CHAPTER -2

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND STRATEGIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

With such magnitude of poverty persisting rather perpetuating over hundred of years in the past, there are, perhaps, no instances to mention about any organized efforts, except some individual philanthropic pursuits, to ameliorate the sufferings of these rural poor who have been living in abject and grinding poverty from generation to generation, which is now known by the popular phrase-living below the poverty line.

The christian settlements which are traced down since 1860 are the first indications where Christian Missionaries initiated definite organized steps for the economic and social uplift of their converts.¹

The rural relief programmes which are now known as early efforts in the field of rural development have very restricted field of operation and low investments. The Christian missionaries took up programmes of social up-liftment of their converts. There were two types of settlements i.e. directly controlled or indirectly controlled. Shortrun settlements were directly controlled where the land belonged to the mission and given to settlers on tenancy. While long term settlements were indirectly looked after as the land was permanently given to settlers. The efforts were necessitated to create villages for the settlers who converted themselves to Christianity and were not acceptable to Indian Society. Anyhow, the programmes were undertaken to raise their capacities physically, train them for

farming and non-farming (handicrafts) activities and make them self reliant. These can be regarded as the earlier seeds of rural development management in India. There is a long list of these isolated efforts. As reported by Pandey, up to 1920, the total number of protestant christian settlements were 83. "Gopalpara Santal Colony" (1880) and "Gosaba" were the only big settlements having above 5000 settlers, rest were very small settlements covering 7 families to 1000 families.²

The second phase in the sphere of rural development which seems to have begin in 1920, envisaged complete development of rural life. The objective of such an holistic concept of rural development was the outcome of "the International Missionary Council Conference which was held at Jerusalem in 1928"³ which called upon the missionaries to give a new thrust to the uplift of the rural life in total spectrum. It envisaged physical utilization of resource development, health, social living facilities and good environment to all without any class and caste distinctions.

Although the international conference envisaged rural development on secular basis yet religious considerations prevailed over developmental needs. As a result the idea of rural development could not get support of churches only the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) conceived a plan to take up rural development on 'Cooperative Basis'.⁴ It aimed at


economic uplift, social development and removal of illiteracy and for that it put up trained personnel in selected areas. With the efforts of the association, rural development was started.

The 'Marthandam' experiment (1921) is an example of excellent efforts in the field of rural reconstruction. The efforts were initiated by Spencer Hatch. The spinal aim, as Dr. M.S. Randhawa put it was to bring about a complete upward development towards a more abundant life for rural people, spiritually, mentally, physically, socially, and economically'.

The strategy was to take up constructive schemes for the betterment of living conditions of rural poor and the emphasis was on (a) self help, (b) own programmes of people for their development, (c) secular character with attention on the poorest of the poor, (d) development of cottage industries, (e) austerity to lower costs, (f) encouragement to honorary extension service to guide the villagers in various fields. The above were called as pillars of policy by Dr. D.S. Hatch, who was the director of the Project.

The dominant thrust was on self help with 'Cooperation in work' as the principle. The people were responsible for their 'own development'. Marthandam covered 46 villages on a comprehensive basis and initiated programmes of production, marketing and provision of credit on cooperative basis. This was an integrated approach and as reported by Hatch, the average


6. Hatch, D.S., "Early Times at the Marthandam Project", pp. 19-23. (Dr. Hatch was Director of the project - an American with a Doctorate in Agriculture).

additional income of a family rose by 7 per cent.  

F.L. Brayne, District Collector of Gurgaon also made a commendable effort when he launched an ambitious programme of rural reconstruction in 1927. It was a vide spectrum programme based on values and old-fashioned virtues, hardwork, thrift, self-respect, self-control, self help, mutual help and mutual respect.

The effort of Brayne was the first official attempt in a district to make the villagers conscious of their betterment. A school of Rural Economy was opened for preparing multipurpose village guide to help the villagers and motivate them in the field of cooperation, public health, and sanitation. The thrust of the scheme was on animal husbandry development and improved agricultural practices. One very important strategy adopted was the uplift of women under the scheme and to impart them training in the field of village sanitation and hygiene, knitting, sewing, embroidery works, cooking, first aid, child care and welfare activities.

Brayne estimated an annual gain of Rs.40 lakhs which was two and half times the land revenue of the district. However, the initiative was officially dominated and could not motivate people, irrespective of the success of the programme, to take up development on their own. Yet Gurgaon experiment was a milestone for practicing some new techniques in the field of rural development.

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Rabindernath Tagore set up rural reconstruction centres initially in 8 villages in 1908 and later on he started his experiment known as Sriniketan Rural Reconstruction Programme under which an Institute of Rural Reconstruction was set up in 1921 that aimed at making the rural population "self reliant and self respectful".\(^{11}\)

The aim of Tagore was "all round transformation of village life".\(^{12}\) One very important aspect of it was to study the problems of rural life.

Its objectives, -both economic and social, were designed to upgrade rural life in an integrated way. They were:-

(i) To win the friendship and affection of villagers and cultivators by taking a real interest in all that concerns their life and welfare.

(ii) To understand the villagers' daily routine and the varied pageant of their life.

(iii) To take the problems of village to the classroom for study and to experimental farm for solution.

(iv) To carry the knowledge and experience gained in the villages.\(^{13}\)

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Tagore’s effort was mooted from his very personal concern about the poor masses. He even executed public works at his own expenses but with the willing and voluntary labour of the people.  

Baroda experiment was by far the most organised, comprehensive and systematic programme conceived by the then ruler of Baroda, Sayaji Rao III. So concerned he was that he declared, "My idea is to improve village life—all sides of it. I earnestly desire to make village life interesting and farming a career, the rewards of which will satisfy the most enterprising among the villagers".

There are a few exceedingly remarkable characteristics of the programme. First, the process of rural reconstruction was planned one; secondly, before launching the programme a survey was done to assess the needs of rural people; thirdly, infrastructural development proceeded the programme; fourthly, the programme had tremendous participation of the beneficiaries both financially and physically and last but not the least, the programme proceeded on effective decentralization by creating Co-operatives as well as Panchayats.

