation. The team was also asked to examine, “the extent to which community development movement has succeeded in utilizing local initiatives and in creating institutions to ensure continuity in the process of improving economic and social conditions in rural areas. (Ibid:P-15)

To sum up, the basic principles emphasized by the Committee were:

1. There should be a three-tire structure of local self-governing bodies from the village to the district, with organic linkage among them well defined and practical.
2. Adequate administrative powers may be entrusted to these bodies to avoid excessive state control.
3. There should be real transfer of power and responsibilities to them so that they can discharge their duties.
4. Adequate resources should be transferred to the new bodies to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.
5. All developmental programmes should be excluded through these bodies.
6. The system evolved should aim at further devolution and dispersal of responsibilities in the future in the real sense.
7. State Government should not duplicate their functioning.
The Study Team also recommended that such a body, if created, has to be statutory, elective, and comprehensive in its duty and functions, equipped with the necessary executive machinery and in possession of adequate resources. It must not be cramped by too much control by the government or by government agencies. Further, it emphatically stated. This body can develop programmes which are of exclusive interest for the areas. In such matters, the State Government will cease to operate within the area and in special circumstances when it has to do through the agency of this local body. (Ibid: P-16)

The main thrust of the Committee was the argument that development cannot progress without responsibility and power. The community development can be real only when the community understands its problems, realizes its responsibility, exercises the necessary powers through its chosen representatives and maintains a constant and intelligent vigilance on local administration.

After acceptance of these recommendations by the National Development Council (NDC), the State Legislatures passed legislations to create these bodies in their states. Different States created different types of structures keeping in view the requirements of the states. These legislations provided for development of districts as their main unit. Simultaneously, these bodies were given enough powers not only to raise resources but also to implement development plans of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The idea of decentralization was reiterated in the Third Five-Year Plan and it was proposed that the states should formulate their annual plans, at least in the following activities on the basis of district and block level plans:

1. Agriculture, including minor irrigation, soil conservation, and village forests, animal husbandry, dairying, etc;
2. Development of co-operatives;
3. Village industries;
4. Elementary education, especially provision of school buildings for local communities;
5. Rural water supply, programme of minimum rural amenities, including construction of approach roads linking each village to the nearest road or rail head; and

6. Works/Programmes for fuller utilization of manpower resources in rural areas.

(ii) Administrative Reforms Commission:

The Administrative Reforms Commission in 1967 examined the question of planning at the district level. Thereafter the Planning Commission issued a set of detailed guidelines for the preparation of district plans. These guidelines also visualized the preparation of a ‘respective plan’ along with medium-term and annual plans. On the basis of Planning Commission’s guidelines, the State of Maharashtra started the preparation of district plans in 1972. It not only identified the schemes for district planning but also set apart plan funds and created separate planning boards known as District Development and Planning Councils at the district level. Gujarat initiated district level planning in 1979. Karnataka was the third state to start district level planning around this time. All these States evolved their own procedures of devolution of plan funds to the districts as well as formulation of plans. These developments, however, did not make much impact. The new Government at the Union Level in 1977 set-up a Working Group under the Chairmanship of M.L.Dantwala to draw up guidelines for the block-level planning. The Working Group noted that the remoteness of the planning agencies from the areas of implementation and vastness of geographical coverage hamper matching of sectoral financial allocations with location-specific needs as well as potential for regulating the destitution of the developmental gains. (Ibid: P-17)

Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its Report on Local Governance, published in October, 2007 headed by M. Veerappa Moily has examined in detail the issues relating to rural and urban local governance in India with a special focus on the need for real democratic decentralization in the country in order to usher in genuine grass roots democracy as envisaged by the founding fathers of our republic and as now specifically mandated by our Constitution. The Report examines these issues in three parts - the first part deals with common issues of local governance that
are relevant for both rural and urban areas as well as the rural-urban continuum; the second deals with rural governance issues; and the third with urban governance. The report tells that our Constitution provides a clear mandate for democratic decentralization not only through the Directive Principles of State Policy which exhorts the State to promote Panchayati Raj Institutions but more specifically through the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution which seek to create an institutional framework for ushering in grass roots democracy through the medium of genuinely self-governing local bodies in both urban and rural areas of the country. In this Report, the Commission has tried to chalk out an agenda for reform of local governance in both urban and rural areas. At the outset, the core principles that underpin this agenda have been outlined. These principles includes democratic decentralization as the centre-piece of governance reforms in the country; the principle of subsidiarity which means that what can best be done at the lower levels of government should not be centralized at higher levels; a clear delineation of functions entrusted to the local bodies; effective devolution in financial terms and convergence of services for the citizens as well as citizens centric governance structures. Based on these principles, the Report first looks at the present constitutional scheme relating to local bodies and what has already been achieved as well as what remains to be done. On the basis of this analysis, it is proposed that a framework law at the national level may be prescribed for local bodies with the consent of the States in order that devolution of functions as well as funds and functionaries becomes mandatory and not optional. The report also deals with the issues relating to capacity building for self-governance, the need for assigning the functions of decentralized planning to a single agency at the local and regional levels, the mechanisms required for ensuring transparency and accountability such as well defined audit mechanisms as well as the need for constitution of an Ombudsman to take care of complaints against local bodies.

Thereafter, in the section on rural governance, issues relating to the role of Ward Sabhas, giving Panchayati Raj Institutions greater autonomy in personnel management and in the management of local resources are discussed in detail. The question of ‘activity mapping’ to ensure clear cut transfer of functions to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as well as the critical issue of fiscal decentralization are also analyzed in detail. Besides these, the need to give the PRIs
the central role in the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes while, at the same time, increasing the proportion of untied funds made available to them for carrying out their statutory functions are also highlighted.

(iii) **Ashok Mehta Committee:**

Another committee, headed by Ashok Mehta, was appointed to enquire into the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and to suggest measures to strengthen the decentralized system of planning and development to be effective. Ashok Mehta Committee felt that development work in future needs intricate designing and greater co-ordination, which would be unwise to attempt at the State level. It also suggested that district planning unit consisting of a professional qualified team should be placed with the Zilla Parishad. Mehta Committee concluded that, “a number of developments in the past have conspired to undermine the Panchayati raj Structures and make them ineffective”. In fact, “Except in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the PRJs have been merely given an opportunity to take up planning or implementation work on a sizeable scale.” (Ibid: P-18)

The Planning Commission again set-up a Working Group on district planning under the chairmanship of C.H. Hanumantha Rao. The Working Group submitted its report in 1984, recommending the ‘stages approach’ to district planning. The Seventh Plan document (1985-90) re-affirmed its faith in the process of decentralization and resolved to follow the process in the lines suggested by the Rao Commission. In 1985, the Planning Commission appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of G.V.K. Rao to review existing administrative arrangements for rural development and to suggest appropriate structural mechanism to activate PRJs.

(iv) **L.M. Singhvi Committee:**

In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi Government appointed a committee on the 'Revitalization of the Panchayati Raj Institutions for Democracy and Development' under the chairmanship of L.M. Singhvi. The L.M. Singhvi Committee Report submitted at the instance of the Ministry of Rural Development. After tracing the growth and development of democratic decentralization, the Singhvi Committee recommended for-
The Panchayati Raj Institutions should be constitutionally recognized, protected and preserved. For this purpose, a new chapter should be added in the Constitution of India. It also suggested some Constitutional provisions to ensure regular, free and fair elections to the Panchayati Raj bodies.

Nyaya Panchayats should be established for a cluster of villages.

The villages should be organized to make the Gram Panchayats more viable. It also emphasized the importance of the Gram Sabha and called it as the embodiment of direct democracy.

The Village Panchayats should have more financial resources.

The judicial tribunals should be established in each state to eradicate controversies about election to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, their dissolution and other matters related to their functioning. (Ibid: P-19)

(v) Sarkaria Commission

The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations (1988) did not favour the idea of L.M. Singhvi Committee to confer constitutional status to the PRIs. The Commission advocated that the power of enacting any law on the Panchayats vests under entry 5 list 11 exclusively with States. Uniformity in these aspects of the law throughout the territory of India is essential. The uniformity can be secured by adopting in the following order of preference any of the alternatives given below:

(i) By law with respect to this matter made by all the State Legislatures in accordance with a model bill prepared on the basis of consensus at the forum of the Inter-State Council, recommended by us to be established under Act. 263.

(ii) By a law on this subject made by Parliament under Art. 252(1) with the consent of the Legislatures of all the States.

(iii) By a Parliamentary Law uniformly applicable throughout India containing provisions analogous to Art. 172 and 174 of the Constitution. (Ibid)

Local self-governing bodies form an integral part of a democratic society. They are designed to play an effective part in the evolution of people's participation from the lowest ebb; they are given the opportunity to express themselves on
administration, on social and economic problems and to evolve an integral Indian community through a process of emotional integration.

The introduction of Panchayati Raj and other programmes of rural reconstruction in contemporary India have given fillip to the popular participation. Consequently there are rising pressures for the distribution of economic benefits and facilities, the close interactions between processes of economic and political development.

