CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 NEED FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In India eighty percent of the population lives in Rural Areas and the Rural economy is predominantly agrarian in nature and in many cases subsistence prevailed. Marginal productivity of labour is low and there is ample evidence of unemployment. Productivity is low, due to reasons such as obsolete practices in farming and cultivation, low yielding crop varieties, the absence of modern technology and even resistance to change in attitude towards development. The rural economy has also been neglected in our country during the early stages of national development, the focus being given to growth in the urban centres and the emphasis on industrialization. This subsequently created a lopsidedness in the national economy, the end result of which was poverty and the rural economy was unable to free itself from the yoke of the so-called vicious circle of poverty.

Hence the Indian Planners have realised the need for systematic and pervasive development of rural sector for--

rural sector forms the major portion of the country with the large majority poor,

rural resources are not fully exploited and developed,

rural economy forms the base of national economy and its contribution to the Gross National Product is very substantial. It provides raw materials and manpower for industrial development, serves as a potential market for industrial products, produces food for population, employs a large portion
of the civilian labour force and is also a source of government revenue, rural and urban sectors have mutual with dependance for overall development, rural areas have not received the benefits of development made at their costs, in the required proportion, rural areas are the potential sources of problems as well as development.

To remedy the above state of affairs, Rural Development Programmes were initiated and undertaken by Government of India so that the gap between the country-side and the developed urban centres could be minimised. This resulted in embarking on the process of modernising the rural environment to increase the rural productivity, to bring forth changes in employment pattern, changes in levels and distribution of income and wealth enhancement in the articulation of interest reflected to the extent of influence of rural population on the local and national decision-making processes, changes in class mobility and changes in values, benefits and attitudes favourable to development.

**Past strategies of Rural Development**

The strategy of development in India is well reflected in the very preamble of the constitution of India adopted after independence. As the basic law of the country the constitution had taken steps in the direction of elimination of injustices and inadequacies prevalent in the socio-economic system. In consonance with the broad objectives of the constitution, the first five year plan initiated a process of all-round, balanced development to ensure rising national income and a steady improvement in the living standards of the
masses over a period. The second five year plan was based on the strategy of developing a socialistic pattern of society with a long term policy of economic and social development, which aimed at social gain which resulted not only in appreciable increase in national income and employment but also in greater inequality in incomes and wealth.

The first step in giving a concrete shape to this strategy was the introduction of Community Development Programme which was visualised as a multipronged effort for total development of rural life. It conceived that economic aspects of village life cannot be detached from the broader social aspects and the agricultural development is inextricably linked with a whole set of social problems. This being so, no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation. While community development provided the content of the programme, panchayatiraj system built up the greatly needed administrative frame work for effective mobilisation of human resources. The logical allay in this effort was the cooperative movement based on voluntary action.

The implementation of Community Development Programme was marked by several unanticipated critical situations in the country resulting in stagnation of food production on the one hand and diversification of resources to non-economic activities on the other in the sixties. This necessitated a shift in policy from broad based Community Development approach to a sharper focus on the food production. The shift brought about a new approach adopted through introduction of Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP) and Intensive Agriculture Area Programme (IAAP) which were a success and culminated in the ushering in of green revolution with remarkable achievements in food production. While this constituted the main thrust of development strategy, several other complementary policies and strategies were
initiated for rural development. The policy on land reforms stands out in bold relief during the sixties and seventies in this regard. Laws imposing ceilings on holdings were enacted in all states with a view to reducing wide disparities and distributing surplus land among the landless households, particularly those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The development of rural industries is another facet of this strategy. These industries are particularly suited for better utilization of local resources and for the achievement of local self-sufficiency in respect of certain types of goods. To overcome the problem of organisation, six all India Boards of Handloom, Handicrafts, Coir, Sericulture, small scale industries and Khadi and Village Industries were established. Slowly plan to plan periods, training facilities, technical services for the programme in the wake of which rural industrial estates were established and the focus of the rural industries had been shifted from social and ideological to economic consideration and promotion of small industries in backward areas by providing physical concessions.

The third shift in rural development strategy took place in late 60s when evaluation of the development programme indicated that small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers were not getting their due share from the development planning. In order therefore to specially benefit them, series of special programmes both area and beneficiary oriented were introduced. The small farmers' development agency, the various employment programmes, such as the Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE), Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (PIREP) etc. and the Food - for - Work programme were attempts in this direction for giving benefits to the identified target groups. At the same time area oriented development programmes such as Minimum - Needs Programme, Drought-Prone Area
Programme (DPAP) Hill area development project, Desert Development Programme, Integrated Tribal Project and Command Area Development Programme were also initiated with the main objective of utilising available resource potential in specific areas and also providing infrastructure and institutional net work.

