CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Community Development has come to be recognized on all hands as an effective means of raising the socio-economic status of the teeming millions inhabiting the developing and underdeveloped countries of the world. It is the offspring of two forces. Its paternal side is represented by "Economic Development" from which it takes its surname, and the maternal by "Community Organization" from which it takes its first name.

Definition and Approach:

Many attempts have been made to provide an acceptable definition of the concept which has been variously defined. Community development, "for the community", for the achievement of some "self-determined condition in the future", and for "community improvement" are the efforts at segmental definitions.

Taylor has defined Community Development as "the method by which people who live in local villages and communities are involved in helping to improve their own economic and social conditions and thereby become effective working groups in programmes of national development". The major emphasis in Taylor's definition is upon goal-achievement. It refers neither to the mode of involvement of the people for goal-achievement nor to the goal setting. Secondly, it does not point to the fact of creating community consciousness for improvement.

In 1943, at Cambridge, the conference of Colonial Administrators defined it as, "A movement designed to promote better living for the whole community, with active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously then by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement."
Batten extends the scope of the definition by emphasizing that "it includes the whole range of development activities in the district, whether these are undertaken by government or unofficial bodies." This definition identifies community development with any and all forms of local development or betterment which is achieved with the willing co-operation of the people. Its major emphasis is, thus, upon the initiative of, or creation of initiative among the people. Both the definitions are more concerned with the emotional content of the goal rather than with the attitudinal. The fact that prior to better living there is a need for motivations for better living is ignored in the definitions. The form and nature of the movement is also not clear.

For working purposes the United Nations have adopted the following definition: "The process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress." The definition was further elaborated by emphasizing that the term, "community development designates of utilization under one single programme of approaches and techniques which rely upon local communities as units of action and which attempt to combine outside assistance with organized local—self determination and effort and which correspondingly seek to stimulate local initiative and leadership as the primary instrument of change. In agricultural countries, in the economically under-developed areas major emphasis is placed upon those activities which aim at promoting the improvement of the basic living conditions of the community including satisfaction of some of its non-material needs."

Social scientists and specially the sociologists have criticised this definition as it leaves some of the issues unresolved. The major line of
criticism is, "What is the primary goal of Community Development? Is it, as may be implied, promoting the improvement of the basic conditions? Or is it development of self-determination and effort in the local communities? Are all these objectives of equal importance? What is to be done if "self-determination" conflicts with "improving basic living conditions?"

These definitions reveal that programmes for development of communities, its goals and modes of goal-achievement may differ from community to community depending upon its needs and social situations.

Four different theoretical "Approaches" may be identified for goal-achievement. They are:

1. Community Development as a Process
2. Community Development as a Method.
3. Community Development as a Programme.
4. Community Development as a Movement.

As a Process: Community development as a process moved by stages from one condition or state to the next. It involves progression of change in terms of specified criteria. It is a neutral scientific term which is subject to fairly precise definition and measurement expressed chiefly in social relations. For example, change from state where one or two people or small elite within or without local community make decision for rest of the people to state where people themselves make these decisions about matters of common concern from state of minimum to one of maximum cooperation, from state where few participate to one where many participate, from state where all resources and specialists come from outside to one where local people make most use of their own resources. The emphasis is upon what happens to people, socially and psychologically.

As a Method: As a method, Community Development is a means to an end, a way of working for some goal-achievement. Other efforts such as changes by decree,
changes by use of differential rewards, changes by propagation may be supplementary to the community development method which aims at process assessment so that the will of those using this method may be sustained. Specificity of purpose guides process which may prove harmful or helpful to the local community depending upon goal-orientation and passing judgment. Thus the emphasis is upon ends.

As A Programme: As a programme community development has method and content as its components. Method is a set of procedures and the content is a list of activities. Procedures and activities form a means-ends scheme. In highly formalized programmes as in long-range plans focus are upon the programme rather than upon what is happening to the people participating in the programme. Activities are the major concern.