Although, this programme was launched formally in 1932, yet its beginning can be traced to 1870. It started with a well defined educational programme in 1870 and the political decentralization was effected in 1904. The Maharaja said, "The best form of Government is the government which is run by the people. People must be trained to safeguard their interests."

They must be so educated that they shall feel their responsibility.16

The Co-operative movement was started in the State of Baroda for the first time in India, with the start of "Anyonya Sahayakari Mandal" in 1958.17 Along with various developmental works, economic legislations were introduced in the field of tenancy legislation and debt legislation.

Baroda experiment used refined administrative approach and personal approach, intensive and integrated developmental approach as the "Methodology of Rural Development".18

The notable aspect of methodology was the intensive thrust on the agricultural improvement by adopting cluster approach. The programmes have strong 'economic bias' along with other aspects of social and educational development. Besides agriculture, the dominant emphasis was on subsidiary occupation. To implement the programmes the agency was co-operative along with other institutions like Panchayats, Schools and Youth Clubs.19

On the personal front the programme has initiated the culture of, 'adopt-a-village-method'. One very important feature was the participation of people who willingly paid their

18. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
19. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
share of development. Another was training in various fields imparted to the executing agencies. The Baroda experiment can be called a fore-runner of community development programme. The programme was not institutionalised as a structure of policy and administrative organisation and, therefore, remained short-lived as it was "person oriented" and not "programme-oriented".20

There was yet another experiment in rural development in Madhya Pradesh at Rasulia. That is the Friend’s Rural Centre, Rasulia.21 The centre took up educational work in rural areas with financial aid from foreign societies and the government. It also took up work of well digging and cement suck work activities in agriculture farming. The distinguishing features were cluster approach of development and community organisation. It did notable work in irrigation, seed banks, cooperation and collective work, public latrines, abolition of untouchability, education and adult education and particularly child education and health facilities.

Summing up the experiments which were taken up by individuals or groups or associations and kings, S. Das Gupta Wrote, "In short, the lessons of this sublimely human and intensely democratic movement for planned growth have been highly instructive and its failures have almost in equal measures led the way for evolution of certain basic approaches and methods which are bound to serve as a bacon light to generations of rural social workers of our country".22

20. Padhy, Kishore Chandra, op.cit., p.36.
22. Das Gupta, S., op.cit., p. 231.
Almost during this period beginning from 1920 a parallel programme of rural development was undertaken which marked the "third phase"\textsuperscript{23} of rural development strategy.

On the Governmental side, the recurring famines forced the government to assume some rural development functions. But it was more a humanitarian effort than an organised way of taking up rural development as a conscious government policy. This was more to accumulate stocks during famine time and to distribute the same at the relevant time to starving people. The purpose was "to control profiteering and alleviate rural sufferings."\textsuperscript{24} This intervention by State officers was without legal policy and more or less they were guided by philanthrophic spirit.

Slowly, a need was felt to accord some legal sanction to these issues and it was the Famine Commission of 1880 which recommended a policy of government intervention, whenever, either there is scarcity of food grains or famine conditions persisting. It was a deviation from the general policy of the then government i.e. laissezfaire. Therefore, rural development in the shape of State intervention began as a search for an alternative to laissezfaire.\textsuperscript{25} This was necessitated by abject poverty in the rural sector and without satisfying hunger the very existence of the government would have been jeopardised.

\textsuperscript{23} Third phase is associated with Gandhi who took up rural reconstruction from 1917 onwards. The entire Gandhian concept along with other experiments based on this approach are discussed in chapter 3rd in detail.

\textsuperscript{24} Misra, B.B., District Administration and Rural Development, (Delhi, Oxford University Press 1983), p. vi.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 387.
As a prelude to establishment of a well organised agriculture department which was ultimately set up in 1906; the famine commission did recommend a vide variety of structural, strategical and systematic changes in policies pertaining to 1) land reforms; 2) agriculture improvements; 3) construction of railways; 4) communication system; 5) extension of canal system; 6) expansion of protective works; and 7) administrative reforms.

These recommendations were based on the philosophy of building up a strong agricultural base, since agriculture and rural development were taken as synonymous concepts. A basic turning from the concept of free market economy was thus mooted as a conscious government policy. This policy was not mooted only to ameliorate the plight of Indian farmers but had its seeds in the needs of textile trade which was then developing in U.K. It was, therefore, necessary to organise and improve cotton cultivation in India. Thus, the concept of rural development as a governmental policy, apart from philanthropic efforts, has taken its birth as "a by-product of colonial economy plus welfarism".26

On the government side, the efforts have really been initiated, with the Government of India Act, 1919. The system of 'dyarchy' was introduced in 1921 which gave a definite direction to government efforts. It has been realised that those fields where local knowledge, expertise, and Social Services could be better utilized must be decentralised so as to give 'more opportunities' to local aspirations.27


It is on this principle that the "subjects concerning agriculture, public education, public health, cooperatives, local self-government and animal husbandry" were placed in the transferred list with a view to increase government spending in these spheres which benefit the rural sections. The decentralisation process was a sequel to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report which noted:

"The guiding principle should be to include in the transferred list those departments which afford most opportunity for local knowledge and social service, those in which Indians have shown themselves to be keenly interested, those in which mistakes which may occur though serious would not be irremediable, and those which stand most in need of development." 28

From the above, it is clear that the Government did start concerning itself with programmes of rural development and vividly recognised its importance. Therefore, these subjects which were placed in transferred list, have been placed under the charge of elected ministers. It is irrelevant to question the considerations of foreign administrators for adopting the above pattern of the effectiveness of "dyarcy" as to what impact and seriousness had been created by placing some departments in transferred subject but it is relevant to know that the system did initiate the concept of development departments. Transferring the development departments under the charge of elected ministers gave an initial boost to rural development by provincialisation of administration and allocation of financial resources on education, medical, public health, agriculture and industries etc. The increase in allocations during the period

28. Ibid., para, 238.

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1921-40 rose from 139 to 215 lakhs in education, 25 to 37 lakhs in medical, 16 to 24 lakhs in public health, 26 to 81 lakhs in agriculture and 9 to 30 lakhs in industries.

