

**A STUDY ON SWARNAJAYANTI GRAM SWAROZGAR YOJANA (SGSY) IN
ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT**

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CHAPTER - VIII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER-VIII

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In the forgoing chapters a detail analysis has been made on various aspects of introduction and implementation of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in Assam in general and Lakhimpur district in particular. In this chapter an attempt has been made to weave all the threads together in order to summarise the major findings of the forgoing chapters and to put forward some suggestions in the light of the findings for better implementation of the programme.

The **Chapter-I** named as Introduction chapter, highlights the problem of poverty as well as introduction of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) as one of the poverty alleviation programme in India, Assam and in study district Lakhimpur. It is found that around 302 millions of people (27 per cent of total population) in our country are still living below the poverty line and are not able to get sufficient food to eat, water to drink and shelter to live.

It is found that SGSY was introduced on 1st April, 1999 by merging six (6) ongoing rural development as well as poverty alleviation programmes with the objective of alleviation of poverty through promotion of micro enterprises and self-employment opportunities. As a

centrally sponsored programme along with the other states in the country, SGSY was also introduced in Assam and study district Lakhimpur in 1999. Considering the importance of the problem the fund under SGSY has been gradually increasing over the years for effective implementation of the programme in Assam in general and study district Lakhimpur in particular. This chapter also deals with the objectives, hypotheses, methodology, review of literature, limitation of the study and concepts and definitions of various terms used in the study.

The profile of the study district Lakhimpur has been discussed in **Chapter-II**. The district is situated at the foot hills of Arunachal Pradesh and the northern part of the river Brahmaputra. The district has two subdivisions (viz North Lakhimpur and Dhakuakhana) with nine (9) development blocks and a total area of 2277 sq.km. Nearly 90 per cent of the total population in the district live in rural areas and agriculture is their main source of income. However agriculture, specially the cultivation of paddy is adversely affected by the frequent occurrence of flood in almost every year.

The district has a total population of 889010 (as per 2001 census) constitutes 3.34 per cent of state's population. The literacy rate in the district is found out at 69.59 percent against the state literacy rate of 64.28 per cent. The district has about 2840 educational institutions of

various levels. Although the district is lagging far behind in case of industrialization, it has great potentialities for development of different types of industries like agro based, forest based, animal husbandry based, fruit processing and textile based industries. It is expected that with the development of infrastructural facilities as well as expansion of secondary and tertiary sectors, the economy of the district will achieve further development in near future.

Some of the major poverty alleviation programmes implemented by the Government of India during the plan periods have been briefly discussed in **Chapter-III**.

During the First Five Year Plan, the Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched with active participation of the rural people in order to improve the living conditions of the rural masses. In the Second Five Year Plan, the Balwantray Mehta Committee had evolved the Panchayati Raj System in 1957 for decentralisation of power. Accordingly, 5000 National Extension Service (NES) blocks were created under Community Development Programme.

In the Third Five Year Plan, a series of development programmes (viz IADP, IAAP HYVP and MCP) were introduced for the benefit of the poorer section of the society. These programmes were implemented in

170 district till the year 1970 as a measure of removal of food shortage in the country. But these programmes were being more capital intensive in nature and its stress being on limited areas with particular crop products; so it had to face a number of hindrances for achieving the desired objectives.

Another two programmes viz. SFDA and MFALDA were launched in the year 1970, which were meant for the development of the economy of small and marginal farmers as well as agricultural labourers. Till the Fifth Five Year Plan, a total of 160 districts were covered under these programmes. However, in the year 1980, these programmes were merged with the Integrated Rural Development programme (IRDP).

