CHAPTER 2

Evolution of agricultural development strategies in Indian Plans

1. Introduction

In the present chapter, an account of the evolution of agricultural development strategies adopted in India since the commencement of the First Five Year Plan in 1951 is given. Alongside the evolution of the strategies has also been the evolution of the institutional and administrative framework designed for carrying out the strategies. The evolution of this framework is also described in this chapter.

2. First Five Year Plan—the beginning of Community Development Programme

2.1 During the First Plan, agricultural development was sought to be achieved mostly through extension, institutional changes and land reforms. According to the Review of the First Five Year Plan: "It was recognised that structural and institutional changes of a far-reaching character would be necessary if the process of development was to bring forth the desired results not merely in terms of the increase in output but in terms of an increase in the production potential and of the satisfaction of vital democratic and egalitarian urges within the community. The plan indicated various directions in which action would be required in pursuance of this objective: the establishment of a nation-wide national extension and community projects movement, land reforms, the expansion and strengthening of cooperative organisations in credit, in trade, in housing, and in certain spheres of production, reorientation of the banking and credit structure and the establishment of a new relationship between the public and the private sector in the interests of orderly growth." (1) Obviously, the immediate concern was to develop
appropriate institutions for undertaking the task of agricultural development and, in fact, several other aspects of rural development. Reliance on local institutions at the village level, like cooperatives and village panchayats for many aspects of rural development, including, importantly, agricultural development, formed the core of the proposals contained in the First Five Year Plan.

2.2 Extension was undertaken through the Community Development (C.D.) programme. While agricultural production was the main emphasis of the programme, the basic idea underlying the C.D. programme was to bring about an all-round development of rural life as a whole, encompassing economic, social and cultural aspects. The two essential elements in community development are participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which would encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make these more effective. The core of the C.D. programme was thus local participation and, Government's participation was, in due course, to be reduced to no more than a catalyst to community action. The First Plan document clearly stated that "people's participation" was "the very essence of the programme."(2)

2.3 This approach towards community development had in fact been tried earlier and programmes on a small scale had been carried out in different parts of India. But it was in the context of increasing agricultural production that C.D. acquired importance in the First Five Year Plan.

"After the Grow More Food Campaign failed to produce the
required result, an Enquiry Committee was set up to investigate the causes of failure, under the chairmanship of Shri V.T. Krishnamachari. Their report had much to do with the initiation of the Community Development Project. It pointed out that 'the economic aspects of village life cannot be detached from the broader social aspect; and agricultural improvement is inextricably linked with the whole set of social problems'. 'that all aspects of rural life are inter-related and that no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt in isolation'.” (3) It was thus considered that the approach and methods of community development are best suited to motivate farmers to adopt better methods of farming, which is within their capacity to do with their own local resources, such as, use of better seeds which they can themselves multiply and store for next year's sowing, use of irrigation from small irrigation works that, through community effort, they can themselves construct and maintain, the adoption of simple soil conservation and crop protection measures which they can easily adopt. Capital resources being scarce in the agricultural sector, it was thought that community development should exploit the advantage of relying on local resources, particularly on the availability of abundant unutilised manpower. Thus the fundamental approach towards agricultural development was to use extension as a method to motivate the farmers gradually to adopt better techniques of production and also to construct the necessary infrastructure for agricultural development through the utilisation of rural manpower.

2.4 Along with the C.D. programme, another important development which took place was in the field of agricultural credit. Institutional credit system in the rural sector, existing since
the beginning of the century, was not geared to meet the requirements of agricultural development. The All India Rural Credit Survey Committee appointed by the Reserve Bank of India drew attention to the failure of the existing system to meet the credit needs of agriculture; the Committee pointed out in its Report (1954) that the cooperative credit institutions accounted for only 3 per cent of the total credit availed of by the farmers. The concept of lending for a credit-worthy purpose and the introduction of crop loan were major contributions of the Committee.

3. Administrative set-up - Block Development Officer and the C.D. Block.

3.1 The administrative set-up for carrying out the programme was designed so as to be in consonance with the core objective of the programme of bringing about an all round development of the rural area with focus on agricultural development. After some initial experiments, described in para 4.2 of this chapter, the unit of development was eventually to be a C.D. block. The head of the block level administration was the Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO was assisted by a team of Extension Officers for different fields of work - Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Irrigation and Works, Cooperation, Panchayats, Public Health, Social Education, Village Industries and Women and Children's Welfare. The idea of a team of extension officers from different departments functioning at the block level under the BDO was considered essential for achieving the basic objectives of the C.D. programme. It was made clear that the
block level set-up was not to be a "sector" by itself functioning alongside other "sectors" like public works, irrigation, public health etc., but is the "medium" through which all the sector departments concerned would function and seek to reach the people. The relationship between the block level set-up and the different sector(line) departments, and the link between the set-up and the farmers are given in the following diagram:

While, at the block level, there were different Extension Officers, they all functioned through the multi-purpose Village Level Worker (VLW) or Gramsevak as he was called. In fact, the gramsevak was to be the only link between the farmer and the block administration. This fitted in with the underlying philosophy of the C.D. programme summed up in the Review of the First Five Year Plan as follows:
"When different departments of the Government approach the villager, each from the aspects of its own work, the effect on the villager is apt to be confusing and no permanent impression is created. The peasant's life is not cut into segments, in the way the Government's activities are apt to be; the approach to the villager has, therefore, to be a coordinated one and has to comprehend his whole life. Such an approach has to be made, not through a multiplicity of departmental officials, but through an agent common at least to the principal departments engaged in rural work." (4)

3.2 Eventhough it could be debated whether its immediate contribution to agricultural production during the First Five Year Plan was significant, the C.D. programme was nevertheless a significant step in the development of institutional framework for agricultural and rural development. To a considerable extent it anticipated the currently fashionable "integrated approaches" to rural development. To appreciate how much of a departure it then constituted, it is necessary to realise that prior to the commencement of the programme the different line departments were hierarchically structured, each department having its own roots upto the district level or even below. The C.D. programme, for the first time, brought the line functionaries of the different developmental departments like irrigation, public works, public health, agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperation etc. at the block level, under the administrative control (not mere coordination) of the BDO.

3.3 This was not achieved easily, nor did it work smoothly. The technical officers of the block team resented being
brought under the administrative control of a generalist administrator (who was of the rank of a Tahsildar). It was therefore very difficult to obtain technical officers on loan from the respective line departments; recruitment from the open market to these cadres of Extension Officers was not very successful. The line departments who were to provide the necessary technical support to the block level team were at best cool and at worst hostile towards the C.D. programme. The Review of the First Five Year Plan observed as follows:

"Until towards the end of the First Plan there was perhaps a tendency on the part of individual development departments to consider that national extension and community project areas were in some way less their concern than other areas."(5)

3.4 The different line departments did not easily get reconciled to the idea of their "base" being brought under the administrative control of the BDO. There was a good deal of argument about the extent of control of the technical departments over the respective technical officers of the block team. It was recognised that the technical officers of the block team should receive technical guidance from the higher officers of their respective departments and be subject to their technical control. But it was not easy to reconcile this "technical control" with the "administrative" and "operational" control exercised by the BDO. The State Governments drew up detailed instructions demarcating the field of control of the higher technical officers of the line departments and of the BDO. The Manual on Community Development brought out by the then Government of Bombay devotes an entire Chapter to this issue(6). But this conflict could not be easily resolved through
instructions and circulars.

3.5 In fact, the problem of ensuring a coordinated implementation of any multi-sector rural development project has so far defied a satisfactory solution. The block set-up perhaps came nearest to a solution because the different departmental functionaries at the block level were placed directly under the control of the BDO. Every such move invariably produces a pull in the opposite direction by the line departments trying to break away from such a control. Different solutions, short of such a control, have been attempted in the multi-sector projects which were started later in the 60s and 70s; these are discussed in Chapters 4 and 8. In Maharashtra, when the Zilla Parishads (ZP) were started in 1962, the effective control over the functionaries of the different development departments was kept at the district level. To what extent this solution worked and what problems were faced are described in Chapter 4. The history of agricultural development efforts is also the history of attempts to devise a suitable administrative set-up which would ensure a coordinated working of the different line departments connected with different aspects of agricultural development.


