CHAPTER II

RURAL INDIA AND PLACE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Importance of Rural Economy in India's Progress:

India is a country of villages. About 82 per cent of India's 430 millions population lives in some 567,000 villages. "That India is mainly a land of villages is shown by the fact that 74 per cent of the people of India get their livelihood from agriculture as against 6 per cent in Great Britain, 19 per cent in U.S.A., 14 per cent in Germany and 25 per cent in France."

Development of rural area is very urgent in this context. Really the villages need our utmost attraction. Their call is irresistible. But how many of us heed and respond to this call? It is a pity that educated mass of the rural areas today develop an attitude of contempt for the village. They do not find congenial social life there nor means of recreation, nor prospects of employment. And so they turn their backs to the villages and swarm into the towns becoming thus uprooted, ill adjusted individuals whose lives have not zest or fervour nor any uplifting guiding ideal. In this context Gandhi Ji used to emphasise the importance of rural development by saying that Indian nation really resides in seven and half lakh of villages as the number was then in undivided India. No wonder that rural development was given top-most priority after the nation became independent.

From the early days of our civilization India was the land of villages. In fact she was known for her significant village culture. The place of rural India is so great that it would be no exaggeration to say that our rural community is practically the whole of India. "India meant the villages of India and that the development of India meant essentially the development of villages." 1

Agriculture is the mainstay of our rural economy. It embraces nearly 70 per cent of the country's population and is responsible for nearly 50 per cent of her national income and is the backbone of development and occupies a position of higher priority in the over-all scheme of national growth and development. The agricultural sector in India still constitutes the weakest link in the chain of her economic development. Average crop yield in India are the lowest in the world, and it is believed that productivity can not be improved unless the millions of peasants that make up the India's farming community are persuaded to adopt more scientific techniques of cultivation. So far as the India rural problem is concerned undoubtedly the crux is the agricultural problem. For, in a primarily agricultural country with tremendous rural bias the entire economy depends on the nature and extent of success in the field of agriculture. All this has been increasingly realised after bitter experience in recent years.

No advanced country in the world is so ruralised as our own. A few figures relating to agricultural dependence in some other countries would reveal it.

Table No. 2:1

Table showing the proportion of Labour force depending on agriculture in some countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion of labour force depending on agriculture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.S.R.</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The table reveals that dependence of active population on agriculture is highest in India at 71.9%. In no civilised country of the world is agriculture carrying so heavy a burden as in India. No doubt, vigorous and comprehensive endeavours are being made for rural revitalisation since the dawn of planning era in the country. Our Five Year Plans have been aiming at socio-economic transformation of the rural society through re-organisation of agrarian structure, building up an effective organisation and administration for agricultural and industrial development and building of democratic local institutions not only for shouldering the responsibility for planning and development at their respective levels consistent with the national aspirations and local needs but also for initiating long term and lasting changes for progress.

The Poverty of the Rural Masses:

There can be no two opinions on the fact that the
Indian peasants who form the bulk of nation are the victims of poverty. Their plight is a tale told in the letters of pity, of inadequacy and insufficiency. Naturally the rural dweller of India today presents a dismal picture. The village people are poor and ignorant. They are torn with fractions based on caste and religion. Exploitation continues unchecked. Many do not even have a square meal a day. It may also be noted that the predominance of agriculture in India is also a serious drawback. This is one of the fundamental causes of India poverty and her economic instability. This is due to the fact that our agriculture is far from prosperous and is run on very primitive lines. It is also over-crowded and productivity is extremely low. There is consequently appalling poverty among the rural population of India who lives on the margin of subsistence. "The representative Indian villager with his convex belly, sunken eyes and his countable ribs peeping anxiously through his chest himself relates the pitiable tale."¹ The annual income per capita in the rural area is, therefore, so meagre as not to allow to the peasant even barest minimum necessities of life.

No wonder therefore, if he suffers from mal-nutrition and underfeeding, lacks in disease resistance and is a perpetual host of ignorance and squalor. It is idle to talk of the standard of living with regard to the villager. Articles of luxury are fairy tales to him and of comforts he knows little. Necessities he does manage to have but at an appallingly low level. The reference, therefore, of a standard of life, having cultural attainments in the context is equally unrealistic. One may contend for intellectual

¹ Dr. R. Lal. "Community Development." BookLand Private Ltd. Calcutta. 1963 p. 29
honesty by using the term 'standard of existence.' But a more appropriate expression would be standard of survival, in case of rural masses. Such miserable is the lost of our teeming millions. It is a common knowledge that for the interest of both the foreign rulers as also the indigenous urban population, Indian villages and the rural people were being systematically exploited and were being denied of practically all the benefits of a civilized rule. Physically they were smitten with chronic and epidemic diseases like malaria, small-pox and cholera etc. Economically, village cottage industries were being deliberately destroyed, agriculture was left totally uncared for and above all, no fair price was assured to the people for their agricultural products. Educationally they were kept backward, illiteracy was universal. There was complete mental lethargy in the rural areas.

