Chapter IV
THE PRESENT STUDY:
OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES AND FIELD OF STUDY

The Objectives

The Rural development has acquired special significance in the countries of the third world. These countries after achieving independence have launched vast programmes of rural reconstruction to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the village community.

Rural development as a process involves the interaction of economic, social and political processes in raising the levels of living of the people in the rural areas. It is intended to expand the community's productive power and to provide the environment for the social reconstruction of the society through equitable distribution of income and wealth. India after independence, confronted with the problem of transforming a traditional society with low levels of literacy and production, has introduced various plans of rural development encompassing social, economic and political processes. These programmes were mainly to crystallize along the Community Development and later through Panchayati Raj setting up the goals of speedy economic
development for self-sustained growth of village community.

In introducing Panchayati Raj, it was, in fact, to establish a system of rural local government to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages. Enormous economic funds and resources are being channelled through these institutions because of the emphasis on development activities for the rural areas. A preference for democratic decentralization was in effect to democratize the base of the village power structure for social mobilization for effective economic growth and welfare of the rural population.

The Panchayati Raj institutions, alongside creating a set of elective institutions to democratize the base of power, function as channels of distribution of governmental plan expenditures and other divisible benefits made available under the plans of rural development. Compared to earlier years the funds and facilities being administered through these institutions is enormous. This has, thus, led to a situation where there is intense competition among various classes and groups having some
resource base in the society to acquire these benefits. This makes it thus imperative to explain the phenomenon of change against such a framework which brings out the role of rural local institutions in restructuring the social and economic relationships in the society.

The present study is primarily concerned with examining and evaluating the relationship between the process of development and the rural stratification system in terms of the accessibility of various groups and classes to the "funds and facilities" made available under the plans of rural development. An attempt will be made to examine the emerging patterns of leadership in relation to the changing rural social structure. Our main concern here is with the developmental aspect of the rural local institutions, in its functioning as channels of the distribution of governmental plan expenditures and other divisible benefits. In analysing the phenomenon of change our main emphasis is on the dispersal and inflow of economic facilities and benefits administered under the plans of rural development.

In a country like India, with extreme social and economic inequalities, the process of democratic
decentralization and various programmes of rural development has led to the emergence of a new class in the society whose main task has been to utilize the mutually reinforcing factors of economic and political processes. It is important here to analyse as to what is the class composition of this sector of activity. The problem is thus to examine as to what extent the plans of rural reconstruction have been able to transform the traditional social structure of the village community and has led to a shift in political and economic relationships in the society as a result of change in Indian social system. Whether the process of political and economic development have catered to the needs and aspirations of the people on the top of the social hierarchy or have provided an important avenue of mobility for different sections of the society?

"Sociology of development" in the present context refers to the understanding of economic development from a sociological perspective. It involves an examination of the land legislations, policies and the development programmes in terms of its objectives of equitable distribution of wealth and resources for the society as
a whole. However, our emphasis in the present study is mainly concerned with the analysis of the processes and dynamics of development in the rural areas.

The main point of our discussion here is that the plans of rural development administered through local institutions have been "part of the "increasing inequalities" in helping the socio-economic and political base of the well-off sections of the society. They have also given rise to regional imbalances.

We shall also examine and evaluate the viability of "local level planning" in its pursuit to expand the community's productive power and to provide the environment for the social reconstruction of the society through equitable distribution of income and wealth. The analysis of the dynamics of change and development is based on the fact that the economic development can not take place independent of social structure and the political power. There has been a sort of congruent relationship between the processes of economic, political and social development.

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the development programmes and
political processes in rural India. The assumption behind such a study is that the situation created by rural local institutions and the development programme has resulted in the emergence of new distributive processes. It is thus important to examine as to how various groups and classes have reacted to these new processes of distribution of benefits of economic development and the positions of power and privilege. The present study aims at the understanding of the relationship between the programme of rural development and the "social hierarchy" of the groups in terms of their accessibility to the funds and facilities and the positions of power and influence made available under the plans of rural development. With this perspective we have studied the Koilasa Block of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh.