As A Movement: As a movement community development is a combination of programme and emotional dynamics. Community development is a cause to which people become committed. It is a subjective approach and not a neutral one. Political leaders use the emotional charge for or against it. It is dedicated to concept progress, as a philosophic and not as a scientific one, since progress must be viewed with reference to values and goals which differ under different political and social systems. As a movement it becomes institutionalized, building upon its own organizational structure, accepted procedures, and professional practitioners. It stresses and promotes the idea of community development as interpreted by its devotees.

Assumptions:

All these approaches are based on certain assumptions which help to understand uniformity in the programme undertaken by different societies. These assumptions are that: (i) planned measures are the only alternative to
narrow the gulf among the backward and rapidly advancing societies?

(ii) People can develop capacity to deal with their own problems. That is to say that, communities, even in those situations in which many people feel helpless, can develop attitudes and skills which permit them to work effectively to shape their community more adequately to meet their needs.

(iii) People want change and can change. That is, people are consistently interested in making things better to facilitate their way of life and make it more comfortable.

(iv) People should participate in making, adjusting or controlling the major changes taking place in their communities. This is not to suggest that changes are subject to voluntary participation of people, nor that social groups in the community can control all the forces that impinge on the collective lives of these people. Rather, it is that people should have an opportunity to regulate and to organize to secure their own communal goals and to plan the adjustments which must be made to change over which they have no control. The need to participate in this way is based on the fact that (a) man gains confidence as he participates in the regulation of his own life, (b) without participation man becomes entirely subjected to the whim of forces which leave him socially and politically isolated and his life becomes meaningless, and (c) without such participation, democratic principles which are said to be backbone of the programme have no life or vitality. (v) Self-imposed or self-developed changes have a meaning and a permanence that imposed changes do not have. The dangers of imposed changes have been emphasized by social scientists, in the field, who see that community without any sense of participating in, or conscious planning of adjusting to imposed changes, may become completely disoriented. (vi) Community problems are multidimensional and intricately interrelated and for this reason a single specialized approach to the problem is, often, of limited value. (vii) For permanent results community development requires co-operative participation and action in the affairs of the community, so that people must learn the active participation in a communication process
which makes possible identification of common goals and areas for collective action. (viii) Communities need help to solve their problems just as many individuals require help in coping with their individual problems. The help required, however, may differ from community to community and their socio-cultural environment.

The essentials which develop from this analysis are that community development may be explored as a process which in the present context, aims at to bring about and to maintain progressively more effective adjustment between the local resources and social needs of a society. Process here refers to "the conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary movement from identification of a problem or objective to solution of the problem or attainment of the objective in the community." In this concept achievement of goal becomes a problem of local-action for which community identifies its needs, ranks these needs, develops the confidence and will to work for the achievement of the needs, finds resources to meet these needs, takes action in respect of them and in so doing extends and develops co-operative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community. In its orientation to goal achievement community may be assisted by outside agents or professional workers or state government both through finance and guidance or help to initiate, nourish and develop the process.

It further lays stress upon conceived objectives, and implicitly accepts the need of methods of working that may be taken up to promote activities in any programme of rural development, which is capable of being developed into a movement with an emotional and ideological appeal."

Another benefit in regarding community development as a process is that our focus becomes analysis of social change and sequences or stages through which social entities, like communities, pass as impersonal forces. In
community situations change is interpreted from changes in social system, its structure and functions, from motivations and socialization of individuals in groups and from formalized control structures and legal systems. In this way process approach becomes inclusive to cover community development as a method, a programme, and a movement.