**Need of Rural Community's Economic Progress:**

It is a sign of relief that Government of India has realised the need of improving the lot of rural masses and of making an allround development of the rural sector. It is being increasingly recognised that the prosperity of the nation is conditioned very largely by the prosperity of peasant. Our organised battle against poverty has to be fought first on the rural front. The need of rural community's economic progress becomes all the more clear in the light that we have to create a sense of community spirit in the rural masses. The basic primary unit of the great non-violent society, Gandhi Ji taught, should be the community in which men could live visibly and concretely with and for another. It is for this reason that Gandhi Ji laid such great emphasis on the
Indian villages. They were to him the primary bricks out of which to build the non-violent society of the future.

There is no community spirit in the village now, every family of which is not only physically separate from every other but also thinks and works for its own interest. There is no conception of community of interest for which every member has to work together. The distinguishing feature of true community is that every one of its member thinks and willingly works for the interest of all and all together think and work for the interest of each. Unless such a spirit and way of life are created in the villages, they are bound to remain poor, backward and neglected because the basis of organised economic life without which no progress is possible will be absent.

**Need for Agricultural Break-through:**

The urgent need for increasing agricultural production needs no emphasis specially now when the present food shortage has rasied a national stir. Nearly a hundred years of industrialisation in India has not basically changed the country's economic structure which is even today predominantly agricultural and stagnant at a very low level of productivity. The rapidly increasing population, the urgent need to conserve foreign exchange now being spent on food imports are compelling us to act quickly in solving this problem. Unless agricultural production is increased quickly, our hopes of developing the economy and with it the rural sector will be mere dream.

That this is the situation even after our planned efforts and heavy investment during the last 15 years, should be a
matter of serious concern to us all. It is true that in our efforts of increasing agricultural production we are faced with many problems both the age old problems and the modern problems arising out of our planned efforts to step up agricultural production.

Most of these problems are being tackled although with varying degrees of success and if our legislative measures for increasing allocations to the agricultural sector in our successive Five Year Plans and our rapidly expanding organisation for agricultural production are of any indication at all, our agricultural production should be registering a continuous and unbroken rapid rise. But it is not, hence we need to turn to others.

Agriculture, which is the pivot of our country's economy contributes more than 50 per cent of our national income. Besides producing food articles, it supplies raw materials for industrial production and income from agriculture provides purchasing power for the output of other sectors. Our population has been increasing with astonishing rapidity at the rate of 2½ annually resulting in additional 10 millions mouths to be fed every year. This population explosion has taken such a serious turn that it is neutralising all our efforts at augmenting country's food production. The hard reality of situation is that the problem of meeting the growing food requirements of the increasing population has become the focal point of Indian Planning. To add to our food difficulty, food production which remained satisfactory for some time since the advent of planning in the country has shown signs of stagnation for the last few years, despite huge governmental expenditure on agricultural production. The following table shows the production and import of
foodgrains in India since the year 1951.

Table No. 2:2

Table showing the production and imports of food grains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Production of food grains (million tons)</th>
<th>Import of food grains (million tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>54.91</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>66.35</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>69.35</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>64.30</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>77.32</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>75.91</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>80.87</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>79.82</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>78.45</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>79.43</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:— Dr. R. S. Kapuria, "Agricultural Development in India" Kurukshetra May 1966 p. 9

No real breakthrough in the economic development of a country is possible without a sound agricultural base. "In India during the period 1949-50 to 1964-65 agricultural production has shown an average linear rate of growth of 3.92 per cent per annum with the average for the period 1949-50 to 1951-52 as the base."1

For a dependable agricultural base for economic development, an average linear rate of growth of at least 5 to 6 percent per annum seems to be essential. Various factors have

contributed to the present state of agriculture in the country. The rapid growth of population has exerted an enormous pressure on land leading to the dwarfing of holding. The land-man ratio is less than one acre per person when all agricultural land is spread over the total population and about 1.5 acres when it is spread over the cultivating population. The size distribution of holdings is also greatly uneven. These holdings in many parts of the country are fragmented into several pieces. The tiny fragmented holdings and an unfavourable tenurial system has offered the small cultivator neither the means nor the incentive to save and invest in land. Hardly 20 per cent of the cropped area in the country has irrigation facilities while the rest 80 per cent depends on the vagaries of monsoon. The agricultural implements used by the farmers are outmoded and of low efficiency.

Indian agriculture is thus still on the traditional plane. The man who farms as his forefathers did can not produce much food, no matter how rich the land or how hard he works. The farmer who has access to and knows how to use what science knows about soils, plants, animals and the machines, can produce an abundance of food though the land be poor. Nor needs he work so hard and long. The knowledge that makes this transformation possible is a form of capital whenever it is an integral part of their material inputs farmers use and when ever it is a part of their skills and what they know. The effect of traditionalism in agriculture is that India is now faced with a critical food situation. For a predominantly agricultural country like India, a permanent solution needs to be urgently evolved and implemented on an emergency basis. The main problem, therefore, is
to release Indian agriculture from its traditional grooves and to modernise it on the basis of science and technology.

Agriculture has also great social and political significance for the country. Agriculturists are a sturdy, self-reliant class of people who are the backbone of the state. They are the best soldiers with their fixed out look and attitude, and they exercise a great stabilising influence in the social and political sphere. But whilst the predominantly agricultural character of Indian economic organisation is a matter of common observation, there has not been an equally common recognition of the vastness and variety of our agricultural production and our agricultural resources.