To sum up the experience with rural development in the 1960s and 70s is a classic example of the evolutionary approach towards the development objectives. The strategies in this regard were evolved through distinct phases, beginning with community development, the strategy encompassing the panchayatiraj with the objective of strengthening government efforts through popular participation.

Present Strategy:

The unintended consequences of the strategy followed during the period were the growing disparities between areas and sections of population which led to the introduction of target group and area oriented special programmes of development, constituting a departure from the earlier strategy. The new found Integrated Rural Development strategy is the present phase, based on the continuous search for appropriate strategies to achieve the objective of an egalitarian society within the frame work as enshrined in our constitution.

The present strategy of rural development is mainly built around attempts at creating gainful employment and income opportunities for the assetless rural poor and also for those who have very thin land-base. While this strategy is essentially sound and should continue in the future, what needs to be visua-
lised at the local level (district and below) is a total strategy of rural development combining efforts of IRDP, RLEG, NREP, Minimum-Needs Programme, Family Welfare, Education and Health so that there is effective inter-sectoral integration to bring about a socio-economic transformation. In order to realise this objective three important aspects need to be emphasized:

Effective Planning and Management of Rural Development Programmes and Projects.

Decentralisation of planning and development by providing more autonomy in decision-making and deployment of funds for fulfilment of area specific development priorities, and

Organisational support by strengthening the planning and administrative structures at the district and block levels both of adequate personnel and their capacity to perform the tasks.

Planning has done much more to promote growth in rural areas, but there have been many more failures than success in the implementation of developmental plans, and in consistently achieving reasonable plan targets over an estimated period.

Moreover the gap between promise and performance appears to be widening.

Plan implementation (without distinguishing it from planning of plan implementation) has been considered among the major factors for the failings of Indian planning. Waterson puts forth the view that a planner becomes a know-all and do-all and the problems of implementation become as those
of 'administration and politics'. It is views such as this which justify the case that planners have "no special competence to deal with the question how plans are to be implemented because this aspect largely involves administrative, institutional and political factors". Also Dantwala points out that "In any critical appraisal of our planning efforts, it is now almost common place to say that the greatest defect from which it suffers is the sphere of implementation. This has now been freely admitted even in official documents. The publications of the programme evaluation organisation of the planning commission and the committee on plan projects have pinpointed the precise areas in which implementation has failed. The Planning Commission has taken cognizance of this and, from time to time, made suggestions for improvement in implementation. The real trouble is that inspite of all these evaluation self-criticisms and remedial prescriptions, the malady persists, perhaps it is getting aggravated".¹

This may be partly attributed to the absence of implementation plans in project report and to the inadequacies of implementation plans. And also to the inadequate coordination among the planning, administrative, institutional and political agencies. Hence it needs to bring about a change in formulation of projects, programmes at the district level. In order to achieve effective and timely implementation of projects or programmes at micro level a clear-cut time-bound implementation plan indicating coordination among the planning, administrative, institutional and political agencies is to be incorporated in the project or programme formulation itself.

Existing procedure of Project Planning and Management of Rural Development Projects:

Project formulation, management and evaluation have emerged as the crucial tasks in a local development effort. However, the skill involved needs improvement at the district and local level organisations for administering special programmes and rural development programmes. During recent years, Special organisations like DPAP, DRDA, SFDA and Command Area Development Authority have been established. They deflect more towards decentralisation in project planning and implementation than departmental approach. The objective of the special programmes administered by these organisations is to formulate a realistic resource-based integrated plan for the development of the target group or area or people. This involves systematic collection of data, analysis of specific problems, identification of feasible projects and skills in project formulation and implementation. Though the project formulation and execution has emerged as the corner stone of the development effort at the local level, no district administration has yet developed the adequate capacity to formulate and execute reasonably complex projects although now, perhaps for the first time these organisations created for the implementation of the special programmes have been provided with adequate power to do so.

