Chapter-II

Development – Its Changing Nature

Development in its varied dimensions is a subject of intense and absorbing interest for social scientists in all the countries, developing and developed. Development has only been, one of the most compelling concepts, provoking painful questions about values, techniques and choices. The formulation and implementation of national policies revolves round this central aspect of development of any country. In our country, the Five Year Plans have been the principal means of coordinating national policies in the service of development. But, despite all efforts, development has proved to be a rather elusive goal for most nations of the developing world. Despite a voluminous literature on development, there is much disagreement and a great deal of ambiguity about its meaning. The term sometimes is used as a concept for change, urbanization, westernization or growth. Apart from contrasting perceptions, there have been many development fashions over the years. As empirical evidence has developed old approaches have been revised and new approaches emerged in an attempt to explain, interpret and advise on what is to be done. From each of the competing perspectives on development, a sharpened, broadened, holistic concept has emerged.\textsuperscript{1} The major strategies of development like the modernization paradigm, developmentalism, dependency theory, articulation of modes of production, new political economy approach or political autonomy approach, Another Development, basic needs, sustainable development – have all failed to diagnose properly the causes of underdevelopment and establish the bases for rapid, stable and equitable growth path.\textsuperscript{2}

The concept of development is rather elusive. It is perceived not only as a condition of life but also as a goal to be attained, and as the capacity to grow and change and develop. These three ideas of development are bound
together in efforts to understand and deal with the phenomenon of development. Development is not an absolute condition; there is not a fixed point at which a people, region, or country passes from a state of underdevelopment to a state of development. The relative condition of development, rather, is comparative and ever changing. It fluctuates according to what is needed, possible and desired. It is also relative in terms of what is feasible at any point of time. Development is relative in terms of the aspirations of the people, time, and availability of timely resources / inputs.3

The phenomenal growth of development theory is mainly a post Second World War phenomenon. During the last five decades (1950-1990) the conceptual meaning of development has been changed drastically and new meaning and strategies of development have developed. In the 1950s the emphasis was on economic dimension of development which focuses specially on economic growth of the poor countries. The basic idea was to make calculated input to ensure capital formation as well as raising of the output. It was assumed that, once the growth process gained momentum the growth process itself would take care of the distributional dimension. The development paradigm has stressed economic growth through industrialisation as the key to development. Technology and capital were at the central point of industrialisation.

In the 1960s a relationship between economic development and social change was more keenly realized. It was felt that economic development and technological change are hindered by institutional factors. So, modification in the institutional framework of society and alterations in the attitudes and values were contemplated to facilitate and accelerate the process of economic development. Thus, in this phase a new approach, modernization paradigm was developed. It was assumed that accelerated economic growth
could take place with emphasis on industrialization and modernization. The cumulative benefits of this kind of economic growth were expected to ‘trickle down’ eventually to the larger number who lived in the rural areas in the underdeveloped or developing countries. 1970s was of the decade of pessimism. It was highly reactive to the inadequate paradigms of development and modernization. The transfer of western capitalist models, concepts and methods are not wholly appropriate to the situation of developing countries. These developmental approaches could not accelerate the economic growth. Rather the reality is the conditions in which developing countries had to function in a state of dependency under neo-colonial or neo-imperial powers. The gap between the rich and poor widened. The disenchantment with growth-centered development was due to the emergence of the new concepts of human-centered development which called for greater access for the common man to development processes and strategies geared to meet basic needs, human resource mobilization, and human capital formation. The powerful currents of rethinking development were generated. “The United Nations Committee on Development Planning called for a rethinking about the priorities of development process along two lines. It called for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) for a restructuring of between North and South; secondly, it emphasized equity and participation, self-reliance and structural reform, poverty removal and employment generation, and renewed efforts for rural development and attention to distressed regions and disadvantaged groups.”

The emphasis, therefore, clearly shifted, to a total process involving economic, social, political and cultural spheres. Its principal aim was to improve not only economic, but the social, cultural and environmental welfare of the nation. Local needs and values would determine the direction of development and local institutions would carry it out. This development is endogenous, and springs from the heart of each society. Decentralized, participatory
development process came to be recognized as the need of the hour in developing nations. The current strategies are those of egalitarian development with primary emphasis on redistribution of income in favour of the poor.

From the mid-sixties the developing countries began to articulate their dissatisfaction about the feasibility and viability of the prevailing development approaches for attaining the social objectives. Undifferentiated growth was not raising the levels of employment and not improving the living standards for all in the society. In many countries, despite decades of development efforts, the absolute poverty was growing. Therefore, a search for alternatives started in development thinking. The alternative is to be endogenous and indigenous. It was recognized that the greatest hindrance to the path of development is the absence of real structural change. Michael Todaro observes that development is a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. Development, in his opinion, implies three core values: life sustenance, the ability to provide basic necessities like food, shelter, health and protection; self-esteem, the ability to be a person, a sense of worth and self-respect; and freedom from servitude, the ability to choose, emancipation from alienating material conditions of life and from the social servitude to nature, ignorance, other men, misery, institutions, and dynamic beliefs. Thus, from all these competing perspectives on development, a broadened conception of development emerges. This holistic conception encompasses not only growth, but capacity, equity and empowerment as well. A self-reliant approach to economic development with central focus on meeting the basic needs of the majority of the population of the developing nations provides a fresh orientation in
development strategy. The basic-needs approach to development policy became current in the mid-to-late 1970s. According to Paul Streeten, “the objective of a basic human needs approach to development is to ensure that all human beings should have the opportunity to live full lives.”

The decade of the 1980s introduced greater focus on participatory decision-making, grassroots participation, and use of pluralistic, open-ended and culture-sensitive models of development. A new approach ‘Another Development’ has been proposed by several scholars which focuses on human and economic concerns and the analysis of social aspects of development began to take place. In 1990s the emphasis was on social development. The subject has been discussed at length in the World Summit on Social Development held at Copenhegen in March, 1995. The UNESCO’s Position Paper for the World Summit on Social Development (1995) raises the argument that development is first and foremost social. The aim of social development is to effect social wellbeing- the ability of every human being to satisfy his/her basic needs and achieve a satisfactory quality of life within the environment of quality, social justice and human dignity. Social development calls for strategic investment in health, education and social service, and necessitates access of the underprivileged to means of economic wellbeing.