The table shows 61.25 per cent increase in expenditure from Rs. 240 lakhs in 1921 to Rs. 387 lakhs in 1939-40 which was quite substantial and shows the increasing concern of Government in Rural Development.

To give adequate stress to the transferred subjects, the decentralisation of key services, (which was necessary to execute schemes in development areas) were agreed upon, as a consequent to the acceptance of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on superior services (1922-24) as provincial services was done since 1925. This facilitated coordination, implementation and formulation of policies at provincial level quite approachable, and made execution of schemes, their direction, supervision and control quite effective. The local aspirations, needs and viewpoints were recognised and developmental activities acquired a new momentum.

The Government of India Act, 1935 conferred autonomy on the provinces, in respect of various spheres of functioning. As a sequel to it, a new department of development was created. This helped in further augmenting the work of rural development as by creating this department specific stress could be given to development activities and its implementation. The congress manifesto also promised agrarian reforms, reduction in land revenue and relief from rural debt.

During its 2 year rule the congress worked hard to implement with reasonable success various programmes of rural reconstruction. The pace of rural development went unabated even after congress rule ended due to the exigencies of world war-II. Due to the war, the need was to make a shift in cropping pattern as large amount of food was needed for the army as a result of which the government of India made a targeted stress by requesting the provinces to grow more and more food. For increasing food supplies, various steps had been taken in the shape of distribution of seed free of cost and giving subsidies for minor irrigation purposes such as digging of well, embankments, supply of fertilizer and manure etc. The government also gave land revenue remissions. This was the period when minimum support price for food-grain was introduced and the government decided to buy all surplus at the announced prices. This induced the farmers to shift from cash crops to food grains. Therefore, "rural development received attention as a result of various forces operating during the second world war".32

The election "manifesto of 1945 of Congress Party indicated wide concern for rural development.33

The concern for poverty was utmost and poverty was mainly taken as a problem of rural India. Rural India had peculiar problems such as excessive pressure of population on land and lack of asset creating occupations. Under the British rule, rural population was deprived of many occupations and particularly rural industry saw a vertical decline which was a great source of supplementing income and potentially independent source of employment to a vast majority of rural population. These people were thrown out of their occupation, thus,

33. Pattabhi, Sitaramayya, op. cit., Appendix, I.
increasing pressure on land and giving rise to direct and disguised employment, under employment and unemployment. The congress manifesto mainly pledged for; (i) improving agriculture on scientific lines, (ii) promoting cottage Industries, (iii) planning for maximum employment, (iv) land reforms, (v) solving problems of landless labourers, (vi) cooperative farming, (vii) provision of cheap credit for solving the problem of rural indebtedness and (viii) abolition of zamindari system for providing tenancy reforms. Thus rural development was accorded active priority by Congress Party at that time.

Along with these efforts of the government which were going on with the passage of legislative movement on the political and administrative sides in the field of rural development, some provincial governments had taken up concerted efforts in the field of rural development. These efforts were taken up after 1940. The importance of these programmes were that they became as the only programmes later on which helped in designing the Community Development Programme launched after independence at the national level. The leading programmes were:

1. Firka Development Scheme - Madras, 1943;
2. Etawah Pilot Project, Uttar Pradesh, 1946; and

Firka Development Scheme aimed at "a happier, more prosperous and fuller life in which the individual villager will have the opportunity to develop both as an individual and as a unit of well integrated society".

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34. Ibid., Appendix, I.
The main characteristics of the programme were to impart free education, lay down infrastructure in the shape of roads and communication, health care, removal of untouchability, propagation of the gospel of prohibition, expansion of Khadi scheme and establishment of village industries. The Firka Development Scheme, thus had educational, social, moral and economic dominant considerations. It also created an administrative machinery to execute the scheme and the District Collector assisted by district Rural Welfare Board was the implementing agency. Under this programme, the institution of Firka Development Officer which is now analogous to the institution of Block Development Office, was created. Similarly, Gram Sevaks and other technical staff to provide assistance in the field of agriculture, public works, irrigation, cooperatives were provided. It created a block administrative body, a district administrative body and a provincial administrative body to look after various programmes. The total investment upto 1952 was nearly Rs. 1 crore\(^3\) which was spent on the various agriculture, public works, irrigation and educational schemes.

The programme which was launched in 1946 made great strides in the field of construction of new roads, repair of old roads, village dams, water sources, construction of primary, night and adult schools, libraries, drainage, first aid centres, leprosy clinics, wasteland cultivation, start of new cooperatives, primary maternity centres, dispensaries and wardha type latrines.\(^3\) It also launched cooperative movement in a big


The outstanding feature of the Firka Development Programme was the people's voluntary contribution in executing works like digging of wells, roads, so much so that their contribution exceeded 50 per cent of the total cost of the scheme. The scheme was an example of people's participation, community work and excellent coordination between the official and private agencies.

The programme suffered because of the want of resources and administrative perspectives of the official and no-official members. The programme failed to spread in the countryside mainly because it had dominant thrust at social and moral aspects of development rather than economic. For any pilot project to become a success, the economic interest must be sustained over a longer period of time.

ETAWAH PILOT PROJECT

Etawah Pilot Project can be called a mini Community Development Project of India which was started under the able guidance of Albert Mayer in 1948, in the district of Etawah in


40. An American architect and town planner of Newyork, was Planning and Development Advisor to the Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1946 to 1957. He was the origional planner and architect of this project.
Uttar Pradesh. It was a project for Intensive Rural Development for "Revitalizing life in the villages". The selected objectives set-forth were as follows:

i) To create a desire in villagers for improvement; to inculcate in them a divine discontent to better their lot;

ii) To change their whole outlook on life, to convince them by both practice and precept that it is possible for them to improve their condition; and

iii) To help the village people realize that their salvation lies in their own hand and they can make their lives better, fuller and richer by their own cooperative efforts.

