Chapter - VI

Summary and Conclusions
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In spite of many efforts, still the success of the rural development programmes has been only marginal and quantitative because the target groups, for whom the programmes designed, are simply unaware and ignorant of these programmes. If people are aware of the various programmes, problems like mass illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition, poor health conditions, hunger and pollution can be eliminated. Since independence, India has a long history in experimenting various rural development programmes. Recently, it recognized the crucial importance of micro-planning, micro-credit and people's participation. Micro-credit has been considered a strategic tool in the process of struggle to eradicate poverty. It is strongly felt that capital for investment has been identified as an important for the income generating activities. The capital required to invest in such activities is provided through micro-finance. Micro-finance refers to extending small-scale financial services to weaker sections of the society particularly rural people. For this, both government and non-governmental organizations are involved in providing micro-finance services.

The new development paradigm in the Indian economy has brought the message of globalization and decentralization of planning. PRIs, NGOs, Co-operative Institutions, Community Based Organizations etc, are expected to work as instruments in decentralized planning process.

Various studies relating to social development in rural areas suggest that without associating local NGOs it would almost be impossible to improve the quality of life of the people. Therefore, it is the prime responsibility of the governments to play an active role in organizing the people's associations, co-operative institutions with the help of the existing NGOs engaged in the task of rural development.

Now, the government and NGOs are operating on parallel tracks in pursuing common goals of the community. Over a period, the relationship between the government and NGOs has been constantly increasing to tackle the problem of rural development. This is the reason why the NGOs are considered mirrors of rural social life and rural development. In the process of development, NGOs play a dynamic role in empowering
the poor by fostering greater mobilization and generating awareness among the rural people through SHGs.

We have, in the earlier chapters, discussed in detail the different aspects of the non-governmental organizations like origin of NGOs, their organization and working, programmes and activities undertaken by NGOs in India, role of NGOs in rural development in general, profile of CRASS and its organization, various developmental programmes implemented by the RISE, nature of services provided by the RISE under each programme, role of RISE in formation and organization of SHGs in its area, of operation, concept of rural development and various rural developmental programmes implemented in India, concept and significance of SHGs, role of SHGs in the process of social change in rural areas. Further, we have also analyzed the perceptions of the sample respondents on various aspects concerning the role of RISE in rural development, opinion of the sample respondents on the formation and organization of SHGs of RISE and the impact of SHGs of RISE on improving the socio economic conditions of rural women, opinion of SHG members on the nature of products they produce and sell, marketing facilities available etc, suggestions of the members for effective implementation of various programmes of RISE and on(RISE organized SHGs for the comprehensive development of rural areas. An overview of the important findings is now attempted to provide an integrated and clear picture. Suggestions have also been made to improve the situation in the light of the findings.

Conclusions

Since independence, the government of India is facing various problems relating to rural development. One of the probable reasons is that, it is beyond the capacity of the government to tackle the problems of rural development on its own. Naturally, it is expected that the sincere attempts made by the NGOs in the field of rural development will supplement the efforts of the government.

One of the objects of formal and informal organizations is to alleviate poverty through government-sponsored programmes and recognized that this is possible only by undertaking various economic development activities and social development of
poor people especially rural poor. Rural development is probably the biggest challenge before the planners and policy makers in India, despite launching numerous schemes and programmes. However, the development of rural areas is not up to the expectations.

NGOs mainly aimed at helping the people by developing a sense of cooperative attitude and to help themselves by mobilizing their own resources, tapping their potential, identifying the problems faced by them, finding the solution and implementing them to achieve their goals. Many NGOs have adopted bottom-up approach in their functioning, because, they established better communication and rapport with the people and spread the information among people concerning the problems faced by them and creating awareness among them to get rid of the problem. It is recognized that services provided by NGOs are vital in assisting a large number of poor and the destitute.

In India, development of rural areas and rural poor has been one of the most crucial policies both for union and state governments since Independence and several developmental programmes have been launched for the community to alleviate poverty. These programmes were implemented to improve the quality of life of poor, thus empowering the poor and enhancing opportunities for them in rural areas.

Most of the NGOs in India are in a position to understand better the needs of the poor people, as they are closer to target groups. The involvement of NGOs in serving the rural poor and disadvantaged sections of the society is very active. Infact, it is observed that, the NGOs are continued to play the catalytic role in the development of rural areas and rural people. Moreover, they are trying to create awareness among the people about the development and income generating activities, developmental activities, utilization of natural resources, organizing training programmes etc.

