"India has long way to go in adapting institutions and aspirations, if Indian society values growth with equity. Neither the recently discussed virtues of free market mechanism nor the earlier panacea of central planning appears to carry much conviction today."

-Sukhomoy Chakravarty

CHAPTER-10

SUMMARY
AND
CONCLUSIONS
Coming to the end of this disquisition, having analysed the vast array of polemical factors in the human environment that positively or negatively affect the well-being of rural people having pointed out rural people, having pointed out many disquieting aspects of rural development, having analysed the political background of the strategy of rural development in particular connection between the government and the rural people including the role played by political commitment and the part played by adversarial politics, corrosive corruption and pressures of vested interest, having examined the role of existing local institutions providing health, education and other facilities and having observed the functions of the existing administrative-bureaucratic set-up for rural areas, it is necessary to look forward to make out a case for an alternative approach to rural development, which can permit efficient, prompt and equitable solutions to the non-development of rural sector and malaises of rural people. Following are the summary, conclusions and recommendations made out of the total exercise.

India is nearing the dawn of twenty first century. But it is saddening to observe that a long period of 45 years of planned development has resulted in non-development
of rural areas and adoption of several "welfare" measures has ended in accentuation of "ill-fare" of the rural mass. The quantitative achievements of all rural development programmes do not mean much in themselves. Per capita figures are mere averages, which mask great differences among regions, groups and individuals. Despite the high priority being given in successive plans majority of rural people are subject to grim condition of poverty. All rural development proposals tend to produce a 'shopping-list' type set of proposals, which in essence serve the interests of "elite section" of the rural community and worsen the 'ill-fare' of rural people. All the poverty alleviation programmes are not integrated with agricultural development and development of infrastructure. All these programmes have remained essentially top-down ventures heavily dependent on the bureaucracy, resulting in large leakages and inefficiencies.

The 'poverty overhang' is not only a problem in its own right it is the biggest obstacle in the pursuit of other goals of human development. A large number of programmes have failed to make a significant dent in the problem of poverty mainly because they have tended to underestimate the dimension and complexity of the problem. The limitations of earlier developmental approaches has led to the formulation of a two-pronged pattern of development in India. The first prong relates
to poverty alleviation which is mired in doubt and confusion. The second prong relates to the economic liberalisation and structural adjustment policies, which is oblivious of the real issues of Indian economy.

Present policy of globalisation and marketisation fits perfectly well with an investment pattern and production structure to subserve a social milieu and lifestyle which has no relevance for the broad mass of rural people. On the other hand it impedes the progress towards economic self-reliance, growth and environmental sustainability. Central planning nor the free market forces has any solution to the problems of rural people. Therefore, the way out of the present problem lies not in giving-up planning but in giving it a new content and direction.

10.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The main findings of the entire exercise can be summarised as follows:

1. Most of the studies on rural development and decentralisation are apolitical, ahistorical and defensive of the status quo dominated by marginalism and managerialism.

2. The most unfortunate consequence of India's wherevance to all growth-oriented strategy in all development planning has been appalling neglect of agriculture and rural development.
3. After a long span of planning with several tinkerings of plan techniques rural sector of Indian economy has remained closer to the subsistence level and painfully sensitive to the vagaries of nature. All policy interventions have tended to benefit rich farmers only.

4. The social, political and economic subsystems are so strongly interlocked that the rural poor remain outside the enclosure, which is strongly biased in favour of the rural rich and elite class.

5. The process of industrialisation is inefficient and regionally concentrated; and the process of urbanisation is largely dysfunctional. Growth impulses generated through the market mechanism at these modes get impounded within the urban limits instead of being percolated to the rural sector.

6. The problem of rural poverty has remained as grave as ever, and the main reasons for incidence of rural poverty lie in the deficient development strategy in Indian planning.

7. Rural poverty is very complex in origin and manifestation. It is a multi-faceted and vicious phenomenon. It tends to reduce poor's access to minimum health care, education, nutritional and other facilities.

8. Economic growth has adverse effect on rural poverty scenario. When in equality profile worsens during the growth process, the incidence of rural poverty
tends to rise.

9. Both Sen's index and Head count index show that trend of rural poverty during 1969-86 is negative, but the absolute poverty still constitute a significant socio-economic malady for India.

10. Regression results show that:

(a) Food price is positively correlated with poverty. It implies that while agricultural growth tends to reduce rural poverty, price and inequality in rural consumption tends to push it up.

(b) Rural poverty is lower in states where irrigation facilities and infrastructural development is higher, and where asset-base of rural household is stronger.

11. The basic health infrastructure in rural areas has remained as weak as before. Only 17% of hospital beds are available for 75% of India's population living in villages. (3 hospital beds are available per lakh of population). All vertical health programmes have suffered not only from sufficient funds but also from ignoring the need to involve rural people in a meaningful way.

12. In terms of Human Development Index (HDI) there is very wide difference among the state. Kerala has the highest HDI followed by Punjab, and Haryana. In terms
of Deprivation Index, Kerala has the best and Bihar has the worst standard of living. The composite Rural Development Index shows that inter-state disparity is very significant. It shows that planning exercise of the last two decades has not been effective in bringing the backward states into the vortex of economic development.