The main achievement of the development decade of 1990s has been to put people at the centre of the development discourse, economic policies and social programmes. The Earth Summit (1992) and the World Summit for Social Development (1995) expressed the core impulse of development in terms of the enlargement and enrichment of the range of choices at the disposal of the people. The critical development issue for the 1990s is not growth. It is transformation, the transformation of institutions, technology, values, behaviour consistent with the social realities. The transformation
must address three basic needs—justice, sustainability and inclusiveness of the society. The current development practice supports an extreme gap between poor and rich, imbalance between over and under consumers of the world resources. This imbalance is simply unacceptable by any standard of human values. Justice does not require equality of income; it requires that all people have the means and the opportunity to have a minimum decent livelihood for themselves and their families. Justice rejects the right of one’s self-enrichment based on the appropriation of the resources on which other’s survival depends. The transformed society must give priority in the use of global resources to assuring all people the opportunity for a decent human existence. Current development practice supports increases in economic output that depend on the unsustainable depletion of the global resources—natural and other. The transformed society must use the earth’s resources in a calculated way that assures sustainable benefits for future generations. The development practice in today’s world systematically deprives substantial segments of the population of the opportunity to make recognized contributions to the improved well being of society. This practice breeds alienation and social conflict. Therefore development must be inclusive. It means that everyone who chooses to be a productive, contributing community member has a right to the opportunity to do so and to be recognized and respected for these contributions.  

Development is sustainable only when human beings are increasingly capable of taking charge of their own. A UNDP Report (1994) says “the essence of human development is to place development at the service of people’s well-being rather than people at the service of development.” In this perspective, human development implies empowering people to make their own choices. It also emphasizes the relevance of local values and knowledge as guidelines and tools for making these choices. Human
development implies people-centered development, a development that is focused on people, their needs and aspirations. A UNDP Report (1994) says “sustainable development is development that not only regenerates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably. It is development that is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-jobs, pro-women and pro-children.” The concept of sustainable human development seeks to re-strengthen the human decision of development by focusing development strategies and policies on people, putting people first and at the center of the development process.

It is now fully acknowledged that sustainable human development entails not only income and employment but also participation in decision-making, equal opportunity, equal access to resources and adherence to international human rights, empowerment and inclusive development. Development is a characteristic feature of modern times especially in developing countries. It is often observed to be the inconclusive term and is being like a rubber concept moulded for the purpose that time demands. But in its totality as a process it starts out of dissatisfaction, gets momentum resulting change and tries to end up with the attainment of a really unattainable goal.

**Rural Development – Concept and Strategies**

The ultimate purpose of development is to provide everyone with ever-increasing opportunities for a better life. Development, therefore, emphasizes on equitable distribution of income and other social resources in order to promote justice and efficient production, to raise levels of employment, sustainability, to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, shelter, social and cultural wellbeing. The crisis of development is universal. It exists in the poverty of the masses of the developing countries as well as of others, whose basic human needs like food, shelter, health and education are not met. Any solution to this crisis of development has to be
endogenous one. Development should spring from the heart of each society. In this context, self reliance becomes a basic concept of development especially in the developing countries.

A society’s progress in all walks of life is also determined by its social development which is both the cause and effect of economic growth. In a developing country social development depends on the proper and adequate human development particularly in the rural sector, where majority of the people are very poor, illiterate, and lack the necessary knowledge, skills, initiative. With the independence from colonial rule most of the leaders, planners and administrators of these newly independent nations became concerned with developing the rural areas, because majority of the population live in rural areas in a condition of abject poverty, malnutrition, and insanitary living conditions. These factors not only affect the quality of life of people in the rural areas but also reduce their capacity, productivity. The immediate goal of these newly independent countries was, therefore, socio-economic reconstruction. But any strategy of socio-economic development that neglects rural people and rural areas cannot be successful. Rural development, therefore, became an absolute and urgent necessity in the developing countries. And accordingly various rural development programmes and projects were brought to the rural people. But these were, in many cases, piecemeal programmes and not consistent with their need structure. These specialized rural development programmes and projects have not shown positive results and instead of bringing down the gap between the poor and rich, these have accentuated the disparities between the two groups. This raises the fundamental questions of treating the rural development not only as a specialized programme or programme dealing with certain specifics but to perceive it as an integral part of the total social and economic development of a nation. The adhocism in the planning of
these programmes and strategies raised the basic issue of what is required to be developed in these areas. This brings in the problems of conceptualizing rural development. In most developing countries rural development has emerged as a distinct field of policy, practice and research with focus on distributional issues.

The term rural development is of focal interest and is widely acclaimed in both developed and developing countries of the world. There is, however, no universally acceptable definition of rural development and the term is used in different ways and in vastly divergent contexts. As a concept, it connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities – village and cottage industries crafts, socioeconomic infrastructure, community services and facilities, and above all the human resources in rural areas. As a phenomenon it is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional forces and factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well-being of a specific group of people – the rural poor. As a discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioural, engineering and management sciences.  