During the Fourth Five Year Plan, another package of programmes (DPAP, CSRE, PIREP, FWP, HADP) were initiated to improve the living conditions of the rural community especially inhabitants in the hills, drought prone and other tribal areas. However, due to lack of proper implementation of these programmes, they failed to achieve a satisfactory result.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan, Minimum Needs Programme was launched to extend certain consumption facilities to the rural poor. For

smooth implementation of some of the on going poverty alleviation programmes viz. Employment Guarantee scheme, Small Farmers' Development Agency, Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Labourers' Development Agency, Drought Prone Areas Programme, Desert Development Programme and Hill area Development Programme, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced in 1978 by merging the above mentioned programmes during the Sixth Plan period. Some other programmes which are generally termed as sister plan of IRDP, like TRYSEM, NREP and RLEGP were introduced in the Seventh Five Year Plan Period to generate additional employment and creation of durable community assets in the rural areas. In 1989, merging NREP and RLEGP, a new wage employment programme Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was introduced with Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and Million Wells Scheme (MWS) as its sub-schemes. Keeping in view the objectives of poverty eradication and reeducation of social imbalance, Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was introduced in 1993-94 during the Eighth Five Year Plan period. The programme was continued till the year 2001, and it was integrated with Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) in September, 2001. Due to limited success of some of the earlier poverty alleviation programmes, these programmes were integrated and accordingly, Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yozana (SJSRY) and

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) were introduced during the Ninth Five Year Plan period (1997-2002).

In April, 1999, JRY was restructured and renamed as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY). However, in the year 2002, EAS and JGSY were merged with SGRY which was launched in 2001. To provide food security to the weaker section of the society, some programmes viz. FWP 2001, Arnapurna, NFWP etc. were introduced to meet the required minimum calorie intake by the poor families. To reduce the level of poverty by providing job opportunities to the rural poor, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) which is presently known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was introduced in the year 2005 with the objective of providing 100 days guaranteed job opportunities to the adult members of the rural poor families. It was found that till the year 2007-08, more than three (3) crore households were provided employment opportunities under the programme.

As a poverty alleviation programme, the genesis of the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) has been discussed in the **Chapter -IV**. SGSY was introduced on 1st April, 1999 by merging six (6) on going programmes viz IRDP, DWCRA, TRYSEM, SITRA, GKY and MWS, with the objective of bringing the assisted poor families

above the poverty line within three years. SGSY is a credit cum subsidy programme funded by the Centre and the States in the ratio of 75:25 basis. SGSY is a holistic programme of self-employment covering all aspects of self-employment viz organization of poor into self-help groups and improve their capacity building, helps in infrastructure development, technology improvement credit and marketing facilities. Under SGSY, 4-5 key economic activities have been identified for each development block based on latent resources occupational skill of the people, aptitude of the people and availability of markets. Subsidy under SGSY to individuals is uniform at 30 per cent of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 7500. In respect of SC/STs, the subsidy is 50 per cent of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 10,000. For groups of swarjgaris, the subsidy is 50 per cent of the cost of the scheme, subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.25 lakh.

In order to enhance the knowledge and skill of the beneficiaries, SGSY implementing agency (DRDA) organizes two types of training: Basic Orientation Training (BOT) and Skill Development Training (SKD). There is also provision for development of infrastructure and marketing facilities under SGSY. For implementing, supervising and monitoring of the SGSY programme there are some committees at various levels. These are Block Level SGSY Committee, District SGSY Committee and State Level SGSY Committee.

In Chapter-V, an analysis has been made on financial support as well the progress of SGSY in Assam in general and Lakhimpur district in particular during the last 10 years, i.e. from 1999 to 2009. It also deals with the total allocation of fund under SGSY in India, Assam and Lakhimpur during the same period. In order to collect the required informations, the researcher had made several visits to the development blocks, DRDA, Office of the Lead District Manager and bank branches and collected the required informations for the period of study. The main findings of this chapter are as follows:

1. Finance is considered as the main component of any Government sponsored programme. Moreover, allocation of sufficient amount of fund in time is the key factor for success of any development programme. In case of SGSY, it is found that in India, the total amount of allocated fund was Rs. 1,472.33 crores in 1999-2000 which was increased to Rs.2,781.60 crores in 2009-10. Thus, it is found that on an average Rs. 8,223.206 crores were made available per year during the period of 1999 to 2009 for implementation of SGSY.
2. Regarding the utilization of available fund in India under SGSY, it is found that in the year 1999-2000, only 48.92 per cent of available fund was utilized. But the percentage of utilization of

fund has been gradually increased in the succeeding years to 69.52 per cent in 2000 , and 85.00 per cent in 2009.