13. Review of exercises with rural development programmes during last 45 years indicate that the impact of development programmes on rural poverty and backwardness in most cases is negligible whereas in some cases it is marginal. All most all programmes were carried out on an inflexible and achoc basis, meant for distributing doles remained top-down ventures, without the involvement of beneficiaries.

14. Review of District Planning shows that effective decentralism both functional and operational at the district level is yet to be taken up in most of the states of India. All the schemes remain "collector-centric" and people's role remain peripheral and rhetoric. The present set-up of multi-level planning has strong 'elitist bias.'

15. Growing population in developing countries puts ever greater strain on the natural ecosystem. Rise in its population alone will require more than 60% of energy of the world by the year 2000. Limited life of known
reserves of natural resources has frightful implications for the rural people.

16. Agriculture on which large majority of India's rural population eke out their living is the most vulnerable to environmental degradation and natural disasters.

17. Sustainable livelihood security (SHS) index shows that there is wide variations in the agricultural system of the different agro-climatic zones. It suggests to undertake area-specific projects to improve the overall sustainability of agricultural development through micro-level planning.

18. Rural poor depends on zero-cost energy. They have not crossed the "fuel-gathering" stage. It results in rapid firewood consumption. Depletion of traditional fuel energy and non-affordability of the commercial alternatives worsens the energy-starvation of the poor villagers.

19. The major obstacle to meet the rural energy crisis is political priorities. The 'elitist solution' to the rural energy crisis does not solve the problem of energy-starvation of rural poor. So instead of exercising at the macro-level, the regional planning should have a regional energy planning as a vital component.

20. Ecologically overstressed rural society is further impelled to cause more intensification of the
pressure on its environment in an attempt to survive. Rural ecosystem tends to regress, because, the existing politico-economic system is not yet concerned in terms of the subtle interdependence in nature.

21. Discrete approach to environmental degradation should be replaced by intergenerational approach. The incorporation of environmental dimension in the regulation of economic choices is only possible through decentralisation process.

22. Decentralised Planning in India is an area of ignorance and inconsistency. There is lack of conceptual clarity about what is to be achieved, how to be achieved and for whose benefit it is to be achieved. So its crucial elements/ issues are neglected till today.

23. Decentralised planning is the efficient strategy to achieve a sound reconciliation between the multi-level planning and multi-objective programming. It ensures a meaningful compromise among various policies of different spatial units.

24. Efficacy of the decentralisation is affected by the absence of an information system at the village, block and district level.

25. An effective decentralised framework warrants some reforms in the planning, administrative and constitutional regimes.
26. Successful decentralisation requires some degree of coordination among national, regional and local agencies, in order to establish complementarity and viable linkages.

27. The factors that determine the efficacy of decentralisation policy are political support, regional and local capacities, central support, socio-economic constraints.

28. Successful decentralisation is never considered as once for all exercise. It has to be incremental and iterative. It does not resort to any kind of generalisation.

29. Rural industrialisation, in a labour surplus economy like India is the most appropriate strategy which enhances the efficacy of decentralisation model. It stands for dispersal of industrial activity to the rural areas.

30. Peoples participation is the sine qua non of decentralisation process. But in India it has been distorted in both spirit and purpose. It has tended to mean only distribution of doles and palliatives to rural people.

31. The spatial analysis has two analytical components: (i) Intra-spatial analysis and (ii) inter-spatial analysis.
32. Simulation exercise is required in order to compute the target variables at the end of planning horizon and to direct the plan strategy and tinker the course of the relevant economic variables. Forecasting of the future scenario is very important to accomplish the goals and to deal with critical dimensions of rural development.

33. The ultimate objective of each development project is to ensure sustained delivery of benefits and to contribute to long term development goals. The sustainability issue is very important for social sector projects such as rural health, education, nutrition, energy etc.

34. Prioritisation of projects is a very important step in decentralisation process. It analyses the feasibility, sustainability and acceptability of any new project.

35. Rural development is a steady process but not an instant programme. In order to sustain a steady longrun process, it is axiomatic that unilevel centralised planning is in-efficient to comprehend and deal with complex rural problems. Multi-level decentralised planning is more area specifica and group specific, which establishes close complementarities between the development schemes and local problems, potentials and priorities. Decentralisation can reduce the lags considerably. It is a means of eliciting greater participation in planning.
It can build up local institutions which will provide an enduring base for rural development. It can help in building leaderships and entrepreneurship among the rural mass by working as school of training in the art of decision-making and administration. Above all the decentralised process ensures better spatial convergence of sequencing interrelated activities and optimisation of investments.