The underlying idea was "to have all out coordinated and concerted efforts on the part of the Government to motivate the farmers engaged in the work of rural development to release the infinite mass of human energy lying dormant so far by all proper and possible means. The vital strategy was to organise the work through a non-official agency and get it implemented by workers imbued with missionary zeal fired by the ideal of service and the spirit of crusaders in them to fight against the inertia of ages". The Etawah project was very comprehensive project and it took care of each and every detail of the following major components and sub-components coming under the major components such as:


43. Ibid., p. 86.
1. To increase food production: (vide ranging improvements in agriculture production).

The programme envisaged improved agricultural practices. Improvement in land holding system, distribution and multiplication of seeds, use of commercial manures, use of agricultural implements, storage facilities, to employ new methods in field preparations, irrigation facilities and crop consolidations;

To increase the area under fruit and vegetables; and

To improve the cattle population of the area by import of better breeds of animal, artificial insemination, veterinary health care, introduction of new fodder crops;

2. To develop villagers' participation and villagers' initiatives to help the programme and to make itself perpetuating. In this field, the role or organisations was stressed such as village panchayats, regional development councils which could take over most of the routine work of the governmental organisations such as organisation of camps, organisation of audio-visual educational programmes, imparting training by establishing institutes, adult education, community activities viz. libraries, clubs and physical-cultural centres and a well knitted information system to the villagers. People's participation and involvement was one of the fundamental pillars of the programme.

3. To improve the existing village roads.

It was not initially in the scope of the programme to construct the roads, but later on seeing the infrastructure needs, the villagers were helped to construct roads and to undertake ravines reclamation, construction of houses etc.
4. To improve the villager’s living conditions.

In this sphere, the programme envisaged clear environment by making villages attractive and livable and to take up such works as widening village lanes, construction of soakage pits, educate the villagers and to help them in taking preventive measures against epidemics and other related things.

5. To carry on experiments in the reclamation of land for agriculture, pasturage and afforestation in ravines and barren areas.

6. To replan villages where villagers are ready for it.

7. To hold the industries departments’ training centre programmes.

8. To arrange for the maintenance of small, improved equipments introduced in the area.44

As is seen, the dominant thrust of the programme was people’s participation, self help and use of their religious beliefs and social bent of mind for the execution of the project. On this pedestal, Mayer concentrated on major economic activity i.e. agriculture. In his own words, “the work expands from there”.45 Land is the only asset with villages and labour in abundance, therefore, asset creation and income generation from agriculture was the fundamental priority. The approach adopted by Mayer was integrated and the scope of the activities ----------------


was very comprehensive and the process of development was to be achieved in a very systematic manner. Mayer himself observed that the process of execution involved "concentration, systematic step-by-step performance, self-measurement and self-correction".\(^{46}\)

It refers to the great importance of the process of monitoring and evaluation in assessing the pilot project and then to take corrective measures in its implementation. The activities undertaken should be so simple and adaptable by the people for whom they are intended and later, when the beneficiaries are capable of observing new methods and techniques, complex practices of development process can be made known to them in a gradual manner. This will be in the line of the spirit of more and more people's participation in the process of development as they shall be able to understand what is being done for them and how it will be done. They themselves, can then, suggest what should be done for them. A synthesis of these cross section of ideas will involve a workable and smooth strategy to take up rural developmental works in a better way.

The project had given an institutional administrative machinery from the provincial head to the grass-root level. The Etawah Pilot Project was very successful as it had the dynamic spirit of Albert Mayer behind it who, by his sheer hands on the higher ups, cut short the administrative red tapism and made the process of implementation quite fast. The programme brought economic prosperity to the farmers and their income within a period of three years rose to about $40^3$\(^7\) per cent.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 131.

In the assessment of Mayer, the value of increased agricultural yield was "10 times of the annual expenditure of the project". Similarly, the cooperative brick industry with an investment of Rs.1 crore and 520 links employed 42000 persons directly and one lakh indirectly.\(^{48}\)

Evaluating the Etawah Project, D.P. Singh, Chief Administrative Officer of the Project observed that the Pilot Project had successfully launched intensive agriculture, transforming human factor and organisation but failed to provide greater amenities, services and physical resources and restoration of balance between human and material resources. It also failed to take up rural industrialization. Despite institutionalizing the rural development bureaucracy, the project could not be sustained as it lost its "momentum" once Mayer left the scene.\(^{49}\)

However, Mayer has created a legacy of best trained village workers who have the skills, have teaching ability and dedication and worked step-by-step\(^{50}\). He himself remarked, "Development work can only succeed if it attracts the best people and these best must be in the training work".\(^{51}\) Apart from integrated approach, the Etawah Pilot Project attracts attention towards the fact that enthusiastic, confident, trained and dedicated people are needed to make any project of rural development successful. The Etawah Project crystallized two more


51. Ibid., p. 315.
conceptual concepts a; that pilot project will not achieve its
maximum potentiality if it tends to remain isolated or "Pocketed"
and does not have general support52; and b; that the outside
assistance should gradually diminish and lead to a transfer of
functions to local organisations.53

NILOKHERI (1948)

Nilokheri is another Government financed Project.
Actually, 7000 displaced persons were allotted a plot of 1100
acre of land at Nilokheri. S.K. Day, who became the father of
Rural Development in post independence era, was the man who took
up this re-habilitation work on war footing and developed an
agro-industrial complex which provided organised economic
activity in various fields such as - dairy, poultry, tannery,
printing press, engineering workshop etc. on cooperative
lines.54 This is an example of very good rural development
efforts based on the development of agriculture and allied
industries including other village industries. The progress
also brought nearly full employment to the persons.

