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AN EVOLUATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

The community development is one of the most important and significant movement in our country. In this paper, I examine the need and inception of the community development program and its progress achieved during different five year plan in India.

Key-words: community development,

Introduction

The beginning of Community Development Programme be traced back to the year 1946, if not earlier, when experiments in intensive rural development were carried out in Sevagram in erstwhile Madhya-Pradesh, at Sarvodhya centers in Bombay, under the Firake Development Scheme in Madras and at the pilot projects in Etawah, Faizabad and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, Some of these schemes achieved good results while some could not be carried on satisfactorily good results and other could not be carried on satisfactorily owing to certain difficulties. The results of these experiments have been summed up in the first five year plan-

First: Various departments of Government which have to deal with rural work in different fields, viz, forests, co-operation, agriculture, revenue etc. approached the villagers from their own aspects of work. This confused the villagers and could not leave a permanent impression on them of the social importance of the multifarious schemes.

Secondly: The programmed almost on the villagers and as such. they failed to create any enthusiasm or spirit of co-operation in them.

Thirdly: There was a lack of initiative from the people which was very essential for the success of schemes.

Fourthly: The schemes depended too much not only on the momentary aid from the Government but on the spirit of mutual and self-help also. This would utilize the dormant man power economize the expenditure for better utilization.

Fifthly: Theoretically advice need to be supplemented by practical aids and demonstration.

Sixthly: The programme lacked intensive action. The schemes should be embraced all the families so as to make them render their own contribution.

Seventhly: The experiences of the villages should be respected and should not be prejudicially discarded, and

Lastly: There should be a definite inspiration and attractive goal for villagers which would draw their spirits to work for the improvement in their standard of living.

Need for the Programme:-

Poverty, ignorance and lack of initiative were the legacies from the past. Added to this, was the fact that when India gained independence in 1947, she found herself faced with many vital problems of economic and social reconstruction. The patrician of the country caused considerable bloodshed and communal strike. It affected severely the economy of the country due to the influx of a large number of displaced persons and the transfer of some areas with surplus agricultural production to Pakistan.

Purchases of food grains from foreign countries were straining the resources of the country. A series of unprecedented natural calamities had aggravated the situation still further. It was natural that the country had to give serious thought to the building of self-sufficiency in food in the very near future. Coupled with the problems of acute food shortages and general poverty of the masses were the problems of illiteracy, Public Health, unemployment etc.

Inception of the Programme

The Commission which was established in March 1950 by the Government of India charged to formulate a plan for the most effective use of the country's human and material resources, reviewed the full problem of rural reconstruction in the light of the post experience. It then laid down a 'Community Development Programme' in the First Five Year Plan issued in December, 1952. It provided for initiation of work in 55 Community Projects located in selected areas in the different states of India.

The Project area was divided into three development blocks. A development block consisted of about 100 villages and a population of 60,000 to 70,000 Each block in turn was divided into groups of 5 to 10 villages each, each group being the field of operation, for a village level worker (VlW) now known as "GRAM SEWAK" to begin with only areas with assured rainfall and facilities for irrigation and soil capable of giving quick returns were selected.

A Project was to be completed within a period of three months. During the period, selection of the area for projects, its economic survey and planning were completed. The second stage was 'Initiation Stage'. This was spread over six months.

During this period arrangement for temporary house for personal, establishment of communications with in the operational area and collection of required material were to be made. The third stage was 'Operation Stage'. The entire approved activities for the project were taken up during this period of 18 months. The fourth stage was 'Consolidation Stage'. During this period of six months the operation was wound up. The last stage was 'Finalization Stage'. As this scheme was simply in the form of introduction and experiment, this was expended to be carried on by the villagers themselves after they became well versed with the nature of activities.

After few months of launching pilot projects, it was prominently experienced that the people were ready. The government, therefore, decided to launch alongside the Community Development Programme, another programme that is somewhat less intensive in character, called the National Extension Services Programme. The National Extension Service Programme was formulated in April 1953 and it was inaugurated one year after the 55 Community projects that is on October 2, 1953.