1.2 REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Rural Development Programmes implemented so far in India have, by and large, not been successful in improving the lot of rural people, especially the rural poor. Although the country has made impressive progress in increasing food grain production and industrial production, and in building up socio-economic infrastructure during successive five year plans, the benefits of
development have not been equitably shared by all. Uneven benefits of development have aggravated the problems of poverty and unemployment which have manifested themselves in various problems including social unrest, malnutrition, slums, secular, cultural and economic vulnerability etc. The growing poverty and unemployment in the country undermine the principal objectives of planned development, i.e. improvement in the standard of living of the masses. There could be a multitude of factor influencing the success or failure of a development programme. These factors include physical, technological, economic, sociocultural, and political environment in which the programme operated; the natural, human and financial resources available for the programme; the programme strategy, the operationality and consistency of programme objectives, the absence, or the presence of vertical and horizontal linkages, the nature of planning, programming, implementation and management processes; the degree of peoples' participation in the programme etc. Where as we concede the importance of all these factors in influencing the performance of a development programme, the focus here is on planning and management interventions. The rationale for this focus is the growing realization by development policy makers, planners, and administrators both in India as well as in other developing countries that the problems of management of development programmes have not received the attention they deserve.² This is achieved at distilling, from India's experience with Integrated Rural Development Programme(IRDP), some lessons of planning and managerial significance. IRDP is the latest and largest anti-poverty programme currently underway in the country. It represents a synthesis of various strategies and approaches tested and found successful in the past. We consider the lessons of both success and failures as important for generating useful insights and lessons.

The lessons are stated as propositions, each of which specifies a condition stated as necessary for the success of a programme and could be created by appropriate management interventions. The validity of each proposition is tested by the evidence marshalled from IRDP as well as various other agricultural rural development programmes.

Planning for Management and related aspects:

In recent years, project planning methodology has become more sophisticated, elaborate and potentially more useful as an aid to rational resource allocation. Much of the refinement has come from the application of welfare economics and development theory at the micro (Project) level. Those exploring and proposing improved methods of social benefit cost analysis (or economic or social appraisal) have met with some criticism on theoretical and operational grounds. However it is important to recognise the considerable progress that has been made in the past ten years or so in formulating procedures by which improved and or consistent project choices may be made.

There has been little in the way of parallel development in what can be termed 'Planning for implementation and management'. The functional components of project planning and management may be as follows; identification, design, prepare appraise, select and establish or construct or implement operate, evaluate and terminate or integrate respectively.

Note that the planning components can be best seen as applied to point alternatives, the selection component thus consists of choosing the 'best' alternative on the basis of comprehensive appraisal of the way, new initiatives have been identified, designed and prepared and relating this to established criteria of acceptability. One selection option is of course that of choosing...
not to carry out the project or any of the project options as formulated. The best alternative may, therefore, be the 'no projects' alternative.

The management components come into operation only if projects pass through the decision barrier at planning component(s) and are implemented. This distinction between essential planning and consequent management is one underlying reason for the apparent neglect of implementation planning and management.

The need to improve Project Management:

Disappointing and inadequate development project performance is a fact of life. The reasons for 'failure' are numerous and the inter-relationships are complex. Any ex post evaluation study is likely to produce a long list of constraints on effective project performance. Any attempt to produce a comprehensive checklist for all projects reveals a plethora of what have been called 'project planning and management problems' when looked at within the frame work described above. However, it is possible to make a workable distinction between planning and management which will then enable to concentrate on the latter.

The project success may be dependent on the execution of planned management action by the representatives of those agencies playing a vital supporting role. Within the project context, the important phase is planned management action. This suggests that there are areas of project management, sometimes

within and sometimes outside the designated executors or personal control, which can be planned. In other words, one set of reasons for project failures is based on the inadequate performance by those responsible for executing policy and/or cooperating along certain established lines. This raised a lot of questions about the extent to which effective management and implementation planning involved a greater degree of participation than that which is provided by the classical management model. The responses of the project formulator and those appraising the project should also contemplate the sensitivity test of the project, in respect of its planning for project management in addition to certain other assumptions.

At another, equally important level, many development projects involve the deliberate improvement or sometimes the transformation of the environment within which people live and work. Rural and urban settlements, irrigation schemes, credit and advisory packages to farmers, traders or small businessmen, public health projects and vocational training initiatives are just some examples of this type of activity. Many of those ventures require an approach to 'management' which is very different from that applicable to the private cooperation or the established civil service department. Here the unplannable element is not determined by the vagaries of the weather or political instability but rather by the requirement to continually consult and co-operate with those who are the direct beneficiaries in such a way that flexibility in method of operation within an overall objective is essential.

Those involved in formulating such projects have a responsibility to design a management structure which is, at the least, compatible with the develop-

ment of flexible, consultative style of administration and at best positively encourage the same with the time and financial constraints which obtain.

It is now apparent that the artificial distinction made between planning and managing cannot be sustained. Once we begin to look more closely at the reasons behind a particular level of performance and try to relate them solely to the way management has been executed, it becomes apparent that we cannot divorce operational management as a set of specific activities from the project planning sequence as a whole. There are two reasons for this. The first is that those involved in project management or the management of activities which directly affect project outcomes have, of necessity, to be aware of the set of technical, economic and (where appropriate) social objectives within which the project operates. Unless the responsibilities accepted by those chosen to manage a project are based on a real understanding of not only 'how' but 'why' the project was designed in a particular way, we cannot expect the kind of consistency which project analysis assumes. Those carrying out re-appraisals and evaluations may observe that a project has changed markedly in operation from the way it was originally designed without any apparent reason.

