Preface

During the last two decades a radical transformation of Indian agriculture has been taking place significantly altering the rural economy. The transformation is more than mere technological in cultivating practices described as green revolution. It is associated with other changes -- institutional, organisational, administrative and economic. Nor are these profound changes fortuitous or coincidental events. They have followed as consequences of governmental policies for agriculture and rural development.

The relationships between policies or components of policies to results are not always easy to establish. Not all differences in the rate growth can be attributed to the impact of policies and programmes. There are nonpolicy variables like history, qualities of the people and above all agro-climatic conditions. However, policies do make a good deal of difference to output growth.1

After independence, time had come as a result of the very compulsion of situation to promote the idea of agricultural revolution. Through mutual stimulation over three decades between political leaders, civil servants, agricultural scientists and foreign advisers, policies took shape which started the process of agricultural revolution.

It is the attempt of this treatise to make an analytical survey of the evolution of these policies in India after independence, the factors that influenced them and the extent of their success and failure and draw attention to some possible lessons to be derived.

Policy analysis is a new field of public administration and the treatise is a contribution in this new area.
Policies have to be viewed in a long-term perspective because they take shape and mature and have their impact only in the long run. It is only in the long run that we can distinguish the chaff of momentary reactions from the grain of long-term policy decisions. In a historical perspective, a momentary decision which may appear to be all important in the short run, recedes into background and loses all its significance as the situation unfolds itself over the long run; on the other hand only in the long run can one clearly perceive the circumstances under which policies took shape, what impact they had and whether they have stood the test of time.

But how long should be the period which could provide a proper perspective for the evaluation of policy decisions? A decade perhaps may be too short a period for a definitive evaluation of policies. On the other hand, a quarter of a century or a little more may appear to be just the right period at the end of which one can have an unbiased view on the policies and the programmes, and institutions emerging in the wake of those policies.

India launched its first five year plan in the year 1951 and thus has completed three decades of development policies in various fields. This would appear, therefore, to be the right time for the review of policies of independent India.

The subject matter for this study is the range of policies in the field of agriculture and rural development. This may appear to be too vast a field to be covered in a single study. The preference of researchers is generally to take a limited area and study it in depth. This also makes the task of the researcher more manageable. But in the
field of policy study, concentration on only a small segment of policy can be a great disadvantage and may indeed come in the way of full and proper understanding of a policy and its consequences. This is because if the various segments of policy or policies in various segments are inextricably inter-linked with each other to such an extent that one cannot succeed without another, then a partial vision may turn out to be a faulty vision. That is why the whole spectrum of policies in the field of agriculture and rural development have to be covered in order to have a balanced appraisal. As an example of faulty conclusions from limited perspective may be cited two studies of food policies by B.M. Bhatia and K.C.S. Acharya ('India's Food Problem and Policy Since Independence' and 'Food Security System of India') which have given the entire credit for increased production to the price policy when the fact of the matter is that price incentive would have been of no avail in the absence of a technological break-through in the case of wheat, rice or cotton. Where such a break-through is not forthcoming, as in the case of oil seeds or pulses, price incentive has been of no avail. Therefore, for a proper appreciation of policies, all segments and aspects in the field of agriculture and rural development have to be taken together. It is only then that one can have a holistic view or a systemic perspective of policies.

If this is accepted, then a study such as this of policies in the field of agriculture and rural development has necessarily to cover all relevant aspects -- institutional, technological and economic. The institutional policies relate to the introduction of land reforms and Panchayati Raj, programmes of community development and cooperation and
a bunch of programmes which have come to be known as anti-poverty programmes. The technological policies cover various aspects of what has come to be known as the 'Green Revolution' or the 'New Strategy of Agriculture'. These cover policies relating to the introduction of high-Yielding and high-Variety Seeds, use of chemical fertilisers, development of irrigation, including Command Area Development, use of pesticides and insecticides, and modern implements. The economic policies are related to a wide variety of policies relating to the establishment of incentive or remunerative prices to the producers in relation to the costs of inputs, including those leading to establishment of the Food Corporation of India and the Agricultural Prices Commission, public sector procurement operations, building up of buffer stocks and policies related to marketing and processing, specially in the cooperative sector.