The World Bank, in its Rural Development Sector Policy Paper of 1975, had defined rural development as a strategy designed to improve the social and economic life of a specific group of people, the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small farmers, tenants and landless. The World Bank strategy emphasized growth and the direct alleviation of poverty by government guarantee of the distribution of
benefits of growth. On the contrary, the ILO approach focuses on satisfying also non-material needs such as human rights, participation and autonomy. It stresses the redistribution of assets, income and power, and changes in income-distribution and in the structure of production.\(^\text{13}\)

Rural development has been conceptualized in a different way with economic growth, with modernization, with increased agricultural production, with socialist forms of organizations, and with services for basic needs such as health, education, transport etc. Development thinking has shifted from the view that growth and modernization would be enough, with benefits trickling down to the poor to the more realistic, even if depressing view that mostly growth and modernization make the poor poorer. The main benefits of development go to the better-off sections of the society than to the poor and the weak. The World Bank strategy suffers from some limitations and exclusions, like the women, the children and the poorest of the poor. A completely, and more inclusive definition has been offered by Robert Chambers that it is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to know, to have access to and to gain for themselves and for their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development.\(^\text{14}\)

As the current centrepiece of the new development strategy, the concept of rural development has also been undergoing reinterpretation in the same way as the holistic concept of development. In the decades of fifties and sixties, rural development strategy in the context of national approach to development objectives and processes laid the main emphasis on rural economic development, implying largely agricultural growth in a broad sense. As this began to result in social and economic polarization with rising agrarian discontent and even some local conflicts, reformulation of
development strategies and restructuring of programmes began to take place so as to induct the social equity concept as concomitant to than complementary to rural economic growth. Employment expansion, income transfers and extension of social services and social welfare facilities have began to be given an increased emphasis in strategies and policies.15

It is now widely recognized that rural development is by no means an agricultural or productivity problem alone, nor is it mainly a technical problem. Poverty is spreading, while constraints seem to multiply and continue to halt progress. It is on the removal of these constraints and the identification of gaps in rural development policy, process and research that there is a real need to focus attention. Rural development must be looked upon as a process of change in societies whereby poverty will be reduced, if not totally eliminated, and the creativity and the existing knowledge of the poor fully utilized. The poor must be enabled access to the resources of the society and the environment and encouraged to achieve control of resources in order to make available resources more productive of amenities, services and goods required and wanted by the poor and their governments.

The integrated approach to rural development has assumed great significance as a means of achieving a balanced development of rural communities. The word ‘integrated’ indicates a new multipurpose thrust of rural planning. Thus, rural development has to be symbiotically related to national development plans and programmes. The integrated approach to rural development envisages a direct and frontal attack on rural poverty by providing viable income generating assets to the target groups and to enable them through training, extension and other supportive services and infrastructural facilities to maintain the assets. It is a synergic approach aiming at total development of the area and the people by bringing about the necessary institutional and attitudinal changes. It delivers a package of
services through extension methods to encompass not only the economic field, i.e., agricultural and rural industries, but also the establishment of special infrastructure and services in the areas of health and nutrition, education and literacy, basic civic amenities, family planning and so on, with the ultimate objective of improving the quality of life in the vast rural areas. The realisation that poverty eradication is the objective of rural development must mean that all dimensions of poverty must be considered.

There emerged some new concepts and methods which sought to make rural development a meaningful enterprise. These are: development as human enterprise, community resource management at the local level, development as a learning process, decentralization and participation, and local action involving local actors and organizations, local beneficiary groups, local service organizations, local governments, and so on. Community-based resource management, with its emphasis on rural development, decentralization in the sense of delegation or devolution or privatisation, development of non-bureaucratic organizational forms, and community control of productive resources and technologies, has come as an emphatic refutation and denial of the rational and effectiveness of the conventional image of development. The transition from ‘delivered development’, which is planned from the top, with people as objects and beneficiaries to ‘participatory development’ which is planned from the bottom, with the people, particularly the poor, as the subjects of the development process, symbolises the emergence of a new model of development for most of the developing countries. Rural development like Lincoln’s Democracy is to cater to the ‘of’, ‘by’ and ‘for’ the rural population.

In the context of decentralized, people-oriented, participatory and self-reliant rural development with an accent on distributive justice and
egalitarian social order, it is very disappointing that a distinctly Indian comprehensive public policy can not be yet evolved; and whatever research has been or is being carried out at the level of professionals, academics and other social scientists, it seems, has not found its way into the policy process.

At the time of independence, the debate over the direction of Indian society and the economy centered on three visions of the country’s future – a Gandhian view of a return to a largely rural, self-sufficient and decentralized polity and economic system based on India’s villages; a socialist ideal, promoted by Nehru, in which the government would take a leading hand in planning and controlling the creation of a centralized, industrial state that would bring India into the modern world; and a liberal, capitalist vision favoured by Sardar Vallabhai Patel. The policy that was eventually adopted by the Government of India was based largely on Nehru’s vision and focused mainly on the modernization of India through industrial growth and urbanization. Until the years following Nehru’s death in 1964, relatively less attention was given to the rural poor who, altogether account for over 70% of the labour force and 80% of India’s population.18

**Rural Development Programmes in India**

India has a very long history of experimenting various approaches to rural development. Even in the pre-independence period, a number of rural reconstruction experiments were initiated by nationalist thinkers and social reformers. Well known among them were the Gurgaon Experiment of F. L. Brayne (1920), the Marthandam Experiment of Spencer Hatch (1921), the Sriniketan Experiment of Rabindranath Tagore (1920s), the Sewagram Experiment by Mahatma Gandhi (1933), the Firka Development Scheme (1946), and Etawah Pilot Project of Alber Mayer (1948). Besides these experiments by social reformers and missionaries, various departments of the Government – Agriculture, Cooperation, Irrigation, Health, Education – also
tried in their own way to resolve rural problems falling within their respective jurisdictions. Soon after independence planned development of India’s economy was started with the goal of increasing income and eradicating poverty. Each successive Five Year Plan laid great emphasis on this goal. Accordingly in different Five Year Plans Government of India systematically adopted various programmes and schemes for rural development with emphasis on different areas, sectors and issues.