In these circumstances, the project plan, far from being a guide for the manager, may become an historic document which has served its purpose as a means of 'selling' the project to the final decision-makers. This makes a mockery of appraisal methodology by relegating those who apply it to a negative role of eliminating bad projects.\(^5\)

\(^5\). See P.P. Streeten 'Development Planning problems and possible solutions'. Foreign Trade Review, April-June, 1976 P.29, for a warning about the mechanical appraisal of appraisal techniques.
The second reason why we cannot sensibly separate operational project management as an activity from the overall planning framework within which it fits is because, as discussed above, there is a specific but inter-related part of planning which should be concerned with the design, preparation and appraisal of management and institutional requirements. Note that this is not restricted to the appraisal of available managerial and institutional resources as seen typically by the external financier. Alternative management and administration frameworks and producers can be and often should be designed and prepared much in the same way that alternative technologies and location are considered prior to appraisal. This can of course only be integrated as a planning activity if it is elevated from what has often been in the past a last minute inclusion of a standard management structure in a project document.

If the arguments already spelled out above, which all seem to demonstrate the need for giving more emphasis to the integration of project management, are acceptable, it is somewhat surprising that more has not been done to promote this area of planning. It may be helpful to survey briefly some of the reasons for this apparent neglect as this may help us to focus on the practical implications for improvement.


Neglect of Management Planning - Some reasons:

The prime reason for the neglect is the continued and even increasingly intensified compartmentalisation of development project-planning activity. This takes two forms; the first is the distinction between planner and manager or Executor or Implementor and the second is the distinction between planner and planner. We will consider these in turn and show the relevance to management planning.

The gap between those who plan and those who execute, is quite wide in development project planning. The distinctions should be recognised as artificial but permanent. The separateness of project planning from project management is not a problem which small or medium scale entrepreneurs encounter; it develops from the necessary rigidities and specializations of public sector and large company administration. As far as the individual government officer is concerned movement from planner to manager and vice-versa may be possible, and where encouraged and built into middle and senior level staff planning it can only help to develop greater understanding on both sides. Although this is a desirable policy it is not one which is easily accommodated within understated and inexperienced government departments. In the medium term many of the problems which arise out of the separateness will remain. The first step should therefore be to recognise this and plan the management input with greater care through deliberately developing an awareness amongst planners of what is entailed in the day-to-day running of projects.

Distinctions between planners and planners are no less serious and only help to limit planner-manager interaction. Technical planners may mainly concen-
strate on design components and economists may be mainly found carrying out appraisals. Although this appears logical, it would be productive only if there is a constant interaction between planners of all kinds, including the financial analyst and administration specialist. Ministerial and departmental hierarchies and orders of precedence may work against, rather than for, integration. If the separateness of one planning component from the others is perpetrated it is even more difficult for those involved in project work to effectively develop a realistic approach to management planning. It remains an after thought not only through ignorance of its importance but because there is no way in which it can be effectively introduced into a planning sequence which is already over-divided and over-specialised. Creshkoff suggests that "the walks between project analysis and project management as conventionally understood and practiced must be broken down". He envisages a dismantling of the walls between analyst and analyst as a necessary first step.

Another reason why project management planning has been neglected at a time when much intellectual effort has been devoted to other aspects of planning may arise from its complexity. The organisational structure of some development programmes is daunting to the analyst whilst at the same time presenting a considerable challenge to those who seek for improvements in operational efficacy. Rondinelli and Ruddle draw an example of complexity from an agrarian reform programme in the Philippines, where specific schemes required institutional cooperation amongst sixteen major government agencies.

and upto ten separate governmental financial institutions. The more integrated the project the more complex the management and the more difficult the task of operational analysis.

Paradoxically, planning for management can also be seen as a comparatively unattractive area for academic research. The project establishment and construction component lends itself to the application of scheduling charting and networking techniques and the management formation and monitoring and control functions of the operating component present all sorts of opportunities for modified systems analysis. Generally speaking these have been seen as management service or public administration areas rather than as opportunities for the applied economist or even the technologist. The research and investigative work needed is of an applied type and does not easily and productively lend itself to theoretical developments or model building. Fortunately there are sins that increased dissatisfaction with project performance are presenting areas for interdisciplinary work of a type which will enable us to eventually make informed recommendations for styles and methods of management based on a real understanding of the needs, opportunities and in-built constraints.

