CHAPTER I

ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: A CASE STUDY IN KARNATAKA

Introduction

Development programmes are introduced by the government to improve the living conditions of the underprivileged population in a society. However, it may be difficult for any government to provide assistance to all the underprivileged in the community as the resources at its disposal may be limited and also the number of persons or aspirants for such a benefit may be large. In order to have a larger coverage many a times, the governments follow a via media wherein it categorises the poor into different layers based on the criteria evolved from time to time and distribute the assistance by prioritising to the poorest of the poor. During the initial years of the introduction of the development programmes, income was used or taken as basis for identifying beneficiaries for development programmes. Later on indicators like caste, ownership of assets, occupation, place of residence, and recently gender have formed the basis for selection of beneficiaries for different developmental programmes. In an attempt to alleviate the poverty of masses and to contribute to the development of national economy several antipoverty programmes were introduced during 1970's. Under such antipoverty programmes, the target group approach was attempted to provide income and
employment generating opportunities to the poor people to enable them to cross the poverty line.

It is widely recognised that human factor plays an important role in the context of the development of any economy. More and more stress is being laid upon investment in human capital, so, as to increase its contribution to the growth of the economy and to the promotion of the welfare of the individuals. Unless sufficient attention is paid to the development and utilisation of human resources, rapid growth cannot be achieved. In this context, women's participation in various economic activities need to be paid sufficient attention particularly in the rural areas where we find widespread illiteracy, ignorance and unemployment of different types. Any plan or scheme aiming at increasing employment and contributing to the development of women will go a long way in the upliftment of the family and the community or society.

As we are aware, India is basically an agricultural country, where about two-third of the population lives in villages. Therefore to think of economic development of our society without rural development is meaningless. There have been many attempts by government as well as voluntary agencies to improve the living conditions of people in rural areas during the last four decades. But even to this day the progress made in this direction is not up to the mark. During the recent five year plans, more emphasis has been laid on strategic rural development programmes and the involvement of voluntary agencies or NGOs in the identification of beneficiaries and in implementation.
Women constitute nearly half of the rural population. For the successive implementation of the rural development programmes the active involvement and participation of rural women is undoubtedly a prerequisite. From time immemorial women have played different roles in the day-to-day activities of the community and in particular the economy. At home women contribution has been recognised as an important factor not only in child bearing and child rearing but also in the day to day running of the household. Women play a pivotal role in several spheres of life. Her contribution in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and commerce, industry, etc has been equivalent to their male counterparts. But such a contribution has not been recognised since till recently women were treated as inferior in all fields and given low position in all walks of life.

Women in India: Past and Present

Every human society composed of males and females is stratified on the basis of sex. Women constitute half of the population and thus form a significant segment of every society. Therefore, logically, their status, role and position should determine the progress and development of the society as well as identify the culture and values on which society is based.

India has a long history of civilization and in every stage of its history women constituted half of its population. But their position in the society is not the same throughout history. Their position has been variously estimated and is diametrically opposite in different stages of Indian civilization. Several factors including foreign invasions are held responsible for their low position in the society (Parmer, 1973).
status of women since centuries could be mapped based on the several social movements, various geographic regions, different economic activities, political structure, religious affinity of the family to which a woman belongs, etc. All these have always greatly influenced her status in the family as well as in the community (Gour Alkerbine, 1980).

Women in Ancient India

The Rigveda, the Upanishads, Kautilya's Arthasastra and many other writings written thousands of years ago, reveal that women in India enjoyed a fair measure of equality with men in all spheres of human activity - spiritual and religious teaching and learning, and in even war and spacecraft. The Rig-Veda propagated that reality consists of two aspects that is male and female. Except Hindu religious scriptures nowhere it is written that males and females are counterparts of each other. Hindu religious scriptures endorse that both male and female are complementary to each other and are worshiped in the form of Shiva and Sakthi which constitute the nature. Hindu religion provided the concept of unity of male and female who equally contribute for sustaining the reality. Further, the woman as per traditional religious belief, has been regarded as the universal mother. The common metaphor used to describe her was Prithvi (Mother Earth) who upholds all the living and nonliving beings together constitute the reality of nature. This religious dictate determined the equal status of women in family and in society. During the Vedic period, education was imparted to both male and female children on equal footing. In fact, the education of women was looked upon as so important that the Atharvava Veda asserted "the success of women in her married life depends upon her proper training during the Brahmacarya period". They were also allowed to perform Sandhya vandana rites like the males. Women thus learnt and recited Vedas and took
part in conferences and deliberations and in this context the names of women like Lopamudra, Brahmavadini, Gargimaitri, etc. are still heard as the most learned philosopher women of Vedic age (Gaur Alkerbine, 1980).

Buddhism and Jainism in ancient India also did not make any gender discrimination so far as education and religious preachings were concerned. The women during this period undertook equal responsibilities, like male missionaries, by traveling far and wide in preaching the messages of Lord Buddha. They led a life of celibacy and became prophets of Holy Scriptures. The Buddhist history still carries the messages of the famous nun Amrapaali and the missionary Sanghamitra, daughter of King Ashoka, who went to Ceylon in order to spread Buddhist teachings. Similarly, the daughter of King Videha was one of the great 24 Tirthankars of Jainism who took the teachings of Jainism far and wide in the country.