Now-a-days NGOs are providing relief activities, welfare services such as formation of SHGs, services through crèches, distribution of aids and appliances, organizing training programmes, protection and propagation of human rights, etc for the welfare of women, children, the aged, unemployed youth, SCs, STs etc.,
Community services like housing, construction, maintenance of streets, providing drinking water, electrification etc., and Educational services like pre-school education, special education for mentally retarded, adult education, library services etc. Health and medical services like maternity and child health, maintenance of dispensaries, hospitals, leprosy control and rehabilitation, community health services environment hygiene, immunization, aids and appliances for the differently able persons, etc. To improve economic conditions by undertaking various programmes through agriculture like adoption of new technology, proper use of fertilizers and seeds, storage, marketing etc., animal husbandry through dairy development, poultry, fisheries, piggeries and micro-financing, income generating activities and other services like eradication of social evils, promotion of people's institutions, legal assistance and other promotional activities.

The poor in rural areas often suffers from various problems like lack of access to inputs, information technology, marketing etc., which reduces their production, income and earning capacity from their assets. They also lack access to credit institutions, which is a key requirement for upgrading their income potential.

For the development of any nation, provision for credit and generation of saving are essential and the governments as well as NGOs recognize them. The provision of micro-finance has been emerged as one of the most effective tool for enabling the poor and disadvantaged section of the society to alleviate poverty. Hence, it is considered that micro-credit system is an alternative source of credit input for the development of the poor.

NGOs normally deliver the micro-finance through SHGs because they act as local financial intermediaries to reach the poor. One of the most popular and recognized benefits from the formation of SHG is the accessibility to credits. The concept of SHG have provided access to credit to its members, helped to promote savings and reduced the dependence on moneylenders by the majority of rural poor.

SHGs are small groups consisting of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic background. They come together for solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help under the concept of saving a rupee is earning a
rupee. Hence, the SHG concept promotes small savings among its members and makes them easy to get the loan with low transaction cost, simple, the SHGs provide loans to its members without any rigid surety procedure, so that they can invest the loan money on income generating activities to increase their income which helps them to meet their needs to overcome their economic problems.

Empowerment of women is essential for the development of any nation and the literacy has been considered a tool for their empowerment as well as rural development. Literacy makes the people to understand the problems and able to analyze each aspect so that they can overcome their problems. A number of schemes and programmes have been introduced and implementing for the socio-economic development of rural poor, especially women at various levels irrespective of their caste, place etc. In the process, the SHGs disburse micro-credit to the rural women for the purpose of making them enterprising women and encouraging them to undertake the income generating activities.

RISE a pioneering NGO having national outlook working in the fields of child welfare, women development, disability, agricultural development, promotion of education, organizing training programmes, formation of SHGs and to provide micro-finance. In this study, an attempt is made to observe the role of SHGs in rural development and socio-economic development of the members especially women.

The sample of the present study is spread over four mandal parishads of Chittoor district comprising SHGs irrespective of their caste, religion, place, socio-economic status, etc.

Based on the information collected from the members of SHG of RISE, it is observed that mostly middle aged women are showing much interest to join as members of SHG. Irrespective of education, all the members are participating actively in raising their socio-economic status through income generating activities. The family burdens and obligations drive mostly the married women to join as member of SHG in order to search for supplementary income. Majority of the SHG members' primary occupation is agriculture, non-agriculture labour and self-employment like dairy, petty shop, vegetable vending etc. In order to encourage the group members for
the development of their business and supplementary income, they have taken micro-
credit from RISE through SHGs. This helped them to increase their economic status as well as social status in rural areas.

SHG members conduct meetings to share their ideas of each member to overcome the socio-economic and organizational problems of SHGs. The members were also trained and acquired skills in various fields more particularly in the art of conducting meetings, maintaining records, aware of new technology, development of skills, techniques to increase income etc. The members were also encouraged to save small amount in every month. This is happening due to loans given by the RISE to the members through SHGs. The SHG facilitates the members to repay the loan amount in easy installments so that they can repay the loan without any burden. The annual income of the members increased after joining as a member of the SHG and due to involvement of the members in income generating activities. As a result, they have acquired many assets such as household articles, land, machinery, etc.

After joining as member of SHG the economic position of all the members has been increased irrespective of their caste and religion so that, their social status has also risen as they expected. Decision-making power has also increased among all the members after joining as members of SHG. In addition to that, leadership qualities, financial skills, group management skills, technical skills were also acquired after joining as a member of SHG. This is happening because the members of SHG have been successful in utilizing the developmental opportunities provided by the RISE through SHGs.