Shri V.T. Krishnamanchari, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission describes the inter- relation between the Community Development Programme and the National Extension Services Programme as under.

'It is necessary to explain the interrelation between the Community Development Programme and the National Extension Service. The movement has identical aims. The National Extension Service is a permanent organization and will cover the whole country.

These recommendations have been accepted by the Central Committee and the National Development Council with some modification in April and May. 1958 respectively. According to the new plan, which came into force with effect from April 1,1958, there is no distinction between N.E.S. and community blocks and there is no phase like post intensive phase. This plan implies that all the existing N.E.S. blocks have became Community Development Blocks. The implementation of the programme is to be brought about in two stages of five years each with a budget provision of Rs. 12 lacs and 5 lacs respectively. The complete coverage was achieved on October, 1963. This scheme will help to relieve the present acute shortage of trained basic and supervisory personnel.

Progress Achieved During Hitherto Plan Period

It was on 2nd October, 1952, Dr. Rajendra Prashad, President of India, switched on the projects, and like a flash the work was started almost simultaneously throughout the country, where the projects were selected for location.

Progress during First Five Year Plan (1951-1956)

Community projects began in 1952 and additional 53 Community Developments blocks started in 1953-54 were regarded as equivalent to 300 development blocks and 900 national extension services blocks were to be taken up during I five year plan. In other words, it can be said that the target for first five year plan was 1200 development blocks.

The staff engaged in National Extension Services and Community Development Block numbered over 80,000.

A provision of Rs. 90 crores was made under the First Five year Plan for this programme in adiition to about 10 crores of rupees provided in the plans of state for Rural Development. The total expenditure incurred on CD/NES during the First Five Year Plan period was Rs. 46.02 crores.

Thus during the first five year plan period the community development programme was taken up in about 14,000 vallages situated in 988 development blocks and in all 77.5 million persons were served.

Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997)

The Eighth Plan was formulated when the country had passed through difficult circumstances. The growing fiscal gap and the sudden depletion of foreign exchange resources created a situation, which put severe strain on the economic system leading to drastic curbs on imports, high rate of inflation and recession in industry. As a consequence, growth rate slumped to low level of 2.5 percent in 1991-1992.

Challenges Before the Eighth Plan:

Certain critical imbalances emerged in the Indian Economic, which necessitated remedial action during the Eighth Plan. The challenges which were to be met are:

(a) Increasing fiscal and budgetary deficits, mounting public debt and severe constraint on resources of the Government and the public sector to undertake essential development activities.

(b) a critical situation in the balance of payments. The current account deficit as a ratio of the GDP averaged 2.4 percent during the seventh plan, for above the average figure of 1.6 percent projected for the period, and

(c) a high rate of inflation.

To meet these challenges and social problems, the following objectives will be accorded high priority in the Eighth Plan:

(i) Generation of adequate employment to achieve near full employment level by the turn of the century.

(ii) Containment of population growth through active co-operation and an effective scheme of incentives and disincentives,

(iii) Universalisation of elementary education and education and complete eradication of illiteracy among the people in the age group of 15 to 35 years.

(iv) Provision of safe drinking water and primary health care facilities, including immunization, accessible to all the villages and the entire population and complete elimination of scavenging.

(v) Growth and diversification of agriculture to achieve self- sufficiency in food and generate surplus for exports.

(vi) Strengthening the infrastructures (energy, transport, communication and irrigation) in order to support the growth process on a sustainable basis.

Outlays in the Eighth Plan:

Data provided in Table 2.1 reveal that the Eighth Plan has made an effort to provide an allocation pattern in its outlay which aims "at improving the income generating capability of weaker sections and assuming a higher share in the development expenditure of the Government". This explains why the Eighth Plan has allocated about 22 percent of expenditure for agriculture, rural development special area programmes and irrigation. The other major sector, which is intended to reduce infrastructure constraint, is energy, which would receive 28 percent of total plan allocation. In view of the fact that quite a large number of areas have been opened up in industry and minerals, the allocation of this sector has been kept at a relatively lower level of 10.8 percent.