Women in ancient India are understood to have been imparted not only with religious education, but also with military and administrative training. Of course, such accessibility was restricted to only the women of ruling elite class families. To give an illustration, one may cite from history the Dowager Queens, Nayanika of Satavahana dynasty (Seventh Century A.D), Vijaybhattarika of Chalukya House (Seventh Century A.D.) and Sugandha and Didda of Kashmir (Tenth Century A.D.) who successfully ruled vast kingdoms.

The social status of women during this period was also very illuminating. Girls had their effective say in choosing their life partners and also in the marriage affairs. Swayamvara was an accepted practice among the Kshatriyas in ancient India. Child
marriage was rare and girls were eligible to marry only after attaining puberty. Prostitution though existed as a rare phenomenon did not degrade the status of women in the society of ancient period. The Rigveda, the Buddhist Jatakas mention that prostitution was a part of the social system and was not totally absent in the society. Nevertheless, the prostitutes also commanded a certain amount of status in the society and they were economically well paid. The other manifestation of prostitution was found in the accepted custom of dancers in the king’s palaces and Devadasis in the Hindu temples. Elopements, though unusual, were not negatively sanctioned (Gaur Alkerbine, 1980).

Further, in ancient India widow remarriage was allowed and encouraged. According to Narada Smriti, women could remarry if their husbands died or they were impotent and property rights were granted if the widow married a person approved by her father-in-law. Levirate (The custom by which a dead man’s brother or next of kin married the widow) was extensively in vogue in ancient India Mukherjie, (1980). Subbamma (1987) suggests that sati was not approved though there is a mention of it in the Atharvaveda. But Ghosh (1989) argues that the archaic system of sati prevailed at the beginning of the Vedic age. It was however discontinued when the Aryans found it necessary to encourage the widows to live and increase the population by Niyoga and remarriage. There are several cases of sati in the epic of Mahabharatha. For example Madri committed sati in the funeral pyre of her husband Pandu. But the Ramayana bears no case of sati. Archaeological excavations and historical documentations provide ample illustrations of the worship of female deities in the country which is a reflection of the high and exalted social status of women in the society. Hence, Radhakrishna (1956)
rightly observes, “Indian tradition has generally respected womanhood, though occasionally we find derogatory reference to women”.

However, the status of women began to lower down from 300 B.C. when the Aryans encountered various tribal people who inhabited the Gangetic plains. The Aryans took recourse to invasion and needed male child to fight in the battlefield. The expectation for male children gradually reduced the status of a woman. Furthermore, because of the availability of the manual labour of the vanquished non-Aryans, the need for women labour in agriculture and in the production of goods was reduced. At this point, Altekar (1962) observes, “the women became less productive members of the society, which indirectly lowered their status”.

The large number of illiterate among the non-Aryan women as compared to their Aryan counterparts had contributed negatively in maintaining the equal and respectable status and identity of women in the society. Gradually, all women in Aryan and Non-Aryan societies became ineligible for Vedic studies as well as for ritual duties. Further Manu Smriti, the first law code for Hindus in India has endorsed a dependent and subservient status to women in India. Manu had made a sex-based division of society and offered a lower position to women in the social ladder of the hierarchical organisation of the society. According to Manu, a girl has to depend on her father during childhood, on her husband during her youth and on her son when she becomes old. A woman cannot do anything on her own even in her own house by being a young girl or a young woman or even by being an aged woman. So, Manu set a series of chains for the women wherefrom liberation became very difficult. Thus, the secondary position of women became the traditional order of society since those days.
The deprivation of woman from Vedic studies and ritual duties was accompanied by the vicious circle of social customs like early marriage, sati and widowhood which made the position of women in society worse. Child marriage which started around 500 B.C. had continued for a long time as a social custom that had made women silent in choosing their partner. Women loosing their own identity and freedom became individuals to be treated with pity and sympathy in their in-law’s houses after marriage. Marriage was treated more as an alliance between two families than a union of two souls with equal and reciprocal love and affection. Mehta (1970), Kapadia (1966) and Ross (1973) subscribed the view that “Marriage in Hindu Orthodoxy was not a selection between two families but a social duty towards the family and community”. Joint family system which became an established social institution during the period had its adverse effect as far as the status of women is concerned. Dubois (1973), while making an analysis of Hindu customs and ceremonies made a keen observation that the concentration of authority with the head of the family left an unhealthy influence on younger members who lived in a state of subordination which obscured personal liberty and prevented development of character. This is specially marked in the case of women (Dubois, 1973).

Again, during this period, ban on widow remarriage lowered down the position of women in society. Widowhood became a curse and was considered as a result of sin committed by the women. A widow was physically exploited, mentally tortured and economically deprived not only of the properties of her deceased husband but also deprived of participating in socio-religious ceremonies of the family and the community. As a result, women were forced to immolate themselves on the funeral pyre of their
husbands which led to the evil institution of ‘Sati’ in Indian society. If the women became barren they were treated as inauspicious persons in society.

