CHAPTER - IX

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPAT OF
THE MINI CEMENT PLANT
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An important consideration in encouraging the network of Mini cement plants as against large-scale cement plants is that MCPs bring about dispersal of industrial activity in the rural area. Each mini cement plant may serve as nucleus through which development may spark off. Since cement is a versatile commodity needed in almost all constructional activities, it would initiate a process of change in the round about rural economy.

The use of locally available cheap cement may encourage more housing activities, the roads which link the remote villages may be renovated and improve communication and transport. Technological improvements in agriculture could reach the remote villages. They could be integrated into the modern exchange economy. All these factors would create vast secondary employment-opportunities, with the multiplier effect. In course of time, this would greatly reduce rural-urban differences, by setting up rurban sector, which serves as a link between rural and urban sectors.

Viewed from this angle, the Lokapur Mini Cement Plant has brought slow yet discernible changes on the countryside
around, over the decade. The consumption of cement was practically nil a decade ago. Now it is about 20 bags per day. As the workers are drawn from the nearby villages, it has increased contacts. It has raised the income levels of the people and the villages.

The signs of the area, becoming 'semi urban' are clearly visible. As for example, enrollment in the schools is steadily increasing, from bare 925 in 1981-82 to 1984 in 1990-91. The number of medical practitioners has increased to 10 from only 2 a decade ago. Hikes have taken place in the number of hotels, restaurants, grocery-shops, fruit-stalls, cloth merchants, tailors, laundries, medical stores etc. The presence of many cycle-repair shops, autoworks, electrical shops, welding-machine works, mills, grinding machines, lime kilns etc. is the symptom of gradual change taking place in the area.

That cement is an important input in the creation of an economic and social infrastructure which benefits rural economy is proved beyond doubt. But a concerted effort is needed to reap full benefits from it. There is a vast scope for generating multiplier employment and income benefits in the rural economy. A regional plan, incorporating all
possible sectors and an official for coordinating the activities, would go a long way. All local works private or public requiring the use of cement should be executed by the use of cement of the factory. This would increase the capacity-utilisation and reduce the break-even point and make the mini cement plant more viable.