3. In respect of Assam, the State had received an amount of Rs. 7195.2 lakh in the year 2004-05 for implementation of SGSY, which was increased to Rs. 14,390.35 lakh during 2008-09.
4. In case of study district Lakhimpur, in the year 1999-2000, the district had received total amount of Rs. 69.08 lakh for launching the SGSY programme, which was increased to Rs. 138.55 lakh in 2002-03 and Rs. 331.16 lakh in the year 2008-09, and thereby making available a total amount of Rs. 1920.45 lakh during the last ten (10) years (i.e. from 1999 to 2009). However, It was found that during 1999-2001 and 2004-06, the district did not receive any state share due to non-release of State share by the Government of Assam.
5. As a credit cum subsidy programme, under SGSY, it is the duty of the nationalized banks to extend financial support to the beneficiaries of SGSY to create self-employment opportunities in the rural areas. As far as the disbursement of loan by the banks under SGSY in the study district Lakhimpur is concerned, it is found that an amount of Rs. 7,99,82,450.00 was disbursed by the banks to take-up different economic activities by 809 SHGs in the district during the period of study, i.e. from 1999-2000 to 2008-

09. Thus, it made available on an average Rs. 98,865.82 of loan amount per SHG during the same period.

6. During the course of study, it is found that Karunabari development block could able to get highest amount of loan of Rs. 1,52,50,000.00 followed by Telahi, Nowboicha, Lakhimpur, Dhakuakhana, Boginadi, Narayanpur, Bihpuria and Ghilamara development blocks.

7. As a credit cum subsidy programme, for implementation of SGSY, a part of fund is provided by the banks as loan and another part is provided by the Government as subsidy. Where an individual may get 30 per cent of the project cost, one SC/ST beneficiary may get 50 per cent of the project cost and a group (i.e. SHG) may derive upto 50 per cent of the cost of the scheme subject to a maximum of Rs. 1.25 lakh as subsidy. During the period of study, it is found that, in the year 1999-2000, out of the total received amount of Rs. 69.08 lakh, the district could able to disburse only 13.77 lakhs i.e. only 19.93 per cent of total available fund as subsidy. But the percentage of utilization of total available fund has been raised gradually in the succeeding years. In the year 2008-09, out of the total received fund of Rs. 331.45 lakh, an amount of Rs. 493.00 lakh was disbursed (i.e. 148.87 per cent) for implementation of SGSY.

8. Although SGSY lays more emphasis on group activity rather than individual activity, yet there is also provision to assist the individuals under SGSY. During the period of study, it was found that in the initial years of the implementation of SGSY, i.e. from 1999-2000 to 2003-04, total 1277 individuals were assisted in the district under SGSY.
9. Under SGSY, there is a provision to disburse a part of the available fund on infrastructure development and on providing training to the SGSY beneficiaries. During the course of study it was found that in the initial three (3) years of the implementation of SGSY programme, the district had disbursed 78 per cent to 80 per cent of available fund on infrastructure development. However in the succeeding years, i.e. from 2002-03 to 2005-06, the disbursement on the same was within the range of 63 percent to 31 per cent, which has been further reduced to 19.25 per cent and 10.64 per cent in the year 2006-07 and 2007-08 respectively.
10. The principal objective of SGSY is to bring the assisted poor families above the poverty line within three (3) years through formation of SHGs and thereby promotion of micro enterprises and generation of additional income. So far as the progress of SGSY in Assam is concerned, it is found that a total of 1, 75,595 SHGs have been formed under SGSY during the period of 1999-2009. Out of which 1, 17,793 SHGs (i.e. 66.91 per cent) are exclusively

women SHGs. During this period, 78,193 SHGs have taken up different economic activities and 1826 SHGs could not able to continue the group activities for a longer period of time. However, it is found that 76,481 families could able to cross the poverty line during the course of study.