Main Hypothetical Questions

In the light of above observations we shall try to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the basis of recruitment to the positions of power and influence in terms of the basic socio-economic characteristics?
Whether the traditional dominant castes on the top of the social hierarchy still continue to hold the positions of power in the rural areas, or it has a wider dispersion to articulate political groups from different sections of society?

(2) Whether the "open and competitive" process of political participation and recruitment has only helped the privileged and entrenched strata of the society or has provided an important avenue of mobility for other sections of society? More specifically, to what extent the weaker sections of the society have been able to have access to the positions of power and influence in the society?

(3) What are the social bases of leadership formation in relation to its social structure?

(4) Whether the process of democratic decentralization has led to the emergence of a new class in the society whose main task has been to utilize the mutually reinforcing factors of economic and political resources or has it
dispersed it to other sections of the society to raise their socio-economic status?

(5) Whether "the funds and facilities made available under the plans of rural development are catering to the needs and aspirations of the society as a whole or a group of people with the resources-base in the society?

(6) What is the comparative spread of the distribution of governmental plan expenditures and other divisible benefits and who are its main beneficiaries?

(7) What type of "networks" and "skill" are being acquired or developed for gaining economic benefits in the new set of distributive processes?

(8) How far the officials and non-officials of the block pursue and co-ordinate the developmental activities under the institutional arrangement of development administration as creative actors in the process of social reconstruction of the society?

(9) How does the emerging structure of leadership and the distributive process of economic benefits administered through the plans of rural development
contribute to the structural change and economic development of the social system?

Method and Field of the Study

The Universe:

The present study has been conducted in Azamgarh, a district in Uttar Pradesh. Azamgarh belongs to one of the backward districts of the State. The district because of its backwardness received special attention of the government in its various plans. The government under the Five Year Plans have taken various measures and strategies to accelerate the process of economic development and social change in order to ensure the balanced growth of the region. The Azamgarh district has been always on the forefront in the sphere of political mobilization before and after independence. Due to reasons of economic and political activity the district has acquired greater significance. It is thus expected that a study in Azamgarh district would provide ample opportunity to examine the interplay of the forces of modernization and change. Consideration of the convenience in terms of well acquaintance and familiarity with the region has been another factor for this selection.
Koilasa Block of the district has been selected as the comprehensive unit of study. It has been proposed to undertake the research in a community development block, primarily because block represents in all its aspects an attempt to introduce programmes of rural development after independence. And secondly, Kshetra Samiti which is coterminous with a block is a crucial unit for planning and implementation under the statutory provisions of Panchayati Raj in Uttar Pradesh. The selection of block as a unit of study from the point of political process and development is another consideration. The block, as the middle tier of Panchayati Raj institutions, is, no doubt, expected to perform the functions or duties that are totally different from the higher levels of elective institutions, but, however the political functions and the processes are almost similar. An intensive study at the block level would, thus, provide in depth analysis of the processes of development and change in the context of the changing rural social structure of the country.

Koilasa block has been selected as the unit of study due to undermentioned considerations. The block
has fair interplay of both the processes of political and economic development. In the sphere of political mobilization and political activity, the block is one of the very active blocks of the district. It is not only that all the major political parties of the district have been actively involved in day to day political activities of the area, but all the successive Assembly and Panchayat Samiti elections have witnessed a keen contest among various political parties and groups. In the sphere of economic development also, the block has made considerable achievement. Different schemes for the upliftment of the rural masses adopted under the plans of rural development have made its impact in the block. Funds and facilities like loans, taqabi, subsidy and such other benefits to raise agricultural productivity have been fully utilized by different sections of society. The Block has witnessed an intense competition among the different groups to avail of these facilities made available by the government to accelerate the pace of development in the rural sector. The caste-composition of the block is another consideration for its selection as the unit of study. Almost all the major upper and lower castes are fairly represented in the block.
In recent years through integrated Rural Development Programme concerted efforts are made to provide an opportunity to the farmers to avail cash subsidies as well as different agricultural inputs for agricultural development and other entrepreneurial activities. The reactions of various groups and classes to these new processes of distribution of economic benefits have been very spontaneous in the area. An analysis of such distributive process in this case will be of immense help to understand the dynamics of development at the grass-roots.