These policies have not necessarily emerged as a series of logical steps to reach pre-determined goals. At any point of time the policymakers would no doubt be making such an attempt. But there are many compelling circumstances, including situations of crisis, making administration take certain decisions. This would particularly happen in the field of agricultural and rural development since agriculture production and more especially food production can become a matter of life and death to the nation. It is thus that while one can see that policies often moved backward or forward or tilted in one direction or another, with the knowledge of hindsight one could see that a more logical process could have avoided pitfalls, false starts or wrong steps and achieved better results.
For viewing policies in a historical perspective, the minimum that is required is a coherent, chronological, clearcut, uncluttered statement of the course of evolution of policies with their essential elements, the circumstances in which they evolved, the factors that shaped them and the impact that they had. This is what is attempted in the present study. In the process the study brings out the contents of various programmes, the agencies established especially to deal with policies and programmes, and brief appraisal indicating the extent to which the policies met with success.

The most important outcome of such an approach is an understanding of the extent to which the over all objective of policies was accomplished. An optimum mix of policies would avoid lopsided approaches which were often adopted in the past. In the holistic perspective, one clearly sees the imbalances that crept up in the policy formulation in the field of agriculture and rural development. In the fifties and early sixties the country had to exorcise the Malthusian ghost of population pressing on limited food supply which seemed to be haunting the nation. Hence the policies tilted towards imports of food on massive scale thereby delaying the emergence of policies conducive to sustained agricultural development. With the new strategy of agriculture ushered in 1967 facilitated by the technological break through available in the shape of high Yielding and high Variety Seeds, the package of policies conducive to sustained increase in agricultural production was introduced. But again these proved lopsided since they concentrated on those who could respond most and thus ignored the backward areas, and the small and marginal farmers. Apart from the
neglect of distributive aspects, this limited the impact of the green revolution and hence it became necessary to once again think of the institutional approaches which would enable the large majority of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers to participate in the process of agriculture and rural development.

The lopsided policies have to be attributed as much to the compulsion of events as to the absence of integrated policy mechanism. The imperative need for such integrated policy formulation is the unmistakable conclusion that emerges out of this study.

With most of the policies and programmes in the field of agriculture and rural development mentioned in the study I have been directly connected in one way or the other during my administrative career stretching over three decades. In fact this is one of the reasons for deciding upon the theme of this study. In the early years of my service as a Project Executive Officer (1955-56) I had enthusiastically gone about establishing new community development blocks and developing links with village communities as "friend, philosopher and guide". Later as Deputy Development Commissioner (1959-62) I had visited community development blocks all over the State of Mysore (later known as Karnataka) and reviewed their activities and guided their progress. Immediately thereafter, I had the privilege of being the Director of Studies at the National Institute of Community Development, Mussoorie (1962) which gave me an experience of relating field experience to training and research in community development.

When Panchayati Raj was ushered in the State of Mysore in 1960, I was associated with the delineation of the Panchayati Raj Sector of
Development and the formulation of enactment and rules relating to Panchayati Raj Administration. Similar was my association with the related field of cooperative development. I have had the privilege to be a chairman of Taluka Land mortgage (Development) Banks, District Cooperative Bank and Cooperative Farming Societies in my early years (1956-59). Later as Secretary, Cooperation, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development in the State of Karnataka (1971-72), I had been on the Board of Directors of the State Apex Cooperative Bank, and State Land Development Bank of Mysore. I represented the State in the negotiations with the World Bank (1971) for supporting the agricultural credit project for Mysore with the support of the Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation and the Reserve Bank of India. As Joint Secretary in the Central Government, Incharge of Cooperation (1977-78) I could make my own contribution to the evolution of cooperative policy.