Communication. In the execution of any approach the important problem is of communication of ideas. For its applicability three facets of communication theory may be mentioned. First facet is that of involving communication on a face to face basis between leader and followers, specialists and villagers, and consultant and community leaders. Much difficulty ensues when parties concerned are looking at community development from different perspectives. Second facet deals with diffusion of knowledge and practices which are basic to community development. Third facet is maintaining a flow of ideas up and down the community development hierarchy so that those who do the regional or national planning are in touch with what the people in the local communities think and also help the latter to gain some understanding of the problem faced by those trying to administer a complete nationwide operation. Without adequate communication programme will bog down, nor will adequate communication exist unless those responsible for it base their procedures on sound communication processes.

Genesis of the Indian Programme.

The roots of the Community Development Programme in India lie in the concern of the social and political reformers for the poor lot of the masses. Even prior to independence, efforts were made by individuals and organizations at experimental levels to gain these objectives. Gandhi's constructive programme for rebuilding the life of the countryside, Tagore's programme of
village uplift, experiments carried on by F.L.Bryane in the Gurgaon district of the Panjab and by Spencer Hatch at Martens are chains of the same concern.

In pre-independence period several states notably Bombay, Madras and Uttar Pradesh initiated programmes of rural development. The rural development scheme of Uttar Pradesh, launched by the Congress Ministry during 1937, though comprehensive could not be carried through due to the resignation of the Ministry in 1939. The Firka Development Scheme of Madras, the Pilot development of Etawah and Niloheri scheme of rehabilitating the refugee population brought to the fore some of the experiences which could be usefully utilized for carrying out rural reconstruction activities.

V.T. Krishnasachari Committee which was appointed to investigate the cause of the failure of Grow more food campaign initiated by K.M.Munshi, the then food and agriculture minister, is very much responsible for the initiation of the community development. The committee pointed out that the economic aspect of village life cannot be detached from the broader social aspect and the agricultural improvement is inextricably linked up with a whole set of social problems......that all aspects of the rural life are interrelated and that no lasting result can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt in isolation. It is only by placing this ideal of bringing about an appreciable improvement in the standard of the rural life and making it fuller and richer.......that the energies of the entire administrative machinery of the States and of the best unofficial leadership.......can awaken mass enthusiasm and enlist the active interest and support of the millions of families living in the countryside in the immense task of bettering their own conditions.

Objectives Of The Programme;

Rural Community Development programmes are the media of national planning for village life. The plans include activities in almost all the areas of
The specific objective of the community development programme is to assist each village in planning and carrying out an integrated multiphased family and village plan directed towards increasing agricultural production, improving existing village crafts and industries and organizing new ones; providing minimum essential health services and improving health practices; providing required educational facilities for children and adult education programmes; providing recreational facilities and programmes; providing housing and family living conditions and providing programmes for village women and youth.

The achievement of these broad objectives necessitates many more specific objectives laid in community development programmes. Important among these are:

i) Changing the outlook of the village people is the primary objective of the programme. Unless the people develop rising expectations for a higher level of living, they will have no motivation to provide the required leadership and the programme will not become people's programme.

ii) Along with leadership there is need of responsible and responsive village organizations and institutions. If the programme is to become a sustained and living self-help programme, it is essential that the leadership for planning and implementing it in the villages should come from the present and yet to be developed leaders of the village.

iii) It further aims at developing the village people to become self-reliant, responsible citizens capable and willing to participate effectively with knowledge and understanding in the building of our new nation.

iv) An all-round socio-economic transformation of the rural India is another important objective of Community Development.
v) In accepting the responsibility for helping to rebuild each of our 5,53,000 villages as significant functional democracies, the Community Development Programme must assume responsibility for training village youth to assume citizenship responsibilities through early and continuous involvement in youth programmes and activities and all round village development.

vi) If the villages are to be guided in the expression of their rising level of living and aided in, effectively, converting their increased income into better living, the Community Development and N.E.P. Programmes must of necessity have as a programme objective organized assistance to village women and village families. Improvement in village families including the women, is as important as that of male adult.

vii) Essential to the success of the Community Development Programme is the close inter-relation of the village school and the village teacher with all phases of village development. If the community development programme is to succeed in making its maximum contribution to the recreation of a significant village culture, the full participation of the school and village teacher is essential.

viii) To make the rural folk conscious of their responsibilities with respect to rural health and sanitation, so vital for a healthy and happy life.

