CHAPTER 6

AGRICULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS
AGRICULTURAL PLANNING PROCESS

Agricultural development especially in Punjab is influenced and conditioned by national economic policies, planning structure and federal set up of our country. The current problems in agricultural development in the country and in the State of Punjab can be clearly related to policy assumptions of economic planners and to the organisation of politico — administrative structures that implement them. Although agriculture occupies a strategic position in the national economy, the policy measures that have been adopted, do not vigorously promote agricultural development. Policies are sometimes relevant and specific, but their implementation is generally thwarted by weak political and administrative institutions. Despite the planners' awareness of the inadequacy of these institutions, very little has been done to orient them to meet the agricultural developmental needs of the country.

Agriculture development and agrarian change requires planning. Without planning it is difficult to achieve the desired objectives. However, planning for agriculture seems to be particularly difficult not merely because the factors determining the various demands fall outside the sphere of agriculture, but also because the very process of agricultural growth and production is conditioned by factors such as
monsoon and droughts. The situation is further complicated by the fact that farmers are widely scattered and they usually operate in small units and most often without much education and organisation. Planning for agriculture involves several steps. The first step in this direction is to assess the requirements of different agricultural commodities and formulate demand projections for human consumption, for meeting requirements of industries and also for exports. Simultaneously, the production possibilities in respect of each commodity are assessed and physical programmes to attain the production potential are also drawn up. The physical programmes are evaluated in terms of production potential and, as a second step, targets in terms of production are worked out and fixed, taking into account the past progress, the potentiality for increasing production, the technical, the organizational and financial resources available, and above all, the demand estimates as framed earlier. The national targets are first worked out and these are reconciled with the State targets after consultation between the centre and the states, and an agreed set of strategies and targets is worked out, the all India target being viewed as summation of the State targets. At the third stage, the actual physical programmes to be taken up and the other infrastructural facilities to be provided are transcribed into operational schemes and are incorporated into the Plans.  

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The schemes included in the Plan may be categorized into (i) State Plan schemes which are implemented by the States and are envisaged in the State Plan; (ii) Central schemes which are implemented by the Centre or by any of its attached or subordinate office and are envisaged in the Central Plan; and (iii) Centrally sponsored schemes which are implemented by the States, but are envisaged in the Central Plan and are financed by the Centre (see Annexure I). The last category is generally restricted to nationally important schemes or schemes of regional character (involving two or more states).

Theoretically the States are free to sanction and implement the State Plan Schemes, once they are approved during the Annual Plan deliberations. The approach has generally been scheme-wise rather than programme-wise, although, a programme-wise and area-wise approach will be better than individual schemes.

3. AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AT THE STATE LEVEL

State plans usually constitute nearly half of the Public Sector outlay in the Five Year Plan. But the real importance of State Plans lies not so much in their magnitude as in the nature and composition of their plan outlays.

Nearly 85 per cent of the State Plan Outlay is concentrated

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on three heads of development (i) Agriculture and Co-operation; (ii) Irrigation and Power; and (iii) Social Services. It indicates that State Plans are usually oriented towards increasing agricultural production, building up the infrastructure, developing special services in rural areas and raising levels of living for the less developed areas of the country. A large part of the State's outlay is, therefore, promotional in character. It also needs to be emphasised that the main responsibility for institutional reforms like land reforms and panchayati raj falls upon the states. All these measures involve huge expenditure which requires the help of the Centre. This would be brought out by the ensuing analysis.

At present there is a high level State Planning Board with the Chief Minister as its Ex-officio Chairman and Planning and Finance Minister as its Ex-officio Deputy Chairman. There are six ex-officio and eleven part-time members of the Board. These members are specialists in various fields. The Secretary, Planning is the Member-Secretary of the Board. The Board is responsible not only for preparation but, implementation and evaluation of plans also. In brief,

3 Ibid., p.85.
it performs the following functions:

(i) Make an assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the State, including technical personnel and investigate the possibilities of augmenting such of these resources as are found to be deficient in relation to the State's requirements;

(ii) formulate a long-time perspective plan for the most effective and balanced utilisation of State's resources;

(iii) evolve a short-term strategy (Five Year Plan) for planned development after examination of different approaches so as to evolve a maximum growth rate, keeping in view the need for social justice;

(iv) identify factors which tend to retard economic and social development of the State and determine conditions to be established for successful execution of the Plans;

(v) review the progress of implementation of the Plan programmes and recommend such adjustments in policies and measures as the review may indicate;

(vi) assist district authorities in formulating their development plans within the spheres in which such planning is considered useful and feasible and to co-ordinate these plans with the State Plans; and

(vii) make such interim or ancillary recommendations as appear to it to be appropriate either for facilitating the discharge of the duties assigned to it, or on a consideration of the prevailing economic conditions, current policies, measures and development programmes, or an examination of such specific problems as may be referred to it for advice by the Government.

The staff working in the Planning Board has been organised into the following 13 Divisions for dealing with different subjects:

1. Plan Co-ordination Division
2. Economic Division
3. Local Plan Division

4. Agriculture and Rural Development Division
5. Employment and Manpower Division
6. Irrigation, Drainage and Flood Control Division
7. Trade and Transport Division
8. Industry and Mineral Division
9. Energy Division
10. Housing and Urban Development Division
11. Special Backward Area Division
12. Social Services Division
13. Monitoring and Evaluation Division

The Plan Co-ordination Division undertakes the
Co-ordination work relating to Planning. All the Divisions
consist of technical staff and each of these Divisions
is headed by a subject Specialist or a Director. An
efficient Planning Organisation is all the more necessary
in the context of the growing Punjab Economy and the Need
for its further diversification. As regards the plan
formulation in the field of agriculture at the State level,
a time schedule is fixed by the Planning Commission for
discussion with the State Government. ¹ Before the State
Government comes up for discussion with the Planning Commis-
sion, it analyses and finalises its approach towards the
five year plan after consulting its Planning Board and the
concerned departments and finance department. The first
step in the planning process is for the State Planning
Board to collect statistical and other information on

¹Normally the discussion takes place with the State
government in the month of November and December
of each year.
existing structure, potential manpower and capital and national resources of the economy. The sources from which this information is collected are usually the Directorate of Agriculture, Economic and Statistical Organisation and other concerned departments. The Working Groups on Agriculture and allied sectors\(^1\) constituted by the State Planning Board examines these proposals in the context of a critical assessment of the achievements of the previous agricultural Plan. The reports of these Working Groups are considered by the Committee on Economic Policy and Planning in consultation with the State Planning Board. The Draft plan is then placed before the State Cabinet for its approval. The approved plan then goes to the Planning Commission for discussion. The Draft Plan of the State is critically examined by the Planning Commission with the help of the Central Ministry of Agriculture through the mechanism of Working Groups on Agriculture. The Draft plan is finalised by the State Government in the light of the discussions with the Planning Commission. The final State plan document which emerges, is communicated to the Director of Agriculture for submitting annual agricultural plan proposals for the approval of the government. The Director of Agriculture submits the proposals for annual plans in conformity with the Five Year Plan. The procedure for the processing of

\(^1\)See Annexure regarding Committees and Working Groups of the Punjab State Planning Board in regard to Agriculture and Allied Sectors.
the annual plans is broadly similar to the one described above for the formulation of the Five Year Plans. The Planning Department directs the whole process of the formulation of these plans at the State level. When the aforesaid steps have been taken, the end product would be a recommended pattern of development and of public expenditure over five years. It would also provide for implementation of an integrated set of policies and programmes in tune with agricultural production and goals of the plan. There is thus, consciously or unconsciously, a tendency on the part of the States to follow the national pattern of priorities and central directions with consequential neglect of their own growth capacity and requirements.

