CHAPTER III

CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development as a method of accelerating the process of social, economic and political growth of the under-developed areas of the world is a post-second-war phenomenon. The earliest use of the term was made in despatches of Cambridge Conference on African Administration in 1948. It defined Community Development as "a movement designed to promote better living of the whole community, with the active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, it should be aroused and stimulated by special techniques designed to secure the active and enthusiastic response of the movement." Several

1 Community Development was so defined by the Cambridge Conference on Administration in 1948. This definition was further examined by the Arshire Conference on Social Development in 1954 and considered the above definition valid and comprehensive but preferred a shorter description.

"Community Development is a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and on the initiative of the community."

experiences in British Territories of Africa brought home to the Administration that a progressive constitution was not enough towards the national independence. There was greater need for a group of people capable of taking active part in public life and shaping political development themselves. Hence the need for the active participation of the community and developing its initiative."

The International Co-operation Administration defined the concept thus:

"Community Development is the term used to describe the technique many Governments have adopted to reach their village people and to make more effective use of local initiative and energy for increased production and better living standards. Community Development is a process of social action in which the people of a community organize themselves for planning and action; define their individual needs and solve their problems; execute these plans with a maximum of reliance upon community resources and supplement these resources where necessary with services and material from governmental and non-governmental agencies outside the community."¹

¹ International Co-operation Administration Washington:
In the above definition, three points are emphasized; namely, democratic participation in initiating social action, self-reliance to the maximum possible degree and participation of the government and non-government agencies outside the community to supplement its resources with necessary services and material.

The concept has also been elaborated by national governments which have initiated nation-wide programmes of community development. The planners of our country have defined Community Development as a "process of change from the traditional way of living of rural communities to progressive ways of living; as a method by which people can be assisted to develop themselves on their own capacity and resources; as a programme for mobilizing certain activities in fields concerning the welfare of the rural people; and as a movement for progress with certain ideological content."¹

The First Five Year Plan regarded Community Development as "the method through which the Five Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages."²

¹ First Five Year Plan, op. cit., p. 225.
² Ibid., p. 223.
The Second Five Year Plan set forth the following characteristics of the method.¹

In the first place, National Extension and Community Projects are intended to be areas of intensive efforts in which development agencies of the Government work together as a team in programmes which are planned and co-ordinated in advance.

In the second place, the essence of the approach is that villagers come together for bringing about social change, are assisted in building up a new life for themselves and participate with increasing awareness and responsibility in planning and implementation of projects which are material to their well-being. If the programme provides them with new opportunities, in turn, through their active participation in its execution, they give it a distinctive quality and enlarge its scope and influence.

The movement should bring within its scope all rural families, especially those which are under-privileged and enable them to take their place in the co-operative movement and other spheres in their own right.²

The objective of Community Development is all round development of the rural community. When the various development activities in different fields such as agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health etc. are kept in view, it is described as a programme; but when the emotional content or ideology behind the programme is taken into consideration, it appears to be a movement. But for its proper understanding, Community Development should be studied in its manifold aspects, as a process of change, as having its own special method and as a programme capable of developing into a powerful movement with an ideological force. Voluntary participation by the people and technical assistance by the Government are its two essential elements. The people take part in efforts to improve their living conditions on their own initiative and the Government's technical assistance comes in a way which would make the self-help and initiative of the village people more effective and fruitful.

Community Development has thus been described in a variety of ways. A study of these definitions brings out the main characteristics of Community Development.

Firstly, the programme has to be correspond to the basic needs of the local communities; secondly, it has to
be an integrated and multipurpose programme that deals with all the major problems of the people; thirdly, it must aim at utilizing fully local resources of manpower, material, talent and leadership and their fullest development relying as little as possible on outside help; fourthly, it must emphasize permanent improvements that will build up the peoples' capacity and confidence in themselves; and lastly, it must distribute the benefits evenly over the entire community and reduce the economic and social disparities that exist between the different classes in the community.

It is now proposed to consider more fully each of these characteristics.