Table 2.1 Outlays in the Eighth Plan* (1992-1997)

S. No	Sector	Amount Cr. Rs	Percentage
1.	Agriculture. Irrigation and Rural Development	96,167	22.2
2.	Energy	1,15,561	26.6
3.	Industries and Minerals	46,922	10.8
4.	Transport and Communication	81,036	18.7
5.	Science, Technology and Environment	9,042	2.1
6.	General and Economic Services	6,360	1.4
7.	Social Services	79,012	18.2
	Total	4,34,100	100.0

*At 1991-92 Prices / Source: Planning Commission, the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)

Assessment of Eight Plans

It may be stated that the attainment of 6.5 percent growth rate fo GDP is a welcome development. It is also heartening that agricultural growth rate reached a level of 3.7 percent, though it was lower that the target of 4 percent for the Eighth Plan. It is also creditable that balance of Payment on current account showed an average deficit of 1.24 percent of GDP during the Eighth Plan. The reduction of poverty ratio to 29.2 percent in 1996-97 as a consequence of high growth rate is another encouraging development.

However there are areas of concern: The sudden and sharp decline in the share of realized investment in the public sector to low level of 33.6 percent resulted in contraction of investment in the infrastructure to fill the gap but this did not materialize. However, the government withdrew itself from infrastructure investment in power, energy and irrigations. This has really slowed down the creation of infrastructure and is now acting as a constraint on development. The growing pressure on non-plan expenditure has eroded investment in plan expenditure. It has also resulted in a cutback on expenditure in social sector. Moreover, in agricultural and manufacturing, electricity and construction, actual plan expenditure was 57 to 59 percent of planned expenditure. This has adverse effects on the growth of these sectors, Lastly, although wholesale price index indicated a growth rate of 9 to 10 percent. There is no doubt that growth rate of employment during 1994-1997 reached a level of 2.47 percent, but it is still below the target of 2.6 percent, moreover, the combined incidence of unemployment and under- employment 10.45 percent.

Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)

The ninth plan prepared under the United Front Government was released in March 1998. This official document was released by Professor Madhu Dandavate, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Perspective, Objectives and strategy of Development

The Ninth Plan has been development in the context of four important dimensions of state policy and against a perspective of development for 15 years. Quality of life, generation of productive employment, regional balance and self- reliance summarize the main dimensions of its policy. It will focus on stronger poverty reducing and employment generating effects, which will be carried out over a 15 year period of framework of consistent polices.

Objectives of the Ninth Plan: The focus of the Ninth Plan is on: Growth with Social Justice and Equality. The specific objectives of the Ninth Plan arising from the greater reliance on market forces and the imperatives for public policy and action are as follows:-

(i) Priority to agriculture and rural development with a view to generating adequate productive employment and eradication of poverty;

(ii) Accelerating the growth rate of the economy with stable prices;

(iii) Ensuring food and nutritional society for all, particularly the vulnerable sections of the society.

(iv) Providing basic minimum services of safe drinking water, primary health care facilities, universal primary education shelter connectivity to all in a time bound manner.

(v) Containing the growth of population ;

(vi) Ensuring environmental sustainability of the development process through social mobilization and participation of people at all levels.

(vii) Empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and Minorities as agents of socio-economic change and development.

(viii) Promoting and development people's participatory institutions like Panchayat Raj Institutions, Co-operatives and self- help groups:

(ix) Strengthening efforts to build self- reliance.

The Development Strategy

(i) The development strategy is based on a continuance of the role of the government but with a change in its manner of functioning and content.

(ii) The Ninth Plan is based on the concept of co operative federalism whereby greater freedom would be given to states to determine not only their own priorities but also the modalities of public intervention and provision of goods and services. Deregulation of financial sector would need to be accompanied by relatively more stringent prudential norms and improved monitoring by the government.