It was such a thrilling experience of progress through
self help, mutual aid and cooperative secular socialistic living
that it was described as 'a model settlement' and 'a model to
India'.55 So successful was this strategy that Pt. Nehru

52. Ibid., p. 77.
53. Sussman, Gerald. E., "The challange of Integrated Rural
Development in India. A Policy and Management Perspective"
54. Dey, S.K., Nilokheri, (Bombay, Asia Publishing House,
55. Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru on Feb. 22, 1950 and March 10,
1951 quoted in Ibid., pp. 115-122.

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remarked, "I have seen one Nilokheri from its birth to its present development .... I want 9999 Nilokheri to implement the message of Nilokheri which says work is the supreme sacrament and the right community organisation is the means for enduring values and survival".56

The real thrust in the field of rural development was made in a big and concerted way in the post independence era. Adequate priorities were given to various aspects of the rural life and it is in the Five Year Plans that new goals, strategies and directions have been logically assigned to the task of rural development.

The constitution of India provided for the directive principles of State policy which the central and the State governments should follow and promote as a conscious policy of the republic of India. Whereas article 40 of the constitution refers to the constitution of village panchayats and to give them sufficient powers to function as units of local government, article 48, on the other hand advises the State to use and organise modern and scientific methods in the sphere of agriculture and animal husbandry.57 While the first part i.e. Article 40 speaks of evolving an administrative structure to fulfill the aspirations of socio, politico, economic, democratic rights from the grass root levels, the other part i.e. article 48 speaks of adopting agriculture and animal husbandry as the priority sectors for taking up development of the country as a whole. Both these directive principles of the State policy have been drafted with great caution. Apart from politico administrative decentralisation, the fundamental priority sector


57. Constitution of India.
which is the basis of rural development is the agriculture sector. It has been referred to in the most comprehensive way and it has taken in itself policies from the basic needs of land reforms to the ultimate technological applications in agriculture sector which is the key for rural development and poverty alleviation in the country.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

Against this background and with a view to bring the rural millions in the process of national building, the most ambitious programme of Community Development was launched for total rural transformation during the first five year plan.

Community Development is defined as "the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authority to improve the economic special and cultural conditions of communities to integrate their communities into the life of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress".58

Community Development was viewed as the tool of total social transformation of Indian rural economy and was considered as a sacred duty and responsibility of the nation. The idea was to cover the entire countryside "within the shortest possible time, not exceeding ten years"59 in a new phase of development activity. It saw "building up new India"60 through community development.

The planners were so enthusiastic that they viewed it as the Strategy, methodology and process of transformation of the social and economic life of the village. Community Development was viewed by national leaders as Yajana as it was to be performed for the upliftment of rural population of India who were living in villages. It was a process of Gramkalyan and through it a march of Indian Nation "Towards New Destiny".

It contained the aspirations of our great leaders to fulfil their long cherished dream to see an economically free and prosperous India. The programme was, as is seen, viewed with great enthusiasm and zeal to ameliorate the Indian economy in general and the rural sector, in particular.

Initially, the programme was started through fifty five projects in the country. Each project had 300 villages in its ambit or a population of 2 lakhs. The budget provided was 65 lakh per block which was to be spent over a period of 3 years. Community Development was basically a multipurpose programme, yet the main emphasis or priority was assigned to agricultural development. With this emphasis in view, the initial selection of project areas was done where either irrigation facilities were existing or the rainfalls were assured. The concept of

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63. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Broadcast from All India Radio on October, 2, 1952.

Community development marked an era of intensive stress which was to continue for the years to put the process of rural development in a 'take off' stage. This is also evident as the government launched another programme in 1953 of National Extension Service Blocks with a provision of Rs.7.50 lakhs per block. This programme was started as per recommendations of the 'Grow More Food Enquiry Committee'. This programme was to run concurrently with community development which had the same objectives and aims. Whereas community projects were to end after three years the NES Blocks were permanent. On this duplicacy of these two programmes being run concurrently observed S.R. Maheswhari, "Nevertheless, the simultaneous, even though separate, existence of CD Blocks and NES Blocks was an unnecessary and uncalled for complication". 65

The community development programme was a perspective programme as it was contemplated to cover about 270 blocks per year during the first five year plan and more blocks subsequently. By the end of 1st plan it covered some 1100 Blocks and by the end of 2nd plan it covered 3627 Blocks and by October, 1964, the whole country was covered by the programme.

It was a very comprehensively conceived programme with main thrust on economic betterment and to get popular support. The CD programme took a holistic view of the farmers problems which no other programme had taken so far.

C.D. Programme and National Extension Service covered various aspects of farmers' life viz sanitation, cottage industries, transport, education, health, roads, housing, apart from social and cultural with emphasis on development of women and youth and specific activities relating to agriculture and

allied subjects. Other objectives were to create decentralised panchayat co-operatives for bringing improvements in the total spectrum of rural life.\textsuperscript{66}

Although the strategy was multi pronged but the dominant emphasis was skewed definitely in favour of agriculture production and its expansion. This emphasis was due to the fact that agriculture productivity was quite low and agriculture productivity problems were more directly related to the appaling poverty in rural sector. In an agriculture based economy, the future expansion of agriculture sector largely depended upon the agriculture surplus only.\textsuperscript{67}

Thus it is evident that the CD Projects concentrated more on agriculture development and other economic activities. It was not purely official programme but the basis of the programme were contemplated on the principles of people's participation. Rather, people's participation was the crux of the programme.\textsuperscript{68}

The CD programme has added new dimensions to rural development concept on the basis of territory function, the concept of block, as the basic unit of rural development operational unit has been carved out. Thus a smaller unit, in the shape of viable unit of rural development was conceived for all times to come. Although it has still to come up in line with Gandhian concept of 'rural unit', yet this was a positive contribution of CD programme and till today, development blocks are taken as the basic unit of all rural development activities from where all activities in the

\textsuperscript{66} GOI, A Guide to Community Development,(New Delhi Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, Government of India), p. 3.

\textsuperscript{67} Maheshwari, S.R., op.cit., p. 39.