The Grow More Food Campaign (GMFC) was India’s first organized effort to increase food production which was launched in 1943 in the wake of the Bengal famine. It did not make any headway until 1947. The campaign was reoriented in 1950-51 following the recommendations made by Thakurdas Review Committee (1948). In the following year, the GMFC became a part of the First Plan. In 1952, the Government of India appointed the Grow More Food Inquiry Committee under the chairmanship of T. T. Krishnamachari to evaluate the campaign. The committee found that all aspects of village are interrelated and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects are dealt with in isolation; and the movement touched only a fringe of the population and did not arouse widespread enthusiasm or become in any sense a national programme. The Committee made a number of recommendations for the future policy of the GMFC. One of the recommendations was that an extension agency should be set up for rural work which would reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of rural life.

It was with this background and experience that India’s Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched during First Five Year Plan (1951-56) which emphasised all round balanced development in different parts of the country. The CDP aimed at overall development of the rural community through effective participation of the rural people, backed by the
coordination of technical and other services necessary for securing the best from such initiative and self-help. It was to provide the necessary institutional structure and services that early attention was given to the development of basic democratic village institutions – especially Panchayat Raj, cooperatives and village schools. It was also emphasised that the problems of rural development have to be viewed from a holistic perspective and the efforts to solve them have to be multifaceted.\textsuperscript{21} The objective of the CDP, described by the Estimates Committee on Community Development Project Administration as “the aided self-help programme or people’s programme with government participation”, was to promote self-help and self-reliance among the rural people through the initial supply of material resources. It was based on the assumption that as the programme caught on and became acceptable to the rural people it would move from officially motivated self-help to self-motivated self-help.\textsuperscript{22}

By the middle of the Second Plan, it became increasingly evident that whatever the success of the CDP, a new approach would be required if agricultural production was to keep ahead of the demands of India’s mounting population. Therefore, the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP), popularly known as the package programme was launched during Third Plan (1961-65). Its basic premise was that India needed to organize its agricultural production with enough resources to make it effective. The immediate goal of the IADP was to achieve rapid increases in agricultural production through a concentration of financial, technical, extension, and administrative resources. Its aim in the long run was to achieve a self-generating ‘break-through’ in productivity and raise the production potential by stimulating the human and physical processes of change. The programme was also intended to provide lessons for extending such intensified agricultural production programmes to other areas.\textsuperscript{23}
The failure of the growth-oriented strategy of the sixties to make any significant dent on the problems of rural poverty and unemployment led to its re-examination in the late sixties. Especially the conditions of small and marginal farmers, and the agricultural labourers began to worsen in spite of Green Revolution. Also, there was no direct evidence of their participation in social, economic or political affairs of the villages. Absolute decline in their standards of living also caused concern among the planners and politicians. There were clear signs of marginalization and subordination of rural poor to the politico-economic structures within and outside the village. Inequitable distribution of the benefits of the growth-oriented programmes, between prosperous and backward areas and between rich and poor people within an area, was officially acknowledged and corrective measures in the form of group-specific programmes were initiated in the early seventies i.e. during Fourth Plan (1970-74).

The special programmes introduced for the weaker sections of the rural people and backward areas included the Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA), the Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL) programme, the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), the Desert Development Programme (DDP), Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Tribal Area Development Programme (TADP), Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE) and Food For Work (FFW) programme. These programmes were aimed at attacking the problems of rural poverty and backwardness directly by helping the weaker sections increase their incomes. To supplement the income effect of these special programmes, a programme geared towards providing civic amenities and community facilities like elementary education, drinking water, hospitals, roads and electricity was launched in the Fifth Plan (1974-79). This is known as the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP). The MNP attempted to raise the level
of social consumption of the poor people in rural areas. The major objective of the group-specific and area specific programmes was that their benefits would flow to the weaker sections and backward areas because of the specificity of the target groups and target areas. Progressive reduction and ultimate reduction of poverty has been one of the major goals of India’s economic policy since the beginning of the Fifth Plan. The basic strategy of combining the MNP with programmes for employment and income generation took a concrete shape towards the end of the Fifth Plan when IRDP was launched. The Sixth Plan (1980-85) launched a direct attack on the basic problems of rural poverty and unemployment. In the Seventh Plan measures have been designed to raise the productivity and incomes of the poorer sections of society and poorer regions. Therefore, food, work and productivity have been the three basic priorities. The Seventh Plan envisaged an expanded coverage under the various anti-poverty programmes. In pursuance of this strategy, the Seventh Plan gave a wider base to the IRDP by integrating it more effectively with agricultural and other rural development programmes. The IRDP, the single largest anti-poverty programme, aims at providing income generating assets and employment opportunities to the rural poor to enable them to rise above the poverty line once and for ever. The IRDP in effect seeks to redistribute assets and employment opportunities in favour of the rural poor; therefore, the target group of the IRDP consists of poorest of the rural poor – small and marginal farmers, agricultural and non-agricultural labourers, rural artisan and craftsmen, SC and ST families who live below the poverty line. The Seventh Plan paid special attention to the problems faced by the more vulnerable sections of our society like SCs/STs women and children.

The Eighth Plan was launched in the backdrop of widespread changes which have altered the international social and economic order. The Indian
planning system was gradually moving towards indicative planning from a highly centralised planning. The Eighth Plan recognises ‘human development’ as the core of all development efforts. The priority sectors of the plan that contribute towards realisation of this goal are health, education and basic needs. The Eighth Plan emphasises the essential need to involve people in the process of development. It is realised that the total dependence of the people on the government for developmental activities has been removed. It has to be altered to a proactive attitude of people taking initiative themselves. In the development process, people must operate and the government must cooperate. In this plan, therefore, for the first time a new direction had been given to achieve these objectives by the adoption of institutional approach which was meant for creating and strengthening various people’s institutions at the district, block and village level in order to synthesise the purposes of investment, envisaged in the central plan with optimisation of benefits at the grassroots level by relating these programmes to the needs of people. The Panchayats and Nagarpalikas had been given larger role to play in formulating and implementing developmental projects in their areas. The involvement of voluntary organisations and other people’s institutions was welcomed for effective micro-level participatory planning. The institutional approach has changed the existing programme-oriented approach. It was to provide a community instrument which would determine what people really need and how it could be achieved most effectively. The Eighth Plan paid special attention to generate employment opportunities in the rural areas. Such an expansion of employment opportunities called for a shift in emphasis in the rural development programmes from the creation of relief type of employment to the building up of durable productive assets in the rural areas. These assets can enhance productivity and create more job opportunities leading to sustained development.
In the Ninth Plan a new era of people-oriented planning was ushered in, where not only the Central and the State Governments, but the people at large, particularly the poor, could fully participate. A participatory planning process was an essential precondition for ensuring equity and accelerating the rate of growth of the economy. In this plan priority was given to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty. The plan emphasised the empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups (SCs/STs/OBCs/minorities etc) as agents of socio-economic change and development. The plan also focused on promoting and developing people’s participatory institutions like Panchayati Raj, cooperatives and self-help groups and strengthening efforts to build self-reliance.