Features Of The National Programme

To accelerate the process of change in traditional and under-developed society and to involve a large proportion of the population, India has an effective national organization which looks after the planning, training, staffing and financing of the programmes. The programme is led by a minister in the national government and he is assisted by ministers in the state government.

For working of the programme there is need of three elements. 1) The government
must have well organized and staffed agencies to render various technical services needed in the development of village life; ii) There must be a large number of village level workers to help the people to utilize the aid and, iii) there must the establishment and maintenance of effective communication between the agencies and villages. Indian organization in theory possesses all the three.

The National Community Development Programme was inaugurated in October 1952, in 55 project areas including over 25,000 villages and a population of over 16 million. At first, community projects were organized as the intensive phase of National Extension Service Programme, but latter both programmes were merged at the national level in the Department of Community Development and Co-operation.

The programme at the level of implementation was divided into four distinct stages of intensity of work outlined in terms of funds expended and size of the staff. The four stages were pre-extension stage, stage one, stage two and finally post-extensive stage. At pre-extension stage the major concern is with the agricultural development and to get the people acquainted with the programme. The stage one is the most intensive period of working for community planning and community change. From here there occurs second stage where people's contribution is more important. Here, more emphasis is laid upon people's co-operation and self-help. Thereafter the block passes to post-extensive or normalized stage of development when people are supposed to apply community development processes at their own initiative. Now these stages have been reduced to two.

The Block is the unit of administration between the magisterial district and the village. It commonly includes 100 villages. The staff at block level is made up of a Block Development Officer, who leads the team of several extension
specialists and a group of multipurpose village level workers.

Voluntary Agencies And Interests,

The programme is under the control of the government. But efforts are made to involve voluntary agencies at every level. Numerous agencies and associations in certain parts of the country are working at local level while others are working at regional or national. These groups represent almost all major interests, such as agriculture, small scale industries, health, welfare, housing, adult education, family planning and town and regional planning.

Some of the prominent organizations are Bharat Sevak Samaj, Bharat Sadhu Samaj, Servodaya Shanti Sena, All India Panchayat Parishad, The Indian Cooperative Union, Rural Housing Wing, Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, and All India Association of Farmers, Peace Corps of United States, Bhart Sevak Samaj and Khadi Gram Udyog. Indian Conference of Social Work and Indian Adult Education Association are especially active. These organizations though working in collateral fields have no "Co-ordination".

People Participation And Leadership,

For effective action-orientation actors' responsiveness to the programme and their participation in the programme is basic to Community mobilization.

Both are an integral part of the ideology of the programme and of the processes followed in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programme.

Balwant Rai Mehta Committee report focussed attention on this issue and envisaged the formation of people's organization as a way of securing their real participation in community development programme. To quote from the report, "People's participation should not be regarded merely as providing a certain portion of the cost of a particular work in each, kind or manual labour
but it is their full realization that all aspects of community life are their concern and that government's participation is only to assist them where such assistance is necessary. It is the gradual development of their faith in the efficacy of their own co-operative action in solving their local problems."

Again, "only in normally organized and fully empowered units, continuous local administration can shoulder the responsibility of organizing community life on progressive lines".

Besides gaining the mass participation a community must gain participation of those who have special talents. It is for the community to decide if it likes to give them the role of leaders or of consultants, or active participants. But the community must see then, "A community that is not eternally on the hunt for leadership and talent in its own midst is not only starving its talent but also depriving itself of one of its chief assets. Leadership may be better provided by the unofficial and spontaneously recognised leaders rather than the leaders in low. There are definite limits to the power of law to compel action. If public opinion does not support law it is without a force".

