Chapter-3

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The idea of village self sufficiency has recently received great deal of attention from social scientists and policy makers. The reason for this may be political, academic or even human considerations. In fact, the problem of improving a lot of seventy five percent of our population that lives in rural areas has assumed greater significance because of its explosive nature which is threatening our existence. Vast number of people in rural areas live below the poverty line. They include landless labourers, small farmers, artisans and other weaker sections of society. They have been subjected to economic deprivation, exploitation, discrimination and oppression of the worst kind and all types. Their object poverty and sub human living conditions were standing monuments and living expressions that demanded a new policy framework which gave priority to the amelioration of the lot of our village population. Improving the quality of life of these people became the subject of national and international debates. The Government was

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committed to the philosophy of social justice and socioeconomic development of the rural areas. The government of India stated its planned growth soon after independence\textsuperscript{17}. These plans had very clear and specific objectives to achieve, namely, eradication of poverty and reducing disparities both between the urban and rural sector itself. Thus the villages were to be provided with modern amenities and their standard of living was to be raised, so as to reduce the disparities between rural and urban sector. At the same time a programme of actions was to be launched and coupled with massive propaganda and economic incentives to reduce the disparities between the ‘haves’ and have not’s in the rural sector itself and elimination of privileges of chosen few.

Rural development as a concept is not a new one. It had received the attention of people like Gandhi, Tagore and many others much before independence. Tagore’s Shantiniketan was perhaps the first systematic attempt in this direction. The problem of rural reconstruction however, was concretised by Gandhiji. He experienced the toil, drudgery and subhuman living conditions in villages of India. Having lived it Gandhiji knew for certain that unless and until the village economy of India was boosted, ‘Swaraj’ would be meaningless\textsuperscript{18}. The soil of India, he said with


agony and anguish lives in village and India salvation lay in rural reconstruction\textsuperscript{19}. It is not surprising, thus, to note that the new government decided to give highest priority to agriculture and rural development programmes. The driving force behind such a philosophy were a firm belief in the humanistic ideology of Gandhiji and very rational approach of increasing agricultural productivity.

The idea of rural development is the result of our experiences gained through various programmes designed for development. Even as a concept our thinking of rural reconstruction has under gone a lot of changes. Rural development earlier was taken to be synonymous with agricultural development\textsuperscript{20}. The significance of agricultural development can not be underscored. It is not only basic for the development of rural areas but also of the industrial sector as it supplies the major and necessary material for many industries. The rural sector is expected to provide the necessary savings for investment in industrial economy. It was soon realized that development was much broader in its scope\textsuperscript{21}. It meant developing the necessary infrastructure, cottage and small industries as well secondary and tertiary sectors such as marketing which

\textsuperscript{19} Gandhi, M.K. Harijan, 16, 1934
\textsuperscript{20} Arora, R.L., Integrated Rural Development, S. Chand, Delhi, 1980.
\textsuperscript{21} Arora, R.L., Integrated Rural Development, S. Chand, Delhi, 1980.
are vital for the process of economic development.\textsuperscript{22}

Rural development strategies by force of circumstances have been
dynamic in nature, community development and national extension
blocks were started in the early fifties as a part of rural reconstruction
programme. The panacea for rural problem was seen, at that time,
through the development of agriculture and allied sector. The community
development programmes did have its impact on the socio-economic and
cultural matrix of our village population. They bought about definite an
specific changes in the socio-cultural mores of the rural people and
created a will in the village masses to improve their lot. Community
development may have not achieved much, but its role can not be
minimized. If nothing else, they generated hope in the rural masses\textsuperscript{23}.
However, CDP's could not achieve anything remarkable in the
agricultural economy of our country.

Although rural development as a philosophy has attracted the
attention of the government of India, the intellectuals and the developed
economics very recently, the village and rural communities in India have
been the focus of attention of the social anthropologist, the economist and
the government much earlier but for different reasons. The scholars were

\textsuperscript{22} Azad, R.N.: 'Integrated Rural Development' in Dynamic of development, Sharma S.K.
(Ed.), Concept, New Delhi, pp. 420-26.
\textsuperscript{23} Mukerji, B., Community Dev. in India, 1961.
primarily aroused by ‘curiosity’ first, and later on the magnitude of the problems of the ‘rural poor’ attracted them to study rural societies.

The government on the other hand prior to independence was more concerned with taxes, patterns of land tenures customary law, and maintenance of peace in the ‘real India’. Administrative control over these villages was a problem of nominal dimension. As early as 1812 the problem had attracted the attention of the British as in the evident from Mukherjee's analysis of British Parliamentary papers on village communities24 (1812) till the publication of first administrative report of the Punjab (1852) and max's commentary on the Indian villages community.

Proposal for local self government and there action created by it received considerable attention by many observers of the village scene25. The recurrent famines in India resulted in the monumental report of the Royal commission on Agriculture regarding the problems of rural population in India. In 1916 even the University of Madras was involved in economic survey of villages, which were resurveyed in 1936 and 1961. By a large so far the economists alone were interested in such activities.