The status of women deteriorated more with the constant invasions. Women became a prey in the hands of the invaders to be tortured – both physically and mentally. In order to protect the women from cruel hands of the invaders, they were to be hidden inside the house and in other safest places and thus confining them to the four walls of the house. This led to a number of evil practices like ban on women’s education, exposure of women outside the home etc which gave rise to the customs like, child marriage, polygamy, purdha system and deprivation of women from property ownership and so on. All the above factors contributed to the low status of women both socially and economically in medieval India.

Women in Pre-Independence Period

The reformist wind blew in the direction of emancipation of women for the first time in India during the 19th century. The great thinkers like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and others endorsed the need for equal status for women and to abolish the evil practices against them which were in vogue during that period. The ideas of the social reformers became manifested to some extent in the legislations introduced by the British Government, in India. In 1829, the first social legislation was enacted by Lord William Bentinck to abolish sati practice and to declare it a crime. Simultaneously, the Brahma Samaj established by Rajaram Mohan Roy stood for the principle of freedom of women and equality of sexes. He vehemently opposed sati and campaigned for widow
remarriage. All these ideologies were reflected through his publications particularly in Sambad Kaumudi published by him. Ishwara Chandra Vidyasagar took leading part in promulgating the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 to make widow remarriage legal as well as to provide a status to Hindu widow in society. In order to prevent child marriage, another great landmark of the 19th century was the Civil Marriage Act of 1872 which rose the age of marriage for girls and to enforce monogamy in the society.

During the national struggle for Independence, Gandhiji gave a clarion call for the emancipation of women from household drudgery and to join the movement for the freedom of the country. He was well aware of the fact that 50 per cent of the population being women and their participation would help in fighting against British successfully. Hence, it was Gandhiji’s behest that women in large numbers came out from their homes and stood shoulder to shoulder with men to fight for freedom and this became unprecedented in Indian history. Gandhiji wrote “I am uncompromising in the matter of women’s rights. The difference in sex and physical form denotes no difference in status. Woman is the complement of man and not inferior”. He said “To call woman, the weaker sex is labeled and it is man’s injustice to women. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power then woman is immeasurably man’s superior”. Further, he wrote “woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man and she has the same right of freedom and liberty. By sheer force of various customs even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying superiority over women who they do not deserve and ought not to have” (Gandhi, 1918). Swami Vivekananda also gave a very high status to women in
India, when he said “That country and that nation which did not respect women, never becomes great nor will even in the future”.

Being inspired by the social reformers and national leaders a large number of women came out and joined the freedom struggle. A number of women’s organizations were formed to create social and political consciousness among women for their participation in the freedom struggle. The first women’s organization, the Women’s Indian Association, was formed by Mrs. Margaret Cousins in 1917 under the leadership of Mrs. Anni Besant. Mrs. Anni Besant was elected as the President of the Calcutta Session of Indian National Congress and a resolution was passed in that session to treat women on par with the men in regard to exercising franchise and eligibility to become members of all elected bodies concerned in the local government and education. Thus, the Indian National Congress recognised officially the equality of sexes in politics. In 1927 Smt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya organised the All India Women’s Conference and Sarojani Naidu’s contribution to the renaissance of Indian Womanhood cannot be underestimated. Similar were the roles played by the Raj Matha Amritkaur, Mridula Sarabai, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani and many other great women in India who set golden footprints for awakening and emancipation of women for their freedom.

Women in Post Independence Period

The first task in post-Independent India was to provide a constitution to the people of India and the spirit behind the constitution was to bridge every gap between the citizens of India, as far as right to equality and development were concerned. Hence the constitution does not make any distinction on the basis of sex, and provides rights,
freedom and privileges equally to both men and women. The preamble of the Indian Constitution (Giriraj Shah, 1998) promises to secure to all citizens:

1. Justice, social, economic and political
2. Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.
4. Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.

During the UN Decade for women, the Government of India constituted a Committee on the Status of Women by a Resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare on 22nd September 1971. The Committee was entrusted with the task of making a comprehensive examination of all questions relating to the rights and status of women in India and to provide useful guidelines for formulation of social policies. Accordingly, the committee examined the existing position of women in India and recommended several social, legal and economic measures for raising the status of women.

Raising the status of women with equality, freedom and dignity is still a matter for debate even after 55 years of Independence and the working of Constitution of India. The very fact that the numerical strength of women is declining during these years raises doubt relating to the improved status of women. The table below shows the picture of declining trend of the numerical strength of women in India.
Table 1.1  Sex Ratio in India from 1951-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001*</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of India, Office of the Registrar General of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 2001

Education is one of the important socio-economic status indicator of an individual in society. Education is not only insurance for woman when in need, but also an assurance for the full-fledged development of her personality. The correlation between several development indicators and the level of female literacy cannot be underestimated as education is positively related to women’s participation in modern economy. But a wide gap is seen between the rural and urban female population in all fields where rural female population lags behind in several spheres of life as compared to their urban counterparts. Realizing the importance of women’s education, the University Education Commission in 1948-49 stated that, “there cannot be educated people without educated women. If general education had to be limited to men or to women, then that opportunity
should be given to women, for it would most surely be passed on to the next generation” (Giriraj Shah, 1995).