All these objectives were intended to achieve ‘growth with equity’ and they should get reflected in four dimensions of state policy like – a) quality of life of the citizens; b) generation of productive employment; c) regional balance; and d) self-reliance. In the Ninth Plan it was recognised that under the self-employment programme of IRDP there would be a progressive shift from the individual beneficiary approach to the group and / or cluster approach. A holistic approach would be adopted with an integration of the existing sub-schemes of TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA and GKY in IRDP. However, at the block and district level the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) would be the single wage-employment programme. Efforts would be made to bring about a greater integration between the poverty alleviation programmes and the various sectoral programmes as well as the area development programmes under the umbrella of the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). In the area of basic minimum services, the Ninth Plan had placed greater emphasis on primary health care, primary education and provision of safe drinking water and shelter.
The process of development in any society should ideally be viewed and assessed in terms of what it does for individual. The decade of the 1990s saw a visible shift in the focus of development planning from the mere expansion of the production of goods and services and the consequent growth of per capita income to planning for enhancement of human well-being. It is now realized that human development is much more than mere rise or fall of national income. It is about the quality of life, the level of human well-being and the access to basic social services.

Today there is a broad-based consensus to view human development in terms of three critical dimensions of well-being. These are related to longevity – the ability to live a long and healthy life; education – the ability to read, write and acquire knowledge and command over resources – the ability to enjoy a decent standard of living and have a socially meaningful life. Similarly, poverty is viewed not only in terms of lack of adequate income but as a state of deprivation that prevents people from effective participation in the development process. Good education, health, nutrition and low fertility rate help reduce poverty by increasing the opportunities to generate incomes. In view of the above thinking in the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) there has been a renewed focus on development indicators in the area of education and health attainments – which are critical for capacity building – and other social and environmental consequences that have a direct bearing on the state of well-being. Progress in these social sectors is both a vital yardstick and key element in the reduction of poverty. Most of the monitorable targets of the Tenth Plan relate to significant improvements in social indicators, particularly in the areas of human development indicators – education, health and family welfare. These are not only important on their own men but they also have an important bearing on the achievement of the growth and employment targets.
Rural development as in the overall development of the country, received due attention from all quarters, particularly since implementation of the development plans. But the approaches and strategies employed from time to time to realise its objectives could not yield satisfactory results. In the history of rural development in India various programmes were introduced from time to time under different names, although their contents remained almost the same and the fate of the people marked no substantial change.

Any analysis of the last few decades of planned rural development indicates that there has been no dearth of programmes, sectoral, area-based, target-oriented and projects for the disadvantaged groups and huge investments are made under these programmes, compared to the overall resources of the country. But the past experiences of rural development in India have amply demonstrated that meeting the target of eliminating poverty and unemployment is still a far cry. The rural poor have been deprived of the benefits of various rural development programmes undertaken under the Five Year Plans. The programmes and schemes of rural development are ad hoc, partial, segmented in nature. As a result, most of these programmes could neither solve the immediate problem nor provide any long-term benefit to the rural poor. These programmes created further economic imbalances and social tensions.

Despite the implementation of land reform programmes and agricultural development there has been little change in the agrarian sector in favour of the rural poor. There is still a heavy burden of exploitation upon the masses of the peasantry and agricultural labourers, whose standard of living is kept consequently squeezed. The productive forces in agriculture do not adequately develop. The masses of the peasantry who are excluded from land ownership have neither the means nor the incentive to undertake any
productive investment on land while the money lenders still squeeze the rural pauperized peasantry. Under the circumstances, whatever is sought to be done in the name of rural development has failed to bring about any improvement in the living condition of the rural poor.

The policies, plans and programmes for development, especially rural development, can only be influenced by direct and active popular participation at the regional and local levels by utilizing the instrumentalities of local-self government and by ensuring the active leadership of the state-level administration, at the same time de-bureaucratizing the whole machinery and the process of management of change. In the wake of market economy and liberalization, the very concept of achieving integrated and comprehensive rural and urban development through elected bodies at the district, block and village levels has tremendous appeal as an administrative and political innovation seeking to combine rapid economic development and social change.

West Bengal’s experiment and experience in democratic decentralization through Panchayati Raj for achieving comprehensive rural development, initiated in 1978 assumes tremendous significance in contemporary India. During the last few decades of its working, Panchayati Raj in West Bengal has been able to carve out a crucial role for itself in the programmes and processes of economic development and social change in several distinct and interrelated dimensions, viz. a) administrative decentralization, b) political decentralization, c) participatory democracy at the grassroots level, d) comprehensive rural development through Operation Barga and land reforms. The main directions of the West Bengal Government’s policy and working in the field of panchayats have been acceleration of organizational development, development of human resources in all aspects, and effective implementation of various rural
development programmes, central and state, by and through the three tiers of panchayat institutions.\textsuperscript{29}

Studies conducted on the Panchayati Raj institutions, during the 1970s and 1980s by several scholars and also by some state level committees show that in spite of some sporadic achievements, the Panchayati Raj did not develop as a very successful system. It had, so far, worked for the rural elite or the group of big farmers and rich traders. The masses of the poor did not gain much from the working in the Panchayati Raj institutes. It failed to involve the rural poor in development activities either as beneficiaries or as decision-makers on any significant scale.