Project Management - Trouble spots:

As Dennis pointed out, an expost evaluation of any project reveals the possible major sources of trouble as (a) poor initial evaluation and plan (b) failure to use available techniques and (c) lack of organisational structure of some development programme or inadequacy of organisational efficiency.
Poor initial evaluation and plan:

Poor evaluation and planning of any project will clearly lead to problems later on. The executor must be aware of the sensitivity of the assumptions so that he can take care in the areas where a small error in an assumption has a large effect on the project outcome. An essential aspect of any sound project plan is that the individual parts of the plan have the support of the managers (executors) who will carry them out. However one must recognise that external influences are source of project problems. If complete definition is not possible, then the areas of confusion should at least be recognised and carefully monitored. Care should be taken in particular about the recording and dissemination of decisions.

Failure to use available techniques:

Clearly in any work, the most effective techniques should be used. Particularly in the project management area itself proven management techniques should be used. Their use in itself will not guarantee success. An intelligent and understanding use of modern project management techniques will help to avoid many problems and to foresee others before it is too late to do something about them. For any large project with a life extending into years the evaluation should make use of discounting techniques such as Discount cash flow (DCF) etc.

Attempts to control complex projects on the back of an envelope are likely to prove disastrous. Charts and graphs will provide a useful tool for judging

---

9. Frank A Wilson - Lecturer Course Director, Rural Development Project Course, Project Planning Centre for developing countries, University of Bradford.
progress. But to ensure that you get a sound logical slack of all activities some form of network techniques should be used. PERT - Programme Evaluation and Review Technique is the best known area most widely used. If it is used and frequently updated, it certainly helps to highlight the areas that are running into trouble. This may be laborious to do, but computer programmes could indeed take a lot of the sheer slog out of the work of updating. It is certainly worth putting network on to a computer if you have more than about 200 activities in it.

It is generally realised that project progress in terms of time must be controlled. However, project progress in terms of cost and resources also need to be controlled and extensions of the PERT techniques help the implementor to do this. A well-prepared and frequently updated network is a great help in deciding what trade-offs between time, cost and performance or worthwhile. With a computer it is, of course, possible to tryout a whole series of alternative courses on the network in a comparatively short span of time.

Techniques are not the be-all and end-all of successful projects but they can be a great help in forestalling problems. We have mentioned only the more obvious ones but any project executor could find out about and investigate many techniques that could help him.

**Failure to identify and concentrate on critical items:**

If a project has been properly planned initially and a network for the project produced, then a critical path through the network will have been identified. If the logic that goes into the creation of the network is thoroughly tested
then clearly the project executor or implementor automatically concentrates his attention on the critical items by focussing on the activities along the critical path. This is an important activity in helping him to decide how to allocate his own time. It is necessary to recognise that projects are dynamic. The network once drawn does not represent a static situation. The critical path once identified, does not necessarily represent the critical path for all time.

For a complex project with many activities, one would expect to find different activities moving on to or off the critical path at each progress review. This makes it important to have frequent updates of the network and also not to neglect activities that lie just off the critical path at any instant. Similarly it is wise to watch out for activities however much float or contingency there is on them, if they start to slip in real time. In other words, if their completion date goes back four weeks at each four weekly review one ought to be on the look out for trouble.

**Inadequate information flow:**

Variations against the project plan are inevitable and with a flexible plan a high proportion of variations will be handled without an appreciable impact. However, for this it is essential to have a free and honest flow of information. Where progress is to a certain extent a matter of judgement, the fact remains that there is a greatest possibility of problems arising because the information flow is inadequate.

An information system that warns the project implementor promptly of things going wrong is essential to the success of any project. The emphasis should
be on helping to overcome the problems and not on allocating blame. By this we do not mean that weak excuses should be accepted. If necessary the pressure must be put on but not in such a way as to stop or slow down the flow of accurate and up-to-date information.

**Achieving changes in project planning emphasis**

Any discussion about what is the major constraint on effective project performance is almost certain to be inconclusive. Hence there is a need to encourage thinking and discussion about the need to give increased recognition to the fact that the planning for implementation and management is an important area for all who are directly involved in developing planning work. It is possible to identify three main areas of activity which will assist in bringing about change in emphasis by those who plan development projects and therefore by those who research, teach and advise in this area.

The first area is directed towards training on the job, formal experience and post graduate training. It should be attempted to develop a better understanding of the nature of management science and public administration and their application to project management work. One should more deliberately try to avoid any distinction between the principles and practice of planning on the one hand and the principles and practice of management on the other. It can be done best by encouraging a much greater integration between planners from different disciplines. Secondly it must be necessary to recognise that although management as a function comes late in the 'project sequence' its planning must be an integral part of those planning components

---

which include the design and preparation of project options. Specially looked at from a governmental development planning viewpoint, almost all projects can be seen as being means to an end rather than ends in themselves. This is particularly the case where the innovative areas are not only concentrated on new technologies, skills and markets but also on increased management participation or self-management by producer or community groups. The more that one gets involved in planning or helping to plan projects of this type then the more essential it is to pay greater attention to the design, preparation and appraisal of management and implementation alternative.