(iii) Adequate quantity, quality and reliability of infrastructure for economic growth and development and to make the country internationally competitive and attractive for investment. There in an imperative need to motivate the private sector to participate in the development process, if the infrastructure gap has be briged.

(iv) The fiscal and revenue deficit is a central concern of macro- economic management. The need to contain the revenue deficit of the government has to be seen within the contest of ensuing optimal utilization of existing public assets and increasing the effectiveness of social schemes/ programme.

(v) There is need to move to a system of transparent subsidies directed towards specific target groups in a selective manner.

(vi) The industrial and financial policy framework will have to be streamlined to promote rapid expansion of foreign direct investment flows in order to augment domestic investment and reduce reliance on external borrowings.

(vii) The maintenance of balance of payments stability would depend upon the growth rate of exports that can be achieved. There is need to revitalize the export- oriented schemes so that the average export propensity of manufacturing rises.

(viii) It is necessary to evolve a technology policy to ensure adequate growth in productivity and quality and enhance the competitiveness of Indian products in the international market.

(ix) Environmental protection has to be integrated with the overall development process and the well-being of people.

Outlays in the Ninth Plan:

The Outlay for Ninth Five Year Plan is placed at Rs.8,59,200 crore at 1996-1997 prices. This represents a step up of 35 percent in real terms over the approved eight plan outlay of Rs. 4,34,100 crore. The distribution of planning finance among different sectors is as shown in the adjacent table 2.2:

Table 2.2 Outlays in the Ninth Plan* (1997-2002)

S. No	Sector	Cr. Rs.	Percentage
1.	Agriculture, Irrigation and Rural Development	1,70,232	19.8
2.	Energy	2,15,545	25.1
3.	Industries and Minerals	69,972	25.1
4.	Transport and Communication	1,68,940	19.6
5.	Science, Technology and Environment	25,529	3.0
6.	General and Economic Services	26,978	3.2
7.	Social Services	1,82,004	21.2
	Total	8,59,200	100

As 1996-1997 prices / Source: Planning Commission, The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-02)

Employment Perspective in Ninth Plan:

The Ninth Plan has estimated that open employment in 1997 is of the order of 7.5 million persons. Labour force is expected to grow at the rate of 2.54 percent per annum. This will imply that an additional 53 million will be added to the labour force. In other words, the Ninth Plan will have to plan for work opportunities for 60.5 million persons. On the basis of estimated sector employment elasticities with a growth rate of 7 percent per annum, 54 million jobs are likely to be created during the Ninth Plan. This leads to a reduction in the open terminal year of the plan resulting in reducing the back log of unemployment by about 1 million (from 7.5 million to 6.6 million).

Assessment of the Ninth Plan:-

After minute observation of the Fund Allocation of the Ninth Plan, it is highlighted that the Ninth Plan has been built on weak foundations especially on 'Resource Crunch' Demands from centre and state are more that the available resources and under the existing unstable political climate of the country. The Plan is woefully silent on price policy and has not outlined a framework of controlling process which is the main cause for the menacing rise is administrative and other expenditure of the Government.

As observed from the multifarious objectives of the Ninth Plan, we find that the government has focused still main attention on Primary Sector of economy i.e. agriculture, irrigation and rural development, has been allocated to the Primary sector. It is because our government is aware of rural development. The agency to execute these schemes and programmes of the government are the 'Community Development Blocks' all over India.

Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

The National Development Council (NDC) has approved the Eleventh Plan on 19th December 2007 to raise the average economic growth rate to 9 percent from 7.6 percent recorded during the Tenth Plan. The total outlay of the Eleventh Plan has been placed at Rs.3644718 crore which is more than double of the total outlay of the previous Tenth Plan.In this proposed outlay, the contribution of Central Government and State governments will be Rs.2156571 crore and Rs. 1488147 crore respectively. In order to make growth more inclusive, the Eleventh Plan proposes to increase the agriculture sector growth rate to 4 percent from 2.13 percent in the Tenth Plan.