It is clear that adoption of improved agricultural practices on a mass scale wherever possible is very necessary and is the need of the hour. But the problem is not so simple as there are unsurmountable difficulties in achieving it. Firstly the village farmers today is by and large following the traditional farming methods that have been handed down from past generation. Secondly these methods are almost wholly inadequate producing some of the lowest yields in the world. Thirdly if India's food production is to be stepped up, the village farmer must leave off these old unproductive methods and accept improved farm practices. The only way out is to prepare and implement an integrated programme for agriculture for the country as a whole on a planned basis.

Inputs and Institutional Factors in Agriculture:

Inputs and institutional factors both are very important for the planned development of agriculture in India. Inputs include supply of seeds, fertiliser, irrigation facilities
pesticides and implements in agriculture. But it must be realised well that agricultural production is not a function merely of the above inputs though these are no doubt, important. From the long run point of view, an improvement in the socio-economic basis of agriculture, involving changes in the structure of the agrarian economy is of more vital significance. The institutional factors which include reform of land system, tenancy reform, consolidation of holdings and co-operative farming and credit facilities to the farmers and rural reconstruction, to a great extent affect the structure of agriculture. Agriculture efficiency and production depend largely upon the inputs and investment in agriculture and the methods of production used. Progressive agriculture will demand among other things (i.e. favourable institutional and organisational structure) improvements in inputs and methods, irrigation, better seeds, better manures and fertilisers, land reclamation and soil conservation, plant protection, use of mechanisation etc. These are various aspects of agricultural inputs.

"The secret of rapid agricultural progress in the under developed countries is to be found much more in agricultural extension in fertilisers, in new seeds, in pesticides and in water supplies than in altering the size of the farm in introducing machinery or in getting rid of middlemen in the marketing process."1

"Sufficient quantities of physical inputs can make significant contribution to agriculture-production. It is said that fertiliser alone has been able to raise the yield by 40%. Japan made considerable progress mainly on the basis of increased

1. Arther Lewis, "The Theory of Economic Growth"
use of fertilisers. In India unfortunately we have not been able to help the farmer with the requisite quantities of the inputs. The short-falls in the supply of fertilisers, pesticides, irrigation plant protection have seriously handicapped agricultural production in the past.  

Seeds:—  

Analysing the inputs in agriculture, we first take the supply of seeds. Lack of adequate supply of seeds of good quality has been a factor responsible for inferiority of our yields. It often happens that poor cultivator has to borrow seeds from the village money lender. Generally its quality is poor and sometimes it causes delay in sowing. These defects cause deterioration in both the quality and quantity of seeds. There is great need of the use of improved variety of seed by the farmers, which is not being done at present among them. There must be a good system of seed distribution and the supply of seeds must be in time and adequate. At present the supply of improved seed is managed by Government through co-operative societies or Block Offices and it has to a great extent increased per acre yield in agriculture and the farmers have also recognised the importance of improved variety of seeds. The Government has now set up the National Seeds Corporation to organise on the country-wide scale the production and distribution of high yielding and disease resistant varieties of seeds.

Fertiliser:—  

Next comes the use of manure and chemical fertiliser.
in agriculture. India has varied climate and soil and can produce any crop. However, because of population pressure and continuous cultivation, the fertility of land is fast declining. In order to help land to recover fertility two methods are used—the system of fallowing and use of manures. The creation of falls results in waste of land. The better method is using manure, both natural and artificial manure. Indian soils have deteriorated in fertility year after year without proper manuring. The best indication that a soil is exhausted of its fertility can be obtained from the poor growth and less out-turn. Farmers in India do not apply adequate manure to their fields. Much of the farm yard manure available is burnt as fuel. It is necessary that the farmers must make the maximum use of cowdung as manure and they must prepare compost. In case of chemical fertiliser, though it has come into use but to a very limited extent due to higher prices, inadequacy of water supply and ignorance of the cultivators. Green manuring is also scarcely practised by our cultivators. After the inception of community development programme in India the use of chemical fertiliser is being constantly increased and the farmers have realised the value of it.

**Irrigation Facilities**

Water is indispensable to cultivation and in a country like India where dry farming is still carried on in the greater part of the country, an adequate supply of water acquires a greater importance than elsewhere. Without an adequate and regular supply of water, agriculture must remain precarious. Where
rainfall is not seasonal and adequate artificial irrigation is indispensable for agricultural operations. In India irrigation is not practised to an appreciable extent. The percentage of irrigated area to net sown area is nearly 16%. There are three main types of irrigation works in India i.e. wells, tanks, and canals. These sources irrigated the land 17.4 million acres, 11.5 million acres and 25.4 million acres respectively. By other sources 6 million acres land is irrigated. From these figures it is clear that in spite of the progress of canal irrigation, tanks and wells still irrigate a comparatively larger area. India is fortunate in her water sources but they remain largely unutilised. Thus it is imperative that we have to make maximum use of irrigation schemes in order to raise agricultural product. It is appreciated that Government is paying more attention on the small irrigation schemes through community development programme in the rural areas. The supply of water perennially to thirsty lands will provide a long range solution to the food problem in view point of raising cash crops.