The Community Development programme must be a local programme based on the felt needs of the people. The motive force for improvement should come from the people themselves. The concept of felt needs can be easily over-looked. What is essential is that in being asked to make an effort for achievement of a goal, the people see the promise of satisfying a need they feel or are stimulated to feel. There should be an urge from within the masses for development and improvement. There is no other way by which the community's participation can be enlisted,
which is the essence of the programme. Much of the difficulty in a community development programme comes from pressing a community to do something against its inclination. Therefore, it is necessary that the members of the society must appreciate the necessity of the change, emotionally adjust themselves to that change and work out the change themselves. The possibilities of better living will have to be presented to them. The people will see around themselves others enjoying their lives in a better way such as good ventilated houses, all household gadgets and modern furniture, good transport facilities such as cars and pucca roads, modern health and medical facilities, education and employment opportunities and all that is indispensible for a better living. With their daily contact and movement, these people will feel that they are being deprived of certain facilities to lead a happy life as their brethren. Once this urge is created, these people will make efforts to improve their lot. They should be free to consider and adopt those measures that they may consider desirable. It is, therefore, the felt needs of the people themselves which provide the motive force. Undertakings launched in response to needs that are strongly felt have a real advantage. They have a greater element
of success than projects which are not fully understood and subscribed to by the people.

The village people are generally lethargic and indifferent to progress and change. This is one of the main causes of poverty and economic backwardness of rural India. Community Development programme is based on the faith that rural people have immense capacity to improve their life provided they are given a chance to work for their own betterment and are properly guided and advised by the Government. In fact, their indifference to progress and change is due to their isolation from the main stream of national life. And due to this they are unable to see the possibilities of progress. For long, they have not been encouraged to participate in or initiate programme of their own betterment. Community Development implies and involves a process of development in which the villager takes part on his own initiative and for his own development and thereby develops the spirit of self-help, self-reliance and cooperation. In this way, he develops himself, his community and his country.

Our Community Development programme being an integral part of our Five Year Plans has to be planned from above to a considerable extent. The problem is how to integrate this process of planning from above with the planning
from below which takes into account the local needs and aspirations of the rural people. Fusing planning from above and planning from below is not easy and the goals of the two may be at variance. But to a certain extent this difficulty can be resolved if in the planning at the local level, care is taken to follow the process of community development and there is good and continuous communication between the national and local levels in the planning process. The latter requirement is of the utmost importance. The central planners must know the needs and aspirations of the people and the local people must know what opportunities open up from time to time through the execution of central schemes for the fulfilment of their local needs, so that they can take full advantage of these by doing their own part. In this connection, the value of self-help group projects may be emphasized. These projects provide opportunities to the local people to participate in group activities for the collective solution of their problems, which in turn prepares ground for the emergence of appropriate leaders and social structures to satisfy their needs. The social capital created through aided self-help projects is more likely to be maintained for continuous use and more adequately cared for then if it were created without securing the investment of local efforts.
The method of aided self-help projects has been described by Carl C. Taylor in his four step model and has been successfully experimented in a number of countries operating community development programmes. These four steps are: systematic discussion of the commonly felt needs by the members of the community aided by the belief that self-help efforts will be supported by the Government; systematic planning to carry out first self-help project which has been selected by the community after due regard to its feasibility. To enlist local manpower and ingenuity, consultations must go beyond the headman or his immediate circle; almost complete mobilization of the physical, economic and social potentialities of the local community groups. Members who might have been hesitant or only mildly interested in the beginning join later when a large organized local group starts working on a project considered useful to the community; and creating aspirations and determination to undertake additional community improvement projects. The group which has successfully accomplished a worthwhile undertaking

1 Carl Taylor, Community Development Programmes and Methods, 1959, pp. 34-42. Article in Community Development Review, published quarterly by International Co-operation Administration, Washington, D.C.
might seek out and do other things to feed its group pride.