11. While, the progress of SGSY in study district Lakhimpur is examined, it is found that total 9,386 SHGs have been formed under SGSY since inception of the programme. Out of the total SHGs, 5,247 SHGs (i.e. 55.90 per cent) are women SHGs and 809 SHGs have taken up different economic activities till the year 2009.

12. So far as the block wise achievement in respect of formation of SHGs under SGSY in the study district is concerned, it was found in the study that Nowboicha development block has formed highest number of SHGs (1965 SHGs) which is followed by Narayanpur (1479), Karunabari (1467), Telahi (1347), Dhakuakhana (817), Lakhimpur (787), Ghilamara (621), Bihpuria (517), and Boginadi (486) development block.

13. Training is an important component of SGSY which helps the beneficiaries to enhance their knowledge and skill to perform their activities. To organise the training programmes, DRDA is allowed to spend up to 10 per cent of the total SGSY allocation. During the

course of study, it was found that in Lakhimpur district, total 72.130 SHG members and 1287 individuals have been trained under SGSY. Out of the total SHG members, 10,463 are from SC community, 19,222 are from ST community and out of which 52,879 are exclusively women members. It was also found in the study that out of the total individual trainees, 200 are SC, 365 are ST and 431 are women. It was further observed that during the two initial years of the implementation of SGSY, no training programme was organised in the district.

Chapter VI deals with the field survey report. In order to collect the primary informations regarding the performance of the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in study district Lakhimpur, a field survey was conducted which is incorporated in **Chapter VI**. To carry out the study, 200 sample beneficiaries (i.e. SHG members) were selected randomly from five (5) development blocks of two sub-divisions (viz. North Lakhimpur and Dhakuakhana) in the district. The samples were selected at equal number (i.e. 40 beneficiaries) from each development block). The primary data obtained during the course of field survey have been carefully tabulated and the analysis is made based on tables, percentage and averages etc.

The major findings of the field survey are as follows:

1. During the course of study it is found that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, only 12 beneficiaries (i.e. 6 per cent) are found to be male beneficiaries, whereas 188 beneficiaries (i.e. 94 per cent) are female beneficiaries. Thus, dominance of women beneficiaries in the SGSY programme was observed during the period of study.
2. It is however observed that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, 86 beneficiaries (43 per cent) are in the age group of 31-40 years, 55 beneficiaries (17.5 per cent) are in the age group of 41-50 years, 50 beneficiaries are in the age group of 21-30 years, and a very small number of beneficiaries (9) are in the age group of 15-20 and 51-60 years.
3. It is found in the study that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, 173 (i.e. 86.5 per cent) beneficiaries are within the family size of 4-6, 17 beneficiaries (8.5 per cent) are in the family size of 1-3 and only 10 beneficiaries (5 per cent) fall in the size of 7-10.
4. So far as the educational level of the beneficiaries is concerned, all the beneficiaries are found to be literate. Out of the total sample beneficiaries, 39 beneficiaries were studied up to class-IV, 98 beneficiaries have under-metric qualification, i.e. they were studied from class-V to Class-X, and 38 beneficiaries are found

HSLC passed. The number of beneficiaries HS passed and Graduates are found out at 23 and 2 respectively.