10.2 BROAD CONCLUSIONS:

Existing governmental and administrative machinery of India is evolved under the legacy of British rule, which is steeped in the culture of law and order. Therefore, it is ill-oriented and irrelevant for the developmental imperatives. Due to the unethical value system in India, the law and order system has deteriorated over the years requiring greater attention from the authority. The machinery having the responsibility of law and order can not handle the development portfolio adequately. Developmental goal become mirages. Efficient discharge of law and order requires intrepidity, evasiveness, circumspectness and the capacity to dispense expediency while developmental work needs to be communicative, empathetic, receptive and to have the capacity to go deep and find the real solutions. The following broad conclusions can be listed:
(1) In fact the strategy of rural development lacks both cohesion and drive. All schemes of development were at best comprehensive welfare programmes rather than an integrated plan of development. The meagreness of outlay on isolated schemes like payments of subsidies to cottage industries, supply of bullocks or seeds, subsidies for housing, establishment of biogas plants, providing improved chullahs, grant of legal aid and running few residential ashram schools here and there providing health facilities in PHC/CHCs without doctors proved ineffective for bringing about any appreciable change in the economic standard of the rural mass. The adhoc nature of the programmes and lack of integrated character of the area development schemes under many subplans are the main limitations. The identification process of the target groups is woefully faulty in as much as a larger number of non-poor avails the benefits from various schemes. In many cases there is no evidence of involving the local community at the time of project formulation. It is also noticed that many specific problems and requirements of the rural villages are not properly reflected.

(2) In most cases, despite several emphatic slogans, the approach to planning is not very different from national-level planning with the emphasis on increasing production and employment through investment in infrastructure. The planning is still top-down although the top has
been brought down to the state-level. The centre still exerts much control in this planning process either through establishing guidelines and directives given from the above or requiring approval from above. The designing and management of infrastructure is done by the top-down bureaucratic structures with very little say for the concerns and perception of the local villagers.

(3) The tendency among the policy makers is still to take it for granted that once priority is given to a sector in terms of longer allocation, (in five year plans) the development of the sector would automatically follow. In case of rural development (and agriculture in particular), ineffectiveness of the grass root level organisations is the real constraint which is very difficult to overcome. In large parts of rural India to be reached, the situation is like that of institutional vacuum. There a functional net work of grassroot level organisations is needed to reach the investment and development inputs across large and widely spread areas. Without effective local-level coordination in implementation, participatory mechanism and continuous monitoring it would be hardly possible to remove rural poverty and backwardness.

(4) We are in the midst of a major rethinking on the adequacy and strategy of our planning process. The new approach would require the endogenisation of the
demographic parameters in the mathematical framework of planning. In the past we had attached overwhelming importance to planning of the commodity producing sectors at the expense of social sectors. The development of human resources is closely related to the improvements in social sector. And it is an accepted fact that the quality of life can be substantially improved with the development of social sectors which can be achieved even at comparatively low income levels. Therefore, the planning framework in India should develop a disaggregated socio-economic demographic framework incorporating female education, female employment, utilisation of health care and other social variables. These shifts would require major changes in the institutional structure of planning. Social sector planning would become feasible and would succeed only under decentralised planning with greater popular participation at local levels.

(5) Taking the entire economy and present level of development into view, liberalisation can be a step in the right direction provided it is used as a strategy not to withdraw the government from the economy but to shift the focus of governmental policies and concerns from helping and subsidising the organised parts of the economy, which are viable enough to operate on their own, to building up the economy and society in the vast unorganised sectors lacking development and
remaining backward. Such a strategy can promote broad-based agricultural growth which would not only increase the growth rate of the economy but more important, enable the backward areas and the rural poor to participate in the growth process and share its benefits. Without such a long term perspective and a strong commitment to help the unorganised and poor, marketisation policy, instead of promoting growth would only intensify the present crisis and stagnation in the economy.

(6) In a country of India's size and diversity there are limitations to what the government even with the best of programmes can achieve. The participation of the rural people, particularly of women and the adoption of community approach are imperative if the success of social sector programmes is to be ensured. The sheer magnitude of the problem involving over 300 million people below the poverty line and 324 million illiterates in India demands immediate and sustained response from the public authority. The stakes are too high and the magnitudes of the problem too large to be swept under the carpet. The repercussions of failing India's vulnerable section could trigger off responses which may seriously undermine the very sustainability of new economic reforms.

(7) Agriculture can work as the biggest safety net in the process of adjustment by softening the rigours of inflation as well as by raising the income and employment
for the vulnerable sections of the population. Broadening the agricultural base by stepping up public investment in irrigation, research and extension and in social development such as education, health and skill formation holds the key to rural development as well as to ensuring that the gains from such development are equitably shared by different regions and class of rural people.

(8) Putting the responsibility with the community is the most rational approach for energy, health, education related problems. The community could be defined in terms geographical or non-institutional aggregation of people linked together for common goals or other purposes. The appropriate level is "community level". Some of the most interesting and success stories of health, education, energy, social forestry etc come out of the community development model. It puts the control over various determinants and perhaps the best antidote to that most pernicious of modern political ills, the fragmentation, disempowerment and alienation of the ordinary rural people.

(9) Mass literacy mission in the real sense of the term, can solve the persistent hurdles like the built-in bias against the poor in our society. A combination of conscien
tisation of the rural poor and sensitisation of the bureaucracy at all levels can go a long way in achieving the
louidable objectives enshrined in the Indian constitution to a large extent. If the rural poor are able to perceive and internalise the need for collectively asserting their rights and are supported by an imaginative and honest bureaucracy, major part of the formidable job can be accomplished.