24 Mukherjee, Ram Krishna, Six villages of Bengal: a Socio-economic survey, Asiatic Society, 1957
25 Malviya, H.D., village Panchayats in India, AICC, New Delhi, 1956.
As a matter of fact Majumdar\textsuperscript{26} regretted such an isolation and proposed an ‘interdisciplinary’ approach in tackling the problem.

The year 1955 could be termed as a watershed in the studies of rural communities in India. Number of studies appealed on the scene, notable amongst them Srinivasan\textsuperscript{27}, Dubey\textsuperscript{28}. The holistic and interdisciplinary approach in studying village communities was not only getting consolidated but approached as well, it stressed for the first time for incorporating in its strategy ‘sociological perspectives’ in understanding rural communities and its problems.

The coordinated approach in studying rural problems got an impetus with the introduction of land reforms and community development programmes after independence. The word ‘community’ by definition suggested a wholeness of life and as such the necessity for the coordinated approach was realised by the policy – makers. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1975) had also submitted is report on Panchayat Raj, which was responsible for linking of the new programme of rural government with community development the synergistic approach to the study of rural communities thus, got further strengthened. By now the strategy for dealing with rural problems had acquired a new bias. Instead

\textsuperscript{26} Majumdar, D.N. Rural Profiles, Ethnographic and folk cultural society, Lucknow, 1955.
\textsuperscript{27} Srinivasan, M.N., India's villages, Asia Publishing House, 1960.
of being ‘preventive’ in its approach it had acquired a development connected to planners and policy makers a system of granting adequate powers to the people so as to enable them to determine their future, equitable distribution of resources and wealth and a healthy and aesthetic ecological environments. The developmental approach to rural communities is a recent innovation, as it was found that rural programme of action and studies, covered only that aspects of ‘total life’ which came under the programme of directed change. These programmes hardly paid any attention to social structure as also the vast changes occurring beyond the scope of community development and Panchayati Raj.

3.2 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The basic framework of rural progress stated above provided the basis for many schemes of rural development. The problems of providing more opportunities to all for not only a better standard of living but a more aesthetic life, expanding facilities for education. Health and nutrition, housing, welfare, an equitable distribution of wealth and safeguarding the rural habitat and environment became the touch stones of planning.

The two strategies adopted to achieve the objectives were

i. The segmented approach, which aimed at improving the
totality by attacking each segment of the totality as if it was an independent variable

ii. The integrated approach, which is concerned with the total development of the village by providing 'all' the necessary 'inputs'. These inputs are concerned with not only the provision of a package of service in the economic field namely, development of agriculture and rural industries etc., but also with bringing about attitudinal changes, establishing the required infrastructure and services in such diverse areas as healthy nutrition, education, literacy, family planning, housing, basic civic amenities etc., with the ultimate objective of improving the 'life style' of the rural inhabitants 'qualitatively'. The philosophy was an integration of the 'social', 'scientific' and 'technological' elements of rural life. The thrust of various approaches to rural development (which can not be considered as exclusive to each other and placed in water-tight compartments) follow a certain pattern and could be classified into

a. Multiple approach
b. Target sector approach  
c. Area development approach  
d. Multi-level District Planning approach  
e. Spatial Planning approach  
f. Integrated Development Approach

The salient features of the above could now be discussed

a. **Multiple approach**

It considered the rural habitat as an organic whole and conceived of improving it by attacking all elements of the rural life simultaneously. The institution chosen for this purpose was the community development programme in the year 1951. Community development plan according to Jain\(^9\) was concerned with changing the attitudes and practices that were obstacle to social and economic progress. The programme’s basic objective was not only bring about a qualitative change in the life style of the ‘common men’ but this utmost development as well. Such an ambitious programmes demanded huge resources and no priorities. It failed to click because of these very reason- resources were limited and ‘priority’ to the food and poverty front had to be given immediately at the cost of every thing else. This became the starting point of the target sector approach.

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b. **Target Sector Approach**

This approach could be said to be the 'segmental strategy for the rural development. One segment of the totality say agricultural productivity was to tackled at war footing. The slogan though of was 'Green Revolution'. It was thought the fruits of such a revolution would percolate to all and sundry (from the elites) and an attempt was made to provide an institutional framework such as progressive taxation, nationalization and subsidies etc., to achieve this objective. In reality however, the opposite happened, the rich became richer and the green revolution did not bring any greenery to the rural poor. All it did was to prove the Marxism right. Coupled with the target sector approach was the target group approach which identified particulars groups (such a the economically deprived) for the purpose of development and satisfying the minimum needs of such groups by laying down a minimum standards of health, nutrition, housing and standard of living. In such an approach the index of development is measured by the benefits that accrue to the weaker section of population of a region rather than by its gross product or per capita income. The relationship was that of a client and a 'consultant' with the objective of transferring in the end all responsibility
of development to the client himself\textsuperscript{30}. The necessity of providing a basic minimum standard to every one was recognized at the international level as well with the launching of the ‘Project on Predicament of Mankind’ by the club of Rome in 1971. Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of ‘Antyodaya’ in which he emphasized that the last man should be the first to benefit is very close to the target group approach of development.