Collection of Data

Preliminary and basic information relating to the problem of the study were collection through Census and enumeration schedules. Survey Research Method was employed for this study keeping in view the nature and problem of our inquiry and the kind of data required. The socio-economic background of village pradhans for all the three earlier elections were collected through a research schedule. It was intended through this to find out the socio-economic background of the village pradhans as well as the beneficiaries of the plan projects. An interview guide was prepared to interview the officials, non-officials and such other respondents selected for the study.
Data through secondary sources was also collected. These sources include Census and Plan Projects, Archival records and the published and unpublished records and documents at the block and the district levels.

The data collected through various sources was analyzed to see the relationship between the process of development and the rural stratification system. The process of economic development and the leadership formation were analysed on the basis of the variables of caste, land, education and age. In our analysis of the processes of political and economic development it has been our endeavour to provide a description of its social class in terms of basic socio-economic characteristics. A further analysis of this class in terms of social stratification of the population in general would provide an insight into the extent of mobility within the institutional arrangement of planning for development. Thus the social basis of these two sectors of activity in terms of the system of stratification in society reflects the comparative "openness" and "closeness" of the processes of political and economic development.
Social Structure of Azamgarh District

Azamgarh district\(^1\) is situated in the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh. It is one of the backward districts of the state. Associated with high pressure of population and low productivity in agriculture the eastern region of the state is a low income area. Azamgarh is situated in the south of Ghaghara river between the parallels of 25° 38' to 26° 27' north latitude and the meridians of 82° 40' to 83° 52' east longitude. As regards its boundaries, it is bound by Ballia and Ghazipur districts on the east and south east, Jaunpur and Faizabad districts on the south west and west and Gorakhpur and Deoria districts on the north and north east respectively. The area of the district is 5744 sq.km.

Administrative Divisions

There are six tehsils in the district. These together with their area and population are as follows.

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1 All the demographic informations have been taken from, District Census Handbook of Azamgarh District, 1971, and Census of India, 1981 (Ser 22, Pt.II-A); Uttar Pradesh; General Population Tables.
The number of Community Development Blocks which were 3 in 1955-56 have increased to 29 at present.

Topography and Physical Environment

The district, by and large, is a level plain without any hills. Except in the proximity of Ghaghara, the country which is in middle Ganga Plain is monotonously flat and slopes down gently towards the south east with some depressions of varying depth and extent in which the surface drainage of the interior collects. On the other hand, there are some high-lying 'usar' plains. As regards the natural division of the district, it consists of the 'southern low lying tract' which differ markedly from one another. The road between Shahganj and Maunath Bhanjan via Azamgarh town serves roughly as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Tehsils</th>
<th>Area in sq.km.</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sagari</td>
<td>914.5</td>
<td>497,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghosi</td>
<td>942.0</td>
<td>593,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azamgarh</td>
<td>811.2</td>
<td>598,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadabad</td>
<td>927.5</td>
<td>678,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulpur</td>
<td>1,152.6</td>
<td>648,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lalganj</td>
<td>997.7</td>
<td>516,199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the dividing line between the two tracts. The northern tract is further divisible into two parts, the uplands known as the "Bangar" and the low lands in the vicinity of the Ghaghara known as the "Kachhar". The "Bangar" consists of most fertile area of the district.

The soil of this region is a good firm loam, which in the neighbourhood of the rivers, becomes light and, in few cases, even sandy. Clay is found in narrow depressions in which the various drainage channels originate. There are isolated patches of clay and "usar" resembling with those in the southern tract. The "Kachar" area consists mainly of two parts, one being the valley of the present "Ghaghara" and the other an old bed. The soil is, for the most part, sandy, covered in the depressions with deposits of clay silt of varying thickness. The geology of the district exhibits nothing beyond the ordinary Gangetic alluvium and consequently, the mineral products are not of any significance.

The district's most important river is Ghaghara. It is navigable throughout its length in the district and indeed for a long distance beyond boundaries of the district by big boats and steamers. It swells during
the rains to an immense size bringing frequent floods. Other main rivers traversing the district are Besu, Mangal, Tons and Choti Sarajoo which falls into the Ganga river further south-east.