(10) Given the synergistic relationship between education, health, nutrition, energy, adequate allocation of public investment needs to be made on the social overheads and efficient measures should be adopted to magnify its trickle-down effect on rural people. The crux of the matter is that the new approach requires human development goals to be an integral part of the economic development (and structural adjustment). The present tendency to initiate several conspicuous social welfare programmes without adequate planning or preparation at the ground level, needs to be curbed and all rural developmental programmes should be pursued with a human face that means with a positive bias towards the rural poor built-into all measures taken up by the government.

(11) Access to maternal and child care are vital for reducing high infant mortality rates in rural areas. But such access is out of reach of most of the rural population of all states. Less than twenty percent of hospital bed facilities are located in rural areas.
Above all the approach to the health care delivery system in rural areas is mechanical and bureaucratic and fails to take into account the real needs of the rural population.

(12) The present top-down techno-managerial approach to 'delivering' health care in India is known for its lack of sensitivity to cultural and social factors of the local people and for its lack of accountability to the people whom it is intended to serve. The problem lies not in the inadequacy of medical science and technology or their availability, but in the inability to reach these to the people through over-professionalised and over-bureaucratised health system both in the public as well as the private sector. It is necessary to explode the myth that health care has to be delivered to the people by very highly trained people and professional experts. It is necessary to liberate the people from the clutches of experts. Unless the people are involved in the planning process, it is impossible to evolve meaningful rational and cost-effective health care system that can provide (adequate amount of "appropriate" health care to the people.

(13) Human health as well as education are the most fundamental requirement of any society/economy. They are the inherent source of production and capital. Rural economic development squarely lies on the improvement in community
health and spread of education. The relation between rural health and education on the one hand and its economy on the other is just like an object and its shadow. Both continue to be neglected entities for the rural people. Both are usually subjugated to other needs of the rural poor, conceived as more important i.e. income, wealth, prestige, power and security. Health is a fairly elusive concept. It has a broad spectrum of determinants. Modern health facilities has a strong urban bias. It is only hospital-based and disease oriented. But the frontier of health care extends far beyond the narrow limits of medical care. 'Health for all' and "Education for all" means extension of these services, to the remote villages. It entails the removal of various obstacles to these services: such as elimination of ignorance, malnutrition, unhygienic housing, contaminated water supply etc. All these aspects warrant concerted efforts in all directions. The nature of the problem is group-specific and region-specific. Hence a micro level decentralised planning is the imperative need.

(14) The dangers to environments and ecology of different actions and inactions and present inexorable and unrelenting pressure on the scarce resources must become an important consideration in seeking a solution to the energy predicament of rural population. Energy consumption pattern of rural people varies across the family size, income class, size of land holdings, end-use and villages.
The present pattern of biomass use of fuel in the villages is highly injurious to the ecosystem. Man in search of wood for fuel is destroying the vast forests and tree-stock which ultimately results in soil erosion and low capacity of the ecosystem to effect good rainfalls. The fuel collected by village poor has very low thermal efficiency and very hazardous for the health of rural women. There is acute energy scarcity on the one hand and huge wastage on the other due to ignorance and inefficient methods of energy-use. In order to curb this colossal misuse/waste, it is necessary to motivate rural people to shift their choice for more fuel-efficient heating and cooking gadgets.

Rural energy problem is area-specific, group-specific and time-specific. The potentials of renewable energy supply of diverse forms vary widely among villages. The topography and land contours are different. Therefore, we cannot have a uniform energy policy. It is imperative to have an appropriate rural energy policy which reflects, local needs and potentials. Detail informations on non-commercial energy sources are necessary. So there is need for decentralised exercise and a micro-level approach, which can only ensure that generation of energy is economical, energy use is efficient and environmentally benign.
(15) As of today various departments of the Central Government and State Government attempt to reach out the same people, thereby spreading their outlay thinly over the entire population. The administrative expenditure of all schemes is considerably large the delivery system itself eats up most of the funds. Very little benefit, a fraction of the total outlay eventually percolate to the people. The funds for all programmes of rural health, sanitation, education, child care, rural transport, rural energy, draught relief, flood and cyclone relief need to be converged so as to make the effective use of the funds. This provides for the main justification for democratic decentralisation quite apart from the basic rationale of people working out their local development programmes based on their own perceptions of their needs and the priorities thereof. For effective delivery of all services it should be possible to devolve the funds currently under control of various departments to the village level panchayats so that it ensures:

a) convergence of social sector services relating to the poor rural artisans women and children; and

b) active community participation in the formulation and implementation of the programmes.

(16) It is highly essential to integrate and coordinate different development programmes under way for optimum results, because rural development is multi-
disciplinary in nature which involves multitude of governmental and non-governmental agencies engaged in the implementation of diverse agricultural and rural development programmes with different and often confrctual objectives. There is a great deal of wastages of resources, unnecessary duplication and overlapping in the absence of proper integration and coordination.