The Constitution of India guarantees equal opportunities for education without any gender bias and it directs the state to endeavour to provide for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. But what is the state of affair with female education? It is true that cent per cent literacy is still a dream for the people of India?. Nevertheless, gender discrimination in the field of education is very unfortunate and sordid affair. Of course, it is true that literacy rate for females is increasing through these years but the rate of progress is very slow in comparison to male literacy rate. Table 1.2 gives the picture of female literacy rates in India.

Table 1.2  Literacy Rate by Sex in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census year</th>
<th>Male Literacy</th>
<th>Female Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>15.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>45.95</td>
<td>21.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>56.37</td>
<td>29.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>63.86</td>
<td>39.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>76.29</td>
<td>57.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of India, Office of the Registrar General of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 2001
The literacy rate for men in Karnataka State in 2001 is 76.29 per cent and that of women is 57.45 per cent. The literacy rate in rural and urban areas is given in table 1.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70.63</td>
<td>86.85</td>
<td>76.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57.50</td>
<td>74.87</td>
<td>57.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59.68</td>
<td>81.05</td>
<td>76.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of India, Office of the Registrar General of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 2001

The number of females in the higher education is very marginal. The National Policy on Education, 1986 in the opening discussion on education for women’s equality, stated that “provision of educational opportunities to women has been an important programme in the education sector after independence” but it observed “inspite of the efforts made so far, the education system has not been able to make sufficient contribution towards women’s equality”. In the same vein the “National Perspective Plan for Women in India” during 1998 – 2000 A D notes that a great emphasis has been laid on women’s education in the five year plans, but the same report points out that
notwithstanding the planned objectives and endeavour, the actual progress in upgrading the educational status of women has been slow, that too in rural areas it is very slow. The reasons for such a dismal picture was mainly poverty, conservative social and cultural values and beliefs, gender discrimination, lack of infrastructural facilities and so on.

Combined with the low educational profile of women, neglect of health is very much prominent which exhibits the lower status of women in India even today. Gender bias in bringing up a female child is still happening to be a lingering paradox. The average expectation of life at birth for females though is a process of constant increase yet it has not come on par with that of males. Infant mortality rate for females is more than that of males due to the general health neglect of a female child by the parents. Rajalakshmi rightly observes, “quite often the root cause of malnutrition among girls is not so much due to lack of food but the lack of access to food. Undernourished girls who grow into undernourished women perpetuate the intergenerational undernourishment cycle” (United Nations Report, 2002). Women were depressed in most of the field however, today social position of the women are changing in the field of social, education, economic and political moreover government also taking more activities for the development of women,

International Women’s Year 1975

The year 1975 was declared as International Women’s Year by the United Nations. Thirty years after establishment, the United Nations (UN) first announced its commitment to ensure equality between men and women in its Charter of 1945. In order to improve the status of women and create awareness among the general public
throughout the world over the continuing unequal status for women, the United Nations declared the year 1975 as International Women’s Year. To fulfill this aim, the UN later declared the decade 1975-1985 as women’s decade and devised both long term and short term programmes to improve the status of women. A historical conference was held at Mexico in June, 1975 and was attended by women delegates from as many as 130 countries. International women’s year aimed at achieving universal equality, integration of women in the social, economic and political spheres and maintenance of international peace.

The concern over the problems of women is not a recent phenomenon. Nonetheless, many years before the United Nations was established several international organisations had dealt with the question of equal rights for women. They include the American Commission of Women, an Organisation in America States and the League of Nations. But the preamble to the UN Charter, for the first time in 21 June 1946, declares that the peoples of the United Nations were determined to reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large or small. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations established a full commission on the status of women. The function of the Commission was to prepare recommendations and reports for the promotion of women’s rights in political, economic, social and educational fields and make recommendations on urgent matters concerning women’s rights.
Need for the Study

The statement of the problem of the present study entitled "The Role of Women in Rural Development Programmes: A case Study in Karnataka", covers various dimensions of women's participation in development and the extent of women empowerment, through Government sponsored programmes. Before going for further analysis of the problem it will be relevant to understand the social structure of Indian society, more prominently, the status of women in India. India since independence has initiated a number of plans and programmes for bringing about rapid transformation in rural socio-economic life. Thus the approaches to rural development in India includes both area approach as well as people’s approach. This pertains to overall development of the area, provision of social welfare services to the rural people, creation of environment for income and employment generation among the rural people as well as encouragement of people’s participation in the development programmes. Rural development is intended to be the development of both men and women. Therefore equal opportunities are provided for both women and men in the Rural Development Programmes. But special provisions were also made for the rural women in the earlier programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), TRYSEM, JRY, DWCRA, etc. A special programme like Development of Women and Children in rural areas was launched in 1982-83 for the alleviation poverty among the rural poor women.
Gender and Poverty

India's policy on women's development since independence has undergone various shifts of emphasis, largely progressive in nature. A few important changes occurred in the mid-1980s, particularly with the Seventh Five-Year Plan, which claimed a move towards equality and empowerment. New institutional structures were established to implement the plans of action. The Department of Women and Child Development, under the Ministry of Human Resource Development is one such institution, which has now its counterparts in almost all the states. Women's Development Corporations have also been set up in most states to implement plans of economic development of women through enterprises and employment. Their activities include facilitating access to training, entrepreneurship development, credit, technical consultancy services and marketing facilities. Empowerment of women was given a priority, at least in terms of policy, in the Eighth Five-Year Plan, envisaging women as equal partners in the development process.