4.1 While the C.D. programme was the medium through which agricultural development was to be brought about, the strategy of agricultural development, as announced in the Draft Outline of the First Five Year Plan, was to concentrate resources and extension in the most favourable areas of the country, so as to obtain a quick increase in agricultural production. The Draft Outline expressed a clear preference in favour of increasing production even if it meant going contrary to the
socialistic fervour of the policymakers. The Draft Outline emphasised that "it is essential that every State should draw up a programme of work for bringing certain areas, one after another, under intensive development, while holding the rest of the State more thinly. Since additional production is the most urgent objective, those areas should be selected where, on account of irrigation facilities or assured rainfall, additional effort is likely to produce more substantial results." (7)

Concern for achieving an immediate increase in agricultural production is obvious from the fact that the Draft Outline even went to the extent of advocating a postponement of land reforms. The argument contained in the Draft Outline was that "on the larger farms production will fall, and, for a period at any rate, on other farms also, and it may well be that the decline in production may have a serious effect on the well-being and stability of rural society as a whole." (8)

4.2 In line with this approach to agricultural development indicated in the Draft Outline of the First Five Year Plan, of concentration of administrative efforts in a few selected areas of promise, the C.D. programme was started in May 1952 in 55 selected areas comprising 27,388 villages and covering a population of 16.7 million (9). In each of the areas, a "pilot project", called Community Project, was started. Each project area contained about 300 villages with a population of about 2,90 lakhs, and a budget of about Rs.65.00 lakhs for three years. The project was placed under the charge of a Project Executive Officer, assisted by two Assistant Project Officers. The project, for convenience, was to be divided into suitable blocks, but the unit of administration was to be
the entire project. Further, as the idea was more to develop the area covered by the project through intensive efforts, there was no particular concern for identification of such project with a regular administrative unit. In fact, since increased agricultural production was the most urgent objective, the selection of areas was done more with reference to the existence of irrigation facilities or assured rainfall rather than on the basis of existing administrative boundaries. This approach of choosing as the unit of development an area different from the unit of administration was another innovation introduced in the initial phase of the First Five Year Plan.

4.3 Ever since the publication of the Draft Outline of the First Plan, a good deal of political debate started regarding the approach to agricultural development. When quick increase in agricultural production was the immediate need, concentration of resources, both administrative and financial, over a few compact areas with promise of results appeared to be the direct and simple answer. But, at the same time, political and social considerations tended to exert a pull towards spreading developmental efforts over all the areas. This oscillation of policy between concentration and diffusion runs through the evolution of agricultural development administration. The interplay of forces finally settled the First Plan strategy in favour of dispersion. In other words, what finally emerged in the First Five Year Plan was a broad front strategy. The final version of the First Plan clearly stated that a national extension organisation, on the pattern of the
Community Projects would be set up, covering the entire rural area within ten years (10).

4.4 Eventhough the adoption of the broad front approach was perhaps the result of an intense political debate, it should be noted that, at that time, there were no technological options in agriculture, and even an intensive approach in selected areas would not have resulted in quantum increases in production. A creeping increase attained over a large area would, with low technology agriculture, result in a higher overall increase in production. As it happened, the highest growth rate of agricultural production of 3.3 per cent per annum was achieved in the 50s; but the contribution of increase in yield (land productivity) was only 1.5 per cent, and the remaining increase of almost 2 per cent came from extension of cropped area. It has been observed that a large number of districts scattered all over the country, but most of them in the dry areas of Rajasthan, M.P., Maharashtra, Gujarat, A.P. and Karnataka, registered more than 5 per cent growth. These areas would most probably have been left out in a selective approach. The lesson one could draw is that a gradualist strategy, depending upon institutional reform and utilisation of idle rural manpower in order to achieve an increase in agricultural production (which was the only option then available), needed to be broad-front even from economic considerations.


5.1 Another development which took place along with the shift of approach from concentration to dispersion was the realignment of the boundaries of the C.D.project areas to
conform to natural administrative units. The pilot projects mentioned earlier dealt with the problems of finding out a suitable pattern for intensive rural development. The main question, namely, the establishment of an extension organisation throughout the country as a permanent development structure, stressed by the Planning Commission in the First Five Year Plan, however, remained to be tackled in a systematic way. The Grow More Food Enquiry Committee, which had gone into this question by this time, had recommended that for such an extension organisation, the taluka or tehsil, the lowest administrative unit consisting of 100 to 120 villages, should constitute a convenient development block, in charge of a Development Officer or an Extension Officer. The Revenue Sub-divisional Officer, according to the Committee, should perform the functions of the Extension Officer in his area. The Collector, in-charge of the district, in turn also was to be the Chief Extension Officer for his district. The concept was thus to link the extension organisation with the administrative organisation and bring about a transformation of the existing regulatory machinery into a welfare administration. According to this pattern, while at the block level the development and regulatory functions were kept distinct with the BDO and Tahsildar respectively, at the higher levels of administration, namely, the Sub-division and the District, the same officer who was earlier a purely regulatory officer, was to perform both development and regulatory functions. This arrangement, with only minor changes, has continued till today in most of the States.

5.2 The pilot C.D. projects started in 1952 in 55 areas
were accordingly realigned and redesignated as C.D.blocks in 1953. Under the pattern of the new C.D.block, each block area was to consist of only a population of 66,000. The 55 C.D.projects started in 1952, each covering a population of 2.90 lakhs, were considered equivalent to 247 C.D.blocks \(55 \times 2.90 = 247\) approx) \(55 \times 0.66 = 36.66\) approx). The total budget for the new C.D.blocks was fixed at Rs.15 lakhs for three years. The change over from the C.D.projects of 1952 to the new pattern of C.D.blocks of 1953 did not mean any dilution of the intensity of effort in areas already covered by these blocks, as the budget of Rs.65 lakhs for the C.D.project (1952) more or less corresponded to the budget of Rs.15 lakhs for the 1953 C.D.block (Rs.65 lakhs \(\times\) 55 = Rs.15 lakhs approx) Rs.5.50 lakhs for a period of 3 years. Each such block would have a permanent NES pattern of staff consisting of 6 Extension Officers and 10 Gramsevaks. After 3 years it would pass into an intensive stage and would be called a C.D.block with a larger budget of Rs.15 lakhs. After 3 years of intensive stage, the C.D.block would pass into what was called the post-intensive stage; only a nominal budget grant was admissible but the permanent extension staff was to be retained. Each NES block would thus go through three
stages: NES block (pre-intensive), C.D. block (intensive) and post-intensive. It was also decided that the areas already covered by the 1952 pilot projects or the 1953 C.D. blocks should be treated as having already entered the intensive stage, and, therefore, eligible for a budget of ₹15 lakhs for three years.

6. **Second Five Year Plan - Democratic Decentralisation.**

6.1 The agricultural strategy during the Second Five Year Plan was to be mostly a continuation of that of the First Plan. The NES and the C.D. blocks continued to be the focal points of the strategy which, as mentioned earlier, had two main elements: motivating farmers to adopt better farming practices and mobilising rural manpower to construct labour-intensive agricultural infrastructure works. The Plan states:

"An under-developed economy has large resources in manpower which are not being fully utilised. These resources have to be used for creating permanent assets...... One of the central aims of the National Extension Service is to organise the systematic use of manpower resources, particularly in the rural areas, for works of benefit to the community as a whole. This can be done in a number of ways, for instance, in constructing local works such as village roads, fuel plantations, tanks, water supply and drainage and maintaining existing minor irrigation works. When a large work is undertaken, such as an irrigation project, the national extension and community project personnel should take initiative, with the support of non-official leaders, in organising labour cooperatives of villages interested in work on the canal system and connected activities. This is also possible in
regard to roads and other projects. By harnessing voluntary effort and local manpower resources, physical targets in the plan can be supplemented in many fields and even greatly exceeded. The Second Five Year Plan will provide large opportunities for cooperative action along these lines."(13)

6.2 During the Second Plan, the budget of the NES block was reduced to Rs.4.00 lakhs and that of the C.D. block (intensive stage) to Rs.12.00 lakhs. This decision was taken on account of the constraint on the financial resources available for the Plan. The organisational structure, however, remained the same. It was also decided that the conversion from the NES stage to intensive C.D. stage should depend on the performance of individual blocks and only those which had become ripe for the "intensive dose" should be given the advantage of the additional financial provision. This decision really meant that every NES block had to "earn" its transformation into intensive stage, and would not automatically be converted into an intensive block after 3 years. The implication of this decision was not immediately apparent. Those parts of the country which, either because of the favourable agro-climatic factors or because of local initiative, were able to utilise the budget provisions, could develop faster. In a way, even the broad-front strategy embodied in the NES, resulted eventually in some kind of selective approach.

6.3 A strategy which depended so much for its results on a continual dialogue and fruitful partnership between the administration and the people could not sustain for long without the association of the peoples' representatives with administration. The need for such an association was
expressed in the Second Plan document:

"The need for creating a well organised democratic structure of administration within the district is now being widely felt."(14) This realisation ultimately resulted in the setting up of panchayati raj institutions in many States, as a result of the recommendations of the "Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Service" (popularly known as the Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report)(15). Democratic decentralisation, as the process initiated by the Team's report came to be called, took different forms in different States. Some States, like Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, which took the lead, set up effective democratic bodies at the block level, whereas Maharashtra and Gujarat set up such bodies at the district level. The panchayati raj set-up in Maharashtra is described in Chapter 4.