**Seventh Plan Objectives and Strategy for Agricultural Planning**

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) of the State of Punjab aims at achieving a growth rate of 4.16 per cent per annum in agriculture as against growth rate of 4.4 per cent for the country as approved by the National Development Council in its meeting held on 9th November, 1985. With a view to achieve this target of growth rate, definite production targets are required to be set and for achieving them a suitable strategy needs to be evolved. The main elements of strategy for the fulfilment of production targets in the State are "increased irrigation facilities,"
efficient water management, enlarged certified seed supply programmes, introduction of disease-resistant varieties, ensuring timely sowing, massive land reclamation programmes, efficient plant protection measures, control of weedicides and pesticides, ground/aerial spray of cotton growing areas, diversification of farming by laying greater stress on pulses, oilseeds, sugarcane, cultivation of fruit suited to different regions depending upon their climatic conditions, dry land farming, balanced, efficient and economical use of fertilizers including micro-nutrients, etc. The details of yield of different crops and the output of principal crops in Punjab in the sixth plan are shown in the Tables (6.1 and 6.2).

Table 6.3 reveals that Punjab has achieved a major break-through in agricultural production, particularly in the production of wheat and rice. As a result, the State is the largest single contributor to the central rice and wheat pool. The envisaged growth in the output of principal crops is given in Table 6.2.

The total foodgrains production during 1982-83 was 141.75 lac tonnes and it rose to 147.78 lac tonnes during 1983-84. It is estimated that during 1985-86, the total foodgrains production will be of the order of 155.00 lac tonnes against the target of 148.40 lac tonnes. The target set for the year 1985-86 is 155.00 lac tonnes. The major addition to foodgrains came from rice and wheat.
### TABLE 6.1
Yield of different crops in Punjab

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>2604</td>
<td>2733</td>
<td>2955</td>
<td>3144</td>
<td>3063</td>
<td>3100</td>
<td>3074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jowar</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajra</td>
<td>1032</td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>1013</td>
<td>1198</td>
<td>1227</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>1723</td>
<td>1602</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>1778</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>2797</td>
<td>2730</td>
<td>2932</td>
<td>3007</td>
<td>3015</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>3285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>1546</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugarcane</td>
<td>5526</td>
<td>5779</td>
<td>6098</td>
<td>6580</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>6626</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton(cleaned)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>185*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>425</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This shortfall is due to severe attack of Ball-worm on cotton crop

### TABLE 6.2

**Output of Principal Crops in Punjab**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Anticipated Achievement</td>
<td>Targets</td>
<td>Anticipated Achievement</td>
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<td>Wheat</td>
<td>8544</td>
<td>9169</td>
<td>9416</td>
<td>9300</td>
<td>10183</td>
<td>9700</td>
<td>10500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>3750</td>
<td>4156</td>
<td>4539</td>
<td>4600</td>
<td>5057</td>
<td>4850</td>
<td>5500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>740</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bajra</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other cereals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jowar)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cereals</td>
<td>13157</td>
<td>14055</td>
<td>14642</td>
<td>14650</td>
<td>15965</td>
<td>15325</td>
<td>16900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pulses</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pulses</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Foodgrains</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>1527</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnuts</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Oilseeds</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Oilseeds</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugarcane(Gur)</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>1218</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The production of rice during 1981-82 was 37.50 lac tonnes. During 1982-83 it rose to 41.56 lac tonnes and to 45.39 lac tonnes in 1983-84. During 1984-85 its achievement is expected to be of the order of 50.57 lac tonnes against the revised target of 46.00 lac tonnes. The target for 1985-86 has been set at 48.50 lac tonnes. The production of wheat rose to 94.16 lac tonnes in 1983-84 against 91.69 lac tonnes in 1982-83. Its production during 1984-85 is anticipated at 93.00 lac tonnes which is at par with the target set for the year. The target for 1985-86 has been fixed at 97.00 lac tonnes. Maize is not a major crop of the State and has not shown a stable trend.

Although wheat and rice will continue to be the major crops in Punjab, more emphasis is now being laid on the diversification of the cropping pattern. It is envisaged to raise the production of cotton, oil seeds and pulses. Cotton production which was 12.18 lac bales during 1982-83 came down to 7.07 lac bales in 1983-84. Its production is estimated to be of the order of 13.00 lac bales during 1984-85 while the target for the year 1985-86 has been set at 12.38 lac bales. However, the production of cotton is not picking up because of the various adverse factors like water logging in the cotton belt which has increased the attack of insects/pests and diseases. The production of oil seeds is estimated to be of the order of 1.50 lac tonnes in 1984-85 against the achievement of 1.18 lac tonnes in 1983-84 while the targets for 1985-86 has been set at
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Allied Services</td>
<td>1000.00</td>
<td>620.35</td>
<td>255.34</td>
<td>310.00</td>
<td>360.00</td>
<td>1400.00</td>
<td>341.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crop Husbandry</td>
<td>4586.25</td>
<td>1563.37</td>
<td>739.94</td>
<td>913.80</td>
<td>915.00</td>
<td>7825.00</td>
<td>3108.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dryland/Rainfed farming</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-stock Improvement</td>
<td>2621.00</td>
<td>1324.85</td>
<td>446.66</td>
<td>304.40</td>
<td>404.40</td>
<td>3000.00</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil and Water Conservation</td>
<td>2060.00</td>
<td>840.47</td>
<td>418.34</td>
<td>507.00</td>
<td>507.00</td>
<td>3500.00</td>
<td>1270.00</td>
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<td>Animal Husbandry</td>
<td>1349.00</td>
<td>944.00</td>
<td>497.18</td>
<td>510.00</td>
<td>552.17</td>
<td>3300.00</td>
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<td>Dairy Development</td>
<td>236.00</td>
<td>165.16</td>
<td>48.91</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>50.18</td>
<td>440.00</td>
<td>170.00</td>
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<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>175.00</td>
<td>104.02</td>
<td>47.27</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>54.65</td>
<td>598.00</td>
<td>234.00</td>
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<td>Forests</td>
<td>1290.00</td>
<td>796.75</td>
<td>446.21</td>
<td>450.00</td>
<td>450.00</td>
<td>3200.00</td>
<td>220.00</td>
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<td>Investment in Agricultural Financial Institutions</td>
<td>1723.00</td>
<td>877.65</td>
<td>313.80</td>
<td>300.00</td>
<td>325.00</td>
<td>2500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>29.75</td>
<td>45.90</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage and Warehousing</td>
<td>120.00</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>125.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15207.00</td>
<td>7160.71</td>
<td>3244.31</td>
<td>3435.00</td>
<td>3651.80</td>
<td>26013.00</td>
<td>8324.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.48 lac tonnes. The production of pulses has not shown a stable trend. During 1981-82 the production of pulses was 1.61 lac tonnes which fell to 1.20 lac tonnes in 1982-83. It again rose to 1.35 lac tonnes during 1983-84. During 1984-85 its production is estimated at 1.90 lac tonnes while the target for 1985-86 has been set at 1.75 lac tonnes. Pulses are mainly sown in rain fed areas and their production fluctuates with the weather conditions.