c. Area development Approach

The first step in such an approach is the systematic identification of under-development regions. The economic trends and rates of growth in different regions are also studied, with the assumption that growth centres have an even effect and benefits of developmental filters down to lower levels over a period of time. The strategy of development in such an approach is to tackle completely the problems confined to one to two segments of the universe, instead of diffusing development over a wide spectrum\textsuperscript{31} (Anonymous, 1975). Thus in this strategy integrated area development plans are drawn for specific areas and groups of people such as tribal area, border area, hilly areas, drought prone areas, etc. on the basis of assessment of the resources, the infrastructural facilities available.


in the institutional support existing and likely to be made available\textsuperscript{32}. Such a program depends heavily not only credit and service organization in several fields such as irrigation, agriculture extension, etc. but is also concerned with building of the basic infrastructural facilities like roads, transport, banking, marketing and processing. It is advancement over the concept of ‘extension’ and ‘welfare’ as it shifts the emphasis to ‘investment’ and ‘development’.

d. Multilevel district planning approach

Such an approach advocates that district should the ‘kingpin’ around which all planning activities should revolve, especially for those problems which have a peculiar local bias. It emphasizes micro level planning and implementation of decisions in a systematic manner by integrating its own plans with all the plans that are generated elsewhere. It is contended that for effective implementation of the rural development programmes, each district should not only have independent decision making authority but control over the whole range of rural development programmes, that come, of course, within the delegated and decentralized authority of the district and are with in the rational and state planning framework\textsuperscript{33}.

\textsuperscript{32} Nathur, H.M. (Ed.) Development Administration in Tribal Areas, 1976, Background, Series on tribal development ministry of Home affairs.

\textsuperscript{33} Nair, M.H.V., et al. 'Need Policy Perspective on Regional development, 'Lok Udyog, 10(5) Aug. 1976 Refer also to special issue of Indian Journal of regional science, on 'Regional disparities in India, 7(4), 1975.
e. Spatial Planning Approach

This is concerned with the inter-relationship between space and particular location so that areas beyond the periphery are not neglected. Leading economists have been pleading for such an approach and have advocated the concept of 'Growth centres' and the provision of necessary infra-structures, in these centres, e.g. N.C.A.E.R. suggested the establishment of market towns as centres of rural marketing and industrial growth. To put the concept into practice a pilot researcher project in growth centres was launched with a view to identify the potential growth centres. However, this schemes goes with the basic objective of accelerating the pace of integrated area development beyond the pilot stage.

f. Integrated Rural Development

This is very recent approach and has special connotation for the developing countries and the so-called ‘Third World’. It is a strategy which focuses attention on the rural poor and attempts to improve the quality of life of the weaker sections of the society in the overall spectrum of development and growth. The strategy is just not an attempt of increasing agricultural productivity but ensuring that the poor and the

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34 Sen, L.K., Planning growth centres for integrated area development, Hyderabad, 1971.
weaker sections share the benefits of economics progress\textsuperscript{37}. It emphasises the necessity of providing more opportunities of growth and development to those who have been living below the poverty line for ages. It emphasise more egalitarian society, community orientation, self reliance, pooling of local resources, mass participation and service to people with minimum state intervention.

Integrated rural development has been receiving attention at the international level as well. Specific objectives of such a programme have been spelled out as:

i. Drawing the entire rural labour forces into main-stream of economic activity.

ii. Realizing the creative energies of the rural people.

iii. Bringing the town into countryside and thereby checking the process of migration to urban areas from the village.

iv. Improving the living conditions of the rural population and their quality of life, particularly through integration of development with environment.

v. All round development of the human resources, their social and economic productivity and work satisfaction.

Integrated rural development centres around the ‘whole Man’ concept, of developing the personality to the fullest extent and satisfying his basic and secondary needs like food, shelter, clothing, health, education and a clean and aesthetic environment for the majority of the population if not all. Philosophy of humanitarian and egalitarianism is quite large in such an approach.

It may sound jarring but Mahatma Gandhi started his experiments of rural reconstruction which were very close to the integrated rural development approach as early as in 1920 at Sevgram and at Wardha in 1938. It would be necessary therefore to glance over some of the essential features of the his plan.

In human terms Gandhi’s concept of rural development centered on the flowering and maturation of human and individual personality to its fullest extent like Food, clothes, shelter, education, simple and aesthetic environment for all. He envisaged a society based on self-supporting and self-governing villages, where life are available to every one irrespective of class, caste, colour or creed and where all enjoy social, political and economic freedom. This according to Gandhi was real ‘Swaraj’.

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