**Pesticides:**

Insects, pests and plant diseases lead to a serious loss to agricultural production. They are caused by fungi-pests which eat up all the food that draws for itself from earth and thus prevent its healthy growth. In India crops are damaged heavily by insects, rodents and other animal pests and on account of diseases, weeds etc. The farmers suffer heavily because of the deterioration of food grains and other agricultural commodities during storage through insects, mice etc. "The precise damage to crops from insects
rodents and other animal pests and on account of diseases, weeds and parasitic flowering plants, is difficult to assess, but there can be no doubt of its serious dimensions. Similarly, considerable losses are caused by the deterioration of food grains and other agricultural commodities during storage through insects, rats, mice etc. ¹ In general however, plant protection measures have lagged very much behind than other aspects of agricultural programmes. Though at present chemical insecticides and pesticides are practised to prevent the plant disease, it has not become very popular with the farmers. For the healthy growth of crop, the use of pesticides must be practised to a large extent as much of the damage can be prevented if plant protection measures are adopted on an adequate scale as an integral part of the agricultural programme.

Methods of Cultivation:

The methods of cultivation in India are today what they were centuries ago. The methods of cultivation are primitive and insufficient because of faulty organisation, lack of capital and ignorance of the peasants. No doubt there is a great scope for their improvement in the light of modern knowledge of soil conditions. Better agricultural equipment and management and more intensive farming will secure substantial economies in the cost of production, improve quality and quantity of produce and raise farm income to an extent. One of the main causes of the low yield in India has been the use of old implements in agriculture. These methods are almost wholly inadequate, producing some of the lowest yield in the world. If India's food production is to be stepped up ¹ Third Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Govt. Of India. p. 313
the village farmer must leave off these old unproductive methods and accept improved farm practices. In India, the improved farm practices and implements are being popularised through community development programme. But as the Third Five Year Plan states specific action in this direction has been slow and insufficient and a serious gap in the agricultural programmes undertaken during First and Second Five Year Plans has been in the field of improved agricultural implements.

Live-stock:

Next to land, live-stock is the most important means of production for the farmers. The good quality of live-stock is also essential to raise the productivity in agriculture in rural India. This becomes more important keeping in view the fact that mechanised farming is not possible in early stage in India. But in view of the great importance of cattle to Indian agriculture their present position is deplorable. Malnutrition is perhaps the greatest single factor responsible for this position. The farmers not had/realised animal husbandry as an integral part of agriculture. But now it has got its own importance and much attention is being paid for the improvement of the breed of cattle as well as for fodder development.

Institutional Factors:

Not much can be done to increase agricultural productivity without vast institutional changes in the country-side. There are many factors to be considered. Simultaneously with the development in inputs, equally urgent is the need of rethinking of
some of the basic issues of overcoming the agricultural lag and of bringing about greater dynamism and efficiency in the agricultural economy. It is in transforming traditional agriculture that we confront the formidable issues of transforming a traditional society. The experience of developing society suggests that the traditional social structure presents more serious problems in the renovation of agriculture than the creation of an industrial structure. The intrusion of non-economic institutes, values, norms etc. in the economic sphere is much deeper in the case of agriculture than that of industry.

The fertility of land depends on many factors like the richness of the soil, the extent of which it is manured, the techniques of cultivation etc. But perhaps the most important factor is the institution frame-work within which the cultivation is carried on and the pattern in which the produce of the earth is distributed among the various social groups. Defects in institutional frame-work breed economic evil and contain germs of social disintegration. Even from the purely economic point of view these defects have to be corrected because they lower production and hinder the growth of agricultural economy. In a society which has accepted the socialist pattern, the demand of social justice further supports the economic argument for correcting these maladjustments.

Agriculture in India is largely carried on the basis of subsistence farming rather than as a business preposition with a little surplus for the market. The tyot produces food crops primarily for his own and his family's consumption. This factor has been greatly responsible for the low yield in agriculture. Our farmers
have to realise that they have also to produce for those who are engaged in industries other than agriculture. This will increase the total yield to feed the others not engaged in agriculture but who turn supplies of other consumption and production goods to the farmers. This fact is being realised in India.

It has also been an institutional factor in agriculture that farmers produced only food crops mainly for their consumption. Their attention was least directed towards producing cash crops, which include cotton, sugarcane, jute and oilseeds etc. Today cash crops are great source of foreign exchange in India. Many governmental measures have been taken to increase the proportion of cash crop during the last few years and farmers are taking to the production of these crops.

Agriculture in India is in the hands of millions who are not educated, hence they find themselves unable to grasp a modicum of new techniques in agriculture. Education can do much in this direction. This brings us to the human factor. Over and above all peasant farming in India depends for its successful working not only on great perseverance but also on unwearied exercise of prudence, forethought and watchfulness and the utilisation of the scientific knowledge of the means of production. The value of the human factor is not to be overlooked in taking stock of the agricultural situation for communities and nations have remained poor in the midst of rich surroundings or fallen on decay or poverty in spite of the fertility of their soil and the abundance of their natural resources and merely because the human factor was of poor quality or was allowed to deteriorate or run to waste. But it
must also be borne in mind that it is not so much the cultivator's conservatism and illiteracy which have stood in the way of progress of Indian agriculture as the absence of suitable men to teach him and the absence of suitable demonstrations.