Another innovation of CDP was village level worker - a multi-purpose functionary who was incharge of 5 villages covering a population of about 4000 villages and (jurisdiction raised to 10 villages with a population of about 6000), he was assigned the duties of implementing, coordinating, supervising and helping the villagers in all technical matters covering various departments. He was a development functionary created at par with the age old Patwari institution.

The concept of village level multi-purpose worker and the institution of block are the hallmarks of CD Programme. Observed SR Maheshwari, "New approaches to rural development have overshadowed the community development programme, but the latter's institutional contribution will endure. Today the expressions block, 'BDO' and 'VLW' have become part of the lexicon of rural India" and permanent institutional pillars of the edifice of rural development. The success of any programme depends upon the enthusiasm of its preceptor and implementor. The personalities of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and S.K. Dey and the uniformity of government at the centre and states was the main thrust and binding force to see that the programme implemented with a great zeal and with great speed.

Conceived at the central level as a peoples programme, the States were assigned substantial role for its implementation as the subjects under the programme belonged to States. Though new post of Development Commissioner was created at the Sate level, yet the key functions of coordination were assigned to District Collector. The new unit of rural development was BDO who headed both CD block and NES block. The BDO was provided with various experts called extension staff in the field of agriculture.

social education, rural industries, cooperation and welfare. All administrative control was vested in BDO.

At the grassroot level, village-level worker was to assist the villages in all development work. He used to meet villagers and guide and persuade them to use new methods of cultivation, seed, fertilizer and other related activities and also coordinated all extension activities.

Apart from the above government organic machinery, the peoples' participation was sought through forming advisory bodies at State, district and block level. These bodies had non-officials, both elected representatives and others, for bringing coordination amongst various departments' activities and to bring before the committee the wishes and aspirations of the people.

A view of CD programme thrust, despite its multifaceted dimensions, was vividly on increasing agriculture productivity. The aims and objectives of 1st Five Year Plan were a clear indication of this general policy and specific priority. It is here that CD programme met with its waterloo. The targets fixed in the plan were over ambitious and exceeded the technical and administrative competency of the experts and administrators. Whatsoever, may be the failures of CD programme, the same were projected in much magnified way, may be because the expectations of a new independent nation from this programme were very high at that time. To assess the CD programme only as an economic programme to boost agriculture production is doing injustice to the programme itself. The rapid infrastructure growth undertaken during the implementation of CD programme will help in evaluating the programme more objectively. Unless a wide network of different infrastructures are laid out in the initial stages of implementation, no programme can be said to be successful. It is the infrastructure development which will help in achieving a take off stage for an economy and particularly a rural economy which has acute inadequacies of all types of infrastructures. Thus as a comprehensive programme, the work done under the CD
programme did provide basic amenities such as roads, schools, panchayatghars and primary health centres. It was the first developmental programme conceived on a new pattern. It is this programme which formed the basis of all other rural developmental programmes but it had no pre-existing programme to follow, except the Etawah Project which had similar strategy at a microscale.\textsuperscript{70}

Apart from two permanent institutional features, the comprehensiveness of CD programme set in motion a fair urge of social change in the rural areas. It has also turned the face of regulatory administration to developmental administration.

There were some flaws noticed in the programme such as its rigidity. It was thrusted from above. Moreover, the programme was not prepared for the weaker section of the society specifically but for rural areas in general. The selection of regions at the initial stages was faulty and the largest section of rural population viz the small farmers, landless labourers etc. did not find themselves in the total design of CD programmes. The programme was not designed on Antyodaya spirit and benefits went largely to better placed rural classes. Yet, the infrastructure created under the project was laudable as it was the first programme and faced numerous institutional and other problems. In the words of Jawaher Lal Nehru "I think nothing has happened in any country in the world during the last few years so big in content and so revolutionary in design as the community projects in India.\textsuperscript{71}

Community Development deserved a better deal and should have continued as a major programme but the failure of the programme on agriculture front was viewed as the failure of the

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 48.

\textsuperscript{71} Quoted in Mukerji, B, Community Development in India, (Bombay, Orient Longman, 1961), p. 18.
entire programme and the thrust of the government shifted to intensive approach in preference to multipurpose approach. The Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP):

Despite the CD programme which envisaged total uplift of rural life with particular stress on increasing agriculture productivity, it became evident by the end of second five year plan that agriculture production was not keeping pace with population growth. This happened even when India had seen some good crop years. The dependence on foodgrain imports rose steadily. The import of wheat rose from 1 million tonnes in the first five year plan to 5 million tonnes. It was increasingly felt that something should be done specifically to augment the agriculture production in a short span of time, hence it was considered to adopt intensive approach to increase the production and productivity of agriculture on immediate basis.

A team of American experts in 1959 studied the agriculture situation and observed a clear gap between demand of foodgrains and production potential of the nation. As against normal expectation, the targeted production was to reach upto 82 million tonnes by the end of 1965-66 whereas the demand of foodgrains was expected to rise upto 100 to 110 million tonnes.\(^{72}\)

There was, therefore, an urgent need for a new agricultural policy which could lay specific stress on increasing agricultural productivity. Based on these recommendations, another team was called by the Government of India which drafted the IAD programme. It submitted its report entitled, "Suggestions for a ten point programme to increase food production".\(^{73}\)

\(^{72}\) GOI, Report on India's Food Crises and Steps to Meet it, (New Delhi : Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, 1959).

\(^{73}\) Ibid.
The programme envisaged identifying potential areas and concentrating on them as they were capable of giving fast results. The concentration was to be done through a package deal. The package deal consisted of applying new technologies in the field of agriculture and changing the pattern of farm management. It envisaged supply of various inputs easily to the farmers such as easy credit through cooperatives, timely supply of fertilizers, pesticides, high yielding variety of seeds, new and improved agricultural implements etc. It also envisaged a better marketing structure for providing remunerative prices. Other activities were to be taken so as to use local labour for constructing drains, soil conservation, minor irrigation and building approach roads which were of great use for providing infrastructures for raising the agricultural productivity.