Programme of Community Development has to be integrated and multipurpose, dealing with all the major problems of the people. This requirement arises from the needs of the rural situation. Its problems are inter-related - the low level of production due to the primitive methods followed in agriculture and village industries malnutrition and disease, illiteracy and indebtedness. A stagnating economy is both the cause and effect of these conditions. These problems can not be solved unless they are tackled simultaneously. Hence the programme has to comprise activities in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, co-operation, village and small-scale industries, health and sanitation, education, communication and housing, economic and social welfare of women, children, youth and the under-privileged classes. It is true that agriculture is the main occupation of the vast majority of our people. But it is not possible to pull out agriculture as a subject for special treatment in isolation. For example; good agriculture is not possible without irrigation, without animals, without proper implements, without co-operation in marketing, supplies as well as credit. Nor is it feasible without communication to facilitate transport; without
good health, if crops are to be grown and harvested timely; without education, if improved knowledge of agriculture was to be progressive. We also need village industries if the unemployed and under-employed were to have the means of livelihood, and the surplus income to find a ready outlet in consumer goods as against suicidal litigation. Hence the community development has to be a multi-purpose and integrated programme.

In backward economies, agrarian reconstruction has to go hand in hand with industrialization as under-developed countries have the greater part of their population subsisting on agriculture. They also have a high rate of population growth which will keep on increasing the pressure on land for many decades to come. Therefore, industrialization has also to be accelerated to absorb the rise in agricultural population if increased agricultural productivity is to contribute to raise the standard of living of the rural masses. But substantial improvement in their living standard can be secured only if the rate of industrial growth is fast enough to absorb some of the agricultural population. Even with all the expansion that can be achieved in industry, we still will have to depend on intensive agriculture for creating more employment.
will be greater demand for food by the agricultural population with a rise in their standard of living, and by the expanding industrial population. While expansion of industries must create the market for the increasing agricultural production, the increasing purchasing power of the agricultural population acquired by more sale of their agricultural produce and at better prices to the growing industrial population would alone provide the growing market which the expansion of industries needs. Thus we see how agrarian reconstruction and industrialization are closely related and parts of a single process of expanding the economy.

Community Development programme is especially suited for promoting industrial development, particularly cottage and small-scale industries. Their importance lies in the fact that they can more easily surmount the basic difficulties which backward economies have to face in the process of industrialization. These are scarcity of capital and low rate of saving, small domestic market, lack of knowledge and enterprise, unemployment and under-employment which rules out the possibility of machine and factory production on a large scale as this will create technological
unemployment. This situation of a stagnant economy with little desire in the people for economic progress, points to the need for advancing by slow stages from a primitive rural economy to modern industrial economy. In this lies the place of cottage and small-scale industries. It can make plentiful use of abundant supply of labour without requiring too much of capital. It does not also need much technical know-how or expertise. It can cater for the small local market, suiting its products to the needs of each market. It can employ farmers in part-time and in seasonal operations; and with their income thus increased, they can themselves be the consumers. Thus can be built up gradually a large domestic market for factory goods to help the process of industrialization on a national scale.

From what has been said in the foregoing pages, it makes amply clear the close interdependence of agricultural and industrial development. The cause of one can not be advanced at the cost of the other. The attainment of self-sufficiency in agriculture is not an end in itself; what is required is a balanced economy of increasing prosperity and rising the standard of living for the masses. Hence the need for an integrated multipurpose community development programme. Likewise; education, health, youth organization and women's programme and participation, all have important place in community development programme. Unless
and until these needs are taken up hand in hand, much improvement can not be made.'

Community Development must aim at utilizing fully all local resources of manpower, material, talent and leadership and their fullest development; relying as little as possible on outside help. This follows from the objective of community development that it should promote the spirit of self-help and self-reliance. In this lies the real strength of the programme; it uses to the best advantage what potentialities the under-developed countries may have and the way it helps to convert weakness into strength. The most important resource is the abundant manpower and its fullest utilization has to be one of the principal objectives. The process of community development works only through the willing participation of the people and so to get that participation, they should be allowed to determine what they want to do, when they want to do it and how they want to do it. In other words, there should be no imposition from outside. This takes us to the first and second characteristics which we have considered, i.e., that the programme must correspond to the basic needs of the people and that it must be a multi-purpose programme. All these characteristics are closely
inter-related. The connecting link is the people and they are the central theme of community development.