5. It is found in the study that out of the total sample beneficiaries, majority of the beneficiaries, i.e. 189 beneficiaries (94.5 per cent) are found married, and only 11 beneficiaries (5.5 per cent) are found un-married. Thus, it is observed that only married persons are coming forward to take the benefit of the programme.
6. As an agrarian district, majority of people in the district are directly or indirectly engaged in agricultural or allied activities, which is the major source of their livelihood. In the study it is found that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, 18 sample beneficiaries are found to be landless. The number of sample beneficiaries belonging to the category of marginal farmer and small farmer stand at 96 and 85, constituting 48 per cent and 42.5 per cent respectively. However, there is found to be only one (1) sample beneficiary who has more than 14 bighas of land.
7. As per SGSY guideline, each development block has to select 4-5 key economic activities based on latent resources, skill of the people, household occupation and availability of marketing facility ; and accordingly, SGSY schemers are allotted to the beneficiaries . It is observed in the study that all the sample

blocks are implementing similar type of schemes under SGSY viz. goatery, piggery, weaving, agriculture and fishery.

8. While allotting the schemes to the beneficiaries of SGSY some criterion like aptitude, training, skill, household occupation etc. are taken in to consideration. It is found in the study that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, 91 beneficiaries (45.5 per cent) were allotted schemes based on the preferences of the beneficiaries. On the basis of training, skill and household occupation the scheme have been allotted to 58, 35 and 16 beneficiaries constituting 29 per cent , 17.5 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

9. Regarding the different economic activities undertaken by the sample beneficiaries it is found that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, as many as 96 sample beneficiaries (48 per cent) are taking goatery activity under SGSY, whereas, piggery farming has been undertaken by 35 beneficiaries (17.5 per cent), weaving activity by 35 beneficiaries (17.5 per cent) and agriculture and fish farming have been undertaken by 28 and 6 number of beneficiaries constituting 14 per cent and 3 per cent respectively . Thus it is observed in the study that none of the beneficiaries or groups of beneficiaries are interested to work in the line of some demand based activities.

10. During the course of study it was observed that most of the sample beneficiaries are found interested only in receiving the subsidy amount rather than implementing the scheme. That is why, they show their preference to take up those economic activities which are found to be exist in their household (e.g. goatery, piggery, weaving, fishery etc.)
11. With regard to the selection of SGSY beneficiaries, it is found that the selection of all beneficiaries under SGSY are not from the below poverty line (BPL) families. During the course of study it was found that out of 200 beneficiaries, nine (9) beneficiaries are selected from above poverty line (APL) families whose annual household income is more than Rs. One(1) lakh or above. Thus, it is found that some in-eligible members of the society also could able to get the benefit of the SGSY programme.
12. In the study, it is found that a total amount of Rs. 37,23,800.00 have been invested by 200 sample beneficiaries in the SGSY activities viz. goatery, piggery, agriculture, weaving and fishery. Out of the total investment Rs.16,75,184.00 have been provided by banks as loan and remaining Rs. 20,48,616.00 have been provided by the Government as subsidy. Thus, per capita investment of the sample beneficiaries is worked out at Rs. 18,619.00.

13. As per SGSY guideline, subsidy under SGSY for groups of swarozgaris (SGSY) is 50 per cent of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.25 lakh. It means that the remaining 50 per cent of the project cost should be provided by the banks as loan. But, it is found in the study that this norm is not followed by the financing banks in implementation of SGSY. Because, out of the total investment made by 200 sample beneficiaries, though they have received 50 per cent cost of the project as subsidy from the Government, but the financing banks are not providing equal percentage of project cost as loan.
14. It is found that most of the sample beneficiaries are satisfied with the fund that they received under SGSY although it is small in size. It means that the fund provided to the beneficiaries under SGSY (including both loan and subsidy amount) are found adequate to take up the SGSY activities.
15. One of the major objectives of implementation of SGSY is to create self-employment opportunities in rural areas to enhance the level of income of the poor masses. However, it is found in the study that the economic activities undertaken by 200 sample beneficiaries could provide employment opportunities to 297 persons, thereby creation of additional employment opportunities to 97 persons.