Rural Development: The Concept:

Rural development has today become an objective not only of the local and regional concern, but a pragmatic objective fully backed by national government and international organizations like the United Nations, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Rural development is advocated today as a basic strategy for economic development all over the world. No country can achieve the desired goal if a large section of its population is living under unhygienic and destitute conditions. India, being a developing country needs to pay special attention to the improvement of the economic, social and educational conditions of rural masses as large population is located in rural areas. Though a few steps were taken before Independence for rural development, these are too few to tackle the problem. The concept of development assumed strategic importance only after the independence. Hence, the rural development occupies a significant place in our economic planning. Our rural area represents real India. Hence without uplifting rural masses, one cannot accelerate the pace of overall economic development of our country.

Thus, rural development is the means to improving basic needs, increasing productivity and employment opportunities and developing potentials of rural resources through integration of spatial, functional and temporal aspects.

Fundamentally, development of rural area means development of the people living in rural areas through implementation of various rural development schemes. The objectives of development include sustained increase in per capita output and incomes expansion of productive employment and greater equity in the distribution of the benefits of growth and development of infrastructure.
About 80% of populations living in the villages of India are poor. To address the problem the government has started many programmes but these programmes will succeed only when the people are aware of these programmes and participate actively.

The Rural Development programme has been defined in various ways. The concept of rural development was born in the context of agriculture and continued for a long time coterminous with agricultural development in India. Though the first seed of the rural development has been sown by Rabindra Nath Tagore at Santiniketan but real efforts for the solution of the economic ills came from Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi made heroic effort to revive village and cottage industries as a part and policy of the rural development. In 1936, he wrote in ‘Harijan’, ‘I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in few cities, but in its 7 Lakhs villages’. Further would say that, “If the village perishes, India will perish too”. To Gandhi, every village must be self – sufficient. Self sufficiency and basic needs are the two important goals of rural development.

Rural development has been defined as a strategy to improve the socio-economic life of rural people with special emphasis on rural poor. Lele defines Rural Development as an improvement in the living standard of the masses of low income population residing in rural areas and making the process of self-sustaining. According to Enswinger rural development seeks to involve a process of transformation from traditionally oriented rural culture towards an acceptance and reliance on science and technology.

The main objectives of the rural development may be summarized as follows:

i. To achieve enhanced production and productivity in rural areas.

ii. To bring about a greater socio-economic equity.

iii. To bring about a balance in social and economic development.

iv. To develop broad based community participation in the process of development.

v. To improving the quality of life of rural poor.

vi. To create additional employment opportunities in rural areas of India.

(Jain: 2002)
Gandhi’s Concept of Rural Development:

Any discussion on the history of rural development remains incomplete unless Gandhiji’s ideas regarding rural development are mentioned. During the freedom struggle Mahatma Gandhi laid great emphasis on the development of villages, and the subsequent attainment of self-sufficiency for the villages of India. Gandhi always said that India lives in her villages and for the development of the country as a whole, much importance should be given to its villages.

According to Gandhi, real ‘Swaraj’ includes economic and social emancipation of the individuals and communities that constitute a nation and not merely a freedom from foreign rule. Gandhi chose Sevagram as an experimental laboratory to work out his ideas of constructive programme which consisted of (a) use of Khadi; (b) promotion of village industries; (c) removal of untouchability; (d) basic and audit education; (e) village cleanliness; (f) communal harmony; (g) prohibition; (h) education for health and hygiene; (i) women’s upliftment and (j) propagation of national language. (Ray: 1985)

Gandhi believed in decentralization of social and political power. According to him, democracy cannot be realised without the Panchayat working as the basic and effective unit of government. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village. Gandhiji said when the Panchayati Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The power of Amanda’s, the capitalists and the rajas can hold sway only so long as the common men do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operated with the evils of Zamindari and capitalism it must die of inanition.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES:

A Historical Overview

Rural development in India has a long history, both in terms of ideas and schemes which go back to the pre-independence era. Its origin can be traced back to 1885, when the first attempt for rural development was made rural of Baroda district. Particularly, the period of 1921 to 1930 was very fertile from the view point of early pioneering effort as rural reconstruction.
The major experiment of this period could be broadly divided into two categories: first, those carried out by charismatic leaders with or without outside resource support, second, those executed generally through individual initiatives but with the resource support of the state. Sriniketan, Martandam, Wardha, and Sabarmati, Nilo Kheri and Etawah belong to the first category, Baroda, Gurgaon and Firka to the second category. (Ibid.)

In 1922, Magan Lal Gandhi established the Swaraj Ashram at Baroda. The Ashram aimed at preparing for Non-Cooperation and the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The resolution of non-cooperation was passed earlier in September 1920 at the Calcutta session under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai. This resolution included mainly the boycott of foreign goods and mass publicity for the use of home made khadi clothes. (Gaur: 1985)

Rural Development before Independence:

Ideal Village Project

In 1903, Sir Daniel Hamilton began a project of rural development on the basis of cooperation and started this project in “Sundaram Village” near Madras (Chennai). In 1910 under this programme, Co-operative Deposit Institute was established. Along with the savings, the programmes of health, literacy and small industry were started. In this planning, the emphasis was on specialized training for unemployed young farmers to make them self-dependent.

Sriniketan Institute of Rural Reconstruction:

Sriniketan is situated about 100 km. away from Calcutta (Kolkata) in West-Bengal State. This area was backward socially, economically and politically. Rabindra Nath Tagore began this project of village development in this area with the help of sociologist Shri L.M. Hurst. Tagore thought that if some villages were developed, the other villages will get inspiration and the programme of village development will spread all over the country and thus the whole country would be developed. Sriniketan Village Welfare Institute was established in 1920 whose main objectives were the following:
(1) To increase the knowledge of rural people.
(2) To help the rural people in establishing cottage industry.
(3) To inspire the people to follow new technology.
(4) Development of dairy farming.
(5) To create the feeling of co-operation.
(6) To arrange the facility of health and education.
(7) To create the feeling of rural leadership.

This Project, in the beginning, was started only in 8 villages but after some time this project was extended to 15 villages. Tagore was the landlord of all these villages. Being centralized over Tagore this Project could not survive after the death of Shri Tagore, and came to an end after his death. The institute mainly undertook programme like organization of health co-operatives, agriculture demonstrations, supply of better seeds and manure, improvement of cottage industries through Vratchari Movement and Shiksha Satra, a school for educating and training village boys on new lines and producing of literature for neo-literate. The aim of the institute was, to bring back life in its completeness into the villages, making rural folk self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural traditions of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic conditions. (Sri Niketan Bulletin: 1981)

Marthendom Project:

This project of rural development was initiated in the village Marthendom near Trivenduram of Kerala State by Young Men Christian Association (Y.M.C.A) and Christian Church Association under the direction of Dr. Spencer Hatch in 1928. This village was undeveloped economically and the economic condition of the native majority was poor. Here, people used to cultivate only paddy and coconut on some places. For exploiting this weakness, it was thought that some developmental work should be done, so that the Christian faith could spread. Consequently Dr. Hatch made agreement with Y.M.C.A and the Church for his work and initiated this project in neighbouring village Marthendom.

The main objectives of this project were:
1. Spiritual Development-To develop the sentiments of people or to create the feeling of progress in their minds, because a work cannot be successful until the people are confident that the work will definitely be successful. Dr. Hatch had the confidence that if people are inspired for progress, then people can be motivated for these development works.

2. Mental Development-To just awaken the feeling is not enough? Mental development is also necessary, until the thinking, understanding and the capacity of taking decision are not developed, the work cannot be completed. Thus mental development of a man is also necessary.

3. Physical Development-The individual, who is not physically strong, cannot work well, whether he is developed mentally and spiritually. So, the physical development of a man is also necessary.

4. Social Development-If the person’s social environment is adverse, he will be afraid to do any new work. Because all the activities of a person is determined by the society and so the development of their society is essential. Thus, the society in which a person lives, its development is also necessary.

5. Economic Development-Even if the man is spiritually, mentally, physically and socially developed, he will not work if he has no hope of economic advantage. So, the fifth object of this project is to give economic advantage to the people.

The main programme planning of this project were the following:

(1) Before launching the programme, surveys are made to know the needs of that area and on the basis of the surveys the programmes were introduced according to the needs of the people.

(2) The rural drama, rural exhibition, inter-rural competition, demonstration were also organized to affect the people and to attract the people.

(3) Religious programmes were also organized for developing the religious feelings.

(4) All-round development of rural life and each individual’s progress were the subjects to importance in the programmes i.e. Farming, rural industry, co-operation and to develop ‘Panchayat’ etc.