(17) The adoption of successful rural development programmes to a national scale requires a shift from person-based to a system-based approach. Complementarity between rural development strategy and national economic development strategy is a necessary precondition for the success of both. The role of local participation and institutional arrangement enabling decentralised decision making in grass-root planning for rural development can hardly be overstated. Enlightened leadership creating pressure from the above (as in case of Tanzania and China) and local rural community organisations creating pressure from below (as in case of South Korea) can help creating conditions which can inspire confidence and a sense of participatory economic justice among rural peasantry and landless poor for successful implementation of rural development strategies. There are many other issues relating to rural development. Whatever may be the issue, the fact remains that the basic parameters of rural upliftment only can be geared through decentralisation process.
Indeed decentralisation must take place in all the sectors of the economy, since health, education, energy, agriculture cannot exist in isolation. Once that is done, a type of social synergy will emerge and people's capability to set their goals and initiate programmes to achieve them will develop over a period of time. All represents the quintessence of the action plan warranted for rural transformation.

All specific rural development Programmes have failed to achieve the desired results because of following weaknesses:

(a) They have not been peoples programme in real sense; rather they are government's programme with a spirit of patronage.

(b) They have diffused character. The Financial, material and administrative resources were spread too thinly, albeit uniformly, all over the country side to produce any tangible impact on rural poverty and unemployment.

(c) They have followed a "blue print" approach to rural development, inspite of their process irrelevance.

(d) They lack any functional basis of delegating responsibility to the lower level which has
resulted in great deal of confusion, and inter-departmental overlapping.

(e) They have employed a large army of untrained extension workers, who, because of lack of coordination, were less a source of support to the villagers and more a source of bewilderment and despondency.

(f) They have permitted a 'spirit of ritualism'; and laying 'foundation stones' inaugurations, openings became the be-all and end-all of all rural development activities.

Therefore, many useful lessons learnt from the past experience are:

(a) Agriculture and agro-based non-farm sector should be treated second only to defence in its claim to development funds.

(b) Agricultural price policy should be producer-oriented and incentive oriented.

(c) Government alone can not effectively tackle all problems of agricultural and rural development.

(d) Development programme should evolve and grow on the basis of experience. "Learning and devising" approach is better than mandated blue print design, while replicating a project on a national scale.

(e) Neither populist nor paternalistic approach to rural development is successful only a "participative model" is the most appropriate for rural development.
The issues that bear upon rural development prospects are inevitably very complex. India has long way to go in adapting institutions and aspirations, when Indian society aims at growth with equity. Neither the recently discussed virtues of free market mechanism nor the earlier panacea of central planning would appear to carry much conviction today. Thus it is necessary to be conscious of the fact that the social, political and economic life of the nation has reached the crossroads, where hard decisions are necessary. In fact such decision should have been taken long before, where the intractable character of the problem become visible. Now in mid nineties, a clear choice of direction and strategy has become absolutely imperative. Though the study does not resort to or recommend for generalisation or standardisation of any kind, the following broad suggestive points can be put forth.

1. The three basic national objectives of the past planning regime in India still continue to be relevant for the country. (1) increasing production, (2) Alleviating poverty, (3) Reducing unemployment. The whole process of District and block plans must focus on the attainment of these objectives. These objectives must be articulated with reference to the different sectors of the economy and the different sections of the society.
All the subsequent stages of district planning such as collection of data, preparation of district profile, formulation of programmes and projects, allocation and deployment of resources and organisation and management of district plan must aim at the realisation of three objectives. The district and block level planning must integrate developmental activities in all the four sectors, primary, secondary, tertiary and infrastructure so as to deal with the above three objectives.

(2) There exists an incompatibility between developmental needs and organisational structures of the government for rural development in India. Given the political system and the policy-making of the government, the present bureaucratic system should be modified by building into them a capacity for innovative learning, leading to functional orientation in their purposes and modes of operation. Therefore, bureaucratic reorientation should give priority to innovation over compliance, to management of systems over the management of projects and to system of self-monitoring and self-correction over the system of formalised planning and evaluation.

(3) Policies to accelerate agricultural growth, infrastructural development and provide better access to subsidized food, along with measures to control inflation promise to be more effective in reducing the incidence of
rural poverty in India. Therefore, measures to control population growth and promote environmental conservation should be incorporated into poverty alleviation strategies in India.

(4) All Anti-poverty Programmes should rely more on inter-agency cooperation through the use of formal and non-formal networks than on hierarchical controls. It should adopt "the learning process" approach, in replicating a pilot project on a national scale, instead of a mandatory blue print design. The programme should be allowed to evolve and grow on its own experience.

(5) In the existing system of planning the whole effort towards reduction of intra-state imbalances has been circumscribed by the fact that all decision-making has been concentrated for a long time at the state level. Almost all financial and physical programmes are channelled downwards from the top rather than building up regional plans based on the aggregation of these components from below. This calls for the identification of the groups of districts with homogeneous characteristics and similar problems so that suitable developmental strategies for each group can be evolved within the framework of decentralised planning. This will require not only the formulation of districtwise and regionwise plans for development but also their dovetailing with each other
in conformity with sectoral plans of the state. The planning authority should undertake an exercise for delineating planning regions in the State. Because the economic regionalisation of state is considered necessary for two reasons:

(i) Assessing the degree of intra-regional and inter-regional imbalances in the levels of development and

(ii) Providing a framework for disaggregating sectoral activities so as to prepare regional development profiles taking into account their availabilities and viability at various levels of decision-making.