16. So far as the additional mandays generated to the sample beneficiaries by the SGSY activity is concerned, it is found that the activities undertaken by 200 sample beneficiaries generated a total of 13,050 mandays to the sample beneficiaries and thereby generating on an average 65.25 mandays per beneficiary during the course of study. While activity wise mandays generated to the beneficiaries is examined, it is found that weaving activity generated highest number of mandays per beneficiary which is followed by goatery, fishery, piggery and agriculture activity.
17. With regard to the training programmes organized by the SGSY implementing agency, it is found that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, 179 beneficiaries (i.e. 89.5 per cent) attended the training programme to enhance their level of knowledge and skill. Out of 179 sample beneficiaries, 99 beneficiaries are trained under Basic Orientation Programme of SGSY. Out of 99 sample beneficiaries, 49 beneficiaries were provided one day training and 50 beneficiaries were attended two days training on respective topic. Of course, it is found that training attended by these 99 sample beneficiaries did not get the opportunity to join in the training programmes under skill development. On the other hand, Skill Development Training was provided to 80 beneficiaries out of which, 10 beneficiaries had attended one day training and 70 beneficiaries had attended two days training on the respective

activity. However, 21 sample beneficiaries did not attend the training programmes due to their personal problems. It is also found that out of 80 sample beneficiaries who have got the opportunity to attend the skill development training, 53 beneficiaries (26.5 per cent of total sample beneficiaries) also got the chance to attend both the training programmes i.e. basic orientation and skill development training.

18. One of the major objectives of SGSY is to generate additional income from the SGSY activities. During the course of study, it is found that the activities under taken by 200 sample beneficiaries could able to generate a total income of Rs.13,71,400.00 during the year 2009. Thus, it has increased an amount of Rs.6857.00 per beneficiary during that year.

19. During the course of study it was noted that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, family member of 130 beneficiaries, constituting 65 per cent were benefited by other poverty alleviation programmes like Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), old age pension, widow pension, productive assets and wage employment programme etc.

During the field study, discussion was also made with the beneficiaries, implementing agencies and financing banks about the various problems faced by them in proper implementation of the

programme which are discussed in detail in **Chapter –VII**. The chapter is prepared on the basis of primary information collected through questionnaires from implementing agency as well as beneficiaries. Some of the major problems faced by the implementing agencies are :

1. One common problem faced by most of the sample blocks is that the beneficiaries a generally provide wrong information about their annual income from various sources. Since, SGSY programme is basically introduced for the below poverty line families, so, it creates problems for the implementing agencies in identification and selection of beneficiaries.
2. During the period of study it is observed that the block officials have to face a lot of problems like submission of incomplete applications, problem created by the members of the richer section of the society, problem of identification of eligible groups (SHGs) etc. in proper implementation of the programme.
3. One important thing during the course of study is that majority of the beneficiaries are more interested only in receiving the Government subsidy rather than implementing the programme.
4. It is found that financing banks generally take a longer period of time for sanctioning the loan proposals due to their work load or due to lack of sufficient staff. Moreover, the individual bank

branches can not lend beyond the targets even if there are viable projects.

5. Although, for effective implementation of SGSY programme, better co-ordination and co-operation among the Government agencies and implementing agency is very much necessary, it is found to be totally discourgeous during the period of study.
6. It is found that financing banks are also facing some problems in financing the programme. These are generally include submission of incomplete and unviable projects, non-recovery of loans from other Govt. sponsored programmes, similarity in loan proposals, submission of applications in the last part of the financial year, delay in grading process and pressure of work load etc.

It is found that the problems of the beneficiaries are the main factors responsible for unsatisfactory performance of the programme. The main problems faced by the beneficiaries are summarised below.

So far as the knowledge of the sample beneficiaries about the SGSY programme is concerned, it is found that 40 per cent beneficiaries are not aware about the name of the programme under which they are assisted. On the other hand, 70 per cent beneficiaries do

not have proper knowledge regarding the procedure of applying for assistance under SGSY.