As regards outlays and expenditure, it will be seen from Table 6.3 that a very high priority has been accorded to agriculture and its allied sectors in the programmes of agricultural development as compared to other programmes.

Table 6.4 shows that the public sector outlays for agriculture have increased progressively in the successive periods. An outlay of Rs.3,766.00 lakhs has been envisaged for agriculture for the year 1985-86 as against Rs.44.09 lakhs in the year 1969-70.

**TABLE 6.4**

State Plan Outlay on Agriculture (Year-wise)
(Rs. in Lakhs)

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.09</td>
<td>336.98</td>
<td>640.50</td>
<td>1219.00</td>
<td>3435.00</td>
<td>3766.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Figures have been collected from the State Plans' Documents.

In addition, substantial investments have also been
made and are still being made on various infrastructure facilities which help in the increase of agricultural production. An important role has also been given to the institutional finance in the form of long and medium term loans through cooperative, land development and commercial banks. It has been estimated that during 1984-85 institutional finance from the various banks/term lending institutions to the extent of Rs. 5973.98 lakhs was utilized for financing development programmes of the Agriculture Department in Punjab. For the year 1985-86 institutional finance would be available to the tune of Rs. 7349.90 lakhs as shown in the following table:

### TABLE 6.5
(Figures in Rs. Lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Institution</th>
<th>Term loan assistance availed during 1984-85</th>
<th>Term loan assistance to be arranged during 1985-86</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Punjab Seeds Corporation (PSC)</td>
<td>66.93</td>
<td>16.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Punjab Agro-Industries Corporation (PAIC)</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>482.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Punjab State Warehousing Corporation (PSWC)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>650.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Punjab Land Development and Reclamation Corporation (PLDRC)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Punjab Agriculture Department</td>
<td>5772.64</td>
<td>6115.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Punjab Horticulture Department</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 5973.98 7349.90

In brief, the preceding discussion has thrown light on the procedures for the formulation of agricultural plans in the State of Punjab as these have been operating and getting crystallized over the years. It is observed that the procedures have been vitiated by certain underlying inadequacies and shortcomings. These have been discussed in the succeeding pages of this chapter.

2. AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

The discussion for the formulation of State Plan would indicate that the process does not encourage meeting the local requirements and solving problems. There is thus the need for looking into greater details of the aspirations and requirements of local areas. This can be achieved through District, Block and Village Planning. This raises several questions like: Who formulates plans for agricultural development at the district? What is the machinery for its implementation? What is the organizational set-up at the district to see that the various parts of a multi-faceted programme are carried out in tune and in line with the requirements? What is the role of the Deputy Commissioner in all these spheres? These aspects have been dealt with here.

**Concept of District Planning**

The idea of district planning is an old one and has been with us ever since the introduction of planning
process in India. One of the major premises of the concept of planning has been the association of the people in the process of plan formulation and plan implementation. The whole concept of decentralized planning, as an essential device of realizing the socio-economic objectives of national planning, found a place even in the First Five Year Plan. In 1954, the Planning Commission asked the States to arrange for the preparation of district plans, especially in respect of agricultural production, rural industries and cooperation. The Second Plan (1956–1961) assigned to the district an important place in the whole structure of planning. Planning at the district and village levels was considered to be as indispensable for securing the maximum participation and voluntary effort of the people. In the approach to the formulation of the Fourth Plan and subsequently Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Plans, an even greater emphasis is given to District and Block Plans.

Towards this end, the Planning Commission has been putting in serious and sustained efforts to encourage greater initiative on the part of the States to draw up their plans in the light of local resource potentials and requirements within the over-all framework of national

priorities. It has become apparent that planning, undertaken exclusively at the State level, cannot possibly take into consideration the different conditions existing in the different physico-geographical and economic regions of the State.¹

In this context, Punjab State Planning Board writes: "...the fruits of progress, particularly those of the green revolution have not been equally shared by all sections of population and by all regions. The richer farmers, with necessary resources have been able to make large initial investment that has enable them to reap the fruits of the new technology. Many small and marginal farmers, inhibited by lack of resources, have not been able to instal tubewells, nor to adopt improved cultivation practices. Even where the small farmers have succeeded in adopting the new technology, their resource base is so small that a large majority of them still fail to make both ends meet. There is evidence to suggest that as a result of the green revolution, the disparities in income have tended to become more accentuated and, that a large number of marginal and small farmers owning small tracts of land continue to live in abject poverty.²

²Punjab, Punjab State Planning Board, Approach to the Fifth Five Year Plan of Punjab State (Chandigarh: Planning Department, 1975), p.2.
The district is the nerve centre for planning at which level most of the departments have responsible officers who can (with some training and reorientation) work out schemes, lay down time schedules and decide the lines on which co-ordination should take place between one department and another. The district level is by far the most convenient level to secure proper co-ordination of activities as also to bring local knowledge and experience to bear on the choice of agricultural programmes consistent with the needs of the area. Because of these considerations, the Punjab Government has set-up District Planning Boards.*

The District Planning Board consists of the following officials and non-officials at the district level:

1. Deputy Commissioner of the District (Chairman)
2. District Officers of Development Departments.
3. M.Ps. representing the District.
4. M.L.As. representing the Districts.
5. Chairman, Zila Parishad.
6. Chairmen of the Block Samities.
7. President of the Municipal Corporations/Committees.
8. Non-Officials (not more than five) nominated by the District Administration.

The District Statistical Officer is the Member Secretary of Board.

The District Planning Board has been assigned the following functions:

(i) to formulate a long-term district perspective Plan and evolve a short-term strategy (Five-Year and Annual Plans) for planned development of the district after the integration of Block Plans therein, reflecting the people's felt needs and priorities;

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(ii) to transmit the district Plan to the State Planning Board within the fixed time-limit for inclusion in the State Plan;

(iii) to ensure effective implementation of the District and Block Plan Schemes through the agencies of the respective development department;

(iv) to review the progress of the Plan Schemes in the district at the end of each quarter;

(v) to any other related functions that may be assigned by the State Planning Department from time to time; and

(vi) to monitor the progress of the development programmes and communicate the performance to the State Planning Board.

Specific Steps in the District Plan Formulation

An exercise in the formulation of an agricultural development plan would first of all require a critical appraisal of the existing level of agricultural development and thereafter the formulation of an integrated strategy based upon the availability of resources and the state priorities.