**Development Administration and Bureaucracy**

The concepts of development and development administration are interrelated. Simply because a nation remains under-developed unless a necessary administrative machinery is there to implement the development strategy. It is believed that without proper administrative machinery all strategies of development applied in the developing nations are bound to fail. The term development administration as the sub-discipline of the broader discipline of modern public administration came into use in the 1950s to represent those aspects of public administration which are needed to carry out policies, projects and programmes to change and improve the socio-economic conditions. In the field of comparative public administration, endeavours to modernize administration (that is, bureaucratic administration) of developing countries were essentially an attempt for the attainment of developmental goals. This way, the key role of bureaucracy was seen as a processor to provide planning and an institutional infrastructure to convert inputs of objectives, capital and know-how into developmental outputs.\textsuperscript{30} In the words of Donal Stone: Development Administration is the blending of all the resources (human and physical) into a concerted effort to achieve agreed
upon goals. It is the continuous cycle of formulating, evaluating and implementing interrelated plans, policies, programmes, projects, activities and other measures to reach established development objectives in a scheduled time sequence. The concept revolves round two key assumptions – efficient management of public development programmes, and stimulation of private development programmes and the acceptance of bureaucracy as the effective instrument of development.

Development administration had its origin in 1950s which was the decade of optimism, expectations and establishment of international aid agencies in various industrialized countries. Development administration was concerned, in this decade, primarily with the transferring of the techniques of public management from the western industrial countries to the developing countries. The aim was to create rational, politically neutral and impartial, efficient bureaucracies in Weberian tradition. In the 1960s, development had become the dominant issue in developing nations. In this decade the west responded to this development challenge in a number of ways. The first was to conceptualize the notion of development administration by blending all necessary elements of human endeavour with financial and material resources in order to achieve developmental goals that were generally recommended by the western experts. Development administration was seen as concerned with the will to mobilize existing and new resources, and to cultivate appropriate capabilities to achieve developmental goals. Thus, development administration became an essentially action-oriented, goal-oriented, administrative system, geared to realize definite programmatic goals. The task of the North was perceived to be the supplier of external inducement to change through technical assistance and transfers of technology and institutions. Development administration was supposed to be based on a professionally-oriented, technically
competent, politically and ideologically neutral bureaucratic machinery. The focus of development administration in the 1970s was to expand the capacity of organizations not only to manage development projects and programmes efficiently, but also to bring about more equitable distribution of the benefits of development activities to the marginalized poor groups of rural areas and elicit participation of that marginalized groups of rural areas in development planning and management and deliver essential public services to them. In the decade of 1980s, the very foundations of the development administration paradigm were severely in question. Not only their usefulness was in doubt in the Third World itself, but an intellectual crisis had set in among students of development administration in the west. Instead of development and nation building, turmoil and fragmentation proliferated throughout the Third World countries. Urban crises, energy crises, cessation of growth, unemployment and breakdown of public institutions and public morality had dampened the early optimism about the ability of the First World administrative technology to solve problems everywhere. The decade of 1990s did not represent an improvement. Administrative culture and morality remained problematic, and improvements within the administrative infrastructure were few. With the advent of liberalization or market economy newer approach emerged which sought to cut back scope of government activities through privatization, deregulation, decentralization, and similar efforts, all of which might be subsumed under the rubric ‘de-bureaucratization’. In this decade public administration was seen more as problem than solution. In de-bureaucratization, downsizing of bureaucracy was being demanded. In the situation, administered development would co-exist alongside private sector entrepreneurship and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with public officials providing an enabling environment and the necessary security, infrastructure, and
financial regulation (market-friendly development administration). If the dominant concern of development administration is the management of change in countries which have development as a major national goal, an effective bureaucracy should function more as an agent of change than as an instrument of stability and continuity. In the context of development administration the Weberian model of bureaucracy which contains features like organizational rules and procedures, division of duties etc. may not be conducive to the fulfillment of developmental objectives. Rule-bound behavior, precise delineation of jurisdiction, centralization of authority and system of promotion based upon seniority in the administrative organization are dysfunctional in the context of development.

A developmental bureaucracy is supposed to be concerned with promoting creativity and growth with a stable system. A developmental bureaucracy needs different kinds of values, orientations and attitudes. The problem of bureaucracy is somewhat complex in developing countries where social and political institutions are relatively less developed and where the state has mainly to depend upon the administrative structure for the accomplishment of its goals. Developing countries require a band of competent people for complex and highly specialized tasks of socio-economic development. Here, all development programmes require considerable direct involvement and participation by the bureaucracy at all stages of their formulation and implementation. Thus, the entire development administration movement focuses on the crucial role of bureaucracy in bringing about speedy socio-economic change. From the developing countries perspective, however, development administration is bureaucracy with a difference, since some of structural features, operational
styles and behavioural implications of traditional Weberian bureaucracy are thought to be unsuited to the needs of developmental tasks.

**The New Economic Policy and The Role of the State**

The Constitution of India established a sovereign, democratic, secular, socialist, welfare state. A full-blown democracy, as envisioned by the Founding Fathers of the Constitution embodies democratic governance, democratic management of the economy, pluralistic society, a welfare state and welfare economy as well as welfare society. Both as a goal and means of development. The state in India must remain a welfare state, and it is a mandatory goal of development as laid down in Art. 38 of the Constitution. The state should promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a just social order.

The underlying philosophical orientation of the Indian Constitution makers was that an activist state through positive and egalitarian action could promote the quality of life of the under privileged, deprived and vulnerable strata of society. Total development has been the goal of our national policy. India since independence followed a protectionist development strategy on the basis of the Nehruvian model of development through centralized planning and mixed economy. There has been a commitment to democratic socialism, a socialistic pattern of society and welfare state ideology with bureaucracy on the centre stage, directing the economy to ensure growth with industrialization and modernization. For this, various measures have been undertaken for rural development.