India had emerged as one of the fastest growing economy by the end of the Tenth Plan. The savings and investment rates had increased, industrial sector had responded well to face competition in the global economy and foreign investors were keen to invest in India. But the growth was not perceived as sufficiently inclusive for many groups, specially SCs, STs & minorities as borne out by data on several dimensions like poverty, malnutrition, mortality, current daily employment etc.

The broad vision for 11th Plan included several inter related components like rapid growth reducing poverty & creating employment opportunities , access to essential services in health & education, especially for the poor, extension if employment opportunities using National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, environmental sustainability , reduction of gender inequality etc. Accordingly various targets were laid down like reduction in unemployment(to less than 5 % among educated youth) & headcount ratio of poverty (by 10 %), reduction in drop out rates , gender gap in literacy , infant mortality , total fertility , malnutrition in age group of 0-3 (to half its present level), improvement in sex ratio, forest & tree cover, air quality in major cities, , ensuring electricity connection to all villages & BPL households (by 2009) & reliable power by end of 11th Plan , all weather road connection to habitations with population 1000& above (500 in hilly areas) by 2009, connecting every village by telephone & providing broad band connectivity to all villages by 2012.

Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017)

The Twelfth Five-Year Plan of the Government of India has been decided for the growth rate at 8.2% but the National Development Council (NDC) on 27 Dec 2012 approved 8% growth rate for 12th five-year plan.[10]

With the deteriorating global situation, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia has said that achieving an average growth rate of 9 percent in the next five years is not possible. The Final growth target has been set at 8% by the endorsement of plan at the National Development Council meeting held in New Delhi."It is not possible to think of an average of 9% (in 12th Plan). I think somewhere between 8 and 8.5 percent is feasible," Mr Ahluwalia said on the sidelines of a conference of State Planning Boards and departments. The approached paper for the 12th Plan, approved last year, talked about an annual average growth rate of 9%. "When I say feasible... that will require major effort. If you don't that, there is no God given right to grow at 8 percent. I think given that the world economy deteriorated very sharply over the last year...the growth rate in the first year of the 12th Plan (2012–13) is 6.5 to 7 percent."

Targets of the Plan : Twenty Five core indicators listed below reflect the vision of rapid, sustainable & more inclusive growth of the twelfth Plan:

Economic Growth

1. Real GDP Growth Rate of 8.0 per cent.
2. Agriculture Growth Rate of 4.0 per cent.
3. Manufacturing Growth Rate of 10.0 per cent.
4. Every State must have an average growth rate in the Twelfth Plan preferably higher than that achieved in the Eleventh Plan.

Poverty and Employment

5. Head-count ratio of consumption poverty to be reduced by 10 percentage points over the preceding estimates by the end of Twelfth FYP.

6. Generate 50 million new work opportunities in the non-farm sector and provide skill certification to equivalent numbers during the Twelfth FYP

Conclusion

The community Development Program is intended to enlist willing co-operation and active contribution of the people. It emphasizes community's participation in the implementation of various schemes aimed at socio-economic progress of rural folk. Community Development Program intends to secure the people's support through persuasive methods. The Community Development are as follows –

I. Has every family in the community development are got a plan of improvement for which it puts fourth , its best efforts and utilizes the improved techniques, seeds and manure and fertilizers proved to be suitable?

II. Has every family in the area become 'Credit worthy' and is every family represented , on its own qualification, in at least one cooperative society?

III. Has every family made its contribution to works of benefits to the community in the form of money and labour?

IV. How far has the interest of the women and the youth in the villages been enlisted in this program?

V. Have all these become part of the permanent life of the village and not a more temporary phases?

VI. Have many families supplementary occupations in small scale and cottage industries so that they have more employment than they had formerly?

These are the test which should be applied for seeing whether our efforts in building up a new life for rural India are proving successful.

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