CHAPTER-VIII

PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

Since Independence, the infrastructure of agriculture in Burdwan has undergone significant changes, for the better, yet there is considerable scope for redevelopment of agriculture in the district. At most a dent has been made in the age-old agricultural stagnation of the district, as the country as a whole. Land reform is an essential pre-requisite for technological innovation in agriculture. The agricultural condition of India today is a composite of the old-subsistence-farming and the new-modernised-farming. The total picture at present is one of some growth interspersed with modernisation, that has unfortunately left unaffected majority of farmers, leaving them as poor and workless as ever. The strategy of agricultural productivity, as applied here, is not adequate enough to cope with the rising demand for good grains and other products.

The impact of the so-called "Green Revolution" has not been very remarkable in all parts of the country both in terms of acreage and output. The future scope also is very much limited, if things proceed in the present happy-go-lucky way. In the agricultural revolution Punjab and Haryana have achieved some success and that too in respect of wheat
production. All the favourable factors for wheat production are present in Punjab, Haryana, which helped these States to produce more and more wheat. In the case of West Bengal, the agricultural revolution was attempted during 1967-68, with the result that production increased as compared with the past but not in proportion to the inputs employed. The output is far below the optimum levels as compared to experimental result. In case of high yielding variety seed more and more irrigation is necessary for the application of chemical fertiliser. It is also necessary to develop intensively the canal network throughout the cultivated field in each and every corner of the district of Burdwan. Besides, the fertilizer should be applied by analysing the soil characteristics keeping in view availability of water and the varieties of crops. An alternate application of organic and inorganic fertiliser in soil is much better for maintaining the fertility of soil. The tenants and small farmers hesitate to use fertiliser and pesticide due to their ignorance of the technique of their application, their lack of capital and their apprehensions about the bad effects of those inputs. They do not get the opportunities of suitable guidance either in these matters. The major contributing factors for high yield potentials are optimum utilisation of solar energy for the prevention of pests.
and diseases. But the two inputs, energy and water, are not available at the same time in the district. Then also, there is complaint about shortage of credit almost everywhere throughout the district, specially among the small farmers. The high yielding varieties of seeds require relatively heavy investment and many middle and small farmers are unable to grow these varieties simply because they are unable to apply the requisite doses of inputs because of financial constraints. No doubt the production of crops has since increased considerably but in areas where the rich farmers cultivate their land with optimum inputs. On the other hand, the poor farmers, who cultivate their land by traditional methods with inadequate inputs, have to remain content with a low yield of crops.

Improvement in production can be achieved by increasing land productivity on existing lands or by expanding that total area of arable land and utilising it. The cultivator may be induced to grow drought resistant varieties of crops, which are suitable for the arid region such as, high yielding jowar, bajra, maize, pulses, gram etc. An essential requirement of multiple cropping is availability of short duration varieties of crops. Pulses may be grown after the cultivation of paddy. Land can be profitably utilized as well as fertility of land can be
maintained for raising second and third crops such as pulses and oilseeds. There are many lands which remain fallow throughout the year in the western part of the district and the monocropped land remains fallow about half of the year for scarcity of water. Such wastage of land is criminal in our poor country, to say the least of it. Many types of dry food grains can be cultivated in the fallow land as not much water is needed for the purpose. Among the non-food grains, various types of grasses, forage crops and trees can be planted as commercial or cash crops. To grow double and triple crops throughout the district, tube wells, wells and tanks should be constructed in the areas concerned. Within the surface-water command area, where irrigation water cannot be provided, during the Rabi seasons, tube wells and wells may be constructed to supplement surface water for plots beyond the reach of canal water. Specially, in the western part of the district, tube wells, wells, and tanks of depths greater than that required in the eastern part and in the adjoining areas of rivers are to be constructed.

Another point to note is that a large amount of water is wasted by over flooding during rain from the rivers and tanks. It is necessary, to save such water from wastage and to utilise it. The thing is that we should develop habits of self reliance and not pathetically go about with begging bowls at all times.
It has been suggested that co-operative farming is the only sensible alternative if India is to achieve speedy progress in rural development. No doubt large scale co-operative farming in our country is not an easy task, because of the psychological attachment of the farmers to their small holdings. But it can be said, without fear of contradiction, that co-operative farming provides a social security cover to all the farmers and their families. In this type of farming agricultural producers may co-operate with one another to secure advantages of co-operative buying of agricultural inputs, co-operative selling of agricultural produce and they may co-operate as well to obtain credit easily. It can be said that co-operative ploughing, co-operative harvesting, joint use of machinery, and joint arrangements for watch and ward save land, labour, capital, wastage of inputs etc. Co-operativisation leads to higher agricultural production, larger income, greater employment and desirable shifts in the pattern of agricultural production from simple arable farming to more diversified farming. Such type of farming assures low cost and highest earnings and the optimum utilisation of farm resources.

It is essential that the growth of small scale industries, agricultural equipment making industries, agro-based industries be promoted, in order to provide more
employment opportunities. Besides, the method of agricultural production should be followed in a mechanised way. It is necessary today to ensure communication of modern technological knowledge and latest proven findings of research in agriculture to farmers through modern methods of extension and to that end strengthening and streamlining of the extension organisation. It is necessary/train and guide the farmers along the right line by district agricultural department.

The consolidation of fragments of land holdings to compact areas should be an important aspect of land policy for both operational economy and production benefits. Co-operativisation leads to efficient utilisation of land, ensures improved crop rotation system, judicious use of credit, higher agricultural production and greater employment. An important task for today is the most rational use of land to ensure increasing productivity, per unit time. What is required is the supply of high quality seed and other essential inputs to meet the needs of the farmers for higher productivity and also to make adequate agricultural credit available to the farmers from the nationalised banks and co-operatives. The supply of credit and other required inputs should reach timely each and every corner of the village and those inputs must be equally distributed to the
rich and poor farmers. Further, it is necessary to reduce the dependency on foreign aids and resources and to build roads and markets of suitable, fixed price in each and every village.

The Green Revolution in India is not fully geared to our agrarian structure. This new agricultural technology is more adapted to foreign countries, where the innovations were started rather than to India. The technique of agricultural production in our country is somewhat different from that of other developing countries. Immediate steps should be taken to breed new high yielding varieties of seed which are suited to our topography, soil, climate, socio-economic and political set up. Japanese agriculture is a good example where modern and traditional inputs have continued to be used with small sized land holdings to obtain higher output at moderate costs. It may be suggested that a judicious mix of modern and traditional technology offers a better promise at this stage of development of our country. To conclude, it can be said that the terminology "Green Revolution" as it is commonly known in foreign countries is not strictly applicable to our poor country. In fact Green Revolution has not been a success in the true sense of the term in the district of Burdwan in particular.
In fine, a good suggestion can be made for the overall development of agriculture in Burdwan. As we know, there is a proverb that Burdwan district is the "granary of West Bengal". No doubt that it is the result of many favourable factors contributing to the growth of agriculture in this particular district more than the other districts of West Bengal. Although many plans and programmes have already been undertaken to utilize the agricultural resources of this area, there is great potentiality for augmenting production. The vast agricultural area of Burdwan with its favourable conditions needs increasing exploitation by the planners and agricultural scientists and specially the Government with a view to promoting its growth so that the district could feed its people in an ever increasing manner. It is up to us all who have the interests of the district at heart to give of our best so that Burdwan may justify its claim to be called the "Granary of the Country".