(5) For bringing economic development among the rural people, many programmes as bee keeping, soap making and the educational programmes etc. were organized.
This programme of Dr. Hetch remained for a long period because he had trained workers and the local people were inspired to work themselves. As such this project was very successful in this area. But the whole programme was centred on a person and after the death of Dr. Hetch, there was a conflict on the question of leadership between Y.M.C.A. and Church Association and due to no economic advantage to the non-paid workers, this programme could not survive. (Randhawa: 1982)

**Gurgaon Experiment:**

Rural Reconstruction Scheme of F.L. Brayne in 1927 was the first programme initiated by the government in pre-independence India to transform rural areas. The then collector of Gurgaon district, Brayne, conceived the idea of rural development. His four fundamental ideas regarding rural construction were (1) Panchayats for spontaneous and permanent improvement (2) knowledge through mass education, particularly education of girls, (3) example and leadership by the elite, and (4) spirit of service and (5) a sense of duty to undergo sacrifices for fellow citizens. Brayne spoke of rural reconstruction as nothing more or less than the revival of the old fashioned virtues of hard work, thrift, self-respect, self-control, self-help, mutual help and mutual respect. The aim was to motivate the villager to develop himself and his village with the assistance of government agencies. In this, high pressure methods were used as quick results were sought. Increasing agricultural production, stoppage of waste and improvement of sanitation facilities were some of the activities through which speedy transformation was sought to be brought. (Ambastha: 1979)

**(d) Sevagram Experiment:**

Gandhiji knew very well that as long as Indian people are suppressed, their society and their nation cannot progress. For ending this suppression, he began this welfare project “SEVA GRAM”, establishing his Ashram in Vardha, in 1920. The main objective of this programme was to prevent the economic and social suppression of the people and to create the feeling of patriotism among them and they must think that this is their own country. For fulfilling this objective, Gandhiji made a programme, which became famous as “Gandhian Constructive Programme.”

16
main objectives of this project were: (1) to use khadi clothes, (2) to introduce Health Programme, (3) the programme of sanitation in the village, (4) the programme of women welfare, (5) the programme of economic help, (6) to uplift the backward classes, (7) primary and adult educational programmes, (8) to improve the conditions of poor people, (9) programme of social harmony, and (10) to popularise the mother tongue and other national dialects. It attempted to create a sense of social responsibility and self discipline. Importance was given to moral values to be inculcated through non violence. Village autonomy, decentralization, self purification, self reliance, development of cottage industries, basic education, removal of untouchability etc. were the ideas to be promoted among the villagers. (Jain: 1985)

(E) Firka Movement:

The Firka Movement scheme was launched by the Madras Presidency in the year 1946 aimed to make efforts for the development of villages at Firka level. The first programme began in 1946. Among Pre-Independence project, this was the biggest project. Its objectives were: (1) All-round development of rural people. (2) To develop the means of drinking water and communication. (3) To develop the committees of panchayat and co-operatives. (4) To develop animal husbandry, farming and irrigation facilities. (5) To introduce khadi and cottage industry. (Ibid)

(H) Baroda and Rural Reconstruction:

In 1932, V.T. Krishnamachari started rural reconstruction programme in Baroda. The programme included: (1) improvement of communication; (2) digging of drinking water wells; (3) pasture improvement ;(4) distribution of Panchayats and co-operatives covering every village; and (5) development of village schools as centers for agriculture and imparting a ‘Will to live-better’.

The programme was quite successful in Baroda, which was one of the few advanced princely states of pre-independent India. By 1942-43, there were 24 intensive units, covering 487 villages, which were actively implementing this programme. This programme became a model on which the community development programme was developed on a larger scale in 1952. (Jha:1981)
In spite of its limitation and failures, Nilokheri left an imprint on the face of the community development programmes. It gave the country its first administrator of community projects. Secondly, Nilokheri became a symbol of progress through self-help and mutual aid. It was an outstanding experiment in the practice of secular socialistic living. Unfortunately, the idea was not given a practical shape in free India.

Rural Development after the Independence:

Etawah Pilot Project:

In 1947, after Independence, the Government of India prioritized on rural development and how this work should be managed. For this the guidance of an experienced person was needed. The Government of India urged the U.S. government to send Mr. Albert Mayor to India because he had enough experience of rural development programme and was a Rural Sociologist. He also had the experience of organizing different programmes of village upliftment. Mr. Mayor, after arriving here, surveyed throughout India and on the basis of his experience, he concluded that it is a vast country enriched with different resources and seasons, therefore such a field should be selected that can represent most parts of the country. So, Mr. Mayor made his headquarters at Maheva (District Etawah in U.P.), selected 64 villages of neighbouring area and there, in 1948, initiated the work of development guided by the following objectives. (Mishra:989)

Objectives:

(1) Mental development of the villagers. (2) To awaken the desire of rural people and to make them laborious. (3) The development of agriculture and animal husbandry. (4) The development of Panchayat. (5) To develop the feeling of self-confidence, co-operation and mass participation. (6) To seek the possibility of transferring this project elsewhere in the country.

Programme:

(1) To find out the desired needs of the people. (2) To demonstrate and evaluate the programmes. (3) To appoint the village level workers (V.L.W.) for working as a link between the people and the government. (4) In agricultural
economics, to develop the cottage industry as the co-operative business for
development of the agriculture. (5) To open the stocks of seeds, fertilizers and the
instruments of agriculture. (6) To introduce the people to the international world
through news bulletins and newspapers. (7) To start the health programme for the
rural people. 8) New schools of primary education and adult education for the
extension of education were opened. (9)To solve the agricultural problems for the
development of agriculture, i.e., improvement of sterile land, to prevent the soil
erosion, reconstruction of tube-wells, the arrangements of demonstrations for teaching
them about improved agricultural methods, the construction of roads, the distribution
of seeds and fertilizers and development of horticulture etc. programmes of
agricultural development were started.

From this Pilot Project, the Government of India achieved encouraging results.
Inspired by the success of this project, some Projects were introduced in Gorakhpur,
Faizabad, etc. Government of India later on introduced a new programme of
“Community Development” in 1952.

Nilokheri Project:

In 1948, S.K.Dey prepared this project for the purpose of providing residence
for 700 immigrants from Pakistan. He began this project using 100 acre of swampy
land spreading in the midst of Karnal and Kurukshetra. The name of this project was
“Majdoor Manzil”. The director of this project was S.K. Dey. He went on to become
the Union Minister of Community Development in 1965. The main objectives of the
programmes were (1) Self-dependence in all the fields of life. (2) To arrange for
professional training and provide occupation for the people on the basis of their
experience. (3) To eliminate the middle-man system. The scopes of the project were
(1) the work was done in 100 villages near Nilokheri. (2) To establish the village level
workers, social development officer and block development officer. (3) The
development and popularisation of co-operative Institutions. (4) The facility for
entertainment. (5) The effort to establish a socialist society.

Besides Etawah and Nilokheri project from the point of view of rural
development, the period since independence can conveniently be divided into three
phases. Following discussion will present a brief review of the major characteristics
of these phases followed by a more detailed discussion on two major rural development programmes, namely, Community Development Programme (CD), and Integrated Rural Development Programme. (Jain: 1985)

First Phase:

Community Development Programme:

The first phase of rural development in post independent India started with the Community Development Programme (CDP), launched on October 2, 1952 which emerged as the first strategic programme of rural development in India. The CD programme was based on the notion that rural development is all inclusive and that all aspects of rural life are its target. It was also argued that primary among all needs of rural people was growth in agricultural production from which most of them, directly or indirectly, derived their income, and that, available resources if concentrated towards this end would produce better result. This led, among other things, to a shift in emphasis.20

The Community Development Programme (CDP) has been defined as a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and on the initiative of the community. (Chattapadhya: 1985)

Objective of the programme:

The aim of the CDP is to secure the fullest development of the material and human resources of the area, and thus to raise the rural community to higher levels of living. The aim was specifically spelt out to include the following;

(a) Leading the rural population from chronic unemployment to full employment;

(b) The rural population from chronic agricultural underproduction to full production through the use of improved scientific knowledge;

(c) The largest possible extension of the principle of cooperation, and every effort to be made to rural families creditworthy; and

(d) Communities increased efforts for its benefits as a whole, such as village roads, tanks, wells, schools, community centre, and children’s
the active participation of people and effective utilization of the local resources.

Community Development Programme (CDP) was started under the major influence of the Etawah Project undertaken by American expert, Albert Mayor. CDP sought to motivate the rural people to take community based approach for the improvement of the economic and social condition of their life. The Govt. was expected to provide general guidance and technical cum financial assistance to some blocks in a phased manner. National Extension Service was also introduced in 1953 as a prelude to community development in various blocks.

CDP can be defined as a total approach to promote the whole community with the active participation of people and effective utilization of local resources. The specific objectives were the promotion of self help groups and co operative efforts, increased employment and agricultural output, creation of community infrastructures etc. the cooperative way of life and peoples participation were central to CDP.

The programme was launched with 55 pilot projects on an experimental basis with blocks as its basic units. Subject matter specialists from developmental blocks were available at block level to assist the B.D.O. The village level worker (VLW) was the contact person for administration and the public. National Extension Service (NES) was created in 1963 to support CDP. The block was supposed to achieve development by 10 years and expected to develop as a permanent unit for planning and development.