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) adopted the strategy of IADP in one district in each State with the aim to increase agricultural production and productivity in specified areas "and to suggest new innovations and combination of practices which could be of value elsewhere".74

The above programme kept certain criteria for selection of areas. These criteria were based on the promise and objectives of the programme for rapid increase in agricultural production. Accordingly, the selected areas were such as having irrigation facilities, less occurrence of floods, free from soil conservation problems, have developed infrastructures and institutions.

In 1964, the IADP was extended to other districts and its name was changed to Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP). This did not make any difference in content strategy, concept and

style of IADP. The programme was based on heavy government spending and, therefore, there was great lobbying from the politicians, "for the inclusion of their constituencies",\textsuperscript{75} under the IAAP. Even otherwise, on laid down criteria, prescribed for the selection of district, many districts did not qualify to be included under IAAP. Due to a policy of intensive strategy of agriculture, institutions such as Agricultural Prices Commission (1965), the Food Corporation of India (1965) and the Ware-housing Corporation in the same year, and the setting up a National Seed Corporation and the State farm corporation (1966), came into existence.

This policy contemplated a new role to agriculture, scientists and farm scientists were involved in solving the basic problems of agricultural development. The new high yielding varieties of wheat were used which gave a boost to agriculture productivity. This spurt in agricultural production and demand for more and more seeds of high yielding variety was known as Green Revolution in India. It is clear from the fact that as against an estimated demand for 5000 tonnes of wheat seed, which was distributed, "the demand shot upto 23000 tons". Even that was not adequate to meet the demand.\textsuperscript{76}

The IADP recognised district as the basic unit of development. Fixing district as the basic unit was not a very wise decision as "a district may have more that one Agro Climatic Zone"\textsuperscript{77} and also the districts do not have adequate and specific infrastructural facilities as envisaged by the selection criteria for a district under the programme. But the programme

\textsuperscript{75} Maheshwari, S.R., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{76} Subramaniam, I.C., \textit{The New Strategy in Indian Agriculture,} (New Delhi, Vikas, 1979), p. 48.

\textsuperscript{77} Maheshwari, S.R., \textit{op cit.}, p. 82.
contributed in changing the attitudes of the farmers who became responsive to the increasing use of new technology. This raised the agricultural productivity and thus changed the whole complexion in the development of agriculture in rural India. This has also given a new shape to the socio-economic structure of rural India but the benefits were only enjoyed by those who were having large chunks of land and access to other infrastructures. This has widened the gap even between rural society and hit hard the interest of farmers having small holdings and other rural-labourers. There was a spurt in rural unrest and, therefore, eventually the attention was diverted to millions of small and marginal farmers and landless labourers who "represent 52 per cent and 24 per cent respectively of the total rural household".  

It has been even noted by the Government of India draft five year plan 1978-83 that despite a break through in agriculture production the 'fundamental objective was still quite far away'. It noted "we must face the fact that the most important objectives of planning have not been achieved, the most cherished goals seems to be almost as distant today as when we set out on the road to planned development. These are the achievements of full employment, the eradication of poverty, and the creation of the more equal society".  

SFDA & MFAL

The thrust of the IADP/IAAP mostly benefited the rich farmers or those who had relatively some resources at their disposal. The strategy of fast development in agriculture and redistribution of growth failed to achieve the desired ends.

78. Fourth Five Year Plan, (New Delhi, Planning Commission, 1969), p. 120.

79. Ibid., p. 4
This has totally neglected the small farmers and landless agricultural labourers. A new type of class struggle emerged in rural sector with this "agrarian reorganization". It is precisely for these reasons that the beginning of seventies saw agrarian unrest in many parts of country. Not only it enlarged regional disparities but it created class disparities even among the rural society. The fourth five year plan, therefore, envisaged directly tackling such left out sections of rural society and such regions which have not been selected under previous programmes of rural development. So far, among the most catchy slogans of the 4th plan was the slogan of "Garibi Hatao" and "Growth with social Justice". Its objective was to make the fruits of development available to the small farmers and agricultural labourers on one hand and to increase agriculture production on the other. The report of the all India Rural Credit Review Committee (1966) appointed by The Reserve Bank of India amply stressed the need to bring this large part of rural society in the ambit of agricultural and other rural development programmes. It suggested proper institutional structure so that small cultivators can be supported adequately to increase their production and income as these sections were not benefited through institutional credit. The RBI survey earlier observed the inadequacy of agriculture credit as well as its insufficiency both in terms of quantity and appropriateness in going to the right purpose and right people. This otherwise was a reflection on Banking sector apathy towards rural poor who could ensure


81. Fourth Five Year Plan, op. cit.

definite repayment of loans but were looked 'with such inherent suspicion by Commercial Banks.

The fourth five year plan defined a small farmer having a land holding below two hectares. The small farmer faces many handicaps such as non-availability of agricultural inputs, non-availability of credit and lack of other facilities like marketing and storage. It was therefore, envisaged in the plan that such farmers be enabled to avail the benefits of the new technology and other facilities.

Plans were devised to spread minor irrigation facilities through construction of tanks and tube wells and credit facilities were made available to them by relaxing policies of the government for providing loan to small and marginal farmers. Similarly, the marginal cultivators were benefited and the landless labourers were provided employment by creating supplementary occupations. The Review Committee (RBI) highlighted the "Socio-Economic Implication" of the problem for not bringing these masses in the main stream of rural development. Based on the above plan objectives small farmers Development Agency and Marginal Farmers' and Agriculture Labourers' Agency were set up under the society Registration Act. 1860, as autonomous bodies to implement the programme.

The programme, was initiated in the year 1970 in 45 SFDA and 40 MFAL projects. The Government took a decision to extend the SFDA till the end of the fifth five year plan. The basic aim of the scheme was to assist potentially viable small farmers to become surplus producers. Thus the strategy of IADP was extended to these farmers for eradication of poverty from the rural sector.