**Climate**

The average annual rainfall in the district is 1313.0 mm. and the average maximum and minimum temperature is 44.9°C and 3.4°C respectively.

**Communication**

The district is served by three lines of the North-Eastern Railway - the Allahabad-Varanasi, Varanasi-Mau Bhatani-Gorakhpur main line, the Shahganj-Indara-Doharighat branch line. The road network is well-developed and the district is linked with all the neighbouring districts and the important cities of the state.

**Population**

The district occupies sixth position in population among the districts of the state. The population of the district has increased from 1,551,654 in 1901 to 3,541,261 in 1981. The Scheduled Castes constitute 24.35 per cent of the total population in the district as
against 21.00 per cent in the state. The decade variation and growth in population in successive censuses in the district is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Decade variation</th>
<th>Percentage of decade variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1,551,654</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1,496,084</td>
<td>- 55,570</td>
<td>- 3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1,531,970</td>
<td>+ 35,886</td>
<td>+ 2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>1,574,982</td>
<td>+ 43,012</td>
<td>+ 2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1,826,590</td>
<td>+ 251,603</td>
<td>+ 15.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>2,106,557</td>
<td>+ 279,967</td>
<td>+ 15.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2,408,052</td>
<td>+ 301,495</td>
<td>+ 14.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2,857,484</td>
<td>+ 449,432</td>
<td>+ 18.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>3,541,261</td>
<td>+ 683,777</td>
<td>+ 23.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The density of population in the District is 617 persons per sq.km. which is higher than the State average of 377 persons per sq.km. The rural population in the district is 94.79 per cent as against 85.98 per cent in the state.

The percentage of literacy in the district is 24.86 as against the state percentage of 27.38. The
male and female literacy in the district is 37.70 and 12.29 per cent respectively.

According to 1971 census, the population in the working age-group of 15-59 in the district is 48.60 per cent as against the state percentage of 51.38. However, about 49.0 per cent of the persons in the working age-group in the district are males and 51.0 per cent females. Out of the total male population, 47.29 per cent is in the working age-group, the corresponding figure for females being 49.92 per cent. As against the 39.1 per cent of the workers and 60.9 percent of the non-workers in the state, the percentage of workers and non-workers in the district is 28.66 and 71.34 per cent respectively. The male workers constitute 47.66 per cent of the total male population while the female workers form 9.58 per cent of the total female population.

Among the workers of the district, 82.87 per cent are engaged in primary sector, 8.94 per cent in secondary sector and 8.19 percent in the tertiary sector. More than 54 per cent of the workers in the district are cultivators and 28 per cent are agricultural labourers. A total of nearly 7 per cent work in the household.
industries and 1.78 per cent in the manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs in non-household industries. About 2.0 per cent of workers are engaged in trade and commerce and 5.0 per cent in other services. The number of workers engaged in other industrial categories is however very small.

There are 4943 inhabited villages in the district in which 3,541,261 persons live. Most of the villages in the district are small having a population around 500. The number of villages with more than 500 population is very small.

As is evident from the above table, the number of villages in the district having an area of more than 200 acres but less than 500 acres are highest, claiming the percentage of 29.16. The percentage of villages with 101 to 200 and 51 to 100 acres of area is 25.48 and 18.80 respectively. There are however, 15.08 per cent of villages which have less than 50 acres of area. The number of villages with more than 500 acres of area is very few in the District. There is only one village having an area of more than 2001 acres but not more than 5000 acres is 30. The percentage of villages with 1001
The Areawise Distribution of Villages (both Inhabited and Un-Inhabited) in the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Area (in acres)</th>
<th>Number of villages</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>50 or less</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>15.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>51 - 100</td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>18.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>101 - 200</td>
<td>1434</td>
<td>25.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>201 - 500</td>
<td>1641</td>
<td>29.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>501 - 1000</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>8.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1001 - 2000</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>2001 - 5000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>5001 - and above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5628</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to 2000 and 501 to 1000 acres of area is, however, 2.26 and 8.67 respectively.