During this era, Mahatma Gandhi’s conception regarding the village panchayat as primary grass root level democratic unit prevailed. People’s participation came to be considered as necessary so that India’s perception as a welfare state could be fulfilled. According to Gandhiji, “greater the power of the panchayat, the better for the people as true democracy.”

Second Phase:

The second phase of rural development in India was marked by the beginning of Green Revolution which was at first characterized by the introduction of High Yielding Varieties programmes of the programmes. It was started in 1965-66 to increase agricultural production and induce farmers to use HYV seeds and apply
improved techniques of cultivation. In 1965, as a special programme, Multiple Cropping Programme (MCP) was launched for development of selected crops in selected districts. The Govt. of India extensively launched the HYV programme in 1967.

The strategy bore fruits as is evidenced by a sharp rise in agricultural productivity and production. But, gradually, it became evident that the benefits of higher production were not distributed to all equally i.e. those with less resources had benefited less than those with more resources. (Jain, 1985)

Third phase:

The third phase saw the beginning of the Integrated Rural Development Programmes IRDP; the IRDP forms the major plank of the 9th five year plan.

Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP) In India:

Emergence of IRDP:

The programmes under community development programmes and some other programmes based on area development did not contribute that much towards bringing about desired improvement in the socio-economic status of the rural poor. Moreover, the territorial overlap of these programmes not only made monitoring and accounting difficult but also blurred the objective thereof. To overcome the problem it was necessary to some integrated programme and thus a far more ambitious programme known as Integrated Rural Development Programme was launched. The main objectives of the Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDP) Programme will be to evolve an operationally integrated strategy for the purpose, on the one hand, of increasing production and productivity in agriculture and allied sectors base on the netter use of land, water and sunlight, and on the other, of resource and income development of vulnerable sections of the population in all the blocks of the country. Any development strategy which aims at improving the lot of the rural poor must aim at creating new productive assets for them. Improving the productivity of land by providing access to inputs like water, improved seeds, and fertilizers would be essential means to help those categories of the rural poor who have some land asset. Diversification of agriculture through animal husbandry,
dairying, forestry, fishery, sericulture, etc., to benefit both the landless and landholders was to form an important plank of the programme. Processing and manufacturing activities based on local resources will also have to be identified and fully exploited. Post-harvest technology will have to be improved so that both producers and consumers benefit from enhanced production.

A critical appraisal of the experience of the various rural development programmes made in the earlier sections of this chapter shows that a mere sectoral approach is not adequate to lead an over all development of rural areas and distribution of profits to local population, particularly the weaker section of the society. It is true that other programmes of rural development implemented since independence under different five year plans aimed at improving the socio economic condition of the rural poor, but did not give desired and expected results because most of the developmental programmes were often planned and implemented in a fragmented and compartmentalized way and the importance of the understanding the totality of the situation was not considered as prerequisites for development. These programmes did not cover the whole country, though a large number of the blocks in the country had more than one of these programmes operating simultaneously in the same area and for the same target groups. This led to the regional disparities in development not only amongst the states but also among the different district within the same state. Further, it also intended to accentuate the income disparities between the rural rich and the rural poor. It was, therefore, proposed that such multiplicity of the programmes for rural poor operated through different agencies should be ended and these should be replaced by one single integrated programme called Integrated Rural Development Programme operating in the country. (Mishra: 1997)

Another reason for the emergence of the IRDP is that while an improvement in the general growth rate of the economy, which our national planners strive for, can also contribute to some extent to ameliorate the living condition of the poor, yet the past experience shows the limited effectiveness of the trickle down effect. To overcome these problems in managing and implementation of rural development programmes, the Government felt it necessary to reorient or redesign the programmes of rural development so as to utilize the local resources, both physical and mental, to exploit local development potential fully. The first and foremost desirable step in this regard was to merge several programmes of rural development specially, Small Farmers Development (SFD), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), and
Command Area Development Association (CADA) into a single united programme. This led to emergence of the Integrated Rural Development Programme during the sixth plan which can be regarded as the fourth phase of rural development in India.

The percentage of rural population depending on agriculture in India is very high in comparison to other countries of the world. Consequently, the land is overburdened and the per capita output is extremely low. This is why a large number of families in the rural areas are still living below the poverty line. Accordingly, The Integrated Rural Development Programmes is an effort initiated by the Govt. of India for the removal of poverty among the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourer, and rural artisans. Under the IRDP a new set of Industries services and business and the scheme for Training of Rural Youth for Self – Employment (TRYSEM) was launched on 15th of August, 1979 to provide technical skills to the rural youth in order to enable them to seek employment in the field of agriculture industry, services and basic activities. Only youth in the age group of 18-35 who belonged to the families living below the poverty line were eligible for the training.

The principal objectives of IRDP are elimination of unemployment and eradication of poverty in the rural areas. Although considerable additional employment opportunities can be created through agricultural and allied programmes, yet it is recognized by the Government that diversion of sufficient surplus manpower from the farm to the non- farm sector is unavoidable.

The planning strategy or rural industrial sectors aims at proving a reasonable income to the rural artisans and a substantial increase in employment opportunities to enable the artisans to cross the poverty line. This requires integration of the beneficiary oriented schemes with the overall plan, which is drawn up after taking the resource endowments of the area into account. (Jain: 1985)

While the central and state governments are responsible for providing financial assistance for the programme and laying down guidelines the District Rural Development Authority (DRDA) is responsible for its implementation. The DRDA consists of multi disciplinary team of officials and its governing body is generally headed by the collector, members of Parliament, members of Legislative Assemblies. This body is mainly responsible for effective planning and implementation of the programme.
For the proper implementation of the programme at the blocks levels a number of extension officers are appointed. A block is the basic unit for preparation of prospective annual plans, implementation of the programme as per approved plan for providing feedback on the part of the programme.

For successful implementation of the programme, it is essential to have the maximum involvement of the beneficiaries.

**Concept of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):**

From time to time, IRDP has been differently defined explained and interpreted, and there is hardly any consensus on this concept. Some of these definitions and interpretation are as follows.

It is viewed as “systematic, scientific and integrated use of all our natural resources and as part of this process enabling every person to engage himself in productive and socially useful occupations and earn an income that would meet at least the basic needs.” (Subramanian: 1988)

“Integrated Rural Development” has been interpreted by K.P.Chand as a package programme of various rural development services and activities of government which are closely interrelated. This would involve the conventional notion of horizontal integration. This notion still seems valid in the case of rural development since poor coordination between different agencies concerned with rural change is a problem faced by most of the Asian countries. (Chand: 1988)

Azad explains the concept of IRDP as integrated development of the area and people through optimum development and utilization of local resources- physical, biological and human and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes and by delivering a package of services to encompass not only the economic field, that is , agriculture and rural industries, but also the establishment of the required social infrastructure and services in the health and nutrition, sanitation, housing, drinking water and literacy with the ultimate object of improving the quality of life of the ‘rural poor’ and the ‘rural weak’. IRDP implies functional, spatial and temporal integration of all these parameters. Thus, the approach is a multifaceted framework involving a multidisciplinary approach. In this process, self help and community participation have a paramount role. (Azad: 1989)
Similarly Sharma and Malhotra consider IRDP as a “strategy package which seeks into achieve enhanced rural production and productivity, greater socio economic development, broader based community participation in the process of development.” (Sharma: 1988)

R.B. Singh states that the concept of integration in rural development proposes five fold integration namely, sectoral integration, spatial integration, socio institutional integration, technological- ecological integration and integration of objective functions. (Singh: 1985)

Integrated Rural Development has been viewed in a broader sense by V.K.R.V. Rao. According to him, “Integrated Rural Development involves the development of both natural and human resources and this has to be done within defined areas. It also requires the identification of the poor and specific measures designed to lift them above the level of poverty. Integrated Rural Development does not mean only agricultural development or increase in agricultural productivity. It has to include all productive activities such as secondary and tertiary and primary other than crop rising. Not only it has to include all production and means designed to improve productivity, but also to provide for full employment, and equitable distribution of the proceeds of development with particular reference to the elimination of poverty.” (Rao: 1985)

Indra Hirway considers IRDP as a major target group programme for rural poverty eradication and briefly describes the policy mechanism of IRDP follows: (1) precise identification of the poor house on the basis of asst and income. (2) Examining the problems of the poor household and identification of suitable schemes for raising their income and employment in the present or in new occupations. (3) Provision of special extension facilities so that the poor are not informed but are also helped in participating in the programme. (4) Provision of credit for undertaking the schemes in such a way that credit is easily available, it meets all types of credit needs and is available at a low rate of interest with easy installments. The asset purchased is also subsidized.” (Hirway: 1988)

From the different interpretations, it is clear that the Integrated Rural Development Programme is an important strategy which envisages a direct attack on rural poverty by identifying the poor and by providing them with requisite financial and other assistance so as to enable them cross the poverty line.
We can say that the IRDP has been devised to revolutionize rural life by bringing about socio-economic transformation in the countryside through the eradication of backwardness, ignorance and poverty within a time frame. The programme envisages the optimum utilization of natural and human resources of a cluster of villages for the material upliftment and overall betterment of the life of all section of people living there. A broad framework of co-ordinate activities is devised for rural development, ensuring simultaneous promotion of agriculture and allied activities such as rural industrialization, communication, transport, irrigation and water supply, education, health etc. This is thus a multi-faceted programme ensuring the development of the focal point in each cluster and intensive development in the villages constituting the cluster.

