The process of development in a country like India gathering a cumulative form in the context of problems and processes. The generation of forces of change cannot depend solely on the structural and attitudinal pre-requisites. Thus the mechanism of development represents the confluence of social, economic and political forces. The plans for development is often faced with the complex problem of this cumulative nature. Programmes of development in India have had to take into account, not only their economic viability and political repercussion, but also their social acceptability. It is precisely at this level of synchronisation of processes of development that planning in India had to face the problems.

Various programmes like the Community Development Programme, the Panchayati Raj and the Integrated Rural Development Programme have been initiated for rural development since Independence. These programmes represent the interplay of such forces where the political process at lower levels has been made a part and parcel of the programmes of development. Following the dynamics of a highly structured society with extreme inequalities, these programmes have followed the logic of concentration of resources.
Gaps have been observed during implementation of programmes, between the apparent motives and actual achievements. Consequently, the programmes have often become subject of vehement criticism. It has been observed that gap was due to "plan from above" (the planners not having a proper view of Indian social reality). It has been suggested that "plan from below" (programme to be chalked out by those who had sufficient knowledge about the area where it is going to be implemented) could solve the problem. In the present study, we wish to examine critically the gaps between policies and practices of the programmes of rural development and their ultimate impact.

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