The first objective of the formulation of agricultural plan at the district level is to set forth a long term perspective indicating the agricultural activities to be established in different sub-regions of the district and the measures to be taken over the next 15 or 20 years to develop natural resources, build-up infrastructural facilities in a manner that would help the district to achieve the targets in the pre-determined direction. The second objective is to formulate an integrated programme of action for the next
five years or one year period on the basis of a critical appraisal of the existing resources and conditions, and a realistic assessment of the immediate problems and short-term priorities. As regards the assessment and evaluation of the existing situation in district planning, K.N. Kabra places emphasis on three groups of questions:

(a) Assessment of general situation concerning physico-geographical conditions with particular reference to natural resource endowment, administrative, political structure, socio-psychological situation, level and structure of economic activities, etc;

(b) Assessment of the preceding plan and its specific strategy, priorities and programmes; and

(c) Assessment of physical and financial resources which could be mobilised during the relevant plan period.1

For the projection of a long term perspective as is being done at the Central and State level as well as the preparation of a short-term operational plan, it is desirable that a careful analysis should be made of the administrative situation and the existing socio-economic conditions in different sub-regions of the district.2 This will help the district administration as well as the State Government to frame broad policies relating to agricultural production. The agricultural plan should be formulated on the basis of the available statistical and administrative data, the


2See for example, the Long Term Perspective Plan for Agriculture 1980-2000, drawn by the Department of Agriculture Punjab (Chandigarh: Department of Agriculture, Punjab, September 1984).
advice of the knowledgeable farmers and entrepreneurs, the experience of local officials and a systematic appraisal of the ongoing programmes. The guidelines for various activities may bring out preliminary suggestions for the type of schemes and projects in various agricultural fields. Guide-points have been provided in Annexure III to facilitate the eliciting of the views of the officials of agriculture department who would be responsible for preparing specific schemes to be included in the agricultural sector of the district plan. A set of statistical tables is normally available with the District Statistical Officer in respect of agricultural programmes and activities for the collection of necessary information.

Essentially, these tables and guide-points are only illustrative or suggestive for it is impossible to prescribe uniform sets of tables and guidepoints which would cover all the points on which a view may have to be taken in different parts of the State at the time of agricultural development plan formulation at the district level. It is, therefore, assumed that these would be carefully analysed at the district level and such improvements and suggestions as may be warranted by the local situations would be incorporated in them.

The first step in starting the work of the formulation of agriculture plan at the district level would be
that the Chief Agricultural Officer (C.A.O.) incharge of
the Agricultural Department at the district level should
be asked to fill up the statistical tables and prepare
notes on the guidelines given in Annexure III. While
preparing the required information, the Chief Agricultural
Officer would get a fairly reliable and adequate data with
regard to various Blocks and Areas. Based on this infor-
mation, the Directorate of Agriculture may formulate
agricultural schemes which in its opinion can be useful
for the development of agriculture in the district.

The composition of the Working Group at the District
level on agriculture and allied subjects which examines the
schemes on agriculture in detail is as follows:

WORKING GROUP AT DISTRICT LEVEL ON AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED
SUBJECTS

(1) Agriculture - Chief Agriculture Officer
(II) Forests - Divisional Forest Officer
(III) Animal Husbandry - District Animal Husbandry
Officer
(IV) Co-operation - Deputy/Assistant Registrar
Co-operatives
(V) Irrigation - Executive Engineer Concerned
(VI) Drainage - Executive Engineer Concerned
(VII) Soil Conservation - Divisional Soil Conservation
Officer/Assistant Soil
Conservation Officer.
(VIII) Horticulture - Horticulture Development
Officer
(IX) Poultry - District Animal Husbandry
Officer concerned or his
representative
(X) Dairy Development - A representative of Dairy
Development Department/Cor-
poration for the district.
(xi) MFALA & SFDA - Project Officer MFALA and SFDA

(xii) Welfare of Scheduled - District Social Welfare Officer
     Castes and Backward Classes

(xiii) Representative of the lead Bank

(xiv) Representative of Punjab State Electricity Board

(xv) Statistical Organisation - District Statistical Officer (Convener)

The working group examines the agricultural development schemes in the light of the relevant information that is furnished by the District Statistical Officer and submits its reports within a time-bound period indicating the present level of development, the objectives and strategy for future development, appraisal of continuing programmes and schemes proposed for at least 10 years' Plan in the agricultural sector.

The report of the Working Group is then discussed in the meeting of the District Planning Board which at that stage determines the broad strategy and inter-sectoral priorities and attempts an integration of the programmes for various sectors. After these discussions, the draft Plan for the district is prepared by the District Statistical Officer in the light of the report of the Working Group and recommendations of the District Planning Board.

The draft on agricultural plan along with other plans is then placed before the District Planning Board for its
approval with such modifications as it may consider
necessary with special reference to the following:

(i) the inter-sector priorities laid down in the guidelines are complied with;

(ii) the objectives laid down under the agricultural sector are in consonance with the objectives in other inter-related sectors;

(iii) an attempt has been made to identify an agricultural plan for the exploitation of unutilised potentials available at a given time;

(iv) the specific interests and requirements of different areas/classes have been kept in view;

(v) the estimate financial and physical inputs for the agriculture plan are reasonable and feasible; and

(vi) the criteria for gauging the success of different schemes have been laid down and a programme for periodical physical reporting has been drawn up.

In case it is found that the plan drawn up for the ensuing year or five years' period at the district level is very ambitious in financial and physical terms, an exercise at pruning would have to be undertaken.\(^1\) It is very imperative that this exercise should not be undertaken at the State level in a mechanical fashion without consultation with the departmental officials and others who have participated in the formulation of the guidelines for the district plan. The main idea of laying down inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral priorities in these guidelines was to provide an objective basis for the allocation of resources between different programmes and also for the reduction as well as the expansion of the plan on the basis of the availability of resources.\(^2\)

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In most cases, the cutting down of a programme in one sphere will lead to a corresponding cut in some other programmes also. For example, if the programmes for the distribution of co-operative credit or fertilizers are cut, it would also be desirable to reduce the outlays proposed for the extension of the High Yielding Varieties Programme. It would, however, not be convenient to apply this rule universally. Availability of resources does not necessarily mean reduction in plan outlays. Even if in the present state of financial and material resource constraints, the overall size of the agriculture plan has, normally, greater chances of being scaled down, it is not inconceivable that in some specific areas, it may be desirable to increase the outlays above the proposed levels. The long-term perspective of development has to be taken into consideration for determining the final shape of the plan. Moreover, in order to ensure that the process of planning at the district level is undertaken on a rational and realistic basis, it is necessary that an element of flexibility and resource consciousness should be introduced at the district level. Unless this is done, it will remain a compilation of unintegrated and impossible demands. The State Government would examine the short and long-term requirements of the districts for drawing up integrated State plans and thereafter it would indicate the quantum of resources which would be available to each district during
the next five years or one year period. On the basis of these indicators, the expectations of private investment and the resources likely to be raised by local bodies, Panchayati Raj Institutions and co-operatives, the districts would have to finalise their Five Year and One Year operational Plans.¹ There is no alternative to broad monitoring of the plan from the national and state levels; yet, the maximum possible discussion, involvement and participation from the village Panchayat upwards should be ensured.²

A copy of the Agricultural Plan after the approval of the District Planning Board is required to be sent to the Director of Agriculture, Punjab with a copy to the Planning Department.

Although the Punjab Government has set-up District Planning Boards, real Planning has not started at the district level. For the first time, in the year 1983 in the history of planning in the State of Punjab, the State Government has made an attempt to ensure an equitable dispersal of plan benefits to various regions and communities by allocating funds district-wise under the divisible plan programmes formulated at State level.³ Details of agricultural sector break-up of financial targets/achievements for the years 1980-83, 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and for the Seventh Plan as a whole are given in the Table 6.6.