Any analysis of poverty scenario in the country cannot afford to ignore the gender dimensions. It is increasingly recognised that 'poverty has a woman's face' (UNDP 1995). Although it may sound to be a simple statement, gender dimension of poverty is much more complex. While lack of income is taken to be the simplest way of measuring poverty, one is aware that poverty also means several other things like lack of access to basic services, lack of opportunities, social and cultural subordination, and exclusion.
While these are the hallmarks of the life of poor, it is now being recognised that there is a difference to the extent men and women share these burdens.

Women have all along been a crucial part of the Indian economy, constituting nearly one-third of the national labor force. They have been the largest contributors to the survival of the family, particularly in non-measurable economic and non-economic ways. Rural women have been the pillars of Indian agriculture, a majority being agricultural laborers. They are among the poorest sections of Indian society. As in many other respects, gender based division of labour is rampant in agriculture. They are engaged in activities involving physical labour as against men who work with machinery and other implements. Wages paid to women are much lower than those of men. A vast majority of rural women in India are unskilled, and generally have no control over land and other productive assets. Consequently they tend to get excluded from access to institutional credit.

Continued advocacy for equitable growth opportunities for women is increasingly being reflected in state government policies and plans. There have been some positive results. Although, India has been doing its best in setting the gender equations right, there is still a long way to go, whether in terms of women's literacy, education, or providing equal economic and political opportunities.

Following the 73rd Constitutional amendment, the nation marched ahead in a marked manner by ensuring a one-third representation for women in the elected local bodies. In different forums we hear now of better opportunities for empowerment of women through such a political space created for women. However, there seems to be a
limit to political empowerment of women at other levels, for there has been a prolonged stalemate over the issue of reservation of seats for women in parliament and state assemblies. Considering that there has been a steady decline of elected women representatives in the parliament and assemblies of different states, there is a need to examine afresh the gender-biased nature of emerging polity in the country.

A number of studies have indicated that the poverty alleviation programmes could achieve only a mixed success in a few states and their effectiveness was confined only to a few groups or sections. The record of the last decade on this front does not come up to the expectations. We find stagnancy in the rate of decline in poverty. Even after fifty years of Independence, we stand in the corridors mutely observing the regions and groups with initial advantages acquiring larger part of the gains of development. The most disturbing outcome of this is the economic fragility of some sections and regions and the 'outliers' of the mainstream development. It is in this context that the role of state becomes prominent and essential for the welfare of the downtrodden and weaker sections of population including women. The role of the state becomes important but certainly along with a responsibility to act on the welfare count with full public accountability and transparency towards poverty alleviation programmes.

Problems of Rural Women

In spite of several attempts to improve the status of women and to assimilate them in the mainstream of development, the real situation of the rural women depicts a sad picture. Further the outcome of the rural development programmes presents a wide gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. Even though rural development
policies formulated keeping the rural women as main focus, yet these policies have failed to translate the programme into action resulting in very slow and marginal development of rural women. The women in the rural areas are still found in a deplorable condition due to illiteracy, ill health, malnutrition, lack of land ownership rights, unemployment, underemployment, lack of bargaining power, low wages, low social status and above all physical exploitation still continue to be the chronic malady of the women folk of the rural Indian society. Taking all these problems into consideration, a maiden attempt has been made in the present study to make an analysis of rural development programmes and the benefits accrued to the rural women.

Research Gap

In spite of these several Rural Development Programmes, the socio-economic conditions of women in general, and the women among the weaker sections in particular, have not improved. There are several studies highlighting the importance of governmental programmes for the improvement of the poor and the disadvantaged sections of the society (Erappa 1996). The review of literature has highlighted several factors responsible for the sorry state of affairs. However, there are only few studies which addressed the issues of women in development in general and the women in rural areas in particular due to the implementation of rural development programmes. There are some studies which have highlighted the issues related to the failure of the programme and stressed the need for the involvement of the beneficiaries for the success of the programme no other study has attempted to highlight the issues in a total perspective (Erappa, 1996; Chowdhari, 1984; Rekha Guptha, 1987). Even these studies also fail to address the socio-cultural constraints of rural women for their non-
participation. Some of the studies are evaluatory in nature and confined to the issues of cost
benefit analysis or only economic improvement of the beneficiaries. However, these
studies have not covered all aspects concerning the problems of the beneficiaries in
availing the programmes in total, the extent of assistance, role of family members, socio-
economic linkages of beneficiary household with the community and of the political
circles in the wider society. Given the lacuna, and also taking note of the earlier studies in
the area, an attempt is made in this study to fill the above gap in knowledge.

Research Issues

The present study aims at enquiring into the main question of how the IRDP benefits
bring about changes in the lives of the beneficiaries. For a better understanding of the
process of development of women through the IRDP one has to address the following main
issues:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the selected beneficiaries?

2. What are the various changes that have occurred in their family, institution of
marriage, occupation, religious beliefs, political behaviour, economic status and
their socio-cultural status? As a result of obtaining benefits for their socio-
economic development.