Groupification of districts according to homogenous characteristics should be made to provide an objective basis for regional configuration of the state and the coordinating links for integrating micro-level plans local, block and district with the regional and state-level plans. The rationalisation of the formulation and implementation of decentralised planning shall certainly result in reduction in regional disparity in the country.

(6) The thrust of any development programme should be to empower the households and communities. Any development policy that does not adopt a bottom-up approach, that does not aim to transform the role of the people from merely being passive beneficiaries into active participants of the decision making and development process is found
to fail in producing any visible and lasting positive impact on their lives.

(7) Investment should increase in social overhead capital like schools, hospitals, and health centres, village road-network should improve. Such type of investment shall noise the productivity of rural people. Widen the market for local produce, reduce the cost and facilitate the establishment of agro based industries. Accessibility of an area is an important parameter of rural development. In fact it touches and affects every aspects of rural life. Better road network of the rural areas optimises the rural resource potentials. It facilitates the direct flow of surplus produce to the market and enables the poor farmers to bypass the middleman or itinerant traders, who had been the exploitative agent in the rural market structure.

(8) The focus on the search for rural energy supply had to be on the use of decentralised renewable sources of energy. Such sources of energy as appropriate in different areas, are likely to be much more cost effective than the long distance supply of energy from centralised sources of supply. Greater the use of renewable sources of energy, the greater would be the long term sustainability of both the energy supply and longrun development programmes. Rural energy planning should
therefore evolve the necessary mechanisms for transferring the available technologies to the villages, to enable rural communities themselves to formulate and implement energy development programmes to match their needs.

(9) Sustainable rural development warrants a development pattern that maintains the stock of natural resources and overall ecological balance. This imply that the development for a steady state society should be based only on renewable resources used at a rate at which they regenerate leading to emission and affluents that can be decomposed and assimilated by the nature. In this view therefore, the key ingredients for building a steady state Society for sustainable rural development.

I) eradication of rural poverty so as to prevent further resource depletion, which calls for changes in the existing socio-political structures.

ii) Cleaner technologies to mitigate environmental pollution, which would call for R&D investment and technology transfer and for environmental impact assessment of all new projects of development.

iii) Slowing down growth of rural population so as to relieve the pressure on rural ecosystem.

iv) Internalization of environmental cost so as to reduce harmful effects on energy-environment base, implying a change in the habits and lifestyle of rural people.
Such principles and measures would mitigate the negative effects of the present pattern of economic growth, prevent further depletion of natural resources base and at the same time contribute to the alleviation of rural poverty and would give a decent but sustainable development perspective for all. There should be wider support for changes in policy making to integrate environmental issues in national and international political processes.

10.4 SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS:

Few specific suggestions can be put forth as follows:

(1) The government should give up the "paternalistic approach" to rural development, which presumes that rural mass are incapable of helping themselves. It has augmented the dependence of rural people on the government to the extent that they believe that rural development is the responsibility of the government only. The government should move away from its traditional detailed control over local activities towards policy making and general supervision. In order to release the participative energy of the rural people the existing system should be reoriented to:

a) encourage local leadership and NGOs.
b) identify regional/local functions.
c) fix minimum standard of performance
d) establish modern institutions for solving local problems

(2) The micro level planning must essentially provide for expansion and diversification of the economy so as to reduce the problem of rural poverty and backwardness. The district plan must focus on providing gainful employment opportunities to all the three class of rural people: (a) small and marginal farmers, (b) landless agricultural labourers and (c) rural artisans.

(3) 'Cluster approach' in the selection of villages and 'antyodaya approach' in the selection of beneficiaries and the package approach in extending the assistance should be strictly adhered to in the implementation process.

(4) Government should redefine the roles of functionaries and agencies concerned with rural development, coordinate their activities and provide all infrastructural facilities and services.

(5) The government should help the rural poor to organise themselves around a viable economic activity and within an institutional framework that gives them access to modern technology, institutional credit, resources, markets, professional management and the political system.

(6) NGOs voluntary agencies and cooperatives, training
institutes and international agencies should play significant role in the process of rural development. The government alone can not tackle the problem of rural development effectively.

(7) All state level functionaries, administrative officers should have direct experience with and understanding of the complexity and severity of the problem of rural poverty. Therefore they should start their career by working in the villages for a minimum probation period.

(8) The target population should be made aware of about the programme benefits, provisions, training facilities. Training programme for the functionaries at all levels should be conducted for the smooth and effective implementation of a programme. Concurrent evaluation and monitoring should be done by independent agencies for the successful implementation.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF LAP

Decentralised planning is in substance micro-level planning where spatial or locational planning is a critical instrument or component involving decisions appertaining to the provision of economic and social overheads like health and medical facilities, educational facilities, sources of clean drinking water, rural roads, rural electrification, housing, veterinary institutions, minor
irrigation works, rural godowns, industrial sheds, village work sheds at appropriate locations for optimising the benefits accruing to the poor people, particularly to the weaker sections of the society. Micro-level planning is concerned with the questions of what, how, when, where relating to production, consumption, credit and marketing of a basic unit of production. These factors demand detailed spatial planning with reference to the target groups. The basic principles of Local Area Planning (LAP) should be:

1) It should be a continuous process of learning and of applying what has been learnt.