Ex-post evaluation of existing projects can be the means by which we can systematically seek to analyse the potential for improving project management. Evaluation studies give the opportunity for developing a greater understanding of the way projects are managed and implemented. This type of investigation research is a necessary base for further work which would concentrate on assessing the achievement or non-achievement of project objectives. At this level there is a need to improve ex-post evaluation methodology so that we can begin to distinguish between 'management performance' determined achievement levels as opposed to those primarily determined by technical and economic design. Although we cannot and should not even expect to totally disentangle technical and economic planning performance from management, it is clear that only by carrying out more evaluation studies we can begin to constructively indicate the main problem areas. Having done this we should then be in a better position to advise on the ways in which better project management can be planned and achieved.

Unequal power equation because of the dominant position of land owners
in the national legislature\textsuperscript{11} resulting in unequal allocation of developmental facilities and the successful manipulation of the development process by the rich farmers has then its main source in their capacity to influence directly or indirectly the political decision-making.

At the level of government there does not seem to be present an adequate role perception and role performance. This reflects partly their centralised model of planning and service delivery system and partly their reluctance to strengthen, synchronise and direct the administrative and institutional flows in order to enable the poor to enhance their social and economic status and to ultimately control their environment. Almost all rural development programmes, and their financial allocations and administrative strategies are formulated in national or state capitals. And in most cases, these are treated as immutable at the ground level. Frequently this services to breed an administrative situation unrelated to field reality. Consequently the locality - level administrative system develops river strains.

Similarly, the legitimacy of the local bodies like panchayats and their important role have generally not been recognised. As the Ashok Mehta Committee argued, these institutions have not been given a chance "to serve as a vanguard of development in ville India".\textsuperscript{12} An inevitable consequence has been a largely inconspicuous involvement of the people at the grassroots level in the development process. Thus there is a clear case for decentralisation.

\textsuperscript{11} Figures collected from a 1982 of occupational background of the MPs, made by reference, research, documentation and information service of the Lok Sabha.

\textsuperscript{12} Report, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, New Delhi. 1978, Pg. 5-6.
and through decentralised planning and administrative system, it is possible not only to realise the objective of participatory rural development, but also to secure local-specific, maximal administrative mobilisation.

The considered view of Dantwala's group on Block-level planning and to entrust planning functions solely to the Zilla Parishads as these are better data based and more experts at the district level. Besides the infrastructure building function except basic village infrastructural and social facilities such as clinics, schools, agricultural demonstration centre, extension and similar types could be enlisted solely to the ZPs. But the formulation and implementation of individual beneficiary schemes should by and large lie within the orbit of authority of the Mandal Panchayats because of their nearness to the clientele. Besides, maintenance of community assets should be vested in the Mandal Panchayats.

An organisational problem concerns an appropriate structuring of operational relations between the local bodies and development departments or agencies at substate levels. The emphasis is on the need for adequate horizontal co-ordination. In order to maximise coordination and minimise polarisation, it is necessary to set up what R. Likest Calls, multiple, overlapping group structure. In every key activity area a cross-function work group comprising the departmental or institutional heads in the field and the local body representatives at district and sub-district levels, requires to be established. The most important function is to see that at each territorial level coordination is secured in terms of what is best for specific problem

solving. At all district and sub-district units in development administration, there has to be decentralisation of powers including financial powers. Devolution and decentralisation must grow together. A wide area of discretion within the framework of broad "decision rules" should be given to the field staff.  

Need for Research:

It is evident from the above review that most of the studies revealed that planning and management are treated as separate entities and thereby missing the link between them led to the non-utilisation of available management techniques, the neglect in improving the efficacy of the existing organisations and evolving an adequate and required organisational structure.