6.4 Apart from bringing about popular participation in administration at district level or block level, an important feature of the report of the Balwantrai Mehta Team was its recommendation that there should be decentralisation of authority and decision making to panchayati raj institutions. However, since Government of India was initially bearing 100 per cent and subsequently (i.e. during the Second Plan) 75% of the expenditure on C.D. programme, the budget of the C.D. block handed down from the Government of India to the States tended to become rather rigid. The prescription to the block level administration that it should respond to the local "felt needs" was not really reflected in the standard "schematic budgets" of the C.D. blocks. The U.N. Evaluation Mission (1957), which
studied the C.D. programme, had expressed the opinion that "there was sometimes too much rigidity in the application of the community development programme sent out by the Centre." (16) The Balwantrai Mehta Team also came to the same conclusion and recommended that the Central Government should only lay down the policy and prescribe the broad outlines of a scheme and then leave it to the State Governments to work out the details to suit local requirements.

6.5 The chief argument in favour of the creation of democratic institutions at the district level and below was that the representatives of the people would be in a better position than the block level bureaucracy to understand and respond to the people's needs. In fact, understanding people's needs was not as difficult as responding to them within the framework of the schematic budget of the block. To give an illustration: when a BDO visited a village, the villagers pointed out that a local nulla needed to be deepened and trained properly as there was a serious water-logging problem. The BDO was indeed helpless as he was not sure whether his block budget permitted the taking up of this work. A reference had to be made to the State Government which, in turn, referred the matter to the Government of India. There were a number of such references from the BDO. The recommendation of the Mehta Team notwithstanding, the rigidities remained to a considerable extent.

This has been commented upon even as late as 1978 by the Asoka Mehta Committee, appointed in 1977 by the Government of India to enquire into the working of the Panchayati Raj Institutions; the Committee observed: "Further, in the process of implementation of transferred activities, here and elsewhere, a number
of orders and directions by the State Government led to the gradual development of subsidiary legislation which would tend to curtail the decision making powers of the elected bodies." (17) This is another recurrent theme in the history of implementation of agricultural development programmes, namely, striking a balance between financial accountability to the authority providing funds and operational flexibility, which often proves intractable.

6.6 Another important recommendation of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee was regarding the different stages of NES/CD blocks. The Committee recommended that it was not conducive to efficient planning and continuity of efforts if there were to be many stages divided more or less artificially, as was the case hitherto in the programme. According to the Committee, the development is to be regarded as a continuous process and transformation from the initial stage to the national extension service and to the intensive stage should in fact be a natural process without any uncertainty about it. Secondly, the financial provision in the post-intensive stage should not be so meagre as to involve a sudden drop in activities which would lead to disappointment and discontent. As a result of this recommendation, the pattern of the C.D. programme was revised by the Government of India from April, 1958. According to the revised pattern, the three stages were to be as follows:

(i) The pre-extension stage for one year with a budget provision of ₹18,000/- for doing only preliminary work. A skeleton staff of 1 BDO, 1 Agricultural Extension Officer and 5 Gramsevaks was to be provided to prepare the spade work for agricultural extension programmes.
(ii) Stage I with a budget provision of ₹12 lakhs for a period of 5 years without distinction of pre-extension or intensive stage. During this period, the provision for staff etc. was to be the same as in the case of normal C.D. blocks.

(iii) Stage II which corresponded to the post intensive stage of the old pattern but with a budget of ₹1 lakh per annum for a period of 5 years. The staffing pattern however was to continue on a permanent basis.

6.7 This revision of the pattern once again restored the earlier equal treatment to all blocks, without rewarding those blocks which had the capabilities of developing faster.

7. The content of the C.D. Programme.

7.1 We have described the administrative set-up under the C.D. programme and the institutional innovations introduced by the process of democratic decentralisation. We shall now examine the content of the C.D. programme from the point of view of the responsibilities cast by it on administration.

7.2 The schematic budget of the Stage I block is given in Annexe (18). It will be seen that items (II), (III) and (IV) pertaining to agricultural development constitute nearly 50% of the non-recurring portion of the budget; out of this a major portion is accounted for by loans for various agricultural purposes. Detailed instructions were given to the BDOs regarding the role of block administration in agricultural development. It was also clearly indicated that agricultural development should be the major concern of the block staff and that:

(i) The amount earmarked for agricultural development cannot be reappropriated for any other items of the block programme.
without prior sanction of the Government.

(ii) The workload of the block staff who have to attend to agricultural work in addition to other work should be so adjusted that the requirements of agricultural development receive prior and foremost attention.

(iii) Nearly 70 to 80 per cent of the time of the gramsevaks should be devoted to matters related to the promotion of agriculture.

7.3 It is necessary at this stage to address ourselves to the question of proper and feasible role of administration in the field of agricultural development. Agricultural development is the end result of a number of steps to be taken by farmers, political leaders, social workers and administration and also of policy decisions of the State and Central Governments. It is the responsibility of planners and policymakers to clearly identify and spell out the tasks of administration and these should be within the capabilities of administration. In fact, with what effectiveness administration responds to the responsibilities given to it depends very much upon how clearly its role is defined and whether this is the role which administration is competent to perform. For instance, the construction of an irrigation project can be regarded as falling entirely within the capability of administration, if the necessary resources are made available. Managing the irrigation system and creating physical conditions conducive to the farmers utilising the irrigation potential created can also be said to come within its capability; but making farmers utilise the irrigation potential created lies beyond
its capability. Production and timely positioning of seeds, fertilisers and other inputs fall properly within the sphere of administration, but mobilising rural manpower to construct certain village assets cannot strictly be considered so. Organising village cooperative institutions - by its very definition a voluntary association of people - cannot be considered the area of responsibility of administration. In other words, certain activities in the field of agricultural development require action primarily by administration; whereas, some require concerted action by both administration and the farmers. It is necessary to keep this distinction in mind while discussing the role of administration in agricultural development.

7.4 From the point of view of implementation and the nature of administrative methods to be followed, the contents of the C.D. programme can be classified into the following categories:

(1) Matters primarily to be organised by the administration.

(ii) Matters to be organised by the administration but with substantial help and close cooperation of the people.

(iii) Matters to be developed primarily on the initiative, and as their own programme, by the people, but, for which, suitable help by way of technical advice and external financial assistance is to be provided by the administration.

7.5 Among the agricultural development programmes entrusted to the block administration, while some programmes like organising soil conservation measures (contour bunding, terracing and levelling), construction of new irrigation works like minor irrigation tanks etc., could be said to
fall under category (i) mentioned above, most of the programmes were really falling under category (ii) or (iii). Thus there were two clearly distinct aspects, namely, what the people should be motivated to do by the block administration and what the administration itself could do. But, in actual practice, these two aspects were not kept distinct and separate. What the block administration was expected to motivate the farmers to achieve, somehow became the targets of the administration itself. Thus detailed instructions were given regarding the preparation of the agricultural programmes for the block, which was to be further broken down into village agricultural plans and ultimately family-wise production plans. (19) What this implied was that the administration was to prepare detailed plans which eventually were to be adopted by the farmers as their own plans. It was somehow presumed that these plans would eventually be adopted by the farmers and, on the assumption that all recommended farming practices would be followed by the farmers, detailed calculations of additional production per acre were required to be done by the block administration. All these efforts ultimately resulted in nothing more than a considerable load of paper work and in due course the preparation of such plans became ritualistic. The real problem was that block administration had very little within its capability to see that plans made for the farmers could be adopted and followed by them.

7.6 Much of the criticism of the block administration and, in fact, of the C.D. programme itself stems from the failure to realise this basic fact, namely, that targets can
be given to administration only of such things which the administration itself is capable of achieving. For instance, it is meaningful to talk of a target for production of improved seeds by the block administration for supply to the farmers. It is equally meaningful to talk of a target for covering a certain acreage with appropriate soil conservation measures like bunding, terracing etc.; but it is not meaningful to give a target to the block administration for bringing a certain acreage under improved seeds, because this is entirely the decision of the farmers. Similarly, it is not meaningful to give a target to the block administration for a certain number of wells to be dug by the farmers. When such targets are given, administration tends to adopt questionable means, which eventually bring discredit to administration.