Land Distribution

Before independence, the system of land tenure in the district was Zamindari, which had given Zamindars the juridical rights in land-ownership. The Zamindars who were mostly from upper castes were alone the proprietors of land and all others were their tenants holding the right to cultivate from them and paying land rent to them.
According to the 6th Settlement Report on the Azamgarh district, native custom had created two great orders of cultivators in the district: (i) those who were supposed to employ farm servants to perform the more menial operations and (ii) those who did all for themselves. The former order contained mostly the upper caste people, while all the inferior castes of Hindu and Muhammadans were included in the second order.

The principal result of the division, as far as revenue officers were concerned, was that the tenants of former order were generally found paying lower rates of rent than those of the latter. But the rule was absolutely not universal. A considerable part of the former class were descendents of expropriators.

The tenure\(^2\) in which the revenue paying proprietors throughout the district held their estates was with the few unimportant exceptions - simple or undivided. They held direct and unrestricted control over their estates, subject to the payment of the government revenue and

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cess to certain police and settlement obligations to individual incumbrances created by themselves and to the law respecting the occupancy rights of the tenants of certain cultivated or cultivable fields.

The proprietary right\(^3\) in the villages was divided between the Malgujars or superior proprietors who paid the revenue and the Mushakshsidars or inferior proprietors who held the villages under the malgujar on permanent hereditary leases. Along with these, some peculiar but very common land tenures were in existence in the area. These are as under.

'Bighadam\(^4\) in it each member of the community was under the custom allowed to cultivate as much land as he could without reference to right by descent. For it he paid revenue, and when he came to record rights it was put down as his share. In "Khuntaiti"\(^5\) shares were expressed in fractions of a given unit. It could contain more than one mauza (village).

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3 Report on the Azamgarh District, Ibid., p.87.
4 Ibid., p.92.
5 Ibid., p.92.
'Arajidaries' in connection with the plenary proprietary tenures it remained to the notice, the plots of land which though included within the area of mauzas were held on a distinct tenure form and conveyed no title to rights and interests in other part of the mauzas. In Azamgarh they were known as "arazis" or "arazidaries". Most of them were patches of the land which having been held revenue free on insufficient titles were resumed and settled as separate portions. A large number of them were held by the descendants or representatives of the revenue free holder.

In Azamgarh district most of the land was held on cash rents fixed in the lump or by rate on the bigha. Other form of rent was batai. In it landlords' share was generally half of the grain.

The erstwhile landlords, particularly Rajputs, Brahmins, Kayasthas, Bhumihars and some Muslims had supreme control over the land and village settlement. After independence, the Zamindari Abolition Act abolished the rights of intermediaries over the village land and gave proprietary rights to the actual tillers of the

6 Ibid., p.95.
land. Consequently, the landlords lost their control over vast areas of village land. The Zamindari abolition however was not very successful in terms of abolishing the huge differences in land ownership amongst the landowning and the non-landowning castes. Zamindari abolition and the subsequent land reforms were no doubt the radical steps to transform the traditional social structure, but it could not bring much change in the earlier existing situation. The big farmers form the upper castes and the affluent farming castes of the village still continue to own most of the land in the villages. A substantial part of the total land still remains in the hands of the traditionally upper caste groups like Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars. Amongst the backward castes who formed the bulk of tenants, the Ahirs and Kurmis have been largely benefitted from the statutory tenancy reform measures in the post independence period. They own a sizeable part of village land. Other middle and lower-middle castes have the marginal land under their control.

The enforcement of land reform legislations enacted by the state government after independence to
distribute land among the landless Harijans and other weaker sections of the society has not met with any success. Landlessness still prevails among the Harijans in acute form. More than 90 per cent of Harijans are virtually landless or with nominal land. These measures to distribute surplus land among the Harijans, because of certain built-in defects and lacunae, could hardly achieve any tangible results. Even the recent attempts to allot land to the landless Harijans have met with the same fate. Most of the land allotted to them is still with the land-owning dominant castes as the Harijans could not take possession of it. Government efforts to evict illegal occupation have hardly yielded any significant success in ensuring to Harijans the physical occupation of land allotted to them.