1. One important finding of the study is that the beneficiaries have to make several visits to the block office and banks for forwarding and sanctioning the loan proposals as reported by the beneficiaries.
2. It is also found that to get assistance under SGSY, the beneficiaries have to fulfill various formalities which creates problem for the SHGs in the initial stage of evolution.
3. As reported by 21 per cent beneficiaries, the loan amount (excluding the subsidy amount) is not sufficient to take up the economic activities under SGSY.
4. During the course of study it is also found that lack of commitment of the officials, inadequate training facilities, inadequate support from other developmental departments and low return from investment are some of the major problems faced by the beneficiaries in the district of Lakhimpur.
5. During the course of study it is found that marketing is one of the main problems especially for weavers to sell their product, Because, sale of cloth produced by local weavers is not very

much conducive. It requires a wider market to expand the level of activities.

6. One important aspect observed in the study that in some cases, the beneficiaries could come to know about the scheme allotted to them only at the time of disbursement of loan. This shows that in allotting the schemes, the beneficiaries' skill, training, aptitude and other relevant factors were not taken in to consideration. Thus, it is found that there is absolutely no involvement of the beneficiaries in selecting and framing the schemes.

SUGGESTIONS

The above analysis made on the performance of the SGSY programme in Lakhimpur District shows that the overall performance of the programme in the study district is partly satisfactory but can not be said to be perfectly satisfactory. However, in the light of the observations and findings of the study the following suggestions are put forwarded for effective implementation of the programme.

1. In order to eliminate the wrong identification of beneficiaries, SHGs' workshop should organise at block level or Gram

panchayat level, after giving wide publicity to ensure attendance by all SHG members of the locality . The criteria of eligibility should be explained to all and eligible SHGs should be selected in presence of all of the SHG members of the block. Adoption of this procedure is likely to eliminate the influence of the officials and local political leaders.

2. It is found in the study that the 40 percent beneficiaries are not aware about the name of the programme under which they are assisted. So the rural Development Departments should organise some awareness camps to create awareness about SGSY as well as other different schemes of assistance available to the SHGs.
3. Credit camps should be held at panchayat level or block level with representatives from Block officials, panchayat workers, DRDA and financing banks along with technical experts from different developmental departments. In these credit camps schemes should be allotted to the beneficiaries on the basis of their aptitude, skill, training, household occupation and other relevant factors. Again, the feasibility of the allotted schemes should be thoroughly examined. This procedure will reduce the

time lag in completion of all formalities relating to sanctioning and disbursement of loans.

4. In order to reduce the trend of unnecessary visit to the block offices and financing banks made by the beneficiaries, the block offices and the financing banks should fix two or three days in a week in which they will deal with the SGSY activities.
5. It is found in the study that majority of the beneficiaries are working in the traditional line of activities. Therefore, the implementing agency as well as other development departments should organise some motivational programmes to divert the mindset of the rural poor from traditional line of activities to some modern demand based activities.
6. In order to ensure sufficient income generation and repayment of loan installments regularly, the block and bank officials should make surprise and frequent visit to the beneficiaries to see that the bank loan has been properly utilized by them. Moreover, at the time of sanctioning the loan amount, the beneficiaries should be well informed regarding the repayment schedule of the bank loan.

7. It is generally observed that all the beneficiaries do not have the same caliber and expertise to perform any activity. It is therefore, requires to enhance the skill of the beneficiaries through well designed training programmes. As it is found in the study that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, only 80 beneficiaries could able to participate in the skill development training programme. So, the implementing agency should take necessary steps to provide skill development training to all the beneficiaries to enhance their level of knowledge and skill to make them competent in the respective activities.

8. Block officials as well as the bank officials generally can not spare sufficient time to supervise or monitor the SGSY activities due to their work load. Therefore, if possible, some local NGOs should be involved with the implementation of SGSY. Because, NGOs, can play a significant role in empowering women entrepreneurs by providing basic education, motivation training, financial help and so on.

9. During the course of study it was found that delay generally occurs in releasing the subsidy amount by DRDA to the financing banks for which there is always found a gap between sanction of loan and receiving the subsidy by the banks from DRDA.