After becoming a republic in 1950 India started with planned development. The First Five Year Plan envisaged the development of villages through community development programmes. Though it brought about awareness of development among the people, it started losing ground during 1960s. Various segmented programmes and schemes were undertaken
for rural development that ultimately resulted into rural disparities and created rural unrest in general. The state has only lent a sympathetic ear to the problem of rural development. It has not been seriously considered as an integrated part of the total social and economic development of the country. Rural development can be a reality only if it is related to the core value system of the villagers. The human needs structure will have to be analysed in terms of ‘survival’ or a ‘social minimum’ and the social supplies will have to be shared equitably or proportionately to one’s needs.\textsuperscript{34}

To implement the development programmes and projects the state needs implementing mechanism. Bureaucracy is the main implementing cum development instrument of the state. So, bureaucracy has been given the responsibility to implement the rural development programmes and schemes. Throughout the Five Year Plans various rural development programmes have been introduced but with little success. While most business and professional organizations have been changing with the change of time, the government bureaucracy by and large remains the same – hierarchical, insensitive, sluggish and monopolistic. Apart from many other reasons, the bureaucracy, the main implementing agency, is responsible for the unsuccessful implementation of the developmental schemes. The district collector represents the tendency of the central government to retain a degree of political control at the local level despite considerable, efforts on the part of the central government to decentralize the development process and to empower the rural poor in many areas of local decision making. To decentralize control of the development process, the creation of village panchayats has not automatically resulted in improved delivery of government efforts. In many areas, the district collector is an official or de-facto member of panchayat institutions, in some cases the collector has the
capacity to inspect the activities of local panchayats, and can even cancel or suspend the implementation of their decision.35

The beginning of the 1990s saw the initiation of far reaching changes in the economic policy framework of India. These policy changes were undertaken through the introduction of a significantly comprehensive New Economic Policy (NEP) in July, 1991. (It was new in the sense that previously there was no such economic policy at the macro level. There were only sectoral policies like Industrial Policy, Energy Policy etc.) With the failure of the planned economy and development strategy and acute crisis in the economy in 1990s, the Government of India launched this New Economic Policy to revive the Indian economy and integrate it with the world economy. For this purpose, it was sought to dismantle ‘license-permit-subsidy Raj’ system and thereby to infuse liberalization in the management of the economy. Through this NEP, it was also sought to reform the whole structure of the Indian economy. As such the NEP is also called ‘Economic Reforms’. The avowed aim of the NEP is economic development in the long term. Through this, it is sought to bring about realignment of domestic demand with available resources and initiate changes in supply and production structure with a view to eliminating the external imbalance. The economy was to be liberalized from unnecessary controls and gradually integrated with the world economy though renovating the tariff walls, protecting foreign direct investment, and upgrading the technology of production in various fields. From this, it is found that the NEP has three important features— liberalization, privatization and globalization. Liberalization is meant for liberalizing the control system; privatization is for the improvement of the domestic production process to enhance efficiency
and competitiveness and thus integrating domestic economy with the global economy that is globalization.

The reform process consists of two dimensions, macro-economic stabilization in the short-run along with structural adjustment programme (SAP) in the medium-term and economic development in the long run. For the long-term economic development, macro-economic stability is necessary. Because macro-economic stability is a necessary condition for market prices playing their role in the efficient allocation of resources. The macro-economic stabilization programme (IMF inspired) essentially focuses on reducing the twin deficits on the balance of payment and on the state budget. The SAP (World Bank inspired) focuses on structural change of the economy in the field of “tax reform, deregulation of prices, delicensing of investment, liberalization of foreign trade and foreign investment regime as well as certain measures of reforming the financial sector and public enterprises.”

According to market economy concept the state cannot do business, it has to roll back from the market. But market cannot solve the social problems, rectify the social handicaps. In this case state’s role is inevitable. State can play a regulatory role in market economy so that the society cannot be shattered by the negative effects of the market. In the liberalized market economy the poor will be the most disadvantageous group. Corruption, personal interests, financial management withered away the state’s welfare character. Consequently, a question arises that who will provide social security to the poor people. In this context the responsibility has to be shouldered by the civil society, and voluntary organizations and non-
governmental organizations as institutions of civil society can play a very important role.

The Role of Civil Society: Transition from Absolutist State to Limited State

The idea of civil society is both appealing and ambiguous but positive. It began to enter into discussions of society and politics in the West from the 17th and 18th centuries where it figures, though not very systematically, in the writings of Locke and Rousseau. A certain line of argument about the nature and limits of civil society was established by Hegel in the early part of the 19th century. Hegel was the first to break the connection of civil society and state, hence in effect to render civil society independent. Hegelian civil society is economic and his notion became the dominant meaning of civil society in modern political thought. To the Marxists civil society was a confused (obfuscatory) name for the interests of capital, the social forms dictated by the ruling class, for the marketeers it was a suspicious mystification of what really mattered, namely markets and individual rights. 37

The assertion of democratic social movements in the contemporary world is inextricably linked with the concept ‘civil society’. Civil society provides the conceptual apparatus to comprehend the implications of these social movements. Civil society can be identified with democratization and political liberalization, but it is a far more comprehensive and deep concept than democracy. The concept of civil society embraces an entire range of assumptions, values and institutions such as political, social civil rights, the rule of law, plurality of associations, representative institutions and public sphere which are indispensable preconditions for democracy. 38 As Gellner says : The ideas associated with this expression are indeed intimately connected with the establishment of a democratic or liberal, social and
political order. In fact democracy though accepted as a shorthand code term of participatory and accountable government, carries with it a model which is less useful than the one suggested by ‘civil society’. 39

Gramsci’s approach to civil society explains that society is not merely a matter of legal rights guaranteed by the state or of economic interests driven by the market. It is also a matter of ideas, beliefs, values, habits and customs that act on market and state and are acted upon by them in complex ways and different level. State and market contribute something but not the whole towards holding together the fabric of society.