**Target Group:**

The target group of the IRDP consists of the poorest among the poor in the rural areas, namely, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, agricultural and non-agricultural laborers, rural artisans, marginal and small farmers and those who are below the poverty line. Initially a family whose annual income from all sources was below Rs.3,500 was considered to be below the poverty line. During the Seventh Plan this limit has been raised to Rs. 6,400 per annum. However, it has been provided that families with an annual income of up to Rs. 4,800 have to be assisted first and there after the families with an annual income between Rs. 4,800 and Rs. 6,400 are to be assisted. The manual of IRDP, 1991 defines the target group as follows. (Maheshwari: 1995)

'Small Farmer'-A cultivator with a land holding of 2 hectares or below is a small farmer, where a farmer has class 1 irrigated land, as defined in the state land ceilings legislation with 1 hectare or less he will be considered as small farmer.

'Marginal Farmer'- A person with a land holding of 1 hectare or below is a marginal farmer. In case of class 1 irrigated land, the ceiling will be 0.5 hectare.

'Agricultural Labourer'- A person without any land other than homestead and deriving 50% of his income from agricultural wages is an agricultural labourer.

The IRDP has brought under one umbrella the following rural development programmes:
Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana:

Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana is the restructured, streamlined and comprehensive version of the erstwhile Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY). Launched on 1 April 1999, it has been designed to improve the quality of life of the rural poor by providing them additional gainful employment. The objectives of the yojana are creation of demand driven village infrastructure including durable assets for increasing the opportunities for sustained employment, and generation of supplementary employment for the unemployed poor in the rural areas. People living in villages constitute the target of JGSY. Preference is given to SC/ST families living below the poverty line and physically handicapped persons.

The programme is being implemented entirely at the village panchayat level. District Rural Development Zilla Parishad will release the funds including matching share directly to the state directly to village panchayat.

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana : (SJSY):

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana single self employment programme for the rural poor. Launched on April 1, 1999, the programme replaces the earlier self employment and allied programmes – Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of rural youth for self employment (TRYSEM), Development of Woman and children in rural areas (DWCRA), Supply of improved tool kits to rural artisans (SITRA) and Millions Wells Scheme (MWS), which are no longer in operation. It aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas. Persons assisted under this programme will be known as Swarojgaries and beneficiaries. The programme has been designed to provide proper support to tap the inherent talents and capabilities of the rural poor. Funds under the SGSY will be shared by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 75:25.

Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment : (TRYSEM)

Under the IRDP a new set of Industries services and business and the scheme for Training of Rural Youth for Self – Employment (TRYSEM) had been launched on 15th of August, 1979 to provide technical skills to the rural youth in order to enable them to seek employment in the field of agriculture industry, services and basic activities.
The target group TRYSEM comprises rural youths between the ages 18 to 35 from families living below the poverty line. The scheme lies down that a minimum of 30% of the trained youth should belong to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities and a minimum of 3.1-3.1 percent of the rural youths trained should be women. (www.trysem.com)

**Development of Women and Children in Rural Area:** (DWCRA)

The programme of development of women and children in rural areas, a sub-theme of IRDP, is designed exclusively for the woman members of rural households below the poverty line to provide them suitable avenues of income generation according to their skills and local conditions. The scheme was launched in 1982-83 as a pilot projects in 50 blocks in the country. The main aim of the programme is to increase the income of the rural women of target groups by taking up income generating activities such as bamboo work, dairy development, carpet weaving, shawl making, bee keeping, handicraft, spinning, weaving, candle making and baking etc.

**Jawahar Rojgar Yojana:**

Jawahar Rojgar Yojana was announced by the govt. of India on April 28, 1989, to be implemented and administered by village panchayat all over the country. The then existing wage employment programme, for example, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were merged with the programme. The schemes aim to give employment to at least one member of each poor rural family for 50 to 100 days in a year, in the vicinity of places of their residences. It is also expected that some integrated schemes will be introduced to provide employment among nomadic tribes. The state government is to supply some model schemes to the village pradhans for their guidance and 30% of the beneficiaries are to be women.

**Accelerated Rural Drinking Water Supply Programme:** (ARDWSP)

Rural water supply is basically a state subject. The Govt. of India, however accords top priority to this programme through the Accelerated Rural Drinking Water
Supply Programme. The national drinking water mission was launched in 1986 to give a sense of urgency to the task of covering all villages by 1990, which however has not been fulfilled.

**Antodaya Programme: (AP)**

Antodaya means upliftment of the poorest of the poor. The programmed envisages improving the lot of the poorest people by adopting a micro approach with family as a unity in the development programme. An effort under this programme is concentrated on the economic development of the poorest families in the rural area and their welfare. The scheme of Antodaya was first launched by the Rajasthan Government on October 2\(^{nd}\), 1977.

**Integrated Child development Service: (ICDS)**

Among the nation's most precious resources are its children, the architect of the future. The poorer case of children must, there be a high priority for any country. The Integrated Child development Service scheme was one of the major programmes taken up in 1975-76 in the central sector on an experimental basis. It was started in 33 rural blocks and some urban slums, for providing children from poor families with the basic services of health, supplementary nutrition and non formal pre-school education for a better start of life.

**Drought Prone Area Programme : (DPAP)**

Drought Prone Area Programme is under operation in the arid and semi arid parts of the country where environment is degraded due to soil erosion, loss of vegetation cover, water stress etc. The programme aims at restoration of ecological balance on a long term basis through harmonious development of land and water resources.

**Desert Development Programme (DDP):**

In certain parts of the country ecological balance has been so severely upset that conditions of extreme aridity, shifting sand, scanty vegetation and severe wind
erosion prevail. For controlling, the process of diversification and restoration of ecological balance, the Desert development Programme was launched in these areas. The main activities covered are sand dune stabilization shelter belt plantation, conversion of surface water, recharge of ground water squatters, efficient water resource management, afforestation grassland and pasture development and horticulture.

**Land Reforms Programme:**

Land reforms measures have been perceived as an integral part of the strategy for rural development with focus on disengaging the rural poor from exploitative agrarian relations. In the context of the scattered nature of land holdings, redistribution of land constitutes an important step in social and economic upliftment of the weaker sections. Various land reform measures have been pursued since independence to provide access for the landless rural poor to land.

**Agricultural Marketing Programme: (AMP)**

The Agricultural Marketing Programme envisages, among other things, regulation of agricultural markets, grading and standardization of agricultural and allied commodities, assistance for setting up of rural go downs, market research and planning and training of personnel.

**Jeevan Dhara Yojana:**

Millions of wells have been launched under the scheme with the objective of providing open irrigation wells free of cost to the poor, small and marginal farmers belonging to SC/ST and free bonded labourers and who are living below the poverty line and are listed in the IRDP survey register of the village.

**Indira Awas Yojana:**

Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) was launched during 1985-86 as a sub scheme of Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) and continued as a sub scheme of Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) since its launching from April, 1989. It has
been delinked from the JRY and has been made an independent scheme with effect from January 1, 1996. The objective of the IAY is primarily to provide grant for construction of houses to members of SC/STs, freed bonded labourers and also to non SC/ST rural poor living below the poverty line.

Kuteer Jyoti Scheme:

Under Kuteer Jyoti scheme SC/STs and bonded labourers, who are below poverty line and are listed in the IRDP survey register of the village, get free electricity.

Kalpataru Scheme:

The scheme has been introduced in 2003-2004 with a view to provide direct self employment to the youth of the society. Priority has been given to the boys and girls of the family living below poverty line both in rural and urban areas of the state except 6th schedule areas.

National family Benefit Scheme :( NFBS)

Under this scheme in a below poverty line family, if a main earning member dies within 63 years of age then a financial aid of Rs. 10,000/- is given to the family.

Whole Village Development Scheme:

Based on the Equitable distributing of development a whole village development scheme has been conceived. It is based on the recommendation of the national commission on agriculture. The main theme of this scheme is the concentration on the entire multi faced development endeavor around the village community as a whole.

NREGA Act:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 was enacted on 25th August, 2005 and came into force on 2nd January, 2006. The act aims at enhancing
livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

**National Social Assistance Programme:**

The National Social Assistance Programme came into force on 15th August to provide social assistance to poor households. It includes components like National Old Age Pension and Family Benefit scheme.