7.7 Among the different targets given to the administration, it is but natural that administration concentrates on what it can achieve, like construction of buildings, so that the target expenditure for the block can be "booked" somehow, as any surrender of unspent financial provisions at the end of the year was considered to be an index of poor performance on the part of the BDO. If, for instance, in spite of the best efforts of the block staff, enough farmers did not come forward to avail of irrigation loans, (as ultimately it is their decision whether to go in for a dugwell or not), the effort put in by the BDO would never figure in the returns to be submitted by the block administration. Hence, inevitably, there is more concentration on 'visible' achievements within the capability of the administration. This is not
sufficiently appreciated. For instance, the Third Evaluation Report on the C.D. programme says:

"In the operation of the programme there has been excessive emphasis on physical and 'financial' accomplishments—getting the targets achieved, expenditure incurred, buildings constructed etc. and not enough on educating the people into new ways of doing things, on making the national extension service an effective agency for carrying out the total programme of development and reform provided for by the national and State plans." (20)

7.8 Targets, therefore, are meaningful and relevant only in certain areas. While it is true that administration can only respond to people's requirement and that it is not realistic to expect administration to make people automatically respond to the targets given to administration, targets are, all the same, inevitable as means of control and supervision. Once it is accepted that it is one of the functions of the block administration to motivate the farmers to use improved seeds and adopt better farming practices, the question arises: how can the work of the BDO be measured? What norms should the BDO apply while evaluating the work of the gram-sevaks? In an agricultural development strategy built around extension as the key instrument, it is necessary to spell out some means of measuring the degree or the intensity of extension efforts put in. This is one of the dilemmas of agricultural development administration; targets cannot be dispensed with, but, at the same time, excessive emphasis on targets could lead to unhealthy practices.

7.9 To sum up, in agricultural development planning, it
is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between two kinds of targets. The first kind of targets, in areas which are entirely within the ambit of administration, like construction of irrigation projects, production and timely positioning of seeds etc., have real meaning and administration can be held accountable for any shortfall. The second kind of targets, like bringing a certain acreage under improved seeds, seeing that farmers undertake spraying of their cotton crop with appropriate pesticides etc., though they are not entirely within administration's control, are nevertheless relevant. It is necessary, however, for planners to be aware of the danger of basing important plan projections on such targets. This may be illustrated from the Second Plan. The Plan document says: "The targets set out at present in the plan are in the nature of working estimates indicating the increases in production potential arising from various development programmes. It is hoped that through better integration of the agricultural and the national extension programme, it will be possible to fix appreciably higher targets for agricultural production. This problem is at present under discussion between the Planning Commission and the authorities concerned.") (21). Appreciably higher targets for agricultural production were subsequently fixed, as indicated in the above quotation from the Second Plan document. In May 1956, the National Development Council called for higher targets of agricultural production than those initially proposed for the Second Plan. The targets were revised as follows:— foodgrains production from 75 million tons to 80.4 million tons, oilseeds from 7 million tons to 7.6 million tons, sugarcane from 7.1 million tons to 7.8 million tons, and cotton from 5.5 million bales to 6.5 million bales (22). But the basis on which the revision was done was not spelt out, beyond stressing the need
for measures to secure the fullest participation of the people through community projects and national extension service. The National Development Council in the 10th meeting (May 1958) resolved as follows: "The Council stressed the fact that the level of outlay which could be undertaken would depend in degree on the success achieved in increasing agricultural production. Local participation and community effort must be enlisted on the largest scale possible in support of agricultural programmes such as the full utilisation of the available irrigation potential and the adoption of improved practices especially in areas which have irrigation and assured rainfall and intensive efforts should be made to reach every family through the Village Panchayat and the Village Cooperative." (23). It is clear from the above that certain projections and hopes based on fallible assumptions somehow became firm targets.

8. IADP and the swing towards concentrated efforts.

8.1 An important landmark in the evolution of the strategy towards agricultural development was the publication in April 1959 of the Ford Foundation's "Report on India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It". This Report strongly emphasised the need to step up food production rapidly. The Report argued: "It is clear to us that food production increases at the rate required ... cannot be realised unless an all-out emergency programme is undertaken, and adequate resources are made available. This means that agricultural development must be given the highest priority among all categories of development for the remainder of the Second Five Year Plan and for the entire Third Plan period". (24). Simultaneously, the Report recommended an intensive and selective development strategy based on a combination of modern practices - improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, pesticides - in irrigated
areas and other climatically well-endowed areas of the country. It may be recalled that this in fact was the strategy advocated in the Draft Outline of the First Plan, and given up later, in favour of dispersion of developmental efforts. As in the First Plan, the argument of the Ford Foundation in favour of a strategy of concentration rested almost entirely on the need to maximise production goals. The Report said: "The immediate potential for increase in wheat and rice production lies in certain districts which have previously shown appreciable increases in yields. These districts have irrigation facilities and the farmers are anxious to apply technological knowledge in order to further increase the yields. Special consideration would be given to about 25 rice districts in Punjab, parts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. In many of these specified districts, yields of rice and wheat can be doubled if the scientific approach is utilised and all factors of production are made available in optimum quantities". (25). The programme of concentrating attention in certain selected areas, which was launched in the last year of the Second Plan (1960-61) as a result of the above Report was called the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP). It was initially implemented in a few selected districts with immediate production potential. The programme was taken up in 37 districts in 14 States, in three stages.

8.2 Apart from the shift towards a strategy of concentration, IADP was responsible for certain other shifts in the approach to agricultural development. First of all, it marked a departure from reliance on gramsevaks to attend to agricultural development in addition to other aspects of rural development. In the districts selected under IADP special staff positions were sanctioned, in addition to the
existing ones, for exclusive attention to agricultural development. This was the beginning of the view that agricultural extension should be made more professional and should not be entrusted to multipurpose gramsevaks. It emphasised a much more direct involvement of the Agriculture Department in agricultural development programmes, particularly agricultural extension. It was seen, in para 3.1 of this chapter, that with the launching of the C.D. programme, the emphasis was on an integrated delivery of services to the farmers through the gramsevak and on bringing the block level functionaries of the different development departments under the control of the BDO. This policy of integration was reinforced by the Balwantrai Mehta Team's Report and the process of democratic decentralisation which followed it. The block level functionaries of the line departments, who resented being brought under the control of the BDO, could not also accept the idea of working under the control of a democratically elected body. The strong pull exerted by the line departments away from integration was felt during the Second Plan. The Third Evaluation Report on the Community Development Programme noted: "The dual control of specialists concerned with different subjects at the block level by the Block Development Officer (whose administrative control may sometimes go too far) and by technical officers at the district level is not yet working satisfactorily. It has happened in many cases that departmental officers, instead of looking upon the extension or community project as their own agency, have concentrated attention in areas other than those included in the extension and community development programme where they had more
direct control over their specialist staffs. To insist on the correct pattern, of administrative and technical co-ordination at the State, district and block level is obviously of the highest importance for, in the next few years, the national extension service will have reached the entire rural population." (26) With the launching of IADP and the importance attached to the creation of a professional cadre of extension workers solely for agricultural development, the pull away from integration gained momentum.

8.3 Another feature of IADP was that the instructions to the administration were much more specific. In the selected blocks a certain "target" area was to be covered with a specified package of practices, consisting of: i) Use of improved variety of seeds, ii) Seed treatment, iii) Sowing time and methods, iv) Seed rate, v) Space between rows, vi) Fertiliser and manure doses, vii) Inter-culture, viii) Plant protection measures, and ix) Use of improved implements. It was also decided that a large number of demonstration plots should be taken up in areas where the above package of practices were to be introduced.

8.4 The responsibility of the agricultural development administration increased in the areas covered by IADP. When administration required the farmers to adopt a certain "package" of practices, it also had to supply them with the necessary wherewithal, particularly, credit and physical inputs in time. IADP emphasised the importance of 'timing' in agricultural development and quick response by the administration to the farmers' demands. Earlier, the block level
administration was to achieve things by 'motivating' people, 'enlisting' their co-operation and 'mobilising' idle manpower; naturally the efforts put in or the results obtained were not easily measureable. It was also possible for the administration to escape responsibility by pointing out to the 'apathy' and 'non-cooperation' of the people. But in a strategy which depended on a more technical package, when timely provision of inputs is the prime responsibility of the administration, the functioning of the administrative machinery is constantly put to test. Agricultural development administration became more and more vulnerable and greater demands were made on it. Earlier, things could not go 'wrong'; now things could go 'wrong' and the administration was answerable. By highlighting the responsibility of the administration for the timely supply of inputs, IADP prepared the administration for the challenges of the technocratic strategy which was soon to follow. The programme has, quite justifiably, been described as a 'pace-setting; path-finding' experimental programme, initiating new ideas in agricultural development (27). With the IADP, the agricultural development acquired a definite strategy with much sharper focus than before.