TABLE 6.6

State Plan Outlay and Outlay for the Agriculture for the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Plan Outlay</th>
<th>District Sector Outlay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-85</td>
<td>10,080.00</td>
<td>4,651.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approved)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sixth Plan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-83</td>
<td>4,499.12</td>
<td>2,478.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Actuals)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>1,786.40</td>
<td>1,037.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Actuals)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>2,096.00</td>
<td>1,135.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlay)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>2,147.00</td>
<td>1,295.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlay)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-90</td>
<td>14,975.00</td>
<td>5,858.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Seventh Plan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) and Annual Plan (1985-86) of Punjab, (Chandigarh: Planning Department), pp.144-45.

The study has indicated that although District Planning Boards have been set up in each district, they are bodies merely on paper. The Planning Department itself admits "It has not been possible to formulate plans at the District level for various administrative reasons, and other constraints." In practice, however, attempts at district agricultural planning have generally not been fruitful. The

authorities responsible for preparing the agricultural plans at the district level have not been given any clear idea about the financial resources which would be made available to them. Even if they get some such indication, they would try to inflate their demands to procure the maximum possible advantage in this regard. These have been no clear appreciation of what the district agricultural plan should actually include and what should be left to the State Planning Board. Again, the agricultural schemes adopted by the districts are not relevant to the needs of the development of the district. Besides, there is a lack of proper coordination among the different implementing agencies in the district. If the district agricultural planning exercises are to have any meaning, these shortcomings would have to be overcome. With a view to enabling each district to make full use of its resources, it would be necessary to give some flexibility and autonomy of action to the districts in drawing up and implementing the agricultural programmes best suited to their needs and resources. Adequate training is also needed for the planners at the district level so that they can draw up the plans carefully, systematically and conscientiously.

3. AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AT THE BLOCK LEVEL

The need for setting up planning units at the Block level which should be responsible for formulating agricultural plans and keep a watch over their progress has been
well recognised by the National Commission on Agriculture.¹ The Commission observes: "There should be a planning unit at the Block level to watch the progress of agricultural development programmes under the Block Agricultural Development Officer who should be directly responsible to the Chief Agricultural Development Officer."² The block is intended to be the primary area for local planning.³ Grass-root planning is more effective for the best use of land and manpower through agriculture. The Block is an area in which conditions are generally more homogeneous than in larger regions and is a readily available administrative unit for plan implementation. Again, the Block is an area enough to evoke effective popular participation in the agricultural planning process. People's participation is required to ensure the contribution of materials, finance and labour by the population in the given area and, the contribution of new ideas based on local expertise. Planning at the Block level is also expected to foster the democratic system through the process of discussion by the concerned persons on the formulation of plan schemes. The Community Development has always had an explicit and implicit strategy of area development.⁴ Mukerji points out special character

²Ibid., p.28.
⁴The Community Development Programme was introduced in 1952. Under this programme the entire country was divided into about 5000 Blocks or 15-16 blocks per district.
stantic of the programme: "The block is an area unit of development and the block organization is required to be responsible for the overall development of the area in its charge. The block schematic budget laying down a uniform pattern of development of schools, adult literacy centres, construction of roads, irrigation works, digging of wells and tanks had the idea of promoting a basic level of amenities and services for the area behind it.\textsuperscript{1} The block programme was preceded by a pre-extensive survey of the conditions, resources and needs of the local people. Community development started with 'felt needs' in the First Five Year Plan and today some of these have been specifically spelled out as integrated rural development programmes and 'minimum needs' in the Seventh Five Year Plan of the Punjab State.\textsuperscript{2} It is essential to have the basic data for this kind of agricultural planning and an information system to monitor this programme at the block level.

**Procedure for Preparing Block Plans in Agriculture**

The process of agricultural planning at the block level is the same as at the district level. The main objective of the formulation of agricultural plan at this level is to provide equitably and efficiently the distribution of agricultural inputs on the one hand, and marketing

\textsuperscript{1}B. Nakerji, *Community Development in India* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1961), pp. 33 and 34.

facilities, storage and processing of agricultural outputs on the other, within each service area at the micro-level.

The objective behind the formulation of a district plan is to lay down an operational framework of future action. For this, it would be necessary to make a critical assessment of the existing situation and thereafter to prepare integrated strategies for further development for each block and for the district as a whole on the basis of the available resources and potentials, the nature of local needs and problems, the trends of development already in evidence, the priorities assigned to different socio-economic activities and the framework of basic objectives adopted for the State.

The lines on which agricultural planning at the block level could be formulated are explained as follows:

(i) **Study of Agricultural Conditions of the Block**

In order to work out the details of the development strategies for different blocks, it is essential to identify and describe the conditions which have some effect or bearing on agricultural development, and to point out the constraints upon agricultural planning in the block. For this purpose, information on the total geographical area, land utilization, land holdings, irrigated area and area under major crops, is collected with the help of pro formas in a data book, to be provided by the District Statistical Officer. This is the minimum information
required for making an agricultural plan at the block level which has been highlighted by the Economic and Statistical Organization, Punjab, Chandigarh, in its case study of 'Samana Block' in Patiala District.¹

(ii) Description of the Flow of Agricultural Inputs and Outputs

After the description of general agricultural conditions, the description of the flow of agricultural inputs and outputs is necessary for agricultural plan at the block level. This could be done by (a) identification of major crops and estimation of actual production and marketed surplus; (b) requirement of agricultural inputs and the estimation of their actual usage; and (c) description of the flow of agricultural inputs and outputs selected.

(iii) Selection of Appropriate Service Areas

In addition to description of general agricultural conditions and flow of agricultural outputs and inputs, selection of appropriate service areas is necessary for planning process. The existing commodity movements for agricultural inputs and outputs should be at the level of 4 to 6 kilometres maximum travel distance. This distance criterion of 4 to 6 kilometres provides a service area of about 10,000 acres or 4000 hectares of net area sown which

¹This is a pilot study of Agricultural planning at the block level conducted by Economic and Statistical organisation, Punjab in the year 1979.
is similar to the comprehensive Area Development Programme in agriculture. There appears to be a balance size of service area within which a large number of agricultural facilities can be integrated together, and also the plan for agriculture can be integrated together, and also the plan for agriculture can be integrated with other sectors, such as health, education and rural development.

Once the appropriate level service areas are selected, it becomes necessary to specify the actual and projected area under land utilization, irrigation, production and surplus of the major crops within these areas. This implies making forward projections for each village within the service area at the micro-level by preparing tables on the basis of the actual data recorded in the 10 to 12 preceding years. The projections regarding the land utilization pattern may be confined to those categories of land which could be developed within the next five years. In order to make realistic crop-wise projections and to estimate as to how much area can be developed or irrigated in the next five years, it is necessary to consult the farmers, Panchayat agronomists, agricultural extension staff, and the people at the village level. Similarly projections about fertilizers and seeds can be made on the basis of the projected area under irrigated and unirrigated crops multiplied by the recommended use of fertilizers and seed rates.
In this way, each projection becomes a plan by itself. This means fixing physical targets for each village and plan to achieve them in the next five years' period. Achievements of these physical targets become at once, the precondition of facilities for agricultural planning at the block level.