**Minimum Needs Programme:**

Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) was introduced in the first year of Fifth five year Plan. The objective of the programme is to establish a network of basic services and facilities of social consumption in all the areas upto nationally accepted norms within a specified time frame. The programme is designed to assist in raising living standards and in reducing the regional disparities in development. The programme is essentially an investment in human resources. The basic needs of the people identified for the programme are elementary education, adult education, rural health, rural water supply, roads, electrification, housing and nutrition.

**Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rural Development:**

Panchayati Raj system conceived for rural development to fulfill local aspirations and local expectations at the grass root level. The Indian situation demands regional solutions for regional problems. Due to its varied lop- sidedness, functional disparities and distinct provincial circumstances India needs an institutional organization which responds actively to all such requirements and helps to surmount them. Panchayati Raj Institutions have been considered as viable institutions for successful implementation of rural development programmes at the village level.

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are inseparable from the issue of good governance, democracy, rural development, social policy, law and social justice. In order to improve the participation of the rural people in development and decision-making and decentralized planning, constitutional status was provided for PRIs under the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992.
Participation of people is a key element in the process of good governance. Peoples' participation and responsible governance should complement each other in achieving the goals of rural development. The main objective of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India and make them “Institutions of self-government” with responsibility of promoting rural development and ensuring social justice.

Panchayati Raj is often termed as “Self-Governments” at the grass root level. Involvement of people at the grassroots level has been considered as the most effective means through which economic development can meet aspirations of the people to ensure that the benefit really percolates down to the lowest strata of the society. Since the bulk of our population lives in villages, the statesmen and political leaders have been advocating adoption of Panchayati Raj System as a panacea for overcoming economic, social, political and other problems of rural India.

Survey of literature:

The vastness of the Rural Development Programme and the attention of the government towards rural development have attracted the attention of the scholars of varied interest to study the impact of the programme. The researchers and scholars could not remain unconcerned with this area and as a result a number of studies have been conducted both by the individuals and institutions. Some studies have emphasized the role of bureaucrats in rural development, others on the necessity of people’s participation in rural development programmes and still others have advocated structural and behavioral, changes in administrative machinery responsible for its implementation. Some have proposed to integrate under a single agency; some others are of the view to integrate all the service sectors. It seems appropriate here to have a glimpse of the studies in this field in order to have a historical and theoretical perspective of the problem under investigation. These studies can be divided into two parts – General studies regarding rural development and Studies on IRDP conducted at various levels. Some of the important studies relating Rural Development and Administration are cited below.

Anil Chaturvedi “District Administration: The Dynamic of Discord” (Chaturvedi: 1988.) concluded that most of the interactions that took place between various departments at District level were routine, with emphasis focused on an
exchange of information pertaining to current demands, stating of complaints and
cirnfigen of decisions already taken unilaterally and there was little interaction
between the actors for a purposive review of the past or planning for the future.

A .P. Barnabas in “Citizens Grievances and Administration” (Barnabas: 1969) found that the public did not have confidence in administration and the officials themselves were not satisfied with what the administration can do for the villagers. More than that, they indicated a lack of confidence among each other and consequently, their alienation from administration.

Alan R. Beals in “Change in the Leadership of a Mysore Village” (Beals: 1969) narrates the story of how the leadership based on hereditary privilege was dethroned and new leadership emerged in Hittarahalli village.

Arshad Mahamood’s “Role of Co-operatives and Gram Panchayats in Agricultural Development” (Mahamood: 1977) highlights the role of Co-operatives in the development of agriculture by providing credit and other necessary inputs and the role Gram Panchayats should play by undertaking activities like public health and sanitation, water supply, education, transport etc. A whole village approach, it is suggested, should be adopted jointly by the co-operative and the gram panchayats for the development of the village.

Bal Ram Jhakar on “Plan Policies for Rural Development in India” (Jhakar: 1985) briefed out that the success of any programme depends on the synchronization of power, administrative structure and strategies for delivery of local services.

B.B. Chatterjee’s (Ed) “Micro- Studies in community development in panchayati raj and co-operation” (Chatterjee: 1977) is a collection papers based on studies conducted in the field of community development and rural life panchayati raj and co operation. The studies cover various aspects such as village level workers perception of leadership roles, village leaders and development programmes, panchayats and decision making, service cooperative society.

B.B.Chitgupi in “Panchayati Raj Reborn” (Chitgupi: 1972) briefly elucidates the recommendations of Balwantrai Mehta Committee report and provisions made in the community development programme for panchayati raj in various states.
Bhupendra Hooja in “Managing rural development through panchayats: a functional approach” (Hooja: 1980) present a broad functional approach to rural development in the context of the jurisdiction of an institution such as gram panchayats or panchayats samiti or zilla parishad. It also details the activities which an institution is expected to discharge in the service of the community it serves.

B. Mukherjee in “Community Development and Panchayati Raj” (Mukherjee: 1962) elaborated programme, ideology, functions and objectives of the Panchayati Raj and Community Development. The author concludes that these two institutions together have greater chances of success.

C.R. Kothari in “Rural Development: Strategy for Rural Development” (Kothari: 1969) has noted that rural development is a part of the same process of socio-economic change and depends upon the will of the people and any scheme of rural development would not make significant on the rural scene till it is based on the local resources, needs and skills.

Chaturbhuj Mamoria’s “Co-operation, Community Development and Village Panchayat in India” (Mamoria: 1979) gives an account of the co-operative movement in India, credit and other co-operative organizations, community development and Panchayati Raj.

C. Narasimhan’s “Revitalisation of Panchayati Raj: Its Implications” (Narasimhan: 1987) is an extensive study of the experience of the implementation of Panchayati Raj in its initial years. It also examines its gradual decline. To him rural development is inseparably linked with the Panchayati Raj which provides innumerable opportunities for self-help and self-reliance to the rural masses.

D. Kantowsky’s “Community Development and Panchayati Raj” (Kantowsky: 1988) discusses how Panchayati Raj institutions were introduced ten years after the launching of community development programme, with the objective of effective implementation of the CD programme. The study concluded that only a number of dominant castes benefited most from the programme with the help of the newly established self-government bodies.

D.M. Nanjundappa’s “Planning from Below” (Nanjundappa: 1976) emphasizes the importance of panchayats. According to the author these representative bodies enjoy certain advantages in the matter of locally manageable
small projects included in a longer development plan meant for the whole state. It suggested that youth be brought within the fold of these institutions and be provided with an opportunity to serve the people.

D.S. Parmar and V.R. Gaikwad’s “Rural Development Administration under Democratic Decentralizations” (Parmer and Gaikwad: 1978) is a study of Rajkot Zilla Parishad. It examines two specific questions: (i) How many paid functionaries looked after the welfare and economic development of the rural people in a district, and how were they organized? (ii) How much funds are handled by them and for what purpose? The authors note that neither the paucity of personnel nor monetary allocation is primarily responsible for poverty in the villages. The explanation lies in the wrong allocation of these resources. Thus, the study highlights the problems of development and bureaucracy.

G. Ram Reddy’s “Panchayati Raj and Rural Development” (Reddy:1989) examines elaborately various aspects on the subjects, viz., union state relations in agricultural development, state government institutions and agriculture, land ownership and land reforms, bureaucracy and Panchayati raj, Zilla development Board, financing and expenditure, and relation of Panchayati raj with government.

H.S. Dhillon in “Leadership and Groups in a South Indian Village” (Dhillon:1969) finds that the leadership is diffused and bases of leadership are high social status of the family, high economic status and individual traits like interest in village activities, spare time, advanced age, speaking ability and hospitality.

H.D. Malaviya in his “Village Panchayats in India” (Malaviya: 1978) has explained the historical background of the village panchayats in India since ancient days. He has also explained how the village panchayats in the country had developed into a sound system of democracy in accordance with indigenous traditions and cultures. Indeed, it is a comprehensive study of the ancient institutions in general, the vicissitudes through which it has passed and the way in which it is developing in the post-independence period.

Hargain Singh “Panchayati Raj Administration in Haryana” (Singh:1985) found that Panchayati Raj Administration in Haryana needs complete overhauling and
a modern, co-operative, involvement-oriented attitude from both the government and citizens. The system requires not only structural changes but its backbone also needs to be strengthened by providing adequate funds, suitable guidance and proper supervision and control to bear the bestowed responsibilities.”

Iqbal Narain in “Democratic Decentralization, The Idea, The Image and The Reality” (Narain: 1963.) says that the new leadership is power-oriented, not development oriented. Sarpanches and Pradhans have become new monopolists of power and there is political consciousness without civic consciousness among the leaders. Democratic decentralization is simply a plea for broad basing the power structure because in reality the power has not percolated beyond the Pradhans and Sarpanches.

Iqbal Narain, K.C. Pandey and M.L. Sharma’s “The Rural Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan” (Narain, Pandey and Sharma:1976) deals with the socio-economic background, levels of political consciousness, the pattern of political affiliations, role perception and behaviour and development orientation of the emerging rural elite in Rajasthan. The study points out that the rural elite is predominantly a socio-economic elite, politically more conscious informed than the citizens, better placed in their potential to forge political linkages, has limited role perception about the goals of Panchayati Raj, observed with politics and motivated more by personal or fractional interests.