8.5 Another contribution of IADP was the awareness which it created that for any intensive agricultural development effort resource commitment is inescapable. It considerably strengthened the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture in its demands for higher allocation of Plan resources. This is reflected in the fact that in the Third Five Year Plan, the share of the Agriculture Sector was increased substantially as the following
Table would show:

**TABLE 4**
Second and Third Plan Outlays on Agricultural Programmes  
(excl. C.D. and Panchayati Raj)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. in lakhs</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Agricultural Programmes</td>
<td>25205</td>
<td>2439</td>
<td>27644</td>
<td>57764</td>
<td>11000</td>
<td>68764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Total Plan</td>
<td>204293</td>
<td>255707</td>
<td>460000</td>
<td>402218</td>
<td>407635</td>
<td>809853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% (1) to (2)</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>8.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Third Five Year Plan, page 85

To quote the Third Plan document: "In formulating agricultural production programmes for the Third plan, the guiding consideration has been that the agricultural efforts should not be impeded in any manner for want of financial or other resources. Accordingly, finance is being provided on a scale which is considered adequate, and the further assurance is given that if, for achieving the targets of production, additional resources are found necessary, those will be provided as the Plan proceeds." (28)

9. Third Five Year Plan.

9.1 The main thrust of the Third Plan strategy did not materially differ from that of the Second Plan. The C.D. programme was continued. The IADP which had just then been started was superimposed on the C.D. programme in the selected blocks. The Planning Commission, as in the Second Plan, emphasised that the financial outlay provided in the Plan
would have to be supplemented in the rural sector by the use of idle manpower to the maximum extent possible. To quote the Plan document: "The Third Plan envisages concentrated effort in agriculture on a scale calling for the participation of millions of peasant families of agricultural workers in village production plans and in large scale programmes of irrigation, soil conservation, dry farming, afforestation and the development of local manural resources. One of the main aims of the Plan therefore is to harness the manpower resources available in rural areas. This is to be achieved through the programme of development for which the Plan provides, supplemented by extensive rural works programmes for utilising manpower resources in the villages, especially for increasing agricultural production." (29) In the scheme of emphasis given to village level institutions, namely, co-operatives and panchayats, in the Third Five Year Plan, it was envisaged that the village level extension worker would continue to be the most important agent for bringing about agricultural development at the village level. The Plan document says: "The growth of agricultural production is of such critical importance that, in the immediate context of the Third Plan, the principal test to be met by the community development movement must be its practical effectiveness as an agricultural extension agency." (30) The Third Plan also envisaged that the concerned subject matter departments would render necessary technical assistance to the multi-functional VLW to enable him to carry out his extension functions satisfactorily. The administrative framework in the Third Plan for the implementation of agricultural development programme
was thus, in the main, a continuation of what was followed earlier except that in the IADP districts staff was given exclusively for agriculture, in addition to the normal complement of block staff.

9.2 But in other respects the Third Plan marked a departure from the strategies pursued earlier. The recommendation of the Ford Foundation’s Report was reflected in the emphasis on specific technical aspects of the agricultural development efforts. The Plan document says: “The principal technical programmes for increasing agricultural production, around which intensive work is to be organised are (1) irrigation, (2) soil conservation, dry farming and land reclamation, (3) supply of fertilisers and manures, (4) seed multiplication and distribution, (5) plant protection and (6) better ploughs and improved agricultural implements and adoption of scientific agricultural practices.” (31) When we compare this with the statement in the Second Plan document: “The main elements in agricultural planning are: (1) planning of land use; (2) determination of targets, both long-term and short-term; (3) linking up of development programmes and Government assistance to production targets and the land use plan, including allocation of fertilisers etc. according to plan; and (4) an appropriate price policy.” (32), it will be seen that the strategy as spelt in the Third Plan had sharper lines. The importance of 'timing' stressed in Ford Foundation’s Report was also reflected in the Third Plan:

"The central task of the community development organisation and of extension workers at the block and village levels is to mobilise the rural community for intensive agricultural
development, to impart a sense of urgency and direction to the work of all the agencies operating on behalf of the Government and to ensure that the requisite supplies, services and technical assistance are available at the right time and place and in the most effective manner possible. At the same time the Agriculture Department must place at the disposal of the community development organisation at the block level the supplies, trained personnel and other resources needed." (33)

9.3 The stress on the preparation of village production plans, mentioned in the Second Plan, continued in the Third Plan. But these plans were to serve more as a guide for action on the part of the administration. The village production plans were therefore not merely for adoption by the farmers, but also for adoption by the administration, in order to plan the necessary supplies. To quote the Third Plan:

"In the field of extension, by far the most important task to be undertaken in pursuance of the Third Plan is to give effect to the idea of working out village production plans so as to draw all the cultivators into the common effort and, at the same time, to make available to individual farmers in an efficient and organised manner the credit, supplies and other assistance needed." (34) and again "The success of the village production plan will largely depend on the efficient organisation of supplies, credit etc. and the quality of the technical advice given by extension workers." (35)

9.4 Though its effect on the communication pattern within administration was not realised then, the development of an input-oriented strategy resulted in a two-way communication
within administration. Till then, the pattern of communication was mostly from top to bottom; upward communication, except for routine reports and references seeking clarification, was rare. But increasingly it was becoming difficult for the higher officers of administration to merely hand down 'targets' and ask for reports. The district level functionaries asked for inputs to back up the 'targets'. Very often the boot was on the other leg. We shall return to this theme in Chapter 5 when the annual functioning of agricultural development administration in Maharashtra is described.

9.5 The pull of the IADP towards concentration, was followed by a pull in the opposite direction, towards dispersion. During the Third Plan (in 1965-66) IADP was extended to cover 1596 blocks in 117 districts and was redesignated as Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP). Later on, it was extended to 150 more districts, but less intensively. While IAAP might have diluted the intensive character of IADP, it nevertheless prepared the administration over a wide area for technology-oriented agricultural development strategy.

10. Fourth Plan and after - the HYV strategy and the decline of the C.D. programme.

10.1 By the time the Fourth Plan was finalised, after an interregnum of three years when Annual Plans were formulated, a clear choice emerged in favour of a strategy based on technology. The emergence of the "miracle seeds" from the research stations, and the performance of Indian agriculture in 1968 (after the three drought years of 1965-67) when a record-breaking gain in foodgrain production of 28 per cent was achieved, were mainly responsible for a decisive shift towards
a technology-oriented strategy. As mentioned in para 9.5, the administrative apparatus was ready in the IAAP districts. The contents of the "package" were, however, different. This strategy adopted during the Fourth Plan has not basically altered till today. The developments since the Fourth Plan have mostly been the setting up of various institutions to provide the range of specialised services required by technology-oriented agriculture, and the consequent administrative readjustments.

10.2 With the HYV strategy, as the new strategy came to be known ("HYV" standing for 'High Yielding Varieties'), once again there was a pull towards concentrated approach in areas of promise. The new strategy depended upon new varieties of seed and fertilisers, both of which were in short supply. Since the yield increases which could be achieved were substantial when the combination of seed and fertiliser was applied in irrigated areas or areas with assured rainfall, the policy of concentration was a natural corollary of the new strategy. The then Agriculture Minister, Shri Subramaniam argued: "If we concentrate our efforts in a given area where we have assured water supply and we have the necessary extension services also concentrated in that area, then it should be possible for us to achieve much better results than by merely dispersing our efforts in a thin way throughout the country." (36) It is interesting to note here that in the 10th Meeting of the National Development Council (May 1958) Shri Subramaniam, who was then the Finance Minister of the then State of Madras, observed that "the entire Plan depended on agricultural production and for the purpose of increasing
agricultural production they had mainly depended on the community development and national extension service. If before the end of the present Plan, the entire area was not covered with community development and national extension scheme, programme for agriculture would to that extent be affected. * (37) * These two views indicate the appropriate strategies during the HYV and pre-HYV periods. Gradually, as the position regarding inputs improved, the challenge was to spread the HYV technology over as much area as possible and to convert as many farmers as possible to adopt HYV. Thus, after the Fourth Plan, administration had a two-fold challenge of spreading the HYV message, and following it up with timely supply of inputs and credit and also providing the farmers with necessary extension services.

10.3 Another accompaniment of the new strategy was the importance attached to price incentives to the farmers. It was realised that the adoption of the new strategy by the farmers depended very much on their ability and willingness to undertake investments on their lands, like dugwells, tubewells, electric motors and pumpsets, land levelling and shaping etc., and that for such long term investments to be undertaken, price incentives would be necessary. To quote from the Fourth Plan document: "Although the new technology offers a prospect of bigger returns to the producers, their cultivation costs are higher and hence the special significance of underpinning the production effort by assured minimum prices. It may be added that while in the past a large portion of the costs of cultivation were imputed, for
the new technology an increasing proportion of the costs are necessarily cash costs. If the minimum support prices are to be effective in facilitating agricultural production, certain aspects of implementation stressed by the Foodgrains' Policy Committee (1966) are particularly relevant. These aspects are:

(i) The announcement of prices should be made well before the sowing season; (ii) In order that the guaranteed minimum support prices may help in creating a favourable climate for long-term investment, the prices should be fairly stable over a long period; (iii) Government should provide wide publicity to the minimum support prices and to the effect that it will be prepared to purchase all the quantities offered to it at those prices; (iv) Adequate arrangements would be made at important markets for making purchases at the support prices whenever the need arises." (38)

10.4 Technology-based agriculture calls for many specialised services, and the creation of a number of institutions to provide these services becomes necessary. This was recognised in the Fourth Plan: "In view of the importance assumed by inputs and services such as improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, plant protection, implements and machinery, irrigation facilities and agricultural credit, several new public institutions were promoted and provided with funds to lend support to agricultural production programmes." (39) The Plan mentions, in addition to research institutions, bodies like the National Seeds Corporation, Agro-Industries Corporations (set up in the States), the National Co-operative Development Corporation and the Agricultural Refinance Corporation. Agricultural research, inputs, i.e. seeds, fertilisers and credit,
agricultural extension and irrigation management are perhaps the most important concomitants of high technology agriculture. Some of the major institutional changes that came about in these fields and the new tasks faced by the administration are being briefly described in the following paragraphs.