2) It should essentially be undertaken and locally controlled and must have broad local participation of common people.

3) It should be simple or sophisticated depending upon the quality, quantity and kind of planning machinery available.

4) It has to be integrated and harmonised with other types of planning, such as road plan, health plan, energy plan, forest plan, education plan, natural disaster plan etc. that may affect the local economy.

5) It should be coordinated by professional planners whose primary task ought to develop and help interpret quantitative and qualitative data and facilitate consensus building.
6) It should improve the growth dynamics of the local area.

7) It should aim at increasing employment, income and other economic targets in consonance with the targets of state and national economy.

8) It should be a public means for improving the use of public resources.

9) It should improve, and sustain the access to a wide range of production resources and strengthen the institutional capacity to support the viability of local enterprises.

10) It must ensure the technical feasibility, strategical soundness, economic viability, environmental sustainability and social acceptability of the development projects.

The solution to rural backwardness lies not in abolishing society's megastructures (Government bureaucracy, big corporations) but in substantially resurrecting, in loosening central control and strengthening the feedback systems that enhance the potential for self direction and direct participation at local levels consonant with the well-being of the larger society (Korten 1981:610). In developing countries the bureaucratic system should be redefined and reoriented. Our capacity to orient and
modify the bureaucracy in the present decade will greatly
determine our capacity to solve our problems of the decade
to come. An ideal organisation for rural development
should:

1) have high professional and technical competence,
2) ensure effective vertical integration (coordination
   of macro and micro planning).
3) ensure effective horizontal integration (inter
   sectoral plans and programmes).
4) have a mechanism for ensuring a dynamic relationship
   between planning and implementation.
5) have an effective delivery system to neutralise
   vested interests.
6) ensure meaningful peoples' participation
7) Provide for checks and balances so that target/
   weaker groups are not deprived of.

10.5 PARTICIPATIVE MODEL:

In developing countries like India, with a mixed
economy, it is difficult to adopt or expect any uniformity
in activities and behaviour of development organisation.
In Indian society, which is prismatic and intrinsically
paradoxical, the problem of transition and rural
transformation is not very easy. The more prismatic the
society, the more intermixed its administrative
structures are with its social, economic, political and cultural aspects, so it is always difficult to evolve a clear operational synthesis of the egalitarian and libertarian dimensions of a participant rural society.

In the field of rural development, community development, agriculture, health, family planning, other social welfare activities, it is very difficult to establish clear cut roles for social, economic, political and administrative structures. Various organisations engaged in rural development criss-cross each other causing operational confusions and wastages of resources. Under these circumstances, it is not easy to find out an appropriate organisational structures for rural development. Researcher and research institution continue to search for new paradigms of rural development based on structures which satisfy the criteria of efficiency, equity, welfare, sustainability and participation. In this perspective "the participative model" is the real paradigm.

Peoples participation is the sine quo non of decentralised process. Credibility of the decentralised planning is judged on the touch-stone of the extent to which it leads to project identification, project prioritisation and its implementation that meets local peoples needs and aspirations. Implementation of a sophisticated and comprehensive plan is often seriously
jeopardised by the fact that it is not implemented by the people with zeal, sincerity and a sense of belonging.

In order to execute the projects successfully the 'participation of people' is very important. Till the people are made to be actively involved in implementing the projects, they would remain paper schemes requiring continuous external support. Therefore to motivate people to participate and become involved in project implementation, high priority should be given in the time sequencing the projects that enjoying popular support and bring tangible benefits to the target group. It has to be always remembered that the common man plagued by the ravages of poverty, is skeptical about plans, programmes and projects, because these have not yielded any tangible benefit for him for the last 45 years. The weaker sections of society and the under privileged groups who are sought to be helped through development projects have remained in that position for so long and have so often been exploited by others that they find it hard to believe that a plan project is being implemented to improve their quality of life. It is therefore, necessary to generate confidence in them through action and results. Development is as much a matter of attitude as anything else. Therefore, strengthening favourable attitudes helps in implementation of more difficult and risky projects that either do not yield immediate results or tangible output.
The power structure in rural areas is heavily loaded against the poorer sections and ritually low castes. Apart from the traditional functionaries like the village headman and accountant, a host of government servants at the local level tend to be drawn mostly from the strata enjoying socio-economic advantages and ritual supremacy. Bureaucracy at the lower levels tends to be relatively more supercilious, unresponsive and corrupt, and for rural masses downright oppressive. The degree of universalism, impartially and rationality of western bureaucracy can be hardly expected in India. Therefore, in order to bridge both structural and empathic gap a structural innovation is very much significant and useful. In a prismatic society, loosening of the rigidity of the lower bureaucracy through democratic structural inputs is necessary both for social and economic development.