NGOs in general and RISE in particular have also faced a lot of problems while implementing rural development programmes and activities, dealing and interacting with people and government departments and availing funds from funding agencies. The problems they faced mainly are: lack of assured funds on a continuing basis from government and other funding agencies, inadequate technical personnel and trained or devoted workers to take up rural development activities effectively, poor maintenance of records and accounts and lack of attention for organization building through education, persuasion, motivation, staff development and guidance,
lack of coordination among the NGOs themselves and the absence of a suitable forum to represent their problems jointly, grievances and lack of interest on the part of government, leadership problems like initiatives. In addition to that, they are also ignoring the decisions of the elderly people and the views of younger generation views and concerns.

NGOs are successful because they are able to provide developmental services in a flexible environment and they are performing optimum level of efficiency. RISE a reputed NGO has subsequently exhibiting sustained involvement in agriculture, health, education, production and development projects in the villages it has adopted. The success of any SHG including RISE organized SHGs depends on the active participation of all members. It is observed that the rural women are empowered socially and economically after they become member of SHG. In the process of development, the involvement of community helped the poor people for the overall development of rural areas.

Suggestions

In the preceding paragraphs, the major findings of the study with empirical evidence have been presented. It has been the researcher's endeavour to present the observations on the problems faced in the field of rural development by the NGOs in general and RISE in particular, and the following suggestions are made which could be considered important from the point of view of making rural development more effective and successful by the NGOs through SHGs.

Rural development is mainly to eradicate poverty and to help the poor to increase their income, to raise their living standards and to develop the rural infrastructure. Hence, credit has been considered as an important input in the process of rural development. As a result, micro-credit has been recognized recently as an important means for the development of rural areas and considered as important era in the process of development, particularly in rural areas in the developing countries by the international financial institutions, donors, etc.

The rural credit by itself cannot bring about development. The rural poor have to be involved in their transformation with credit and infrastructure being necessary
inputs along with technology. Micro-finance is provided to the members of small groups and these SHGs are homogeneous in terms of socio-economic background or traditional occupation and have come together for a common cause and get benefits through the concept of SHGs.

SHGs have been beneficial to its members by providing them access to timely credit with less rate of interest than all the formal and informal agencies. These SHGs provide ample opportunities for the members to improve their living standards and their socio-economic positions. But, the impact of SHGs on its members depends upon the Income Generating Activities selected by the members and quantum of savings.

From the study, it is clear that NGOs have tried to develop the rural people as well as the rural areas through SHGs. The SHG membership has improved not only the economic position of the members but also their social status and role in the family. Most of the members have improved their self-confidence and decision-making power and thus, it can be concluded that the SHGs have shown profound impact on the socio-economic position of the members through Income Generating Activities by providing micro-finance. For this, the role of NGOs is most important in extending their help to the SHG members. This ultimately contributed for the overall development of the marginalized sections of the society in rural areas.

Here an attempt has been made to give suggestions to improve the situation in the light of the findings:

1. Every person has worth, ability and potential. There is a need to recognize their skills capabilities and capacities and understand their potential to make them a catalyst in the process of rural development. This should be undertaken by the NGOs. It is also suggested that, the NGOs are expected to select the members who are poor and essentially required the help as eligible candidates.

2. There is need on the part of the NGOs to promote more SHGs so that the members of SHG are able to undertake more and more activities to develop themselves as well as rural areas. Further, it is important to note that NGOs
are expected to put more efforts to motivate the members of SHG to participate actively in the field of rural development, development of rural infrastructure and rural industrialization.

3. To improve the non-form sector activities in the rural areas the NGOs should be undertaken various non-form activities to help the farmers in the offseason. Credit should be given to the farmers by the NGOs at the right time before commencement of rabi and kharif seasons.

4. The SHG movement can be more vibrant and strong by imparting training to NGO officials and members too. They should revitalize and enhance the existing training infrastructure and to create conducive environment for the uplift of rural areas. There is a need to create more awareness by NGOs among the farmers, self employed etc, regarding conservation of natural resources and motivating them to adopt the approach.

5. If the leadership position of each SHG is systematically rotated among the members at an appropriate time, assuming that each member of the SHG has a leadership experience so that all the members of SHG may develop leadership qualities.

6. There is a need to improve the relations between the government and NGOs so that they can interact supportively as well as collaborate effectively to achieve the goals of rural development. In the field of agricultural development, more agricultural credit should be given to the farmers so that, they acquire new technology, machinery and high yield variety of seeds to get high yield and more production.