In the earlier pages, it was discussed how the unutilized manpower can be used by the intensification of agriculture and the development of village and small-scale industries. Still there will be surplus manpower particularly in off-seasons. To take economic advantage of this surplus labour, community development should take up useful capital producing works, such as; country roads, dams, irrigation and drainage works; public buildings, like schools etc. and their proper upkeep and use of community assets assured. In this manner, fuller utilization of the surplus manpower and local resources can be achieved. To use local material has often required the reviving of a craft or the training of some village people in a new skill. But this is precisely what the community development programme must do. This is what would add to the strength of the community, create more employment and more self-reliance.

Community Development programme should emphasize permanent improvements that will build up the people's capacity and confidence in themselves. Self-reliance can
only come through growing strength. If through the utilization of idle manpower useful community assets are created, they should be maintained and full benefits obtained from their use, be it a school house, panchayat ghar, a well or a seed store or a road. This puts the emphasis on economic improvements which enriches the community, on building up their organizations which ensure effective functioning of the community, on teaching new skills which make the members of the community more capable and on promoting the co-operative way of life which gives to the community greater strength. It requires that not only do we plan the activities and works to be taken up but also the follow-up action that is needed to obtain the permanent and ultimate results we intend to achieve. It is better to concentrate on a few key items in each field needing development and carry out the work with thoroughness and consolidate the gains. But in our programme such thorough work has not been done. Often new village roads have been built, wells have been dug, trees have been planted and school buildings have been constructed only to be neglected afterwards or not fully made use of, at the same time, still more of this kind of programme has been undertaken. Improper and incomplete use of irrigation from new
sources, constructed at very high costs, is an important and distressing example of a valuable initial gain not built upon and consolidated.

Community Development must distribute the benefits evenly among all classes of the community. This is closely related to the principle that the community must be approached as a whole and to the objective of promoting the solidarity of the community. Thus Community Development should aim at the development of all the people, irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. It is a programme which emphasizes that the interest in the development of the locality is necessarily and unavoidably common to all the people living there.

The benefits of education, youth activities, village housing, health improvements, women's programmes, agriculture and village industries should embrace all the members of the community. Likewise the amenities programme is for the entire community. Special efforts must be made to ensure that the backward classes and families take advantage of the new and improved facilities and opportunities. For example, an intensive education drive...
may be needed to persuade the poor families to send their children to school or the community may have to be educated to allow Harijan to use the village wells, community centres and other public utilities. In the distribution of loans and subsidies for productive purposes, care will have to be taken to see that these do not only go to the better off who because of their wealth and high status are able to contact the Community Development authorities easier.

Special programmes are needed for improving the economic and social uplift of the Harijans and scheduled tribes. Fortunately these have been taken up in our Community Development programme. Certain village trades have traditionally belonged to the Harijans; such as hides and bones. While they have to be assisted in these trades, the stigma of caste attached to the pursuit of these has to go and efforts made to promote mobility of labour between professions and trades. An important way of doing this is to modernize the methods followed in such trades so as to make them cleaner. Better housing for Harijans, teaching them cleaner habits in living and eating,
spreading literacy and education among them should have important place in the programme. Above all, their income must be increased.

Likewise, special projects have to be started in tribal areas. The tribal people have a distinct culture of their own, which has some weak features but some strong ones too. They live in greater geographical isolation, in difficult environments and in an extremely backwater and poor economy. It is of utmost importance to study first the culture and conditions of the tribe and they must be approached with deep sympathy and in a spirit of service.

Generally speaking, the tribal economy has to be developed around the proper utilization of forest wealth, the conversion of their shifting cultivation into settled cultivation, the development of subsidiary occupations like carpentry, bee-keeping, poultry, pottery etc. Their housing conditions have to be improved, health facilities provided and education enlarged and improved. The geographical isolation has to be ended by improvement of communication. Panchayat and Co-operative Institutions must be developed taking care to preserve the tribals' own pattern of community organization and functioning which has given them unity and strength for so long.
Thus to conclude the basic principles underlying the community development programme are self-help and cooperation. The driving force for improvement should come from the people of the community. The vast unutilized energy of the rural masses should be harnessed for constructive work and the co-operative principles is to be applied for implementing the programme. The programme emphasizes the fact that all aspects of rural life are inter-related and should be tackled simultaneously. There is need for an integrated approach, embracing all aspects of life. Self-help is at the root of all reform, the Government only assist with supplies, technical service and credit. As the basic aim of community development is to bring about a change in the mental outlook of the people, and to instil in them an ambition for higher standards of life and the will and the determination to work for such standards; the community development worker is required to give a new orientation to rural life whereby the people themselves may strive for their betterment. Thus the "main concept of the new pattern of rural society is that millions of families of farm owners should organize themselves in co-operatives of different kinds and take
decisions as free agents, practising scientific agriculture on the largest scale possible and finding supplementary occupations in a variety of decentralised cottage and small-scale industries, while the state will assist them by organizing research, supplies, services and credit. The basic considerations are not merely economic; there are non-material values and social gains which are equally important."