Research concentrating on the integration of planning and management, the importance that is to be given for management planning, visualisation of implementation and management planning process at the time of project formulation, utilisation of available management techniques and improving the efficacy of the existing organisations and evolving an adequate and appropriate organisational structure for an effective planning and management of rural development projects through an action research process are almost lacking. Comparative studies on identification of constraints problem solving, diffusion and adoption of solutions derived and repetition of cycle are totally lacking.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

There have been many blessings of planned approach to rural development but its failures in the implementation of rural development projects or programmes have overshadowed its success. Very few development projects have succeeded in consistently achieving targets over the estimated period resulting in widening the gap between promise and performance. This has affected the take off in the developing countries where capital as a factory of production is in short supply. This is mainly because of concentration of 'how quickly' rather than on 'how well' money is spent and defective implementation at the grassroot level which often leads to serious short falls in the output targets. Apart from several casual factors most of the resultant problems are attributed to the poor planning and faulty implementation. This was greatly attributed to the absence of inadequate assessment of economic viability and feasibility, time consciousness in completing programme action plans, involvement of participating departments and the community, failure to make use of management techniques available and lack of organisational requirement with adequate capability for an effective planning, implementation and management by close monitoring and control at the district level, although now, perhaps for the first time, these organisations have been vested with adequate powers to do so.

It is in this context, the present study is initiated to fill up the gap of research in identification of constraints at planning and management stage, problem solving with the help of management techniques available, diffusion and adoption of solutions through Action Research Process for effective planning and management of Rural Development projects with the following objectives:
1.4 OBJECTIVES:

The present study initiated aims at the following objectives:

To work out the modalities for estimating the benefits of area development, community and individual oriented rural development projects so as to improve upon the decision making process for selecting the micro level projects at the district level.

To derive the procedures for avoiding time delays in planning and management of development projects with the help of modern management techniques.

To explore the possibility of finding a suitable institutional framework for developing expertise and efficiency at the district level functionaries for an effective planning and management of rural development projects.

To bring about a change in formulation, implementation, monitoring evaluation and feedback mechanism (Planning and Management of rural development projects) at the district level by effecting suitable organisational change.

1.5 METHODOLOGY:

In order to achieve the mentioned objectives, an Action Research methodology was adopted in terms of problem identification (diagnosis), problem solving (providing solutions), creating expertise for clientele by adopting consultancy approach to cope with the problems of estimating the benefits of area development, community and individual oriented rural development projects through economic appraisal techniques and to avoid time delays in implementation and benefit gaps of the projects to the target group by using PERT/CPM techniques for time scheduling and resource allocation, and to propose suitable
organisational augmentation to institutionalise such an Action Research process in order to achieve an effective planning and management of Rural Development Projects at the District level. The whole exercise was carried out with a minor irrigation project as a case for illustration.

**About Action Research:**

In contrast to 'pure' research, a programme of 'action' research may be defined, in conventional sense, as an extended sociological experiment to bring forth a pre-designed change in a given society in a given region. In an action research 'experiment', the researcher has a specific goal attainment in view; he not only aims at analysing and understanding a phenomenon, but also attempts at changing, through participation, the course of a particular socio-economic movement, the phenomenon under study to a 'desired direction' from what it would be in the absence of the experiment. The project should be infused with sufficient inner dynamism so that both the action plan and research design could be continually reviewed and the necessary modification incorporated in them.

**Action Research as a tool:**

Broader concern:

Although action research primarily helps the client-system in the problem-solving process through scientific methods, the concern of action research may not be limited to making the research process and the problem solving process merely more effective. It may go beyond these of which the relevant to the present study are as below:
Achieving Effective Praxis:

The major concern of action research is to move towards an effective praxis—the integration of action, research and the process. This would require the consultant not only to have research competence but also possess capability to help the client group become more effective as a system.\(^{15}\)

Maximising Learning:

Action research provides an opportunity both to the client system and the consultant to learn from each other. Freire\(^{16}\) has emphasised this, much more emphatically when he said that the learners should not be treated as an object but as a subject. The change agent should first become a learner, learning from the client-system. The consultant can be much more effective if he continuously keeps a learning stand and uses every opportunity of working with a client-system to learn various ways of becoming more effective. Thus, the role of the consultant in raising questions and generating alternatives may help the client-system to continuously learn and grow.

Developing Research Competence:

Action Research would fail in its purpose, if it merely focusses on solving a problem and preparing an action plan for the specific problem. The main focus of action research should be to develop competence of the client to use scientific ways of solving problems. In this way the consultant can become dispensable and may be able to make the client-system much more self-reliant.

---


Developing Creativity:

Effective action research contributes to the capacity of the client-system to take risk in trying out new solutions. Even when the client-system is looking for well tried out methods, by generating alternatives, and by encouraging the client-system to discuss the probable consequence of the various alternatives, the consultant can help the client-system to move towards a more creative problem solving. Creativity can be maximised by helping the client-system to think of as many alternatives as possible, and in generating and examining several possible solutions to a problem. The more complex the problems are, the greater the need for creativity. Some specially designed programmes and exercises for generating creativity in the client-system can also be employed.