There are also some other important institutional factors in agriculture which have affected yield in agriculture. Such factors are reform of the land system, tenancy reform, consolidation of holdings and co-operative farming and rural reconstruction.

The zamindari system was the product of British rule. The revenue farmers whose duty was merely to collect land revenue were given proprietary rights. This was partly due to the administrative ignorance and Indian conditions and partly it was introduced for convenience of collecting revenue or to create interests whose fortunes were bound up with the British rule. The abolition of zamindari has been a major plank in the policy of the Government. There is general agreement in the country that the zamindari system has outlived its utility and its abolition constitutes the first step in a comprehensive policy of land reform. The zamindari system destroyed the very basis of agricultural prosperity. The cultivator had no incentive for introducing improvements in land. Agricultural efficiency suffered and productivity of land went down. No body benefitted from this institution except the zamindar which he did both at the expense of the state and the tiller of the soil. This system was too obsolete to fit into any government organisation. However, it must be realised that the abolition of zamindari system does not mean the attainment of the ultimate goal of agricultural
progress and prosperity. In the words of late Pt. Nehru it is only the removal of an obstruction to growth. Now that the hinderance has been removed the land should be so organised as to yield maximum production as also to secure social justice.

So far as tenants are concerned, the abolition of zamindari is a negative act. The rise of the tenancy problem in India is the result of the working of economic forces for the last several generations. In the time of East India Company, the tax collectors became landlords with legal rights. Absenteeism now became a common feature and a host of rent receivers grew between the zamindars and the actual cultivators. Gradually with the increase of population and the saleability of land, transfer of land to non-agriculturist mahajans became frequent. There was a rapid increase in the class of tenants and agricultural labourers. Rent receivers too increased and sub-infeudation developed apace. The tenant is victim of utter exploitation. The land system resulted in reducing him to a state of object misery. It also resulted in an unjust distribution of income from agriculture between the landlord and the tenant. Such social injustice is bound to breed mass discontent and lead to social and political revolution. Moreover, it drags down the efficiency of agriculture. Tenancy was the result of deep rooted causes, the most important of which was the worsening of economic position of the agriculturists. It is of the greatest importance everywhere that farmers should hold their lands on terms which give them security and incentive. Legislation was, therefore, needed all over the country. It came almost in every state in one form or the other and generally speaking it has succeeded in its main
objective. The principle of 'land to tiller' has now been accepted and measures have been taken to implement it. But still the system prevails in rural areas which affect the agriculture unfavourably. There is an urgent need to take strict measure in this direction. It will improve the lot of tillers on the one hand and will increase the yield in agriculture, giving freedom, incentive and encouragement to the farmers on the other hand.

For increasing the efficiency of agriculture, an increase in the size of farms is necessary. This involves three steps: first prevention of further subdivision, second consolidation of fragments of existing holdings and third along with the second or otherwise, co-operative farming. While the first two have for several years past been recognised as essential elements of policy in this sphere, co-operative farming in India is still in an experimental stage.

The average holding in India is not only small in size but is split up into pieces scattered all over the village area. Thus holdings in India are far from economic. Sub-division and fragmentation of holdings have been going on in India for centuries. The All India Agricultural Labour Enquiry (1950) has shown that the largest percentage of holdings relates to those which are less than 2 acres each. The rapid increase in population accompanied by corresponding development of industries, the break up of the joint families and these factors aided by the laws of inheritance have resulted in the present alarming extent of sub-division and fragmentation.

Small holdings, arising out of continued sub-division
constitute the most formidable difficulty in the way of mechanising Indian agriculture. Commercial crop is also not practicable on small uneconomic holdings. Fragmentation results in greater expenditure of capital and labour. Moreover, fragmentation causes great waste of time, labour and cattle power in going from village site to the fields and from one fragment of holding to another. Irrigation also becomes impossible due to fragmentation.

In order to remove the drawbacks of sub-division and fragmentation certain measures have been adopted by the Government such as ceiling, consolidation of holdings and cooperative farming. It has recently become an important issue of the day in the sphere of land policy in India that there should be an upper limit on individual land holdings. A land ceiling has two aspects namely ceiling on future acquisition and second ceiling on existing holdings. Different type of legislations have been passed in the States regarding imposing ceiling on the above holdings. The main purpose of land ceiling is to bring about a wider and equal ownership and use of land than what exists at present. If carried efficiently, this is a very bold step in the field of land reform.

By the process of consolidation all the land of one holder may be formed into one plot only or a few plots. This measure gives relief from the evils that arise from fragmentation of the land. It saves time and labour and facilitates improvement of land through irrigation and dry farming practices and results in reduction in the number of plots.

Co-operative farming of some kind is the most
important requisite of agricultural efficiency in India. The
United Nations Report on Rural Progress through co-operatives has
emphasized that co-operative farming ideally fits into the system
of re-oriented land tenures in under-developed countries determined
to achieve economic development through democratic means.
Co-operative is the best and most suitable to all the methods of
enlarging the unit of cultivation. It has been realised that
neither consolidation of holdings nor redistribution of land made
available by imposition of ceilings offers to increase the size
of holding. Hence co-operative farming is the only solution.