10.5 Agricultural research was being mostly undertaken by the State Agriculture Departments themselves. In the Government of India a few Central Institutes had been established for taking up agricultural research and some research was also being done through departmental set-up. In 1965, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was reorganised and the research activities earlier administered by the Union Ministry of Agriculture were transferred to ICAR. During the 60s, Agricultural Universities were established in the states and the research activities of the State Departments of Agriculture were transferred to the Agricultural Universities.

10.6 In the matter of seeds, it was realised that the seed production and distribution would become increasingly complex and required proper institutional arrangement. Accordingly at the national level, the National Seeds Corporation (NSC) was set up and gradually in many States the State Seeds Corporations were set up. A detailed description of the problems involved in the planning, production and positioning of seeds is given in Chapter 6.

10.7 While fertilisers were mostly produced by fertiliser factories in the public and private sectors, a large number of small fertiliser units designed to produce appropriate fertiliser mixtures to suit the local soil conditions and local
agronomical practices were set up, mostly in the co-operative sector. The role of the administration as far as fertilisers is concerned has mostly been to ensure timely movement of fertilisers to the consumption centres. During periods of acute shortage of fertilisers, distribution of fertilisers to farmers is controlled and BDOs are asked to issue permits to individual cultivators, by itself a stupendous administrative task. In many States the handling of bulk of the fertilisers came to be entrusted to the Agro-Industries Corporations or the State Co-operative Marketing Federations.

10.8 In the field of credit, while the short and medium term credit structure was already in existence, it was in the field of long term credit that strengthening of the credit system was found necessary. Following the recommendations of the All India Rural Credit Survey Committee the State Co-operative Land Mortgage Banks, which were mostly supporting agrarian reforms by giving loans to allottees of surplus lands or tenant purchasers, were transformed into Land Development Banks whose primary concern was to undertake the responsibility of long term credit for agriculture. In order to support the State Co-operative Land Development Banks, an Apex Institution called the Agricultural Refinance Corporation was established in 1963 by an Act of Parliament and it started functioning from 1st July 1963. Its activities expanded considerably since 1969-70 as the need for long term investments increased. The Corporation came to be renamed as Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC) in 1975 and its role considerably expanded, particularly during the 70s. With the
nationalisation of 14 Commercial Banks in late 60s, the institutional infrastructure directed towards meeting the credit needs of the agriculture sector became more broad-based and stronger. The ARDC also gives refinance to the Commercial Banks for their long term lending for agriculture. With the growth of institutional credit for long term investments, the practice of giving tagai loans for wells etc. from the block budget was discontinued.

10.9 In the field of irrigation management, Command Area Development Authorities (CADA) were set up in 1973 for selected command areas in order to provide an integrated delivery of services to the farmers. In essence what the CADAs were really expected to perform was not very much different from the purpose for which the block level set-up was earlier organised namely, to bring the different line functionaries under one control so that there could be a co-ordinated approach towards the problems of the farmers. The vital difference was that CADA as an umbrella organisation had its jurisdiction cutting across natural administrative boundaries within a State; and CADA is confined to agricultural production in the command area, while the block organisation was concerned with a wider spectrum of activities, including Health, Education etc. CADA was to be a much more technocratic organisation than the block organisation. How far this experiment has, in fact, been successful and how far it has been able to overcome the inherent problems of co-ordination in administration are more fully discussed in Chapter 8.

10.10 With the growth of so many specialised institutions,
the main problem before the agricultural development administration was one of co-ordination. The question was, who would do the co-ordination? The District Collector was the almost automatic choice for bringing about co-ordination at the district level, but it is well-known that he was, and still is, burdened with too many diverse duties, including law and order, that it was neither fair to him nor to agricultural development to have expected him to be an effective coordinator. At any level above the district level, co-ordination becomes less specific and more general. At higher levels, what is possible is policy co-ordination but not problem-solving co-ordination. Problem-solving co-ordination is possible only at a level where action takes place or where executive decisions are made; this can be effectively done only at the district level or the block level. For instance, let us take the perennial problem of synchronisation of availability of credit with availability of inputs. The problems of co-ordination which arise are mostly at the operational level. The Taluka Kharedi-Vikri Sangh (Sale-Purchase Union) sometimes does not lift the seeds in time from the National or State Seeds Corporation; one of the reasons could be that it is short of working capital; consequently, the farmers who obtain certificates from the credit co-operative for seeds, to be exchanged for seeds at the Taluka Sangh may not be able to obtain them. Sometimes the problem is the other way about; the input supply organisations, like the Seed Corporations or Marketing Federation, do not supply to the Taluka Sanghs the materials in time. Often, there is a delay in the preparation
of the "normal credit statements", which form the basis for the sanction of co-operative credit to the farmers. These problems require to be tackled in the field; that is where an effective co-ordination mechanism is necessary. While the District Collector could not give enough to agricultural development, the BDO was found wanting in both expertise and status. This problem has baffled satisfactory solution so far.

10.11 Going back, for a moment, to the beginnings of the C.D. programme, it was seen in para 2.3 that, when it was realized that agricultural development cannot be achieved without all-round development of the rural community, a multi-disciplinary organisation was set-up to achieve the objective. Whether the assumption was correct or not is not important here; nor is it of relevance whether the BDO's set-up did make any substantial contribution to agricultural development. What is relevant for our discussion here is the fact that the planners did go about searching for an appropriate administrative framework to achieve the Plan objectives. But there was no such evidence in the post Fourth Plan period. Even though the earlier view that agricultural development was organically linked with overall rural development was not shared by many, it was realised that agricultural development certainly required a multi-agency approach. But no administrative set-up corresponding to that of the BDO was thought of. The administrative set-up at the block level was called upon to implement the new strategy. When it was predictably found wanting, new agencies were set up, which were essentially multi-functional, to deal with specific problems; one such example
10.12 In the context of the realities of administrative structure in India the problem of co-ordination cannot be tackled with simplistic solutions, like the one suggested by the National Commission on Agriculture (NCA). The most difficult question to settle is who should be the coordinator at the district level, granting that the District Collector cannot effectively function as the coordinator. The NCA which examined this issue has suggested that there should be a Chief Agricultural Development Officer (CADO). The Commission observed: "Considering that he will be concerned with widest and most significant areas of development in the district, the CADO should enjoy the status and authority necessary for commanding respect and for exercising co-ordination at the district level." (40) CADO is to be drawn from any one of the disciplines like agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry, co-operation etc. The Commission has also suggested that CADO will initiate the annual confidential reports of the specialists and other technical officers at the district level. The suggestion basically boils down to a set-up at the district level very much akin to the block level set-up under the BDO, but with a technical specialist as a head. It is very doubtful if these suggestions are implementable. The characteristic feature of the administrative behaviour in India is that while the technical specialists dislike working under a generalist administrator, they dislike even more, working under specialists
of other disciplines. It is difficult to imagine the smooth working of an arrangement in which a Joint Director of Agriculture is the CADC with Executive Engineers and Divisional Forest Officers under his administrative control. No initiative has so far been shown either by the Centre or by the States in implementing this recommendation of the NCA.

10.13 In the field of agricultural extension considerable administrative changes came to be effected. The efficacy of the multipurpose gramsevak for agricultural development began to be seriously questioned. We saw how, when IADP was introduced, extension staff exclusively for agriculture was assigned to the blocks selected for IADP. The arguments in favour of extension staff exclusively for agriculture gained strength as the HYV spread to more and more States. It was argued that the VLWs were not able to spend as much time for agriculture as they were expected to. Though they were required to devote nearly 70 to 80 per cent of their time for agriculture, they were actually devoting far less than that. Paradoxical though it may seem, as agricultural administration became more complex, the time spent by the VLW on agriculture decreased. While inaugurating a seminar on 'Reorganisation of Agricultural Extension' at Hyderabad in July 1978, the Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Irrigation remarked: "The village level extension worker is reported to be a multi-purpose worker with maximum emphasis on agricultural extension. It is however well known that he is used on all kinds of miscellaneous duties and very little time is being devoted to agriculture. Though circulars have
been issued that he should devote 80 per cent of his time for agriculture, I doubt very much whether he spends even 50 per cent of his time on productive programmes, leave aside agriculture." (41) A survey was conducted in Maharashtra in 1979 to assess the time devoted by the VLWs for agricultural extension. This survey revealed that, on an average, 27 per cent of the time of the VLW is spent on agricultural extension for the whole year. Quite apart from the large and somewhat unwieldy jurisdiction of the VLWs, the paper work connected with the village panchayat duties, duties connected with agriculture (other than agricultural extension) like subsidies disbursed, recovery statements of various kinds of agricultural loans, and other duties like family planning, small savings campaign etc. were mainly responsible for the gradual neglect of agricultural extension by the VLWs.