The value of the concept of civil society can be understood if we remember that it has been resurrected whenever the power of the state has been challenged and sought to be controlled. The concept historically came into existence when classical political economists grappled with the question of controlling the power of the mercantilist state. The freedom of civil society formed the central plank of democratic movements against absolutist states in 18th century Western Europe. In liberal theory, civil society came to embody a whole range of emancipator aspirations which focused on the defence of human liberties against state oppression and which marked out an autonomous sphere of social practices, rights and dignity for the individual. It is this meaning that has come to inform the current focus on civil society. The assertion of civil society in the West is thus, based upon a shared collective memory of how absolutist states were limited and constrained by the activities of the self-conscious, right-bearing individual in association with others. 40 For the people of the post-colonial world, the context is different. It is not the remembrance of, but the creation of civil society as the sphere where the democratic politics can be constructed. It is the arena of movements struggling to free themselves from tyrannical, unresponsive post-colonial elites. If the first wave of liberation took place along with
decolonization, the second wave comes up against those very elites who had taken over power after decolonization. Obviously then, the resurgence of civil society is a political statement against the first or the second generation of leadership in the post-colonial world.  

The new emphasis on civil society represents a major inversion in development theory and strategy. This can be described as a transition from state and market to civil society and from centralism to localism. In the optimistic post war beginnings of development theory, the ideology of developmentalism and the concept of the interventionist public interest state were inseparable. Mackintosh argues that this public interest view of the state rests on three assumptions – “1. It is possible to identify a public interest 2. The state is competent to identify that public interest. 3. The state will in practice serve (or at least, can be made to seek to serve) that public interest.” The public interest was commonly defined with reference to the market and the claimed severity of market failure was used as an economic justification for granting the centralized state a key role in correcting market failures and ensuring economic efficiency, growth, macro-economic stability and social development. The 1980s brought a dramatic shift away from this public interest view of the state. Instead of being the ‘engine of development’ the state now came to be seen as the central problem. According to Neo-liberals like market governments can fail to work. This can happen if the organization of governments allows individuals to exercise undue power and exploit political positions for rent-seeking, or if the bureaucracy and the state are allowed to grow and become overextended. So, just as market failure suggested a role of the centralized state in the early days of development theory, government failure led back to the market in the 1980s. However, by the early 1990s it had become clear that the structural adjustment programmes had failed to achieve this kind of dynamic growth.
Instead structural adjustment had furthered absolute and relative poverty while the pressure to reduce government expenditures had diminished social welfare programmes. Moreover, these marginalization processes created a potential for political instability that could jeopardize the adjustment programmes themselves. In this situation, a shift occurred from a singular emphasis on market deregulation to an additional emphasis on institutional reforms and social development.\textsuperscript{46} \textsuperscript{47} \textsuperscript{48}

In this context, civil society emerged as the arena in which a host of development objectives are to be achieved. Civil society can exert organized pressure on autocratic and unresponsive states and thereby support democratic stability and good governance.\textsuperscript{49} \textsuperscript{50} Civil society institutions can also be vehicles for participation in development programmes and empowerment of target groups of poor people. This move has in part challenged the centralization of the top-down state through planning couched in terms of stakeholders and local governance.\textsuperscript{51} This new conceptualization of development has three major characteristics. First, it has a top-down strategy in the sense that it is an effort by state agencies and collaborating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to mobilization and empower identified target groups. From the late 1980s neo-liberals have changed their view on state market-relations and are emphasizing a division of labour between these two sectors. Rather than seeing the state, market and society as discrete and opposed arenas, the emphasis is on partnership between them. This means that the state should be restructured to become an efficient and capable ensemble of institutions that can enable market-led social development. The state should refrain from intervention in areas where markets function and rather concentrate on policy areas where market solutions cannot be relied upon, e.g. poverty alleviation programmes.\textsuperscript{52}
Second, the key actors in the empowerment process are to be the poor themselves and NGOs. This new strategy is driven by a desire to promote social development without large-scale government expenditure on social welfare. Self-help and community mobilization is emphasized as a strategy that can ensure cost-saving and increased project efficiency. Entrepreneurial development schemes supported by microcredit are strategic interventions that are expected to enable the process of community empowerment. Non-governmental organizations are assigned a key role as non-bureaucratic and efficient organizations that can mobilize community members for individual and collective empowerment.53 Third, the new strategy for poverty alleviation is based on an understanding of power as a variable sum. Power resides with individual members of a community and can increase with the successful pursuit of individual and collective goals.

This concept of community participation and empowerment has another explanation. For post-Marxists, empowerment is a matter of collective mobilization of marginalized groups against the disempowering activities of both the state and the market.54 55 Friedmann argues that power and development have been concentrated along an axis between the state and the market. The developmental activities of these two sectors have resulted in a marginalization of civil society as a whole and especially of poor individuals and groups. Social movements emerge as a reaction to these processes and seek to define an alternative development altogether that will empower marginalized groups. This notion of empowerment emphasises bottom-up conceptualization of societal transformation. Empowerment processes are initiated through collective mobilization among marginalized social groups. This mobilization is based on shared experiences with economic and political marginalization. Conscientization and collective identity formation around these shared experiences are key elements in this
Collective action for empowerment is in opposition to the state and the market. Non-governmental organizations and social movements are central to the radical politics of empowerment, but these are characterized by their autonomy rather than partnership with institutions and actors within the state and the market. Power is conceptualized in relational and conflictual terms. The disempowerment of poor people is rooted in material dominance and ideological hegemony of dominant classes and groups. Empowerment of marginalized groups requires a structural transformation of economic and political relations towards a radically democratized society. States or market cannot and should not be solely responsible for ensuring social equality and welfare growth. Local actors, knowledge and interventions are important features of the present day development practice. Therefore, the new emphasis of current development practice is on local development, local civil society holding out the promise of bringing about more localized, relevant and, ultimately, sustainable development.
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