Indian Community Development, however, has a scheme to train such leaders known as "Gram Sahayaks" (village helpers). Through community development for the first time the masses were induced to co-operate and participate with the government. For them this was the first time when the government was coming forward to show interest for their low level of living and was anxious to help them to improve their own economic and social conditions and thereby become effective working groups in programmes of national development.

External Agents' Level.

When the programme of Community Development was initiated, it was purely a programme of the state. External agents were supposed to demonstrate the
utility of the programme and thus to prepare a ground for an ultimate change. Persuasion, discussion, guidance, spot demonstration and propaganda through different media were the tools to achieve the objectives. Because of centralization of the government and other decision-making activities, external agents acted as guardians of the programme. By contrast, presently the trend is in reverse direction. It is felt that "decentralization is needed not only for preserving values of freedom but also for securing barest operational efficiency". Decentralization enhances the responsibilities of the external agent with the introduction of decentralization of planning and authority, is supposed to be even-cautious for the better understanding and identification of the people with the programme. Success of India's Community Development is much dependent upon these agents. They must be well equipped with the practical knowledge of community problems, customs and values of the people. This will help them in proving more successful both to the people and the government.

Their main functions may be enumerated as (i) the agents must establish friendly and truthful relations with the people whom they hopes to influence. (ii) The change agents must reach an agreement with the association and the people at large on what the change should be. Every community is in some way different from every other and the pre-planned solutions hardly fit without some detailed alterations. No specific change is "a priori" good for a community. It may, therefore, be adopted to its special needs and circumstances. (iii) The change agents must demonstrate that the suggested programme of change is safe both socially and materially. (iv) He must work with the people and try to gain cooperation of those whose position is threatened with the introduction of an innovation.
Democratic decentralization involves the creation of three tiers of administration at (i) The village Panchayat or Council, (ii) The Block Samiti or Council which is made up of one hundred or more villages, and (iii) Zila Parishad or District Council which involves all the blocks in the district. All the three are representative bodies of the people and the external agents are assigned to them as advisers. These councils are supposed to provide planning of their respective areas. And this elementary planning form a sub-structure of the regional, state and National plannings. This pattern of programs is however, an ideal one. In actual practice the emphasis in the programs is upon getting things done rather than upon developing people's own abilities for leadership, wise judgement and co-operative action, and thus assisting change to happen. In India, the rural uplift problem is so big and in the eyes of the lay men and leaders so urgent that the village workers have to show results and that too, quickly. Whatever our ideals may be, our approach to the Community Development is materialistic and major aim is material development, and for the kind of material development that government wants. Where this cannot be fostered quickly enough by purely permissive educational methods, pressure and more directive methods may often be used. Whenever this happens, the change agents may be seen and are rather seen as other government officers appointed to inflict the purposes of the government upon them, rather than to help them. The change agents thus will see the villagers as apathetic or resistant.

Level Of The Social Scientist:

Role of the Social Scientist is of immense importance. Scientists as objective observers of the situation can offer expedient alternatives in capital formation, increasing administrative efficiency, budgetary control, accelerating the cultural change and attitudes of the people toward the programs. They
can also recommend certain change in the operational theory of the practitioner for better results. Evaluations of the programme and training of the field staff in tune with the programme is another area of involvement of the social scientists. To staff the nation-wide programme which now covers the whole nation it has been necessary to train tens of thousands of specialists and administrators. In 1964 over 180 training centres of various types were applying personnel for community development organization. Some of the centres are affiliated with colleges and Universities, while others are agencies under direct government control. The role of agricultural Universities which are running courses for extension specialists and subject-matter specialists cannot be ignored in this regard.