3. To see if the programme has led to non-desirable changes and probe into the main
obstacles to obtain desirable changes?

4. To generate policy implications of these changes?
Objectives Of the Study

Based on the research gap pointed out in the literature the present study attempts to fill those gaps with the following objectives:

1. To make a detailed probe into the socio-economic conditions of the rural women;

2. To examine the various welfare and development programmes undertaken for the benefit of development of rural women;

3. To examine the factors which determine the level of participation of women in the rural development programmes;

4. To analyse the impact of IRDP on socio-economic conditions of its beneficiaries;

5. To examine the extent of empowerment of women, as derived out of these welfare measures, and;

6. To suggest suitable policy measures for uplifting women and to bring them into the main stream of development.
Hypotheses

Keeping in view the main objectives and the issues of this study, as well as observations made by the available studies, the following hypotheses are formulated in the context of Role of Women in Rural Development Programmes:

1. Although IRDP, as a rural development programme, was targeted to mainstream, all poor women did not benefit from the programme, as expected.

2. The programme came to be dominated and hijacked by men right from conception of the programme to end results. There were design related problems that had less or no scope to include women or be extended to women.

3. Monetary benefit given by the government through IRDP was generally acquiring assets, but spent on items which were non-productive, but decided by the males in the household.

4. Even among women, those coming from upper castes, who are living in develop villages and had some education, gained better better access to the programme than the uneducated and the socially backward ones.

5. Women had no role in the decision-making processes from selection of activity to its utilization and other benefits of the programme.
Scope Of the Study

The present exercise is an attempt to study the implications of rural development programmes on women. Rural development has been given priority by the policy makers since India is a nation of villages. If the villages remain undeveloped then national development will become a myth. So development in India is conceived to be initiated from the grass-root level, that is, from the villages. Further, in Indian rural society, the percentage of women’s population is no less significant. Women, though constitute half of the population, remain utterly neglected in the rural society. They suffer from illiteracy, ill health, economic insufficiency, social taboos, etc. In order to bring them into the mainstream of society, greater importance was given during many plan periods and separate plans and policies. Several measures have been undertaken to promote social uplift of their status, make provisions for their education, improve health care services, provide them employment so as to make them economically self-reliable, etc.

It is obvious from the very title of the subject of research, that its scope is not narrow and limited. It covers a very wide range of issues in the community which promote women’s development through IRDP and also factors against its objectives. Many and multifarious programmes and activities implemented by the government for women’s welfare will also form part of the research. Similarly, the researcher is very much concerned with such factors like women’s empowerment, fallacies in the programme and in its implementation etc. Further, on the improved economic conditions of women through IRDP, the researcher has to examine how far these facilities and
privileges extended to them, try to bring about social awareness and social change in their family, and in the community at large.

The researcher would take into consideration the historical background of women and their contribution to the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry and a host of other allied economic activities, both within and outside the household. All these aspects formed an integrated whole which throw sufficient light on the subject of the study and research. Hence the present study aims at investigating the emerging dimensions of women's development, especially in the spheres of the social, economic, political, educational and religious conditions of the respondents in Tumkur district of Karnataka State.

Relevance of the Study

Sociological studies on women or on development programmes are numerous. Nevertheless, specific studies on implications of development programmes on women are very few. Particularly in the context of empowerment and in the light of having provided special constitutional provisions like reservations in local bodies, employment and safeguards and welfare measures by way of special provisions in developmental schemes, such focused studies are absent. It is becoming increasingly imperative to study the impact of IRDP on women beneficiaries against a backdrop of their relative immobility for centuries. Sincere attempt is made to study the socio-economic, political and religious life of women and their households in Pavagada Taluk of Tumkur district in Karnataka. The purpose of the study is to critically examine, understand and determine the nature and type of changes that have taken place in all spheres and are continually
taking place among these women in Tumkur district through the IRDP benefits. The study is also intended to examine the socio-economic conditions, political, education awareness among women living in the area of study.

Thus, the theme of the study has acquired a greater significance in the recent years. The Government of India as well as the State Governments have introduced several programmes for the improvement of social and economic conditions of women in general and rural women in particular. Women Development and empowerment has attracted the attention of scholars of different disciplines. But majority of researchers have concentrated more on the economic aspects of development programmes than on the social, political and psychological aspects of the issue. The need for such a study is imperative and relevant, is a continuous one and an ever-present challenge to rural development specialists.

Even today women who are numerically equal to men are subjected to various kinds of atrocities, illtreatment, inhuman treatment and denied equal opportunity in all walks of life. There are quite a few academic specialists in rural development, economics, sociology and other disciplines who have undertaken the research studies on women and social change due to development schemes or due to various other factors in India as well as in Karnataka. In order to fill the gap in literature the researcher has selected this topic for study and as it is of immense use in the field of rural development. This is intended to be will be a micro level study.

Since the theme is of current academic and its findings will be great use to policy relevance, planners, administrators, politicians, and the Rural Development specialists of
Government of India and State Governments besides voluntary organizations and social activists. The study will be shrine to enrich field of women studies at national and international level. It will also be useful in devising policies and programmes and to prepare an action plan for the developmental activities, for women's development and empowerment. It becomes a useful document to the Government of Karnataka and other States in India. Last but not the least it will also benefit the women as a community to place their unsolved/unresolved problems before the Government for redressal.