Community Development seeks to bring about change of outlook in various directions. The main directions in which the programme has to work are: firstly, increased employment and increased production by the application of scientific methods of agriculture, including horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, etc. and the establishment of cottage and subsidiary industries; secondly, self-help and self-reliance and the largest possible extension of the principle of co-operation; and thirdly, the need for devoting a portion of the vast unutilized time and energy in the countryside for the benefit of the community. For obvious reasons, economic development has to take precedence over welfare activities. But in a welfare state, such as

1 V.T. Krishnamachari. Community Development in India. op. cit. p. 15.
ours, the latter can not be neglected because of the demands of the farmer. The immediate concern of community development is increased agricultural production, but agricultural development has been conceived as a part of the wider process of rural development.

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru while delivering the inaugural speech at the First Development Commissioners' Conference at Delhi on May 7, 1952, stated, "These community projects appear to me to be something of vital importance, not only in the material achievements in that they would bring about, but much more so because they seek to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter a builder of his own village centre and of India in the larger sense." 1

According to Shri V.T. Krishnamachari, "the aim of Community Development and National Extension Service is not merely to provide for ample food, clothing, shelter, health and recreational facilities in the village.

1 Inaugural speech at the First Development Commissioners' Conference, held at Delhi (May 7 - 13, 1952) vide First Development Commissioners' Conference - Summary Record. 1952. p. 6."
All these are there, but what is emphasized is a change in the mental outlook of the people, the instilling in them of ambition for higher standards of life and the will and determination to work for such standards. This is essentially a human problem — how to change the outlook of the 70 million families living in the country-side, arouse in them enthusiasm for new knowledge and new ways of life. This is truly one of the most difficult problems that has ever faced a nation in the history of the world."

Dag Hammarskjöld, in a U.N. Report on Community Development Programme in India, while emphasising the aim of the programme wrote: "The aim of community project and national extension service is not merely to provide ample food, clothing and shelter, health and sanitation facilities in villages. More important than the immediate material improvement is the change in outlook of the people, instilling in them an ambition for a richer and fuller life and developing, the capacities for the individual so that he can master matters for himself."

1 V.T. Krishnamachari. Community Development in India. op. cit. p. 11.
At the Second Development Commissioners' Conference, while explaining the objectives of the programme, Shri V.T. Krishnamachari emphasized that Community Development should work towards leading rural population from chronic under-employment to full-employment; leading rural population from chronic agricultural under-production to full-production by application of scientific knowledge; the largest possible extension of the principles of co-operation by making rural families credit-worthy, and increased community effort for work of benefit to the community as a whole, such as village roads, tanks, wells, schools, community centres, children's parks etc.

To sum up, this programme is a living movement. It is the herald of freedom to the teeming millions in the rural areas. Through this programme a relentless but peaceful attack is waged on hunger, disease, squalor, ignorance and idleness. India achieved political freedom in 1947 but that was meaningless to our brethren in the villages who were living in economic slavery and social bondage.

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1 Second Development Commissioners' Conference: Summary Record. Delhi, April 1953, p. 9.
This programme was initiated with the object that the rural people will acquire new knowledge, new ways of life and a will to the fuller and richer life. In fact, this programme is ultimately intended to create the machinery for the fulfilment of the avowed objective of our Constitution, i.e., the establishment of a welfare state.

The field of Community Development is very vast. It can be undertaken in all parts of the world, be it a developed, semi-developed or under-developed region. Nearly 40 nations of the world have adopted it - both developing and developed nations admit the need for such an approach. But community development has much scope in under-developed and backward areas and much can be achieved in these areas through community development approach.