Researches are being undertaken by universities, independent social scientists and for extensive evaluation of community development an agency named Programme Evaluation Organization of the Planning Commission has been set up. Social scientists who are often critical of the programme have pointed out certain defects in the programme or in its implementation. Some of these are: a) Inaptness in its presentation to the people, b) deficiencies in the selection, training and motivation of the personnel invested with the responsibility of introducing programme, c) inability to gain participation of the people who are pervasive in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour, and d) lack of tradition of community-wide cooperation and a traditionally hostile attitude towards anything associated with outside authority — in this case government. Traditional system of social stratification; specially caste organization, with concomitant traditional, rigid and marked differential access which various caste groups have to social, economic and other advantages is also pointed out to be a factor/the failure to gain community-wide participation. It is also maintained that elite group more affluent and influential agriculturalist are the
only beneficiaries. Caste still play a dominant role in the entire framework of rural India. Most of the advantages and disadvantages accrue to the individuals on the basis of their caste affiliation. Consequently, the gap between high and low castes have been all the more widened even in the wake of Community Development Programs in India. But the caste status and economic advantages go together and as such, the problem boils down to high caste vs low caste. Some scientists have gone to extent to say that there has been "reluctance to come to grips with underlying problems".

The Planning Evaluation Organization has completed more than forty studies by the end of 1964. The growth of organizational attitudes (e.g., cooperative readiness) and use of panchayats was readily nil. Stimulation of self-help motives was found to be undeveloped, even, overshadowed by dependence on government and public participation in institutional programs, was negligible. These shortcomings and criticism of the program is valid even today. The 99th Report of the Estimate Committee of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture Community Development and Co-operation specifies that the program has failed to meet the expectations and aspirations of the people. Wide-spread differentials in the distribution of benefits among the classes was noted and the staff was inadequate and ill-trained. Punjab Administrative Reforms Commission's Report has also expressed a similar concern and laid emphasis upon reorientation of the program on rational basis.

Decentralization of Power in Community Development

The objective of decentralization is to promote the capacity of the common man and to bring more and more people in the process of the functioning of society and in the process of developing society. This responsibility is a big one when considered in terms of building up of economy, social life and the welfare of the people. Therefore, it requires that together with transfer
of responsibility to the people we ensure that the largest number of people are given the opportunity to shoulder it and enabled to discharge it.

Through democratic decentralization, administrative attention is focused more closely and directly on the efforts of the local people—on their own resources. Democratic decentralization is a two-fold change viz; democratisation and decentralization. Democratisation means the strengthening of the popular opinion of the effective element. Decentralization means the breaking up of the units of authority and government and bringing them closer and nearer to the people thus promoting localization. It will be appreciated that the setting up of nearer administration need not necessarily mean decentralization. We have, therefore, to see in this process as to what extent there is real democracy, real decentralization at the village block and district levels.

Further, democratisation and decentralisation should mean a move towards a local self-government. Such a move, it will be agreed, can be ultimately justified only on the ground of its potentiality for improving two things: i) the process of democracy and efficiency of government; and ii) building up of the community spirit.

Geographic Unit of Analysis

The geographic unit of approach of the India's programme is the village. One may ask the question as to why in community development the emphasis is on the development of village communities. The answer may well be imagined, in the development of science and technology the under-developed or developing countries, if we refer to under-developed or developing countries, have been isolated from the major stream of humanity and have become culturally isolated in the development of the nations. The people are worst affected in this onward flux of rapid development. It is the deep concern for the masses of the rural areas, who are living in conditions of extreme poverty, ill-health, illiteracy,
who are ill-organized for effective participation in the programmes of their own betterment and who lack the knowledge and resources for the improvement of their own conditions, that Community Development Programmes of rural reconstruction have been organized. Community Development focuses attention on the fact that society as a whole will not progress, no matter how fast its progress in the field of industry, transportation, railways, shipping etc., may be, unless the rural areas progress in the same measures and with equal speed. It is recognition of this fact that welfare of the rural people have been given consideration in almost all under-developed and developing countries of the world.

REFERENCES AND NOTES


7. U.N.O. Public Administration Aspects of Community Development Programmes (U.N. Publication)


29. Ibid.