Some of the institutions of the villages have also
affected the agriculture unfavourably. The removal of the traditions
of the villages was recognised essential for progress hence rural
reconstruction measures were adopted with the purpose. These rural
reconstruction measures are described in details in the following
pages.

A Brief Survey of Isolated and Unrelated Stages of Rural Development
Prior to Community Development Programme in India:-

As we have seen in the last pages the exploiting
policies of the British rule made the village people backward,
iliterate, poor and mentally lethargic, deprived of all the
benefits. No attention was paid to the villagers and agriculture
was totally left uncared for. The attention of the British rulers
was centered in the cities to fulfill their goal of maintaining law
and order. This resulted in a neglect of agriculture and famines
became very common.

The British Government then realised they could not
rule over the hungry and half naked people for a long time. A famine Commission was therefore, appointed in 1880 to recommend measures to be taken to avoid famines in future. The Commission strongly urged the Government to pay increased attention to villages to provide them with all the facilities. Thus, for the first time, the Government started the development work in villages in addition to collection of revenue and taxes. In addition to this there were many attempts which were made for the rural development which we shall study in the following pages. It is a fact that there was nothing which went by the name of community development while we were under foreign rule. No doubt, several programmes were in operation which, in fact, formed different aspects of community development. There were for instance, schemes of rural development, rural uplift, adult education and so forth. These schemes used to be conceived by authorities and executed by the various organs of Government for the supposed good of the people who participated in them but little spiritually or physically. Not uncommon were these organs of government themselves unaware of each other activities even in the same area. Naturally there were no co-operative and co-ordinated efforts towards development and there were no solid results. To the villager, the scheme appeared nothing more than fanciful ceremonies which had to be performed now and then. Although attempts were started, nothing substantial came out of these efforts.

A brief survey of such efforts is as follows.

Gurgaon Experiment:

In 1920, Mr. F.L. Brayne who was then deputy Commissioner in Gurgaon district of Punjab, for the first time
started experiment in rural work and appointed the paid village workers to work for developing the villages. The village guide was required to have a hand book for every village and have the details of each village and family. The main emphasis was on manure pits, improved implements, rural sanitation and women education. Mr. Brayne was of the opinion that without giving equal rights to the women the programme can not be successful hence great importance was attached to women education including training in domestic works. There was too much of crude propaganda and too little of real teaching. The details of the programmes had not been carefully worked out. Little attempt was made to study the peculiar condition of the villages and to adopt the programme to its need. Moreover, the unfitness of the village guide for the task allotted to them was also responsible for the failure of the programme. No doubt, some useful developments were done in the villages but it came to a stop as soon as Mr. Brayne was transferred from Gurgaon district. Since the initiative came from Government, the people's active participation was not secured. However, this experiment aroused interest in many workers and agencies for organising development work in the villages.

Shriniketan Experiment:

In 1922, village development work was started by late Rabindranath Tagore in his rural institute at Shantiniketan. For the poet though poverty was indeed an important problem in the village but he was touched by the sordidness and ugliness of village life and included the adding of joy to the life of the villagers in rural reconstruction. With such a vision he established Shri Niketan, the institute of Rural Reconstruction, along with Vishwa
Bharati at Bolpur. The activities of the institute broadly included agriculture, industries, village welfare, co-operation, scout organisation and education. The aims of the institute were to win the affection of villagers and cultivators and to assist them in solving their pressing problems, to take the problems of village and the field to the class room for study and to carry the knowledge and experience gained thus to the villagers, to develop their resources and credit, to teach them better methods of growing crops and keeping live-stock and to encourage them to learn and practise arts and crafts. This programme of rural development was helped by Alfred who was an expert in rural welfare work. Under this work the basic resources were to be developed to assist agriculture and cottage industry. The programmes of adult education and rural sanitation were also developed. The main task was to develop agriculture and farmers by teaching them new techniques. The emphasis was also given on co-operation. In the beginning, the rural workers found some difficulties in the rural development work but they could succeed to some extent. Thus the basic idea of rural uplift of Gurudeo Tagore was fulfilled to some extent.

Sewagram Work:-

Mahatma Gandhi also started rural development work by 1922 and established Sewagram to test and demonstrate the practicability of his ideology. It was Mahatama Gandhi who for the first time in our country accepted the full validity of rural community and placed that validity at the very centre of his constructive programme. Gandhi Ji saw clearly more than any Indian leader before him that if Swaraj or self-government was to mean any
thing for the dumb millions of this country, the national movement must touch all aspects of the villager’s life. He also saw that attempts at economic amelioration could not wait until after swaraj was won, and so, as an immediate step, he developed his scheme for the revival of Charkha and the encouragement of Swadeshi. In 1921 the Indian National Congress gave the charkha a central place in its programme of economic uplift and in 1923 was formed the All Indian Spinner’s Association. In 1934 All India Village Industries Association was formed for the revival and encouragement of various dead and dying industries of the country besides the central industry of hand spinning and promoting the reconstruction of village life.