The SFDA and MFAL agencies were to identify the eligible small and marginal farmers of the area, identify their problems, chalk out programmes to deal with such specific problems. In the case of MFAL the objective was to provide gainful employment. It was also the task of the agencies to strengthen the financial and administrative institutions, rural industries and other common facilities for production and to create marketing infrastructure.

The concept of subsidies to small and marginal farmers was introduced for the first time so that these less endowed peasants be able to utilize the new technologies with direct financial help. So the thrust of the programme was to enable such farmers by suitable means to participate in the process of development and to avail technology designed for small farmers. The extent of subsidy was 25 per cent for small and 33 per cent for marginal farmers with upper ceiling of subsidy fixed at Rs.3000/- per beneficiary. The total amount of subsidy was raised to Rs.5000/- for Schedule Castes and Tribes. No direct cash was provided to the beneficiaries but the subsidy amount was given to the suppliers on behalf of the individual beneficiary.

The activities covered under the schemes were mainly concerned with agricultural and allied activities and such other occupations which could be helpful for raising agricultural production including animal husbandry. Methods needed for intensive agriculture practices, multiple cropping, use of high yielding variety seeds coupled with development of minor irrigation, soil conservation were also stressed. Attention was given to subsidiary occupations such as development of piggery, goat & sheep rearing and in Himachal Pradesh this included rabbit rearing. Of course the main stress was on milk production & poultry. This programme also stressed dry farming practices in

84. Fourth Five Year Plan, op.cit., p. 150.
rainfed areas. Initially started as separate agencies, the Government of India merged the two agencies in 1974.\footnote{85}

Three categories of beneficiaries were identified under the project i.e. small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. The projects were launched in identified districts. The governing body was entrusted with planning, programming and execution of schemes prepared by it.

The programme implementation suffered mainly due to lack of credit facilities. Coupled with it, the credit to targeted groups was to be provided through the cooperatives which were poorly organised to take up this task adequately. Similarly, organisational shortcomings contributed a lot except where the District Collector took keen and personal interest. All these infrastructural inadequacies limited the effectiveness of the programme.\footnote{86}

In addition to these, the programme suffered on account of usual deficiencies like improper identification of targeted groups, lack of awareness of the schemes, process of giving loans, inferior supply of goods (subsidies given in kind through appointed dealers).

The programme also suffered on account of lack of adoption of some schemes by the targeted groups. The local technology awareness and infrastructural capabilities were not up to the mark for adoption of schemes. This has resulted in the programme not becoming self-sustaining and, therefore, repayment of loans surfaced as the major shortcoming of this programme.

\footnote{85. Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India, Department of Rural Development, Letter No.1101/2/74, dated 1/5 June, 1974.}

\footnote{86. Maheshwari, S.R., op.cit., p. 98.}
Unless the beneficiaries are well equipped in technological adoption coupled with necessary infrastructure, no scheme can become viable. The programmes of rural development in India generally suffered from this weakness. The coverage of SFDA was limited and it affected the rural life only marginally. The scope and extent of SFDA was too limited to break the vicious circle of rural deprivation and poverty which had sunk too deep in the quagmire of socio-economic degradation.

The SFDA and the IADP programmes were directed to assist the agriculture sectors. Rather SFDA is a by-product of IADP which was a general programme for taking up intensive agriculture development and unfortunately the benefits were reaped by better endowed farmers. It was a social and political compulsion to launch SFDA, yet the contribution of SFDA is that it paved the way for targeted group approach as future rural development strategy. Whereas, the former placed its emphasis on improving the lot of small and marginal farmers and agriculture labourers; thus raising their social status in order to lessen the class disparities, the later put its stress on well equipped specified areas for raising agriculture production at a faster rate thus causing regional imbalances. This has necessiated to correct these imbalances by adopting new schemes like Drought Prone Areas Programme.

DPAP:

The genesis of the programme, which needs a brief mention here, was based on employment generation in rural areas. Initially, Rural worked programme (1970-71) was launched as a major employment generating programme in rural areas. This was a labour intensive programme in the field of road construction, providing irrigation facilities and covering activities such as soil conservation and raising plantation in specified areas. This was a major step in the sphere of rural development. So
far, there was hardly any scheme which was based on employment generation as a strategy of rural development.

It has been observed that nearly 19 per cent area of the total area of the country is drought prone which covers about 1/8 population of our total population. In different States of the country, the recurrence of high deficient rainfall varies from 2 to 5 years and this results in mild to severe droughts. It is apparent from the fact that expenditure on drought relief went up about 420 crore during 1969 to 1972 in the country and for 1972-73 it was around 370 crores.\(^7\)

Thus the expenditure on drought relief was unimaginative and did not have the utility in generating income. Such relief could not provide sustained employment nor it could raise productive assets. The Government of India, therefore, launched in 1970 RWP for providing massive employment on one hand and to utilize labour force in constructive rural works.

The programme, in its present shape could not provide desired employment on regular basis and therefore, the same was modified and renamed as Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP). It was thought that providing employment by getting the rural works executed was not sufficient unless an integrated development approach is adopted in developing the DPAP areas. So the programme was designed to cover, "development of water resources, soil conservation, farm forestry, pastures, live stock development, changes in agronomic practices and subsidiary occupations".\(^8\)

\(^7\) Desai, Vasant, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 69.

\(^8\) Ibid., p.109.
This programme was launched as a central sector scheme on 50:50 basis in the last two years of the fourth five year plan and continued in the entire fifth five year plan period. The allocation pattern depended upon the extent of drought-proneness of a particular district. Earlier, the basic administrative unit under DPAP was tehsil which was later changed to development block. The emphasis was laid on carrying out development works in these areas and to find permanent cure of drought problems. The implementation was given to District Rural Development Agency (DRDA).

The nature of this programme was supplementary in character. The DPAP suffered from various inadequacies. Due to lack of will to assign proper and appropriate priorities to schemes under the project and faulty implementation, the desired results could not be achieved. Schemes were left incomplete and central funds which were to be provided as addition to normal plan funds were not provided.89