10.14 One of the reasons why VLWs came to be loaded with various kinds of work not initially contemplated in the C.D. programme was that the BDC himself, over a period of time, came to be entrusted with diverse kinds of work. As the activities and the responsibilities of Government expanded, both in depth and diversity, the block level set up came to be regarded as a dispenser of too many diverse goods and services. As the BDC was involved by the Government in various kinds of activities, the entire establishment under the BDC also got dragged into all the activities with which the BDC himself got involved. The argument of the Agriculture Ministry and the State Agriculture Departments that multi-purpose VLWs working under the BDC would never be able to devote
sufficient time for agricultural extension, acquired a considerable amount of credibility and the argument against agricultural extension being entrusted to the VLW began to gain acceptance.

10.15 What really clinched the issue in favour of taking agricultural extension away from the VLW was the fact that along with technological advance in agriculture, agricultural extension needed to be professionalised. It was felt that the effectiveness of agricultural extension depended upon the regularity of visits by the extension worker to the farmer, and the two-way communication between the agricultural universities and the extension workers, so that the findings of research can reach the farmers, and the practical problems of the farmers can reach the universities. Obviously, a part-time extension worker would not be suitable. This accent on transfer of know-how is the core of the Training and Visit (T&V) system of agricultural extension introduced in many States. The introduction of the T&V system of extension is a significant development in agricultural development administration in the 70s. It has so far been introduced in 10 States. A brief account of what it is and how it works is given in the following paragraphs.

10.16 Under the T&V system of extension, the Village Extension Worker (VEW) is the most important element. VEW is assigned exclusively for agricultural extension work. Even other kinds of work related to agricultural development like preparation of village production plans, arranging for the supply of inputs, ensuring that the credit is made available to the farmers in time, report to the BDO if the input supply and
credit disbursement do not go according to schedule, disbursement of subsidies under various schemes, collection of statistics etc. are not to be entrusted to the VEW under the T&V system. The corner stone of the T&V system is the proposition that the effectiveness of agricultural extension depends upon the regularity of visits by the extension worker to the village. In order to ensure this, he would need to be relieved of work which would involve his sitting in an office, preparing reports or writing accounts. In fact, the VEW is not expected to send a single report and his paper work is minimal.

10.17 Each VEW is assigned a certain number of farm families, normally 800 to 1000. The exact number would vary according to local conditions like population density, cropping intensity and accessibility. In order to reach the farmers in his jurisdiction systematically, a VEW would divide the families in his jurisdiction into 8 small groups, with 80 to 120 farm families in each group. He would visit each group regularly on a fixed day of the week covering all the eight groups in a two-week cycle. A certain number of farmers, called contact farmers, are chosen from among each group of farmers. During his fortnightly visit to the group, the VEW is expected to meet and discuss with these contact farmers, involving as many other farmers as possible in the discussions and demonstrations. During each visit the VEW is expected to concentrate his efforts on a few strategically selected recommendations relevant for that particular phase of the crop cycle. For instance, if the particular phase is that of
preparation of land for sowing, the recommendations would pertain to how to prepare the land etc. When the sowing phase commences, the recommendations would pertain to the seed rate, what quality of seeds to be used and so on. The VEW is not expected to deliver a predetermined package of recommendations but he is expected to tailor his recommendations to suit the capacity of the farmers in that group. Initially, the emphasis is expected to be on low cost improvements which the majority can afford within their own resources.

10.18 Above the VEW, for every 8 VEWs there is an Agricultural Extension Officer (AEO). Normally, there are 3 or 4 such AEOs in every block but their headquarters will not be at the block headquarters but will be within their own geographical jurisdiction. The AEO is expected to spend at least four days a week visiting the VEWs in the field. Once every fortnight the VEWs would receive a full day's intensive training in the recommendations to be transmitted for that period, i.e. what is relevant to the coming two weeks. The AEO would also participate in this training session. Thus, during every fortnight the VEW would spend 8 days in visit to each of his 8 groups and one day in training. This training is another key element in the system as it is during this training that the transmission of know-how takes place from the higher officers of the hierarchy to the VEW who, in turn, is required to transmit it to the farmers.

10.19 In order to provide training and technical guidance to AEOs and VEWs and to supervise field work, there is a Subdivisional Agricultural Officer (SDAO) for every sub-division
comprising about 3 blocks. The SDAO would have the exclusive responsibility for supervising about 8 to 10 AEOs in his jurisdiction. Another feature is that at the sub-divisional level there is a team of 3 Subject-matter Specialists (SMS), one in agronomy, one in plant protection and one in training/communication. The fortnightly training is really given by the team of SMS working under the administrative control of the SDAO.

10.20 A typical fortnightly time-table of the VEW would be as shown below (42):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>TRA</td>
<td>EXT</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>TRA</td>
<td>EXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SMS</td>
<td>VIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AEO</td>
<td>VIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2nd | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | TRA | EXT | H   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | TRA | EXT | H   |
|     |     |     |     |     |     |     | SMS | VIS |     |     |     | AEO | VIS |

1-8 - Visit farmers' groups - 8 groups per VEW
TRA - Fortnightly training conducted by SMS.
SMS
TRA - Fortnightly training conducted by AEO
AEO
H - Holiday
EXT - Extra visits, essentially a lag provided to VIS make up visits not made due to reasons like holiday, sickness etc.

10.21 At the district level there is the district head of the extension system (43) aided again by Subject-matter Specialists. Once every month, all the Subject-matter Specialists in the district come to the district headquarters where a monthly workshop takes place. In the monthly workshop a representative from the Agricultural University
remains present. The key link between research and extension is this monthly district workshop, designed to prepare detailed plans for the fortnightly training of the VEWs. The workshop provides the opportunity to the district level officers for discussion with and feedback from the field staff. Thus, training takes place at two levels - fortnightly training of the VEWs by the sub-divisional SMS and monthly workshop of all the SMS in the district, which is conducted by the representative of the Agricultural University.

10.22 The introduction of T&V with its accent on professionalising agricultural extension, has resulted in qualified personnel moving closer to the villages. AEO, who would be an agricultural graduate, is located in his own jurisdiction. A new level, namely, sub-divisional level is introduced; the SDAO and SMS are required to possess post-graduate qualifications. One significant development in the 70s is the sharp increase in the number of professionally qualified agriculturists working at the district level and below, in the various institutions, like Seed Corporations, Cooperative Banks, Land Development Banks, Commercial Banks, Fertiliser handling agencies (e.g. Marketing Federations), private sector organisations dealing with agricultural inputs and so on.

10.23 The administrative structure of the T&V System of
Extension is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Principal Extension Officer</th>
<th>District Officer of the District</th>
<th>District Subject matter Specialist (SMS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-divisional level</td>
<td>Sub-divisional Extension Officer</td>
<td>Sub-divisional Subject matter Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village and Block level</td>
<td>Agricultural Extension Officer</td>
<td></td>
<td>About 8-10 per AEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village level</td>
<td>Village Extension Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 per AEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact farmers</td>
<td>8 Groups of 80-120 farmers in each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all States (except partly in Gujarat) the administrative structure of T&V bypasses the BDO. The unbroken chain of command from the Director of Agriculture to the VEW is often mentioned as a key element of the system. Even as a search for a suitable coordinating mechanism at the district and block levels is still going on, the Agriculture Department in most States has broken away from the only umbrella organisation at the block level, namely the BDO's set-up, and has organised itself on the familiar line-department pattern. The T&V set-up in Maharashtra is described in greater detail in Chapter 4.
# Table 2

**Outlays on Agriculture and Allied Sectors and Community Development during Different Plan Periods.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Plan</td>
<td>Third Plan</td>
<td>Three Annual Plans</td>
<td>Fourth Plan</td>
<td>Fifth Plan</td>
<td>Sixth Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State All India</td>
<td>State All India</td>
<td>All India</td>
<td>State All India</td>
<td>All India</td>
<td>All India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Agriculture and allied (incl. C.D. Panchayat) (Rs. Cr.)</td>
<td>470.71</td>
<td>529.00</td>
<td>941.39</td>
<td>1090.21</td>
<td>1166.60*</td>
<td>1425.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. C.D. and Panchayat (Rs. Cr.)</td>
<td>192.04</td>
<td>218.73</td>
<td>310.13</td>
<td>322.47</td>
<td>99.40*</td>
<td>92.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. As % of 1(%)</td>
<td>40.80</td>
<td>41.30</td>
<td>32.94</td>
<td>29.60</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>6.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Expenditure

**Source:**
(a) III Plan, p.85.
(b) IV Plan, p.85, 186.
(c) VI Plan, p.20.
10.24 Another development which led to a decline in the importance of the C.D. programme has been the gradual shrinking of allocation of plan resources to the programme. Table 2 on page 64 gives the position regarding this. As per the schematic budget of the C.D. block, discussed in para 7.2 of this Chapter, the bulk of the block budget was accounted for by the expenditure on staff and the provision for loans. After every Plan period, the staff expenditure was classified as non-Plan. The loan provision, in due course, disappeared with the growth of specialised credit institutions. The various sector departments budgetted for their new programmes in their own respective departments. All these factors contributed to the decrease in the financial allocation in the Plan for the C.D. programme. But the BDO's set-up is, all the same, playing a useful role and is recently being involved in the implementation of special rural development programmes for weaker sections. Its role in agricultural development in Maharashtra is described in Chapters 4 and 5.