(iv) **Preparation of Agricultural Plan for Service Areas**

After making forward projections for each village within the service area at the micro-level, the comprehensive agricultural development plan can be drawn up. Specific plan proposals for reorganization of production apparatus within each service area can then be formulated on the basis of projections. This may include (a) development of waste and pasture lands; (b) extension of irrigation and power facilities; (c) extension of area under HYVP of wheat and sugarcane where irrigation facilities are available; and (d) development of agro-service centres, etc.

Plans for agriculture for each of the other service areas can be formulated in a similar manner and then be integrated into a comprehensive agriculture plan with some higher order implications for the whole block.

(v) **Determination of Priorities**

Following the preparation of agriculture plan for each service area, the priorities between them must be determined within the plan outlay and the time available.
Theoretically, the priority in order must be given to the plans proposing reorganization of production apparatus. Within production plans, the elimination of constraints requires a priority of sequence, such as irrigation, power, development of land, cropping pattern, etc. in order of preference. These specific production plans usually require more investment, manpower and time to be implemented successfully than the plan proposing reorganization of the service apparatus. Within the plan proposing reorganization of service apparatus, the first priority must be given to the fertilizers or seed distribution facilities before the agro-produce marketing facilities. It is, however, useful to draw up longer term perspective plans, parts of which can be implemented in some logical sequence within the existing resources. Generally a detailed well-prepared feasible plan itself becomes the means of raising plan outlays.

(vi) Estimation of Cost for Implementation

It is also necessary to work out the details of cost in terms of manpower, money and materials to implement the agricultural plan. The reorganization of production apparatus which includes development of land, construction of minor irrigation schemes, canals, etc. must also consider the seasonal demand for workers, both skilled and unskilled. A careful assessment of cost in terms of manpower is therefore required to plan for full rural employment.
Once the plans for agriculture in each service area indicated above, are prepared and detailed, they can be put together as a comprehensive agriculture plan for the whole block.

As in the case of district planning, the Punjab Government has set up Block Planning Committees for each block,\(^1\) which have been entrusted with the task to formulate and implement plans and monitor the progress of the development programmes and communicate the performance to the concerned District Planning Board and the State Planning Board.\(^2\)

Although Planning Committees have been constituted with suitable representation to non-officials at each Block, they have not started functioning. They have so far failed to formulate plans at the Block level for various administrative reasons. But an effort is being made to ensure an equitable dispersal of plan benefits to various blocks.\(^3\) However, the State Government has stressed the need of keeping the following objectives generally in view, with reference to the development of agricultural plan at the sub-region

\(^1\) At present there are 118 Blocks in the State. See Appendix I.

\(^2\) For functions, See, Punjab Government, Department of Planning, Seventh Five Year Plan, Op.cit., p.185 or consult preceding pages of this chapter.

\(^3\) Ibid., pp.191-93.
of the district:

(a) better utilisation of irrigation facilities by (i) multi-cropping and (ii) introduction of better techniques of production such as high yielding varieties programmes, etc.

(b) introduction of suitable cropping patterns in relation to the quality of soils, the agro-climatic conditions, the availability of irrigation facilities and inputs and labour resources and the nature of marketing and communication facilities;

(c) increase in the productivity of unirrigated land through better soil and water conservation practices as also through the introduction of more suitable cropping patterns;

(d) improvement of the economy of small farmers through the liberalisation of credit and other facilities and also through the provision, where possible, of irrigation facilities and other inputs specifically for this class of farmers.

4. AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL

The need of planning at village level has already been recognized. The National Commission on Agriculture states "...it is still essential that any plans based on an area approach in terms of large water-sheds or agro-climatic regions should take the village as a nucleus." As in a federal structure each unit has its distinct role to play, so, in planning, the village occupies an important place while planning has to be undertaken at various levels, its ultimate value consists in the impact it reflects on the

life of the people. To quote Sixth Five Year Plan: "...it will be necessary to ensure that at every stage of planning and implementation, there is full participation and involvement of the people."¹ If it fails to instil in them a desire for higher standards of living and for new ways of life, planning will become something artificial imposed from the top. For planning to develop the strength and vitality of a nationwide enterprise, it is necessary that its roots should lie deep in the village. The district or block is not near enough to the ordinary citizen and it is the village where he lives and works and which comes nearest to him and affects him most intimately. The village, in particular, is the centre of traditions and values; for over 79 per cent of the people live in villages. So, planning at the village level is essential. This step will meet the fundamental concept 'Planning from below'.

For agricultural purposes, every village should have a Five-Year Plan. This may be prepared by the Village Planning Committee i.e. Agricultural Production Committee, which may be constituted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>(i) Two Panches from the village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                   | (ii) Block Development Agricul-
|                   | tural Officer.                  |

Steps for Agriculture Planning at the Village Level

As at the district and block levels, the agricultural planning at the village level too, involves various steps and procedures which are as follows:

(a) **Collection of Data**

The first step is the collection of basic data for planning. The proforma for this is given in Annexure IV. This information should be collected by the Agricultural Inspector or Secretary of the Village Panchayat. The information once collected would prove very helpful for all future planning and development not only of the village, but also of the block and the district. The Village Planning Committee (Agriculture Production Committee) should maintain a register in which this information should be entered and kept up-to-date, as changes are bound to occur as development of the village progresses.

(b) **Contents of the Agricultural Production Plan**

This plan should contain the following items:

(i) Manurial Programme and Tree-plantation;

(ii) Seed Multiplication;
(iii) Irrigation—Utilisation of existing potential, construction of new works and maintenance of existing works;
(iv) Improved agricultural practices, including dry farming practices, land reclamation and plant protection; and
(v) Improved agricultural implements.

(c) Preparation of a Draft Plan by the Village Agricultural Planning Committee

On the basis of the data collected, the Agricultural Planning Committee should prepare a draft plan for agriculture. This may be done in consultation with the members of the Block Planning Committee.

(d) Submission of Draft Plans

As soon as the Draft Plan is ready, the Sarpanch would call a general meeting of the people of that area and place it before them for approval. All reasonable suggestions for amendment of the plans would be incorporated and copies of the approved plan will be sent to the Panchayat Samiti for onward submission to the District and State authorities.

(e) Basic Conditions for Agricultural Planning

While planning for agriculture, it is necessary to take into account the basic conditions under which it is carried on in the different villages of the block. These are:

(i) general climate and the seasonal distribution of rainfall and pattern of drainage;
(ii) availability and quality of land resources;
(iii) patterns of tenure and size of holdings;
(iv) availability of agricultural inputs;
(v) availability of appropriate techniques for the increase in agriculture production;
(vi) proximity to centres of consumption of high value agricultural products; and
(vii) pattern of village consumption.

AGRICULTURAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

Agricultural Plan implementation is of great importance in the context of the growing economy of Punjab. Successive Five Year Plans have emphasised the need and importance of strengthening the implementation machinery so that the agricultural projects, schemes and programmes included in the plan move according to time schedules and targets. It has also been recognized that implementation needs to be supported by adequate monitoring and current and post evaluation of major programmes so that lessons of experience help improvements in the future programmes.

1 Beginning with the First Five Year Plan of India, the successive Five Year Plans documents have been stressing the need of building up and streamlining the machinery for implementation of plans. The First Five Year Plan had observed in this connection in all possible directions, the pace of development will depend largely upon the quality of public administration, the efficiency with which it seeks to evoke.