This type of approach can also be successfully adopted in areas which are inhabited by backward tribal communities. The term 'tribal community' generally refers to territorial communities living in relative isolation of hills and forests. Their comparative isolation has kept them apart from the main stream of society in the country.
The tribal areas are characterized by backwardness and a primitive economy. The culture of these people is quite different as compared with the rest of the country as well as the problems of one tribe is quite different from those of the other. Therefore, the methods and practices which are applied with great success for the welfare of one tribe may not and usually do not hold true in case of the other tribes.

There are many tribal customs and practices that are unique and healthy, which should be retained and developed. The qualities of their dialects and the rich content of their arts and crafts need to be appreciated, encouraged and developed. The approach should not be one of superiority. We should try to help and co-operate with them and try to win their confidence. With this approach, much can be accomplished in developing their economy and integrating them into the life of the nation.

Community Development approach can also be adopted in advanced countries, urban and metropolitan cities. With the Industrial Revolution in the latter half of the 18th century, great changes have taken place throughout the world. Industrial expansion has resulted in the migration of people from rural to urban areas and the concentration
of population in the cities and towns. The population increases so rapidly that it creates problems of dirt and squalor, over-crowding and slums. Thus the importance of improving health, sanitary and housing conditions of the urban centres acquires new dimensions. The problem must be solved without great delay if the industrial development is to continue.

In this connection, the observations of the Royal Commission on Labour are noteworthy:

"In the busiest centres, the houses are built close together, eaves touching eaves, and frequently back to back in order to make use of all the available space." Indeed the space is so valuable that in place of streets and roads, narrow and winding lanes provide the only approach to the house. Neglect of sanitation is often evidenced by heaps of rotting garbage, and pools of sewage, whilst the absence of latrines enhances the general pollution of air and soil. Houses, many without plinths, windows and adequate ventilation usually consist of a single small room, the opening being a door way often too low to enter without stooping. In order to ensure privacy, old kerosene tins and gunny bags are used to form screens which further restricts the entrance of air and light. In such dwellings, human-beings
are born, sleep and eat, live and die." The overcrowding of people in dark, ill-ventilated quarters in towns is also an important contributory cause of tuberculosis and other diseases and ills in cities.

These unhealthy and awful housing conditions force the workers to leave their families behind in the villages and stay alone in the cities. This leads to a great disparity in the ratios between the two sexes and the consequent evils of promiscuity, prostitution and venereal diseases. Over-crowding and slum conditions have cramping effect upon the physical and mental development of the inhabitants. No attempt at raising the standard of living of the people can be successful without an early solution to the housing problem, and clearance of slums. Even the most prosperous countries have not been able to solve this challenging problem. The community development approach to urban and advanced areas offers wide opportunities. In cities and towns, life is somewhat different from the life in underdeveloped areas. The city dwellers are from different ethnic and religious groups. Very often a man does not know who his next-door neighbour is, nor does he concern himself

1 Report of the Royal Commission on Labour. 1929: p. 78
with the joys and sorrows of his next-door neighbour. For all the amenities, he looks to the local body. Thus this impersonality and lack of civic responsibility is the characteristic feature of urban areas. There is thus need to develop new loyalties in the new towns' man and to discover a sense of belonging in him. There is need to promote community feeling and a sense of belonging so that people may contribute to the enrichment of its life. This can be achieved through community development approach.

Community Development covers a wide range of activities. It includes all such activities that enrich the lives of people materially and enhances human welfare. For example, this approach has been particularly rewarding in agriculture, health, education, home economics, village industries, housing, co-operation, social welfare etc.

According to Cambridge Summer Conference on African Administration, "Community development embraces all forms of betterment. It includes the whole range of development activities in the district whether these are undertaken by Government or unofficial bodies; in the field of agriculture by securing the adoption of better methods of
soil conservation, better methods of farming and better care of live-stock; in the field of health by promoting better sanitation and water supplies, proper measures of hygiene, infant and maternity welfare; in the field of education by spreading literacy and adult education as well as by the extension and improvement of schools for children. In fact, community development includes almost everything that enriches life and a better social order—industrialization, agricultural development, education, health, employment, eradication of poverty, family planning and a host of other things.