In India, despite the populist slogans of "empowering people", the inertia of the past still carries the day. People's participation has been distorted in both spirit and purpose. Participation of people's representatives in the name of peoples participation has created a "dole and subsidy culture" and perpetuated the existing brutal socio-economic structure. It has remained rhetorical, wishful and nauseatingly hypocritical. It has remained a fashionable 'cult-word' to cojale the innocent rural people, and to domesticate the poor
toiling class. Peoples participation in India has tended to mean only distribution of palliatives, for which rural people got imbibered in a culture where they are refused to think and act collectively on their own problem. 'Farmers participation' grassroot participation became a catchword for all evils. Elaborate guidelines for extension are given, new departments are added, innumerable grants and huge funds have been disbursed. But the phenomenon remained illusory and now the euphoria has waned. Similarly most of the development programmes like health for all, education for all, literacy campaign, social forestry, urja gram, adult education, etc. are the examples of 'populist model' or 'patriachal model'. All these schemes are carried out with the spirit of patronage of bureaucratic machinery of the centre or state. But genuine decentralisation should be based on "participative model", but not "populist model." It should formulate peoples programme with government's participation, but not governments programme with people's participation. 'Participative model essentially strengthens the feedback system and enhances the scope of self-direction and self-correction. This approach ensures - (a) satisfactory integration between the wants and desires of all the members, (b) full use of the potential capacities of its human resources and other resources, (c) group loyalty and better communication and coordination within the framework of overlapping group, (d) accountability and final
responsibility for the performance of development projects. Local participation is the key and foremost element in the decentralised planning and centre to effective rural development, while other five links provide the necessary enabling conditions (Fig. 10.1). But such participation should be systematic, spontaneous but not merely episodic.

Fig. 10.1: LINKS BETWEEN LOCAL PARTICIPATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

Participation can not be imposed from above, it should be spontaneous and voluntary. People's involvement can better be understood in four serieses of participation in: (i) decision-making
(ii) implementation of rural development programme,
(iii) monitoring and evaluation of projects
(iv) sharing the benefits of development.
People's participation can take place at any stage of the planning round and it may take several forms. Peoples can
be involved at the stage of decision-making, fixing targets, determining priorities, selecting projects and implementation (Fig.10.2).

Peoples participation at the implementation stage should be more closely analysed, because whether local peoples involvement is limited to only providing labour materials or money or whether they take part in managing local/village level projects has far reaching implications for the process and approach to local level planning.
Functional participation of rural people is fully compatible with the "holistic approach" to rural development, through which the basic parameters of rural development can be geared. Execution of any rural development project on a national scale can not be successful without the active participation of its clientele. The participative model ensures three types of balances (Fig. 10.3).

1. sectoral balance,
2. spatial balance
3. operational balance.

Fig. 10.3: PARTICIPATIVE MODEL
Sectoral balances can be obtained: (a) national and state priorities, (b) local relevance, (c) economic efficiency and (d) internal consistency. The operational balance can be achieved within the framework of (organisation, (b) delegation of functions, (c) management procedures and (d) personnel systems. Spatial balance can be secured by taking into account (a) location, (b) accessibility, (c) efficiency and (d) viability.

Thus participative model can appropriately illustrate the local needs, priorities and felt-needs of the innocent rural people. It would promote multiple economic linkages among different spatial framework for socio-economic programmes to find full fusion in terms of generating multiplier consequences on space.

The participative model involves each individual in the process of change and secures each persons commitment to the proposed change and therefore, minimise the potential for any conflict. This builds up local organisations and institutions, which motivate the individuals to cooperate not compete, to contribute not claim and to create not complain.

This participative model can easily unfold the reality with regard to the plea, "good planning but bad implementation," that is commonly rationalised by the politico-bureaucratic system. In fact plans and their implementation are interrelated functions. A bad
planning is always followed by a bad implementation. Because every project requires a unique scheme of implementation. The participative model can eclectically conceive of a scientific implementation system, which has the following components:

(1) Plan for physical work
(2) Plan for resources
(3) Plan for project organisation
(4) Identifying interlinkages
(5) Time sequencing.

Implementation of rural development projects are hindered by several factors. The 'participative model' facilitates the understanding about all:

(a) economic constraints
(b) political constraints
(c) technical constraints
(d) institutional constraints

In order to formulate realistic policies followed by effective implementation. Thus participative framework shall be an effective strategy for attacking on rural maladies. Under this system eradication of rural poverty and rural development programmes are no longer subsumed in the national macro-growth frame. It ensures conceptually and operationally the necessary balance and integration, by adopting multi-pronged and multi-dimensional approach to rural development.

Decentralised model can satisfy the criteria of efficiency, equity, environmental and employment concerns. Functional people's participation can formulate developmental
projects which are:
(a) Socially acceptable
(b) Organisationally feasible
(c) Environmentally sustainable
(d) Economically viable
(e) Technically efficient and
(f) Legally permissible.

Effective decentralised model with functional people's participation can generate a social scenergy and promote the virtuous circle of prosperity, by ensuring:

1) entitlement from below but not endowment from above

2) autonomy by right but not entrustment by discretion

3) majority rule and minority rights but not minority rule and majority despair.

4) Work monitoring and accountability but no accounting of funds.

If planning is, for the people, of the people, it has to be by the people. Therefore, if the functionaries concerned with rural development have to understand the reality, they should internalise the following edicts.

To to the village
Live with common villagemen
Serve, educate, enthuse them
Plan with them
Start with what they know, and
Build on what they have.