Ever since then, the plan documents have been repeatedly emphasising the exigency of improving the machinery of implementation. We have already dealt at length with this aspect in an earlier chapter.


Sixth Five Year Plan in this regard lays stress on:
"...the problems of implementation arise out of weaknesses at all levels of implementing machinery.

Contd....
The main burden of implementing the plans for agricultural development in Punjab rests on the governmental machinery especially at the State, District, Block and Village levels. At the State level, the Directorate of Agriculture is the principal agency which has been entrusted with the responsibility of securing the efficient and effective implementation of agricultural plans and schemes through its field offices. The Directorate of Agriculture provides the Secretariat with technical assistance, facts, data, information, etc., that are needed by the latter for policy formulation and for evaluation of performance of its activities. Implementation of all schemes relating to agriculture, namely, extension, training, acquisition and distribution of inputs is looked after by the Directorate.

The Chief Agricultural Officer assisted by the Block Agricultural Officer and the Extension functionaries is responsible for the implementation of agricultural plans at the District level. He has the overall responsibility for carrying out and co-ordinating the work of agricultural development in accordance with the instructions issued by the Director of Agriculture from time to time.

Continued from pre.page......

improving the apex implementing machinery of the Government at the Centre and States is perhaps the most important....The development of organisational framework has not kept pace with the increasing variety and complexity of the job that State and Central Governments have taken on."

Also see the Chapter on 'Organisation' for the detailed study of working and functioning of the Directorate of Agriculture.
At the Block level, the Block Agricultural Officer is concerned with the preparation, implementation and evaluation of plans. Supported by a team of extension functionaries including the agricultural inspector, he draws up, executes and implements 'Extension, Training and Education' programmes of each village of his block with reference to agricultural production plan adopted by the village. At this level, implementation of agricultural programmes/projects/works is the responsibility of the Agricultural Inspector, who in turn, is assisted by the Village Level Worker. It is his duty to review the progress every quarter and discuss the same with the chairman and members of the Village Planning Committee. He is also responsible for the submission of the quarterly progress reports to the Agricultural Officer of the block, who in turn, passes it on to the Chief Agricultural Officer of the District.

Plan implementation at various levels has its limitations. Antiquated administrative structure and leisurely procedures of work are incompatible with the accomplishment of tasks visualised under the plan. Inefficiency, delay, motivated harassment, corruption, wastage, misuse of resources and delays in the release of sanctions, further aggravate the problems of plan implementation. This invariably occurs because of poor project designs, incomplete preparation of project reports and their inadequate appraisal.

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In the area of agricultural planning, evaluation is a basic concept. Its dimensions have widened over the years and, as Caro puts it, "evaluation research is not new but nevertheless an increasingly robust enterprise." Evaluation aims at determining whether the project objectives set in terms of expected output effects and impacts are being or will be met. This leads to an assessment of the results achieved and the lesson to be drawn for future improvement in a later phase or in a similar project elsewhere. Evaluative research implies the use of scientific methods for collecting data concerning the degree to which some specified activity achieves some desired effect.

The purposes of evaluation can be spelled out as under:

(a) to determine progress;
(b) to determine the distance travelled in a given time towards the organisational goal in relation to the total time set for such achievement;
(c) to determine the shortfalls and the reasons thereof, i.e., to judge the efficacy of methods; and
(d) to provide guidance in the execution or planning of future activities.

3Edward A. Suchman, "Evaluating Educational Programmes".
Evaluation of programmes assumes that the results of a study would be used in making changes in the programme.¹

The Plan performance over the years has been adversely affected for want of effective monitoring, review and evaluation by the Directorate of Agricultural and the Punjab State Planning Board. There is the lack of processes of monitoring, review and evaluation at all levels. Continuous evaluation and appraisal of the agriculture progress are essential for ensuring successful implementation. Scientific evaluation has been one of the weakest links in agricultural planning and has substantially hampered the implementation of development programmes. Though some kind of evaluation machinery does exist in the State, Planning Board and at the Directorate, its organisation is inadequate and weak as has been observed in the preceding pages of this study. Apart from the shortcomings of evaluation machinery itself, the evaluation has been ineffective because of the inadequacy of coverage, delay in carrying out the studies and the time lag between the completion of the study and finalization of the report.

The State Government has recently proposed to contribute a high level "Monitoring, Review and Evaluation Committee" under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister with the Agriculture Minister, Administrative Secretary for

for Agriculture, Planning Secretary, Finance Secretary and the Specialist Members of the Punjab State Planning Board as members. It would periodically review the implementation of the important Plan programmes and projects.¹

Further, it has been found that even though it is claimed at the time of the formulation of the Annual Plans that the progress of individual schemes or a group of schemes is reviewed, in practice, this does not take place. The State Government does not furnish full information in regard to the progress of even major schemes included in the State Plans. This is a serious lacuna which requires attention. Adequate information and reporting systems need to be evolved so that those responsible for implementation can forecast difficulties, assess at each step the achievements and performance in relation to agricultural production targets and design suitable means and methods. Creation of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Cells as suggested in the chapter on 'Organisation' need to be created at the Directorate, District, Block and Focal Point levels.

Issues in Agricultural Planning

We have already discussed the formulation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring in agricultural planning in the preceding pages of this chapter. We now propose to

consider certain general constraints and problems arising out of our discussions. Problems of planning arise at three stages: Plan formulation, Implementation and Evaluation. These three areas of problems form an integral part of planning.¹ Let us now analyse some of the issues related to agricultural planning:

(a) **Lack of Thrust and Direction**: The exercise for plan preparation has only been a variant of the exercise for budgeting. In several cases it has been a mere aggregation of the various agricultural plan schemes of the Directorate without positive thrust and direction.² It is therefore suggested to have a critical look at all the ongoing schemes of the Directorate of Agriculture with regard to their utility and merit with a view to weeding out the schemes that might have outlived their utility. The National Commission on Agriculture has recommended that the schemes should be drawn up in sufficient details so that they could be taken up as soon as the Plan is approved for implementation by the concerned authorities.³

(b) **Paucity of Statistics**

Reliable, adequate and comprehensive agricultural statistics are necessary for formulating.

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²My discussion with the Secretary, Punjab State Planning Board, Chandigarh and Officer on Special Duty (Planning) of the Directorate of Agriculture.

assessing and evaluating plans, programmes and projects. Despite some improvements during the last three decades, the extent and coverage of agricultural statistics is still inadequate. Sound planning and decisions on agricultural development depend a great deal on carefully collected and compiled statistics. Without agricultural statistics for districts, blocks and individual villages, it is impossible to prepare their plans.

These statistics fall broadly into two groups. One is village-wise statistics of area, land utilization, crop acreages, livestock, extent and sources of irrigation, irrigated crop areas, extent of drainage and waterlogging, agricultural population and agricultural labour force and the crop yields. The second group consists of statistics of the ultimate units of agricultural production, namely, the cultivators' holdings in each village, their number, fragmentation, size, tenure, cropping pattern, irrigation, availability of human and animal power and farm implements. These items of information are essential for formulation of village, block and district plans. For collecting this data, there is a valuable reporting agency, the patwari reaching down to each village; several statistics provided by this agency have been shown to be remarkably accurate even now, notwithstanding uninformed criticism to the contrary. For the data on cultivators' holding, a special
effort needs to be made, largely with the help of this agency, by organizing periodically, say every five years, an agricultural census.