7. The respondents came forward to giving suggestions to improve the overall functioning of SHGs such as people should be aware of the utilization of benefits from various activities of SHGs, loans should be given frequently with less rate of interest and there is need to provide subsidy, the repayment of loan should be flexible, recognised the need to introduce new equipment and technical skills, economic security and insurance should be provided to the members of SHGs.

8. Coming to RISE organization, the respondents also provided some constructive suggestions to improve the overall functioning of RISE organized
SHGs. They include, RISE should be given more encouragement to the members of SHG in improving the economic position and social status, should be given more preference for financial support for the effective working of SHGs, RISE is expected to create more awareness among the members of SHG on proper utilization of credit and income savings. The respondents are expected to land, petty shops, houses, self-employment, tylaring, technical training, education, schools in their villages etc.

9. 9) Further, the respondents have also given suggestions to improve the role of the RISE in overall development of the rural areas in the following ways: RISE should educate the rural people to develop their premises by maximum utilization of available natural and human resources, it should encourage people to involve and participate actively in the development process and it is also expected to create awareness in the financial management as well as application of new technology in various income generating activities undertaken by the members for the development of rural area.

10. 10) It is strongly felt that the state government is expected to play an important role for the creation of favorable atmosphere by creating an understanding between the government officials and NGOs while discharging their duties as co-partners for community development. This was also observed on different occasions that the officials of RISE were not at all happy with the existing powers, functions, role in rural development and in implementation of various developmental programmes. There is an urgent need on the part of the government to provide some independent financial powers to NGOs. More steps need to be taken to give full freedom to the NGOs to exercise their powers freely while implementing various rural development programmes suitable to the local community.

11. Majority of the respondents confirmed that the government as well as RISE now more interested in participating in the implementation of developmental programmes particularly after they joined as members of RISE organized SHGs in community works to avail incentives provide people. They are also in favour of greater involvement of RISE in
encouraging the people to participate in developmental programmes that is the case now, including formation and promotion of the concept of SHG.

12. The continuing communication gap between the lower and higher officials of RISE is another problem that needs to be looked into. The communication of information in the form of directions and instructions are very much essential and it should be very quick. Information, which flows from lower levels to higher levels, should not be censored at the middle level.

13. Majority of the respondents, particularly leaders of SHGs consider that the monthly meetings have been useful in solving the problems related to the type of income generating activities to be undertaken, market facilities, processing of loan applications to know their savings amount, any problems exist among the group members. Even in these meetings problems relating to group management, financial management, to pursue the defaulters. If any and other activities/problems relating to their group are discussed and solved. Therefore, if meetings of these bodies take place frequently, it would help in minimizing problems in the presence of the RISE and Bank officials and see that the concept of SHG would be undertaken efficiently in future.

14. RISE is expected to provide more training by establishing new training institutions and by strengthening the existing training institutions, which help the stakeholders to aware them how to get high yield from the barren or dry lands. Further, the RISE is expected to provide more skill-oriented and employment-oriented training to the unemployed and educated youth in rural areas.

15. Further, it is also suggested that, the RISE should spread their development programmes to every village and motivate the rural people to participate in the developmental programmes. RISE should provide micro-finance frequently to the members of SHG so that they can improve their living standards and economic position and decrease their debt position.

16. The present study shows that there is increase in income and asset building, development of skills, more awareness of development programmes and reduction in the level of poverty through SHGs. The focus of the concept of SHG women by the development of socio-economic conditions.
Access to the financial services and subsequent transfer of financial resources to poor women enable them to become economically self-reliant, which play a more active role in decision-making, self-acquired, self-supporting, self-confident and able to confront gender inequalities. SHGs reduced the dependence on moneylenders and made available timely credit at low interest rates to the members.

It can be concluded from the results of present study that NGOs showed the path of development to the world. NGOs are striving in the light of their rich experience in dealing with people in general and RISE in particular played a great role in a fast changing society like ours by implementing many activities for rural development. Micro-finance through SHG has positive impact on chronic poverty. However, there is a need to improve the process of empowerment and continue the rural development activities.

However, the problem is one of human relations with group dynamics, motivation and the dynamics of power structure, mutual admiration, collaboration and enthusiasm on the part of the government agencies involved in the process of rural change, officials of NGOs, and the stakeholders of NGOs anxious willing to contribute their share to strengthen the nation, would go a long way towards making NGOs an effective instruments of social change through organized approach.

***************