I have also had the privilege to be the first Chairman of the Krishi Bharati Cooperatives Ltd. as well as the Director of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative -- the two largest fertiliser enterprises in the country. As on the community development side, on the cooperative side, I had involvement with training. I was the Founder Director of the Vaikunth Mehta Institute of Cooperative Management in Poona (1967-71) established to inject a strong dose of management in the cooperative enterprises in the country. I was also the first Principal of the Reserve Bank's College of Agriculture Banking, Poona (1970-71). As Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture (1980-81), I was concerned with Agricultural Credit, Marketing, Processing and Export of Agricultural Commodities as well as Agricultural Census. I also headed
the Central Task Force on Agriculture to Assam (1979) which gave a comprehensive report for boosting the agricultural economy of that far off State. As Additional Secretary Agriculture, I was also concerned, for some time, with policies relating to Command Area Development of which earlier I had field experience as the first administrator of Malaprabha Project and Ghataprabha Project in Karnataka (1972-73) and still earlier as Collector Director Tungabhadra Project (1958-59). I have not cited this experience in an autobiographical or anecdotal manner in the present study but it does provide a backdrop and insights for this study. It is hoped that experience is not less important than books, documents and statistics, as material to be drawn upon for purposes of research!

Throughout my career I have been reflecting on my experience, relating it to the study of Social Sciences and articulating it in the shape of numerous articles which have been published in journals like Kurukshetra, Yojana, Indian Journal of Public Administration and the Financial Express to mention a few. Some of these have been re-published in my published books like "Rural Development Administration in India" (1970), "The Strategy of Cooperative Development and Other Essays" (1970), and "Economics, Planning and Public Administration" (1973). I have not specifically referred to these articles in this study, but in many ways they are reflected in the account of the evolution of policies and programmes.

As a part of my professional commitment, I have been studying the reports of various Committees and Commissions on various aspects of agricultural and rural development as and when they came out. The
present study has given an opportunity to me to refer to many of them in relation to the policies and programmes which were a direct consequence of these reports. The relevant proceedings of the Parliament and other Government documents have also been drawn upon for this study.

Finally, on every aspect of agricultural and rural development several books have appeared. Most of them are not so much concerned with policy aspects as with the programmatic aspects. I have referred to them insofar as they are connected with the evolution of policies.

This study on 'Policy-Making in Agricultural and Rural Development in India' begins with two preliminary chapters on 'The Concept and Importance of Policy Formulation in Government' and 'Approaches to the Theory of Policy-making'. In these two chapters are discussed the meaning of 'policy', characteristics which distinguish it from other administrative functions, the relative role of policy analysis and political interactions, and the various stages of policy formulation. In the third Chapter are discussed the 'Dimensions of policy for Agricultural and Rural Development'. This clears the deck for tracing the evolution of agricultural and rural development policy before Independence in Chapter IV. Chapter V traces the development in this field after Independence till the country embarked on the Five-Year Plans and then gives a summary presentation of the place of agricultural and rural development in the successive Five-Year Plans and the priority accorded to it in our scheme of planning. Chapter VI distinguishes three distinct stages and three salient aspects of agricultural and rural development policy. The next three Chapters VII, VIII and IX are devoted successively to each of the three major aspects of policy
namely, Institutional, Technological and Economic. In Chapter X on ‘The Process of policy Formulation’ the focus is on the role played by Ministers, civil servants, expert committees and other agencies in the formulation of policies. After describing the structure of policy-making in Government, it proceeds to bring out the details of the process of policy formulation in the states as well as at the Centre in relation to major components of policy. It also relates the theory of policy to the process of policy formulation. Finally, in Chapter XI are set forth some of the principal conclusions arising out of the analysis of policies, the most important being the need for an integrated policy framework which may well avoid various imbalances and give better overall results.

At the end I must express my thanks to my guide Dr. N.R. Inamdar, Professor and Head of the Department of Politics & Public Administration, for his valuable advice and thoughtful suggestions at all stages of this work.

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