(c) **Inconsistency between Resources and Targets:**

Agricultural planning in the true sense consists of two interdependent phases. One is the setting out of State production targets according to the primary consumption needs of the people and the second phase is laying down carefully the tasks to be carried out by the production units according to their own needs, potentialities and environmental conditions with a view to ensuring that the Plan resources will be utilized with maximum efficiency towards achievement of the desired national targets. All Plans, in fact, are composed of a set of developmental schemes formulated in consultation between the Centre and the States. A lead is given to the States by indicating overall production targets and resources, and State schemes are then dovetailed within this framework. However, the results generally fall short of expectations since the targets are not realized through wastage of resources owing to their inefficient distribution and utilization, as also by the failure to generate the necessary enthusiasm and organization among the farmers. Thus, there is a wide gap between what is set out as national production targets and production units' resources. Just as State targets are formulated according to national aspirations and constraints, resources
of production should similarly be built up from the farmer's level for each village, for each block, and for each district. Agriculture is the most heterogeneous and widely scattered industry, and it is only by taking into consideration for each small area, its resources such as the kind of farmers, manpower, land, irrigation, etc., and its needs for economic incentives, technical implements and supplies, such as, fertilizers, improved seeds, machinery, credit, that realistic targets can be formulated for that area. In fact, it is through these individual area targets that the practicability of State/National targets has to be assessed and modified if found unattainable with the available outlay. Once the production targets are set out, the area targets provide a ready means of developing the State resources in the most efficient manner by providing each area on economic and technical assistance.

(d) Absence of Planning from Below:

Planning in India is highly centralised and this centralisation acquires arresting nature when considered against the background of the federal system of government under the constitution. Planning, to be sure, has an inherent centralising slant, but it is possible and desirable to devise counter-balancing mechanisms and encourage styles to encourage emergence of plurality of decision-making centres.¹

Agricultural planning has, therefore, to start simultaneously from both ends; from the top or the State or the national level, and from the bottom or the village or the farmers' level.¹ Out of the most vital gains from this process of planning is that each farming community is made a party to the preparation of the plan, and the resulting State/National plan becomes a people's plan. This point has been emphasised in the Sixth Five Year Plan also which reads: ".... it will be necessary to ensure that at every stage of planning and implementation, there is full participation and involvement of the people."² Since the plan is geared to the betterment of the producers, farmers become enthusiastic in their efforts to achieve the targets and devise ways and means including appropriate organization to secure the maximum results. The National Commission on Agriculture has stressed the importance of farmers' participation in agricultural programmes.³ Such farmers' organizations will help in building up the agricultural plan from the producers' level.

(e) Faculty Approach to Agricultural Planning

Another drawback in the planning process is the faulty approach to agricultural planning. On the one hand, the State Planning Board realises that the aims

of agricultural development cannot be achieved by the present approach, and repeatedly underlines the need of detailed planning at village, block and district level; on the other hand, it commits the State once more to a huge expenditure on agriculture without the slightest change of approach followed in the earlier Plans. What is more distressing, it gives no clue as to why this need be so, and provides no concrete guidance on steps to be taken for securing the objectives of village, block and district plans.

In the interest of national development, some efforts will have to be made immediately which would make way for more effective agricultural planning, so that we may be assured that the resources allotted to agriculture are utilized to the optimum and the agricultural producers of the country participate in formulating the plan and thereby embark upon a really self-sustained course of agricultural development. In the present method of planning, although agricultural production might increase while governmental financial support continues, there is no guarantee that the tempo will be maintained when this support is withdrawn, which is bound to happen sooner or later.

(f) Lack of Co-ordination between Plan and Budget

Budget proposals are expected to reflect the plan outlays properly. However, the fact is that the budget exercises start before the plans are finalised.
At times, the figures given in the budget tend to be determined independently. This leads to variations in the plan outlay and the budgetary figures for the same scheme and period. The formulation of Annual Plans will have little meaning if the outlays provided for in the plans are not reflected in the budget. It will also defeat the very purpose of planning if the schemes which have been approved in the Annual Plans provided for in the sanctioned budget are dropped out on the grounds of paucity of funds and the consequent savings are diverted to other schemes or purposes.

In order to ensure congruence between planning and budgeting, it is imperative to develop co-ordinating devices between the processes of planning and budgeting rather than to merge them into a system of integrated budgeting, treating planning as an integral part of budgetary process. Annual planning, therefore, has to be synchronised with the budgetary process and to provide guidelines to budgetary decisions. The procedures evolved for the formulation of the annual plans can provide an opportunity to establish a close link between the plan and the budget. Both must dovetail each other.

(g) **Annual Plans**

For effective implementation of the Five Year Plans, it is necessary to frame annual development programmes within the framework of the overall plan. These are included in the annual budgets of the Central and state governments. The preparation of Annual Budgets also affords
an opportunity for reviewing and adjusting the broad annual phasing indicated in the Five Year Plan. Annual planning provides for flexibility in the implementation of plan programmes in accordance with the development of the economic situation from time to time.¹ It is through the instrument of Annual Plans that the objectives are translated into action programmes. Further, a five year programme is necessarily based on certain major assumptions. In a predominantly agricultural economy like ours with its proverbial dependence on monsoons and with an acute foreign exchange stringency, a rigid phasing of programmes over a period of five years is just not possible at the time of the preparation of a Five Year Plan itself. Annual plans thus occupy a position and importance in our development strategy.²

THE SUMMING UP

Administrative aspects of agricultural planning do not generally receive serious attention of the planners. Often, their concern for implementation mechanisms, if any, is more of a postscript or a tailpiece than a product of integrated thinking. It is not without significance that even in the sessions of the National Development Council, seldom a word is uttered to demand the toning up of the administrative system or to stress administrative limitations.

²Ibid., p.21.
explicitly. Yet no agricultural plan expects to accomplish more than its administration permits it to; it is too much on its part to move much beyond its administration. Indeed, administration is the single most critical factor intervening between planning and implementation of agricultural plans though, strictly speaking, planning itself is a function of agricultural administration.

It is thus imperative for the state to evolve an administrative system in the Department of Agriculture which can cope up with the challenge of the plan. For this, the planning process has to be taken to the intimate level of the farming community. An efficient implementation of plan programmes requires the active participation of farmers. That can be feasible only through planning from below which culminates in fully worked out and co-ordinated plans at the district, state and national level. An agricultural development plan has, therefore, to be derived by putting together plans framed locally rather than through a breakdown of programmes and estimates at the State level. At the same time, a state plan for agriculture has to be much more than a mere aggregation of village, block and district plans. It is only by providing a mutually influencing two-way process that a realistic, meaningful and detailed plan can be worked out.

The major difficulties and problems of planning lie in the implementation of agricultural plans. For this,
existing machinery for agricultural planning at all levels that is at the level of the State Planning Board, the Department of Planning, the Directorate of Agriculture, the District, Block and Focal Point needs to be strengthened in the manner suggested in the earlier part of this chapter. Above all an effective evaluation and monitoring system will have to be evolved to get the feedback and assess our achievements, pitfalls and draw a positive lesson for future improvement.