J.S.Mathur, “Rural Development in India” (Mathur:1979) inferred that various programmes of employment generation in rural areas have made some impact on the vast problems of unemployment and under employment but the new approach of Integrated Rural Development Programme can be expected to provide a working base for tackling this problem.

Jai Kanta Tiwari’s “Rural Development Administration: Perspectives and Prospects” (Tiwari:1984) a research on relations between client-bureaucrats for developments activities infers that the clients are highly alienated in a bureaucratic structure, more apathetic towards participation in development activities and less universalistic in orientation than bureaucrats.
K.D. Gangrade in his study, “Emerging Patterns of Leadership”, (Gangrade: 1978) analyses the leadership and social structure in three villages of Delhi. The study reveals that panchayat elections have developed village factions, revival of caste feelings and recourse to various types of unfair means. The village leadership is dominated by caste, seniority of age, kinship, territorial affinities and economic status. It is more power oriented than development oriented. Besides the formal leaders, informal leadership is a potent force in village life.

Kuldeep Mathur’s “Bureaucratic Response to Development” (Mathur: 1972) has pointed out that the performance of the administrators was dependent on their mental make up and a ‘develop mentalist’ was needed to implement development policies.

Kumar B. Das “Rural Development through Decentralization” (Das:1991) pointed out that the transplantation of growth models without paying proper attention to resource base, imperative of socio-economic setting, institutional and structural characteristics can neither be expected to reduce poverty and inequality nor can ensure a self-propelling development process.

La Palombora in “Bureaucracy and Political Development” (Palombora:1963) concluded that the upper reaches of a public administrative hierarchy may constitute a paragon of skill, rationality and humanness but all this goes relatively unnoticed if those who deal directly with the public are arrogant, aloof, arbitrary and corrupt in behaviour.

L.N. Dahiya in “Dynamics of Economic Life in Rural India” (Dahiya: 1991) found that the villages are in the process of modernization though the change is not as rapid as it should have been.

L.P. Vidyarthi’s work; “Leadership in India” (Vidyarthi: 1987) is a collection of paper dealing with the various aspects of leadership. The book contains three parts Part-I concerning general and theoretical aspects of leadership, Part-II tribal leadership and Part-III rural leadership. The papers dealing with the leadership pattern in U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan and Punjab are important in this regard. It emerges from these papers that the roles of traditional factors are on the decline, but money still remains the most important basis of leadership. To some extent education is also believed to be playing an important role in the make-up of village leaders.
Nadeem Mohsin in “Rural Development Through Government Programme” (Nadeem:1985) pointed out that small farmers development Agency (SFDA) could not attain the desired goal due to lack of proper utilization of physical and human resources.

Mohindar Singh’s “Rural Development Administration and Anti Poverty Programmes” (Singh: 1987) pointed out that small farmers development agency (SDFA) could not attain the desired goal due to lack of proper utilization of physical and human resources.

M. Francis Abraham’s “Dynamics of Leadership in Village India”, (Abraham: 1974) studies the changes brought to the leadership in village India in the wake of the Community Development and Panchayati Raj. The study reveals that “Power under the new conditions of change, tends to gravitate into the hands of those who operate large farms, maintain connections with Government officials, are educated, change prone and active in local community organizations.

M.C. Naidu in “Panchayati Raj and Rural Development” (Naidu: 1974) discusses that the implementation of rural development programmes through the panchayat bodies very essential because they know the rural problems. The primary objective of the study is to analyse the functioning of these institutions in relation to development programmes. It studies structure, functions, finance and peoples attitude to panchayats.

N.R.Inamder in “Functioning of Village Panchayats”, (Inamder: 1969) has examined the working of four village panchayats in Maharashtra during the period 1960-1962. The study covers both the democratic and functional aspects of the four village panchayats. The study reveals that out of the four village panchayats Dehu and Dhamni worked successfully and on democratic lines. But the same could not be said about Rahatwade and the Khadakwala village panchayats. The panchayats suffered due to village factions and lack of finance.

Norman K. Nicholson’s “Panchayati Raj, Rural Development and Political Economy of Village in India” (Nicholson, 1987) discusses how in 1960 Government of India decided to direct its rural development efforts through two new local institutions, viz., system of co-operatives to mobilized and co-ordinate the economic activities of individual farmers and Panchayati Raj which would serve to rise
resources for public work, community development project and other local activities. This study explores three discrete bodies of literature – Village power studies, Studies of development administration, and the work of Agricultural Economists to examine the success and failures of the new approach to rural development. Although the study is concerned with both co-operatives and Panchayati Raj, the major emphasis is on Panchayati Raj.

O.C.Sud in “Administrative Problems of rural Development in India” (Sud:1992) has mentioned that the grass root institutions, which were expected to play a crucial role in bringing about socio-economic change in rural scenario, have been far from satisfactory due to self seeking attitude of the panchayat leaders and not availability of funds towards the respective panchayats. He also discusses how the ignorance of the village people came as an obstacle in the way of progress of the village concerned.

Park and Tinker’s edited work “Leadership and Political Institutions in India” (Park and Tinker: 1959) includes a number of papers on the various aspects of leadership in rural India. B.N. Singh in his study “The Impact of the Community Development on Rural Leadership” finds that Community Development Programme has brought some change in the people as well as to their local leadership by giving rise to leader younger in age, belonging to middle income groups, functional and with new values and aspirations. H. Orenstein in ‘Leadership and Caste in a Bombay Village’ arrives at the conclusion that informal leaders wield the real authority in the village in contrast to formal leaders. A. Beals in ‘Leadership in a Mysore Village’ finds that panchayat has virtually no existence except on paper and the real leadership is determined by cliques and groups. R. Bachenheimer in ‘Elements of Leadership in a Andhra Village’ points out that though bases of traditional leadership are on the decline, caste and money still continue to have influence in determining village leadership. Similarly E.B. Harper and L.G. Harper’s study ‘Political Organization and Leadership in a Karnataka Village’ finds that on the whole the traditional form of leadership continues.

P. C. Joshi in “The Implication of Panchayat Raj” (Joshi: 1978) discusses how panchayat raj aim at accelerating rural development through local initiative, effort and resource use. An evaluation of the performance of these panchayati raj institutions
shows that they have not achieved their aims. It is argued that mere creation of
democratic institutions is no guarantee that they will achieve the objectives and the
resolution of the contradictions between the requirements of development and the
ideal of decentralization of power and authority would only improve the efficiency of
panchayati raj.

P. C. Mathur in his “Land Reforms and Rural Local Government in India”
(Mathur: 1976) argues that Panchayati Raj system is an administrative annex of State
and Central Government and as such it cannot be expected to perform the function of
political mobilization of land reforms administration with the objective of ensuring
complete implementation of existing public laws.

P. Saran in his work, “Rural Leadership in the Context of India’s
Modernization”, (Saran: 1978) explore the extent to which changes in the economic,
political and social conditions in a modernizing society result in corresponding
changes in the attitudes and values of rural leadership. The author arrives at the
conclusion that the economic, political and social conditions in a modernizing society
do affect the attitudes and values of rural leadership. But the effect is not so inclusive
so as to replace traditionalism by modernity. Modernization does not proceed in a
one-dimensional direction. To him, modernization in India is essentially a
restructuring of traditional values and institutions along more democratic lines.

Prabhat Chandra in “Rural Leadership in India” (Chandra: 1987) makes some
generalized statements about leadership in rural India and emphasizes the “traditional
patterns of group leadership instead of the emerging individualistic, semi-official and
artificial leadership”. According to him, “true leadership will emerge from the
traditional leadership—when it is fully adopted to the modern conditions of the rural
society in India”

R.C. Prasad’s “Democracy and Development” (Prasad: 1971) is an in-depth
study of the Awa Gaon Panchayat in Bihar. The book contains twelve Chapters
besides Introduction and Conclusion. The study covers environmental setting, area,
village assembly, panchayat election, executive committee, chief executive,
panchayat court, panchayat secretary, village voluntary force, panchayat and
government, finance and performance of the panchayat. The author arrives at the
conclusion that the functioning of the village assembly i.e. Gaon Sabha is not
satisfactory. However, to him the introduction of democratic election by secret ballot has brought some changes to the traditional leadership structure.

Rajeshwar Dayal in “Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj” (Dayal: 1977) discusses (i) the concept, features and objectives of community development, (ii) emergency of panchayati raj, its merits and demerits, and (iii) various forms of co-operatives engaged in the process of community development. He also presents a detailed account of village volunteer force scheme.

Ramshray Roy, in the book “Problems In Rural Development” (Roy: 1967) has pointed out that block level planning is essential for rural development which can provide people’s active participation in shaping their own lives by improving economy and removing poverty and inequality.

Sharma and Malhotra’s “Integrated Rural Development” (Sharma and Malhotra: 1977) concluded that integrated rural development is a liberating force, a dynamic awakening by restructuring and modernization of the tradition society and the rural setting with proper mobilization of local resources in man and material to ensure comprehensive development especially of those segments which could not keep pace with more aggregative developmental processes.