Gandhi Ji also started the famous Wardha Scheme of education which emphasized the value of all teaching with a basic crafts as the centre. His village reconstruction programme was necessarily linked with social reform. Undoubtedly he gave the country a new vision regarding the approach to the problem of rural reconstruction and contributed in a truly unique manner to this cause by setting into operation new forces and building up new institutions. It was his unassailable thesis as also the inescapable fact of India that the rural community must remain at the centre of the national planning and reconstruction. The Community Development programme undoubtedly represent the continuity of the forces released by Gandhi Ji in and through the constructive programme.

Marthandam Project:

Another rural development organisation of
significance was started by Dr. Spencer Hatch together with his wife Emily Hatch in 1921 at Marthandam in south India. It was pioneering work in rural development. Marthadam travelled a long way since those early days when Dr. Hatch and his wife came there to help build a new life for the people and to blaze the trail towards progress and prosperity. Looking at it today one can hardly visualize the remarkable transformation that has been brought about by the toil of its people and inspiring leadership of this American couple. In Marthandam project the whole programme was comprehensive based on all the aspects of the village life including agriculture, industry, education and public health and co-operation. The programme was based on the self help mostly.

In the broad perspective of history, Dr. Spencer and his wife are probably an obscure man and woman, but their humanity, their understanding of human values and their dedication to service will always be a beacon light for all to see and receive inspiration from a great example. Since the days of Marthandam, a great deal has been achieved in almost all parts of the country but nothing can eclipse the glory of Marthandam and greatness of people like Emily Hatch and her husband.

The Etawa Pilot Project:

The most important development in Uttau Pradesh is the inauguration of the Pilot Scheme Project at Etawah covering 97 villages with a population of 79,000. This project was started in 1948 for the development of rural areas with the assistance of Mr. Albert Myer from U.S.A. The objects were to measure the agricultural development and social improvement. It included the
improvement of agriculture, ravine building, soil conservation, animal husbandry, public health, water supply and education. The central idea of the scheme is to bring to the villager the benefit of the various development departments. The main object is to increase agricultural production and improve the standard of the rural masses by creating the spirit of self help among them.

Firka Development Scheme:-

The Madras Government started the rural intensive reconstruction programme known as 'Firka Development', in the year 1946. In this scheme it was sought to achieve alround development in the rural life in order to make the State a modern welfare State. The main objective of the Firka Development scheme in Madras was to organise their economic and social life on co-operative lines with a view to make them self sufficient and self reliant. This scheme was initially introduced in 34 selected Firkas having 2859 villages. This scheme is based on Gandhian Plan of rural reconstruction.

The scheme included the items of improvements of agriculture and village industries, provision of sanitation, health and housing services, the imparting of basic and adult education among the villagers and the development of Panchayats, multi-purpose societies and Gram Sewa Sangh. This Firka development scheme of rural reconstruction in Madras state shows that Madras state took the leading initiative to bring rural development on Government level. With the inauguration of the community development programme in 1952, this Firka development scheme was merged in it.

Sarvodaya Scheme:-

This scheme based on the principle of Gandhian
philosophy was started in 1943-49 in Bombay State. The aim of the scheme was all-round development of the rural areas as the word Sarvodaya itself means. The scheme is based on the principle of initiating self-help and co-operation among the rural people. The scheme is under the guidance of Bhooman leader Shri Vinoba Ji, assisted by Shri Jayprakash Narayan and other leaders of Gandhian philosophy. The underlying idea of this scheme is to inculcate in the villagers the spirit of self-help and mutual help. The chief activities included under this scheme cover all aspects of rural life including agriculture, cottage industries etc.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture:

A Royal commission was appointed in 1926 to examine and report on the present conditions of agricultural and rural economy in India and to make recommendations for the improvement of agriculture and the promotion of welfare and prosperity of the rural population. The commission issued a comprehensive report in 1928 which is a landmark in the evolution of agricultural policy in India. The commission made such thorough and thought-provoking recommendations to step up agricultural production that they became the most important factor guiding our rural development policy even till the inauguration of community development programme in India. According to Commission of all the factors expected to promote rural welfare and prosperity, by far the most important is the changed mental outlook of the peasant i.e. the will and desire for a better standard of life. The central problem is more psychological than technical, legal or administrative. Thus the commission provided the greatest analytical tool and basis for our
community development programme. In order to render the business of farming more profitable to the cultivator, the commission emphasized the necessity of widening the outlook of the peasant and stressed the importance of Government initiative in promoting agricultural progress. One of their basic suggestions was that "rural problem should be tackled as a whole in all its various aspects simultaneously. A very important recommendation of the Royal Commission was the creation of Imperial (now Indian) council of Agricultural Research. However, several important topics were excluded from the scope of commission's enquiry such as land revenue, land reforms and inter-departmental co-ordination although these were among the basic problems of Indian agriculture.

Grow More Food Campaign:

During the second world war, due to the acute food shortage, a Grow More Food (G.M.F.) campaign was launched in 1943 and intensive efforts were organised with government aids to step up production of food grains. Financial assistance and subsidy was provided to farmers for improved seeds, fertilisers, manures, irrigation and land improvement works. This campaign brought additional 3 million acres of land in 1943. The campaign did not achieve desired success due to the lack of improved water supply and increased use of manures and fertilisers.