Developing New values and cultures:

The emphasis on process implies working towards a new organisational culture that is more conducive for solving problems and for developing collaborative arrangements to take action on such problems. The way in which action research is conducted should help in the development of such a culture. This can be done if this is kept in mind from the beginning i.e., from the diagnosis of the problem to the last stage of evaluation and replanning. Various ways of constituting the work teams working on action and evaluation can be used to develop such a culture.

Action Research Process:

Based on the above mentioned principles of Action Research process, for the purpose of present study a minor irrigation project Sunkeswari Anicut,

a completed project, was evaluated in Chapter-2 in order to identify the problem and to maximise learning process with the help of the concerned Minor Irrigation department. While evaluating the project in terms of its impact, the problems at the time of formulating, Decision making, implementation, monitoring and management of the project were identified and the need for the use of economic appraisal techniques for an effective decision making process was realised. However, since the project was completed or executed, the decision could not be changed but improvement of other aspects were thought off. It was also identified that absence of clear cut implementation plan has also abnormally delayed the project implementation which necessitated the application of PERT/CPM management techniques.

Action plan was proposed to the same project based on the identified problems to improve the situations of project benefits to be accrued to the target groups. While preparing the Action Plan for Sunkeswari project, the management techniques PERT/CPM were used to adhere to the time schedule contemplated and the effective use of available resources so as to derive the benefits within the stipulated period. While the action plan was prepared in consultation with the Minor Irrigation Department which is the executing agency the researcher was closely involved and coordinated with the other participating departments in achieving the desired results of the project as detailed in Chapter-3.

While passing through the stages of the study, the researcher inculcated effective praxis, maximised learning, research competence and creativity process among the participating agencies such as Department of Minor Irrigation, Soil conservation, Agriculture Department, financing institutions and among the farming groups.
The identified gaps with respect to formulation, implementation, and monitoring and management procedures with respect to the benefits accrued to the target groups and the impact of the project have served as a feedback mechanism to develop solutions and try them on the same Sunkeswari project, to bridge the gaps. The involvement of the researcher helped both the district level officials and the researcher to arrive at a common objective in achieving the applicability of modified methods of project planning and management procedures. At this stage an important task of establishing linkage between the financial institutions, researcher and development department and a coordinated system of implementation was anticipated to be achieved.

As a next stage of Action Research process to achieve and to exploit the full benefit of Action research, an important aspect of Action research, viz., involvement of officials of Minor Irrigation Department at the district level as counterparts in planning for new minor irrigation project and providing training in the planning and management process of Minor irrigation projects was contemplated. In this regard a new minor irrigation project at Madananthapuram, Hampa village in Pathikonda Taluk of Kurnool District was taken up for planning. This project was formulated taking all the constraints, problems identified in the evaluated and action planned Sunkeswari Minor Irrigation project. The project is six times the evaluated project in terms of its costs. Economic appraisal techniques and PERT/CPM management techniques were applied while appraising (initial evaluation) planning and implementing the project. A detailed project report was prepared indicating criteria for decision making process, implementation planning and monitoring procedures in terms of management information systems were included with the help of modern management techniques so as to achieve effective planning, execution and management of RD projects. Details of this project are furnished in Chapter-4.
At this stage an action seminar on project planning and management in terms of monitoring and concurrent evaluation of the project was organised and conducted in collaboration with development administration group, University of Birmingham, U.K. involving the Junior, Assistant, and Executive engineers of the Minor Irrigation Department who are involved in planning and management of minor irrigation projects at the field level. At this stage of action research, it was contemplated to create expertise among the officials involved in planning execution and management of minor irrigation and Rural Development Projects, the details of which are discussed in Chapter-5.

Based on the experiences at various stages of action research process, a manual on minor irrigation projects was developed which presents simple step-by-step guidelines for formulation, implementation, monitoring and management of these projects. The draft manuals were discussed with the concerned officials, link organisation (NIRD) and with the other district level officials. Institutionalisation of manual is contemplated and a model manual on an integrated Minor Irrigation Project is presented in Chapter-6.

In the above mentioned Action Research process, the coordination among the planning, administrative, political and institutional agencies was contemplated and an organisational augmentation was derived which can play the role of researcher with the existing organisational structure at the district level. The idea for such an organisational augmentation was to try out the said institutional frame work in solving the lack of academic guidance in problem identification, deriving solution, to make use of available management techniques and research results; creating expertise in applying modern management techniques for an effective planning and management of rural development
projects by adopting Action Research Methodology viz; Research-Development-Diffusion-Adoption model. This system of action research process would get repeated either on annual plan basis or on project basis, so as to incorporate corrective measures based on the previous annual plan or projects, in the case of future plan or projects. The augmented organisation would act as liaison agency among the administrative, technical, political agencies at the district level thereby improving planning and management process of Rural Development Projects as detailed in Chapter-7.