Selection of Study Area

Selection of District

Tumkur district has been selected for the study. This is because of familiarity of the field is necessary to understand different dimensions of any research problem. Further, it will also enable the researcher to focus on issues more sharply and collect the information more accurately. Though familiarity of the research area in terms of language, culture etc., is an important criteria for the selection of study area, but, it is not a sole reason. In addition, Tumkur is chosen for the study owing to certain specific reasons. These include the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Districts</th>
<th>Categories of Ranking *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellary</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guberga</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raichur</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koppal</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chikkamagaluru</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>D K</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udupi</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodagu</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandya</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C H Nagar</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: 0 indicates newly formed districts for which data not available
* 1 Density 2 Sex ratio 3 Female Literacy 4 Medium land holding 5 Large land holding 6 Total Irrigated area 7 Fertilizer used 8 Veterinary Institutions 9 Commercial Banks 10 Gramsena Bank 11 SC/ST Population 12 Percapita Income 13 Below poverty line 14 Agricultural Labourer 15 Development Index 16 Rain Fall

Table continued—
| Name of the Districts | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Bellary              | 17 | 11 | 22 | 7  | 6  | 6  | 2  | 18 | 14 | 3  | 7  | 9  | 2  | 3  | 11 | 23 |
| Bidar                | 12 | 20 | 20 | 9  | 9  | 16 | 23 | 17 | 18 | 11 | 12 | 20 | 8  | 9  | 19 | 8  |
| Gulbarga             | 20 | 15 | 26 | 2  | 2  | 8  | 13 | 1  | 13 | 2  | 3  | 10 | 13 | 1  | 20 | 9  |
| Raichur              | 18 | 8  | 27 | 4  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 24 | 21 | 7  | 11 | 17 | 3  | 5  | 16 | 12 |
| Koppal               | 24 | 7  | 25 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 6  | 18 | 23 | 11 | 21 | 0  | 4  | 12 | 0  | 20 |
| Chitmagalor          | 25 | 6  | 7  | 15 | 10 | 17 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 16 | 20 | 3  | 19 | 21 | 15 | 6  |
| D K                  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 16 | 16 | 12 | 25 | 20 | 2  | 21 | 22 | 5  | 25 | 23 | 7  | 2  |
| Udupi                | 11 | 1  | 3  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 27 | 19 | 4  | 19 | 25 | 0  | 20 | 22 | 0  | 1  |
| Hassan               | 13 | 3  | 9  | 13 | 14 | 13 | 7  | 6  | 10 | 8  | 14 | 18 | 24 | 9  | 11 |
| Kodagu               | 26 | 4  | 4  | 17 | 13 | 20 | 18 | 22 | 15 | 18 | 27 | 1  | 23 | 27 | 17 | 4  |
| Mandya               | 5  | 5  | 19 | 16 | 20 | 10 | 5  | 4  | 12 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 16 | 5  | 24 |
| Mysore               | 3  | 14 | 13 | 12 | 17 | 7  | 8  | 7  | 5  | 4  | 9  | 6  | 17 | 13 | 4  | 22 |
| C H Nagar            | 21 | 12 | 24 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 24 | 23 | 24 | 18 | 16 | 0  | 10 | 19 | 0  | 14 |


Note: 0 Indicates newly formed districts for which data not available

* 1 Density 2 Sex ratio 3 Female Literacy 4 Medium land holding 5 Large land holding 6 Total Irrigated area 7 Fertilizer used 8 Veterinary Institutions 9 Commercial Banks 10 Grameena Bank 11 SC/ST Population 12 Percapita Income 13 Below poverty line 14 Agricultural Labourer 15 Development Index 16 Rain Fall
In Karnataka state, Tumkur district is moderately developed in terms of female literacy, sex ratio, land utilisation, agricultural labour population etc., and also other indicators mentioned in table 1.4.

Several Rural development programmes for women are implemented in the district.

Tumkur district has more number of women’s organisations.

Since the district headquarters of Tumkur is very close to Bangalore the capital city of Karnataka is in an advantageous position in availing lion’s share of developmental programmes.

All the above factors make a case to consider Tumkur district for undertaking a study focusing implications of development programmes on women in rural area.

Selection of Taluk

Though Tumkur district is in close proximity to Karnataka State’s capital, and is moderately developed, some of the taluks in the district are most backward in several respects. Among the most backward taluks, Pavagada is one of the most backward taluk due to the following reasons: 1) It is located far away from the district headquarters and also lies on the northern most boundary of the district close to Andhra Pradesh. 2) Pavagada taluk has the lowest female literacy in the district. In addition, people who are
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Taluks</th>
<th>Ranking Categories *</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C N Hailli</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gubbi</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koratagere</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunigal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhugiri</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavagada</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumkur</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turuvekere</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* 1 Density 2 Sex ratio 3 Female Literacy 4 Medium land holding 5 Large land holding 6 Net Irrigated area 7 Fertilizer used 8 Veterinary Institutions 9 Commercial Banks 10 Grameena Bank 11 SC 12 ST 13 Families Below Poverty Line
slow poverty line are more as there are more number of SCs and STs population (Table 1.5). 3) The normal rainfall in Pavagada taluk is the lowest among all the taluks in the district. 4) Pavagada is the second biggest taluk in Tumkur district within an area of 1,4846 kms (12.7 percent of the total area of the district). 5) It is moderately placed among the taluks in the district in terms of getting developmental assistance. Pavagada, taluk is therefore, selected for the present study. It lies in the drought prone region of the district, and the socio-economic conditions in the area facilitate an in-depth analysis of the impact of IRDP beneficiaries in it.