Though G.M.F. campaign was originally started by the Government it was reorganised in 1947 fixing definite targets of production in different provinces and States. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then Food Minister, Government of India, put forward a Five Year Plan in 1947 with the object of raising the food
Impact of Community Development Programme

on the Rural Economy of

NORTHERN MAHAKOSHAL (M. P.)

production in the country by 1952 by 15 per cent.

The G.M.F. had a four fold programme as follows:-

(i) To extendirrigation, subsidies and tacaui loans were advanced for repair of old wells and digging of the new wells and tanks.

(ii) Improved seeds and manures were supplied at a concessional rate.

(iii) Subsidies were given to encourage compost making.

(iv) Land revenue concessions and rent free leases were made for the reclamation.

The main principle governing the campaign was the encouragement of schemes of a permanent nature which could be realised quickly i.e. construction of wells and tanks and land improvements etc.

On the whole G.M.F. campaign had disappointed popular expectation and created even resentment. The campaign had been purely a paper plan. Big production targets were fixed, many plans and schemes were floated but unfortunately no definite results had been reached. The propaganda remained confined to the urban areas and the literates and the cultivating masses did not enjoy the full benefits of production schemes. Further more, the campaign was not designed to meet the difficulties of the farmer or to secure the enthusiasm or rouse the imagination of farmer and the lack of supervision and check over the assistance gave lead to serious leakages.

The G.M.F. Enquiry Committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Shri V.T. Krishnamachary with 11 members by the Government of India, Ministry of Food and Agriculture on 8th Feb. 1952, to examine the different categories of G.M.F. and to assess
their relative efficiency for increasing food production and to suggest measures for ensuring the optimum utilisation of the available production requisites. The committee produced its report in July 1952.

Thus we see that the earlier efforts of rural reconstruction could not be fully successful though they prepared a base for an integrated approach to solve the rural problems. In this respect their significance can not be denied.

The main cause of the failure of these efforts was that the impulse for rural development mostly came from above. It was superimposed and therefore, did not arouse any enthusiasm among the villagers. Secondly, the activities under rural reconstruction had not been properly planned and co-ordinated. No detailed survey and investigations were made before implementing the schemes. Thirdly, the various departments concerned with the rural uplift programmes tried to tackle each problem in isolation. This could not succeed since the entire rural life is integrated. What is needed is a co-ordinated effort and an integrated programme. Lack of educational approach was also a handicap in the way of success. Finally the rural reconstructions movement had left some of the basic problems untouched such as the problem of land tenures, tenancy and land reclamation etc.

An Integrated Approach Called for:

The failure of the rural reconstruction schemes called for an integrated approach to solve the rural problems. It was realised that in order to establish and stabilise permanent results it was of greatest importance that improvement should come from
within and that co-operation and will of villagers should be
harnessed by creating in them a desire to improve their own lot
and they should be taught that they themselves are ultimately re-
 sponsible to improve their own conditions and make their own lives
better, fuller and richer by means of self and mutual help. It was
also realised that if adequate and lasting results were to be achie-
ved, the village problem which was the problem of poverty, ignorance
illiteracy, dirt, disease and general apathy must be tackled
simultaneously as one problem. After independence, to eradicate the
deep-rooted imprints of our rural poverty and to substitute there
instead a progressive process of rural prosperity India has relied
on the approach of Community Development Programme. It is a method
which seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social
and economic life of Indian villages. But it must be borne in the
mind that in devising this method of community development the
nation has drawn heavily on experiences in the past of her attempts
at rural upliftment. The programme was started in India on 2nd
October, 1962 the sacred birth day of Mahatma Gandhi for solving the
social and economic problems of rural people.

The concept of community development as a part of
planned development is an improvement on the earlier efforts relat-
ing to rural improvement. The project opened a new chapter in the
life of our rural people. The precise approach of the programme
or its basic concept is that it seeks the many sided development of
rural life as distinguished from the earlier efforts in which the
various aspects of village life were sought to be improved piecemeal
and in isolation from each other. Since all facets of rural life are
closely inter-related, the only correct and effective method would be to attack on the problems simultaneously and in proper co-ordination with other.

The credit of starting community development projects mostly is due to the strong recommendations of G.M.F. Enquiry in July 1962. The Committee recommended the G.M.F. campaign should be enlarged so as to cover a wider plan for the development of village life in all its aspects. The administrative machinery of the Government should be reorganised and equipped for the efficient discharge of the duties imposed on it. The best non-official leadership available should be mobilised for guiding 60 million rural families in their efforts to improve their own conditions. The Committee also recommended that an Extension Service should be set up for the rural work which would reach every farmer and assist in the co-ordinated development of all aspects of rural life. The Block set up of the present community development programme was also recommended by the G.M.F. Enquiry committee. The campaign has its contribution to the conceptual evolution of community development programme for it most glaringly demonstrated that all the aspects of rural life are inter-related and no single aspect of rural economy in isolation can achieve success what ever the amount of attention, energy may be devoted to it. Indeed it were the recommendations of G.M.F. Enquiry committee which hastened the launching of world biggest and most comprehensive movement for uplifting rural population in the shape of our community development and M.E.S. The report of G.M.F. enquiry committee included the recommendation on Extension Organisation, non-official help, financial assistance to set up Extension Service and other miscellaneous items.