Therefore, the subsidy amount allotted to each bank branch during a financial year should be deposited before sanctioning the proposals so that after sanctioning a scheme the loan amount along with the subsidy may be disbursed without delay.

10. As per SGSY guideline, under SGSY, the bank should provide 70 per cent of the cost of the scheme as loan in case of individuals, and 50 per cent in case of groups of beneficiaries (i.e. SHGs). But it is found in the study that financing banks are not properly following this guideline; this may be due to ignorance of the banks about SGSY guideline. Therefore, in order to fully involve the financial banks in implementation of SGSY, the implementing agency should make thorough discussions with banks about their responsibilities in implementation of the programme.

11. For effective implementation of the SGSY programme, the implementing agency also requires help from other developmental departments like industry veterinary, handloom and textiles, fishery, KVIB, agriculture, sericulture etc. But it is found that, in implementation of SGSY the support of these departments is not very much encouraging. Therefore the

implementing agency should take unnecessary steps for their active involvement to make the programme a success one.

12. It is found in the study that out of 200 sample beneficiaries, 189 beneficiaries are found married, and majority of the beneficiaries (i.e.43.70 per cent beneficiaries) are in the age group of 31-50 years. It means that young generation of the society is yet to come forward to take the benefit of the programme. This is mainly because of lack of entrepreneurial environment. So to create an entrepreneurial environment in the rural areas, motivational programmes should be organized frequently among the educated unemployed youths to divert their mindset to an entrepreneurial career.

13. Since, all the beneficiaries are the first generation entrepreneurs, they need proper care. Therefore, the implementing agency should extend all possible services and support for their continuance of the activities.

14. To make the programme a success one, it requires a good co-ordination and co-operation among the implementing agency, financing bank and other developmental departments. So,

necessary steps should be taken by the implementing agency for their active involvement in the programme.

15. For effective monitoring of the programme, the implementing agency should set up a "monitoring cell" at the block level to supervise and monitor the SGSY activities.
16. Since, participation of rural women is one of the key factors for success of the programme. So, there is need to motivate more rural women towards entrepreneurial activities. This calls for more workshops, motivation campaigns, meetings, exhibitions etc. at the district level in general and block level in particular.
17. It is found that banks are more target oriented rather than implementing any Government sponsored programme. They do not like to finance a project, once their target has been fulfilled, even when there are some viable projects. So, banks should be insisted by the implementing agency to become need-oriented rather than the target oriented.
18. In order to provide marketing facilities for the products of the beneficiaries, melas, exhibitions should be organized frequently by the implementing agency at block level, district level and state

level so that beneficiaries get a proper marketing linkage to sell their products.

19. It is found that the implementing agency is neither keeping the records on generation of employment, mandays and income from the SGSY activities at block level, nor at district level. Because, to evaluate the performance of the programme, the implementing agency should maintain proper records on the total financial transaction made with the beneficiaries by banks and DRDA, and should keep proper records on total mandays, employment as well as income generated from the SGSY activities. This will help to examine or evaluate the performance of the programme in the post implementation period.

CONCLUSION

Lakhimpur district is one of the economically most backward district of Assam. Development of industrial as well as service sector in the district is very poor in comparison to other districts of the state, for which majority of the people in the district are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

In the district nearly 40 per cent people are still living below the poverty line which requires implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes by the Government to improve their standard of living. In this regard, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) has been playing an important role in the district to enhance the income level of the poorer section of the society through formation of SHGs and creation of self-employment opportunities. The programme has now got tremendous popularity in the district due to effective implementation of the programme in the rural areas which also leads the SGH movement in a positive direction. However, due to lack of awareness among the rural people, proper plan and policy, support and co-ordination from banks, Government and other developmental agencies, the programme fails to achieve its desired targets for which it was launched.

It is therefore, expected that with the proper co-operation and co-ordination of Government, financing banks, other developmental agencies and rural people will definitely help in effective implementation of the programme in the state of Assam in general and the study district Lakhimpur in particular .