Selection of Sample

The respondents for the study are IRDP beneficiaries. For selection of list of beneficiaries for the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 was obtained from the Block Development Officer who has the responsibility of finalizing and approving the beneficiaries for various development programmes in the taluk including the IRDP. On the basis of this list, the beneficiaries were categorised into three groups based on their concentration in the villages i.e., more than 15 beneficiaries in the village as category- I, between 10-15 beneficiaries in the village as category- II and villages having less than 10 beneficiaries as category- III.

Data provided in table 1.6 shows that there are 510 IRDP beneficiaries hailing from 87 villages in the taluk. It is found that there are 168 beneficiaries who are from high concentrated villages belonging to 7 villages having more than 15 beneficiaries. In the second category of dium concentration, there are 59 beneficiaries from 5 villages having 10 to 15 beneficiaries in
each village. The remaining 283 beneficiaries are from low concentrated villages of less than 10
IRDP beneficiaries each.

In the First category of villages we have selected 4 villages and could interviewed 59
beneficiaries who were available during our visit. The second category villages were very
compact and nearer from one village to another. Therefore, we visited all the 5 villages and
interviewed all beneficiaries in those villages. In the third category, we selected one-third of
villages i.e., 24 villages on random basis and interviewed all the beneficiaries who were
available during our visit. In all, we interviewed 255 beneficiaries from 33 villages.

Table 1.6 Concentrations of Beneficiaries in Study Area and Number of
Beneficiaries Selected and Interviewed in Different Villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Concentration of beneficiaries</th>
<th>Number of Selected villages and beneficiaries interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of villages</td>
<td>No of beneficiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages with high concentration of beneficiaries</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages with Medium concentration of beneficiaries</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages with low concentration of beneficiaries</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: * Records from the office of the Block Development officer, Pavagada taluk,
Tumkur District, during 1996-97 and 1997-98.
Data collection

Any attempt to study the impact of a programme is not feasible unless one has a picture of or data on the status of the beneficiaries at two points of time for comparative purpose. Therefore, efforts were made to collect the details of beneficiaries for two points of time, viz., situation of beneficiaries before and after the implementation of the programme. Secondary data available through government records, gazetteers, district census handbooks and other documents were found to be insufficient to give a full picture of the whole programme. From these documents and records one could get macro level data on certain aspects like number of villages, total population, sex composition, total workers, occupational structure, educational status, total land available, etc., at the aggregate level. These documents and records could throw little or no light on the social aspects of the selected beneficiaries. In order to fill this gap an attempt was made to elicit information from the beneficiaries themselves through various means such as canvassing carefully structured household schedules, use of case study method, informal interviewing, indirect questioning, discussions with local knowledgeable persons and frequent visits to the selected villages. All these facilitated the researcher to obtain a near real picture of the beneficiaries before and after the implementation of the programme. Since the implementation of the programme was only about 5 to 8 years back, people could still remember their past life and respond to our questions. There was, of course, some tendency to exaggerate some of the events and problems which were taken care of through repetitive interviews.
Sources of Data

As indicated earlier, both primary and secondary data are used for this study. The secondary data were collected from records and publications of the Department of Bureau of Statistics and documents like Five Year Plan Reports, State Gazetteers, District Census Hand Books and District Gazetteers of Tumkur district. In addition, secondary data related to the beneficiaries were collected from the local level offices like offices of the village accountant, the revenue inspector, Gram Panchayat, Taluk Panchayt, Black Development Office, Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare.

Primary data from the beneficiaries themselves regarding their own social and economic and cultural aspects of life were collected by canvassing an interview schedule. Fieldwork was carried out during January to June 2001.

Data Analysis

The data collected were transferred into data sheets and also fed into the computer to prepare master tables. Some of the qualitative data were also quantified wherever possible and transferred to tables. The non-quantifiable data were separately recorded which were later used at appropriate places in the text to supplement the quantitative data. Data relating to the pre-implementation period of the programme and the post implementation of the programme are presented in the form of tables to give a comparison of the beneficiaries. Besides, simple statistical
tools like percentage calculations, etc., were used to capture the impact of the programme on the empowerment of women.

Limitations Of the Study

Although concerned in a holistic, scientific perspective, the study has some limitations as mentioned below:

1. It is limited to only one taluk in Karnataka state which is typical in some broad respects.

2. It has attempted to review the impact of only one programme i.e., IRDP, to assess women's development

3. Since the field work was done during the post implementation period, pre implementation situation was captured only by asking appropriate questions to both the beneficiaries, and the others in the household, some key informants in the villages, knowledgeable persons etc. Official documents were also referred to substantiate the responses.