S.R. Maheshwari’s “Local Government in India”, (Maheshwari: 1971) is a work of general nature, studies both urban and rural Local Self Government Institutions. Chapter VII of the book presents a comprehensive picture of the working of panchayats in different states of India. Besides, the book covers historical development, structure, personnel, finance and functioning of local government institutions. The author has also suggested certain steps for improving the system of Local Self Government of India.

S.R. Singh “Bureaucracy and Rural Development” (Singh: 1988) noted that the Rural Development Programme is the single most important vehicle of government initiated for purposes of socio-economic change.

S.K. Jha “Rural Development Administration in India” (Jha: 1988) has remarked that though the number of employees has been increasing, the efficiency of the bureaucratic machinery and its output has remained at a low level.
S.R. Mehta's "Emerging Pattern of Rural Leadership", (Mehta: 1972) is a study in relation to the village social structure. The study points out that leadership in the villages is by and large in relevance with the village social structure and as the village social structure is traditional in terms of male dominance, age characteristics, castes and occupation ranking, leadership is also traditional. But the occupational mobility of certain individuals within hereditary group, and the individual properties like education, income or occupation, account for the changing village social structure and thus leadership also tends to change.

S.G. Deogaonkar's "Administration for Rural Development in India" (Deogaonkar: 1989) highlights the role of village level workers in the effective implementation of community development programme. Proper selection of village level workers, better pay scales and working conditions and imparting training to these personnel are suggested to attract young and enthusiastic persons to this profession in order to discharge the duties more efficiently.

S.P. Jain's "Panchayati Raj in Assam" (Jain: 1976) is a study of the Panchayat Institutions under the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959. The work is based on the study of the Gauhati Mohkuma Parishad, and two Anchalik Panchayats and four Gaon Panchayats under the aforesaid Mohkuma Parishad. If deals with the structure, functions and finances of the Panchayati Raj System. The author has come to the conclusion that the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Assam, compared to other states is 'rather' satisfactory.

S. K. Singh's "Panchayat Raj : Industrial Support for Rural Development" (Singh: 1987) discusses contribution of Panchayati Raj as an institutional support for development administration and democratic decentralization as well as major factors responsible for impending the development of this grass root institution.

S.N. Mishra's "Pattern of Emerging Leadership in Rural India", (Mishra: 1977) is an in-depth study of Darauli Gaon Panchayat of Bihar. It studies the process through which the panchayat leaders emerge, characteristics of the emerging leaders and their attitude to role responsibility and to different values of life. The study reveals that the villagers did not realized the importance of election in the Panchayat election which was held in 1960, but in the next election of 1969 people became alert and conscious and leaders were elected through contest. The candidates adopted both the traditional and modern techniques of election in campaigning. The success of a
candidate depended upon various factors like philanthropic image of the candidates, championship of minority or majority as the case may be, past record of good work of the candidate, personal familiarity of the candidate, influence family relations, advice of the leaders, appeals clothed in caste, bogus voting and capturing of booths etc. The leadership in Darauli is traditional and is based on caste, social and economic status of the persons. Most of the leaders feel that the environment in which the function is not favourable to their role responsibility.

S. Bhatnagar’s study, “Panchayati Raj in Kangra District” (Bhatnagar: 1984) (1984) deals with the various aspects of Panchayati Raj. So far as the leadership characteristics are concerned the study reveals that 62.5 par cent of the leadership in the sixteen Gaon Panchayats and the five Panchayat Samitis covered by it, is held by the traditionally privileged occupations such as the land-lords, shop-keepers and the services. Only 37.5 per cent leadership is in the hands of the poor sections of the society.

Yogendra Singh in his study ‘Changing Power Structure of Village Communities: A Case study of six villages in Eastern Uttar Pradesh’ (Singh: 1969) examined the nature of power structure and also discusses the patterns of traditional and emerging leadership. According to him in the emergence of panchayat leaders, upper castes still continue to hold power.

V.V. Rao’s “A Hundred Years of Local Self Government in Assam” (Rao: 1963) is the first work to deal with the subject in Assam. The book deals with the Local Self Government Institutions both urban and rural. It contains VII parts and each part is again sub-divided into several chapters. The VII parts of the book deal with the historical background, constitutional structure, functions, local finance municipal civil service, inter-governmental relations followed by constitutions. In almost all the chapters there is a historical narration of provisions of the different Acts passed from time to time. Thus, the author has followed mainly the historical approach in explaining the Local Self Government Institutions in Assam.

The available literature on the subjects of rural development and panchayati raj institutions reveal the fact that panchayati raj is the backbone of the rural development without which there can be no national development. The literature
reviewed so far also suggests that rural development has various dimensions such as strategies, institutionalization leadership, and planning and peoples participation. Among them peoples participation/panchayati raj is the most effective instrument to realize desired goals of developmental changes.

No systematic study at micro level has yet been undertaken by the academics on the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rural Development in the district of Cachar In the background of conceptual framework and reviewing the literature available on the subject Panchayati Raj Institutions and Rural Development the present work is an attempt to analyse the role and involvement of panchayati raj institutions in rural development programmes in the district of Cachar.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To examine the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in promoting policies and programmes of rural development.
2. To identify and understand the different programmes of rural development implemented in Cachar district.
3. To assess the implementation of rural development programmes through Panchayati Raj Institutions in the district.

Research Questions:

The proposed study tries to explore the following research questions.

1. What is the significance of PRI in rural development?
2. In what way are the different layers of PRIs such as Zilla Parishad, Anchalik and Gram panchayats associated in the formulation and implementation of RD programmes?

Significance of the study:

A number of studies related to Rural Development and PRIs have been made in this country. No systematic and empirical study has been conducted so far in the
field of Rural Development and study of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the district. This work attempts to fill this gap. The study mainly highlights the Rural Development programme in general and role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in implementation of Rural Development programme in particular.

**Methodology and data collection:**

The area of the study is confined to the Cachar district. It covers the two subdivisions, Silchar and Lakhipur. The present study is based on the collection of primary and secondary data. Secondary data has been collected by consulting books and articles for which Assam University (AU), North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Gauhati University (G.U), Dibrugarh University (D.U), Tripura University (T.U), State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Assam libraries were visited. Empirical study was conducted to collect the first hand information. Twelve Gaon Panchayats, twelve Anchalik Panchayats from Lakhipur and twenty five Gaon Panchayats and twenty five Anchalik Panchayats from Silchar sub-divisions were selected through purposive sampling. A total of 250 respondents were selected on the basis of random sampling. Besides these, interviews were also conducted with the members of the Zilla Parishad and other key functionaries like officials of the rural development department.

A total of 250 respondents from the district have been interviewed. Respondents were contacted at the work place, in agricultural fields and in their houses. Besides these respondents, development workers, some influential local people, teacher of the village schools were interviewed by the researcher to get more data on village development and cross check the information already collected from the respondent.

To identify the respondents random sampling technique has been adopted. Anchalik Panchayats (AP) and Gaon Panchayat (GP) presidents have been interviewed to evaluate their perceptions and participation in the programme to make the study more comprehensive and in depth. The primary data for the study were collected from the sample beneficiaries and officials concerned with the help of carefully prepared questionnaires consisting of both structured and unstructured questions. The questionnaires were designed to elicit responses relating to the respondents background information, administrative structure of IRDP, its process of
implementation and official - beneficiaries perceptions about each other as well as about the programme on the whole. Data were also collected through the techniques of observation and discussions. The personal knowledge and informal discussions with officials have provided a lot of useful information for the study. For collection of primary data, separate sets of questionnaires have been used. The questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents.

In addition to the information collected from the respondents, secondary data were collected from the relevant official records including various guidelines of the programmes and schemes, manuals. Data were collected from the office records of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDAs), District statistics office, Zilla Parishad office, office of the BDO of the respective blocks etc.

Moreover, a number of publications and evaluation reports of Ministry of Rural Development, Planning Commission, National Institute of Rural Development, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj have been extensively used in the present study.

Data collected through questionnaire have been analysed with the master chart and tabulation. Data were also classified in accordance to their socio - economic character such as age group, education level, income group, caste, occupation and so on.

Chapterisation:

The data and information collected through various sources for the study have been classified in six chapters including the concluding chapter.

Chapter 1 explains the meaning and definition and the growth of panchayati raj and rural development. It also includes review of the literature, importance of the study, research questions and the methodology of the present research.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the study area and socio-economic profile of the respondents. It consists of information about the background of beneficiaries and their participation in the rural development programmes.

Chapter 3 deals with the structure and functions of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Assam.
Chapter 4 deals with discussion on the implementation of the various developmental programmes in the district of Cachar during the year 2006 to 2010.

Chapter 5 examines the workings of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and its role in Rural Development programmes in the district of Cachar.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of preceding chapters, major findings of the study, some suggestions for improvement and policy implication.
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53


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