11. Special programmes and schemes.

11.1 The evolution of agricultural development strategies has seen swings from concentration to dispersion and back, influenced mostly by technological factors and the compulsion to achieve a quick increase in foodgrain production. With the adoption of the HYV strategy in the Fourth Plan, it was clear that the mainstream of agricultural development effort was to be purely production-oriented. When "growth with social justice" was accepted as a political commitment at the time of finalising the Fourth Plan, it was felt that a purely
growth-oriented strategy in agriculture represented by the HYV technology would result in sharp income differences in the rural areas. To quote the Fourth Plan document:

"The small holders and the agricultural labourers represent 52% and 24% respectively of total rural households. On the other hand, the pattern of land-holding is such that only about 19% of the cropped area is comprised within small holdings. In this uneven situation, the new agricultural technology tends to add a further dimension of disparity between those who have the resources to make use of it and those who have not. There is thus the danger of emergence of a sharp polarisation between the more privileged and less privileged classes in the rural sector, the privilege in this instance relating to the resources and tools of development." (44) It was felt that the purely growth oriented strategy in agriculture should be supplemented by special schemes aimed at social justice.

11.2 The first such programmes which were started were the Small Farmers' Development Agency (SFDA) and the programme for Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL). These programmes were mainly directed towards making the small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labourers more creditworthy by reducing the loan component of the long term investments to be made by them in order to augment their income, by means of subsidies. These programmes also contained other components besides subsidies, with the objective of giving the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers a viable production programme within their means. On the recommendation of the NCA, the MFAL was merged with SFDA.
11.3 The second kind of special programmes started during the Fourth Plan period was aimed at the development of ecologically and climatically less favoured regions like the drought prone areas. Here again, the objective was to ensure social justice by concentrating on these regions which were likely to be bypassed by the Green Revolution. The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) was preceded by Pilot Projects for Integrated Development of Dry Land Agriculture in 1970-71. 24 Pilot Projects were started in three stages and these Pilot Projects were eventually converted into DPAP.

11.4 Tribal Area Development Programme (TADP) started in 1971-72 and Hill Area Development Programme started in 1972-73 were also programmes designed to develop certain special areas and particularly the people living in those areas whose developmental problems were different from those living in the plains and who were therefore to be given special attention.

11.5 These special programmes were super-imposed on on-going mainstream agricultural development efforts. For this very reason special administrative set-up was created in order to implement these special programmes. A more detailed account of these programmes and the administrative problems encountered while implementing them are given in Chapter 4.

11.6 Another response to the fall-out of the adoption of the HYV strategy has been the introduction of specific schemes for the production of specific crops in order to rectify the inter-crop imbalances that resulted from the new strategy. The two major categories of crops which lagged behind were oilseeds and pulses, as they did not have the advantage of technological break-through achieved in the case of cereals. Subsidies for
inputs and price supports for foodgrains in connection with the HYV strategy also contributed to the stagnation in pulses and oilseeds. It has been acknowledged in the IV Plan document that: "the output of pulses which are of particular importance from the nutritional viewpoint has increased only about less than half as fast as that of cereals." (45) Oilseeds also presented a very slow growth in production of only 0.63% per annum between 1949-50 and 1967-68 (46). It was recognised by the Centre that special efforts would be needed to increase the production of crops like oilseeds and pulses which are important for the national economy. Special schemes were therefore introduced for increasing the production of pulses and oilseeds. The manner in which these schemes were formulated and implemented is discussed in the next chapter.
Notes and References (Chapter 2)


(4) Ibid. p.108

(5) Ibid. p.114


(8) Ibid. p.99


(10) First Five Year Plan p.231.


(12) Review of the First Five Year Plan p.110.


(14) Ibid. p.160

(15) The Balwantrai Mehta Committee was, really speaking, appointed to study, among other things, the contents of the C.D. programme and the priorities assigned to different fields of activity in it, and to report on the system, organisation and methods of work adopted for the implementation of the programme with special reference to intensification of agricultural production, coordination between different ministries, departments and agencies. Later on, the National Development Council, at its 8th meeting held on the 8th and 9th December 1956, requested the Committee to enquire into the pattern of the existing district administration and suggest its reorganisation, so that, by stages determined in advance, democratic bodies at higher levels and organically linked with Village Panchayats would take over the entire general administration and development of the district or its sub-division, other than law and order, administration of justice and revenue administration. The Committee
submitted its report on the 24th November, 1957. The Report is a definite milestone in the history of development administration in India.


(18) This has been reproduced from the Community Development Manual (ibid).

(19) These plans are still prepared by the VLA. Their utility is commented upon in Chapter 5.

(20) The Second Five Year Plan p.239.

(21) Ibid. p.62.


(23) Tenth Meeting of the National Development Council Summary Record. New Delhi May 1958 p.20.


(25) Ibid. p.56.

(26) Second Five Year Plan p.239.


(29) Ibid. p.49-50

(30) Ibid. p.336

(31) Ibid. p.305

(32) Second Five Year Plan p.261

(33) Third Five Year Plan p.304

(34) Ibid. p.337
(35) Ibid. p. 337


(37) Summary Record, p. 7.


(39) Ibid p. 115


(43) The actual designation of the Head of the T&V Extension in the district varies from State to State. In Maharashtra he is called Principal Agricultural Officer.

(44) Ibid. p. 149.

(45) Ibid. p. 118

(46) Ibid. p. 165.
Community Development Budget

Estimated Expenditure on a Community Development Block (Basic Type) for a period of three years.

(This budget is only intended as a guide and is to be adjusted according to local conditions.)

(Figures in Lakhs of Rupees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heads</th>
<th>Total Rupees</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
<th>Recurring</th>
<th>Non-</th>
<th>Loan</th>
<th>Non-Loan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Block Headquarters—

(a) Personnel ........................................... 2.00 2.00 2.00 2.00 2.00
(b) Transport (3 Jeeps) ............................... 0.45 0.21 0.24 0.45 0.45
(c) Office equipment, furniture, etc. ................. 0.15 0.15 0.15 0.15 0.15
(d) Project Office, Seeds Store, Information Centre, etc. 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25

Total .................................................. 2.85 2.61 0.24 2.00 0.85 2.85

II. Animal Husbandry and Agricultural Extension Demonstration equipment. 0.20 0.17 0.03 0.20 0.20

III. Irrigation ...........................................

IV. Reclamation (including Soil Conservation, Contour-bunding, etc.) 4.00 4.00 4.00 3.50 0.50

V. Health and Rural Sanitation—

(a) Dispensary-Recurring Expenditure. ................. 0.20 0.20 0.20 0.20
(b) Dispensary Building .................................. 0.10 0.10 0.10 0.10
(c) Dispensary Equipment ................................ 0.10 0.10 0.10 0.10

(2) Drinking-water Supply ................................ 0.50 0.50 0.50 0.50
(3) Drainage and Sanitation ............................ 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25

Total .................................................. 1.15 1.15 0.03 0.20 0.95 3.50 1.15

VI. Education ............................................ 0.70 0.70 0.70 0.70

VII. Social Education (including audio-visual aids and Women, Youth and Children's programme). 0.70 0.54 0.16 0.40 0.30 0.70

VIII. Communication .................................... 0.90 0.90 0.90 0.90 0.90

IX. Rural Arts, Crafts and Industries. ................. 0.50 0.50 0.25 0.25 0.50

X. Housing for Project Staff and Rural Housing. .... 1.00 1.00 1.00 1.00 1.00

Grand Total ............................................ 12.00 11.57 0.43 3.05 8.95 4.50 7.50