



Development: Concept, Promise and Performance

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ABSTRACT

Development is almost a synonym for modernization in developing countries. The first development decade was inspired by a somewhat wholly charitableness of the developed countries towards the less enlightened countries in Africa and Asia, which had recently thrown off foreign yoke. The main objective was to achieve economic growth at a fast pace. It was only in the second development decade that there was reassessment of priorities and a deeper understanding of the needs of the third world countries. Just as the greatest hazard in capital intensive development is its potential to oppress the powerless by overwhelming them, so the greatest hazard in bringing in foreigners for development them, so the greatest hazard in bringing in foreigners for development is its potential to undermine the powerless by deactivation them. This deactivating can occur when the foreigners take over, through excess of zeal or disrupts through incompetence the community's best developed energies. Experience of the development process revealed that the pattern pursued has depended upon dominances and exploitation and resulted in income inequalities. Although economic growth has been registered in terms of the per capita income and the gross national product, social and economic justice had been sidelined. By far the greater effort in development is and must be the effort of the powerless and the hungry. In a study based on data from the developing countries, Adveman and Morris came to the conclusion the development has only made things worse for the been hurt than helped by economic development.

KEYWORDS: Development, Commitment, Dominance, community, economic Development.

Development is not a gift from haves to the have notes. It is a right generated by conscientisation. The right has to be claimed and only when its fruits would endure. Achieving development may not always be a peaceful process. In a multi layered society that we have in India, resistance from the upper strata to the persistent striving of the poor is but natural. In such circumstances development may be a painful process. Development has to be self generated rather than imposed. Only then it can shake off dependency; local regional or national.

Julius Nyerere, one of the greatest third world leader's help that in developing countries all development should be geared to rural development. In India it is not so even when three fourths of the population lives in the village. India is conscious of its identity as a land of villages. Rural development as defined by the World Bank is simply a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a particular group of people the rural poor. Rural development has to be perceived as a process. It can also be measured as a product of a process. In our planning documents rural development is considered as the end product. Satisfaction of a set of minimum needs has been accepted as the cardinal indicator. The minimum needs include elementary education, rural health, rural water supply, rural electrocution and housing assistance to rural landless. These items are mutually interrelated. In fact, integrated rural development is based on understanding the appropriate pattern of relationship of the different aspects in specific and historical context. It is also to be related to the overall national development, the patterns of relationship in various regions and the rural and urban areas within the same region. When considered as a process, the approach to rural development has passed through several phases. In the first; it was believed that investment on a large scale would lead to creation of wealth to meet the needs of the nation. Once the products were there, distribution and utilization. Would follow But soon it was discovered that even though wealth was generated, poverty was mounting. The malady was diagnosed as the invisible barrier created by traditional values and non rational orientation. This was sought to be corrected through winning over centers of community power structure and also by Trans valuation through imparting new functions to the old symbols. But this also out to be a blind alley. Since early seventies growth with justice has been adopted as the proclaimed ethos of development. It is now accepted that justice has to be built in the process of development. Stress was also laid on people's participation for which a number of incentives and motivations have been provided.

(iii) India's commitment to rural development is long standing. The state policies and programmes at least nominally reflect this awareness and demonstrate some concern for the rural sector. There is some ambivalence towards villages in the country's intelligential. On the one hand, the rural way of life is idealized; the myth of the self sufficient and idyllic village community functioning in harmony

on the basis of consensus. On the other hand there is acute awareness of the misery and poverty, ignorance and superstition which call for a remedial action. This contradiction is sought to be resolved by planning for social intervention aimed at restoring the village community to its traditional pattern and prosperity. Gandhiji made his home in a rural and imitated number of programmes for village uplift. His point programme was aimed to better their quality of life. Rural reconstruction was also dear to the heart of Tagore. After Gandhiji's death reconstruction was also dear to taken up by his followers through Sarvodaya and bhodan Movements. The aim was to build up Gram Swarajya in which the village would be the unit for all round development of the rural community.

In 1952 the Community Development Programme and National Extension Service were introduced in which the Block emerged as a unit of planning and development. The programme was aimed to be a cooperative endeavor with government and people as equal partners for all round development of the village. However, the assumptions on which the programme was based were not correct. People were not enthused about the programme as they had no share in planning. Popular participation was minimal. The gain made under the programme went largely to the rural elite. The attitudinal change among the people did not occur. The high expectations aroused could not be realised.

In the early sixties the government decided to revamp the programme and concentrate effort primarily on increasing agricultural output through intensive agricultural district programme. Thus the state was set for the green revolution which occurred in some states in the country. Food production went up substantially and the country became self sufficient. However, it gave rise to new tensions and conflicts in the countryside. The rich became richer and the poor poorer.

In the early seventies the country rediscovered poverty. It was held that even after thirty Years of independence 47% of the people were below the poverty line. The social services placed within the reach of the village people left much to be desired. In designing the strategy of rural development something positive had to be done to raise people's standard to living and to enrich their quality of life. The Janata Government which came to power in 1977 gave a rural slant to the entire planning process. More attention was paid to rural development particularly to the brutal poor through the antyodaya programme. The voluntary agencies in rural development work were given due encouragement.

In the early eighties integrated rural development concept was introduced. It was aimed to make a dent rural poverty. Assets were to be provided to the weakest section of the rural poor to raise them up from below poverty line. This was a target oriented approach to help the deprived and vulnerable sections of the population.

However, the functioning of even this programme has revealed a number of weaknesses. One of these is the large scale corruption involved in the whole process. A Prime Minister went on record to say that only 17% of the funds available for the IRDP the beneficiaries. The record of the past four decades of development has been largely one of non-performance. While the aspiration of the people has been raised, their hopes have been dashed to the ground resulting in large scale frustration.

(iv) It has come to be realised that the failure of rural development programme can be attributed in a large measure to working in a traditional society which is multi-layered and in which the social structure is not conducive to equality. The poor cannot lift themselves above the poverty line through their own individual effort. On the part of the poor, there is no compulsion of any kind to stay poor. They would certainly like to shed their poverty but the odds are heavily against them. The upper cast/class group is firmly entrenched in power. The poor are prevented by religion, by tradition and by other social forces to unite and challenge the position of the affluent groups. There is a persistent distrust of government officials and the poor are reluctant to participate in programmes designed for their development. The poor have very little access to information about various schemes. The way the development is designed and administered does not enthuse the poor. Everything comes from the above. The top down kind of development planning excludes rather than invites participation of the poor in the development process. Tradition and development are not necessarily in conflict. Traditional social and cultural patterns can well be utilized to promote overall goals of development. Farmers may be encouraged to adopt modern agricultural practices so that they can use the additional income to meet family and kinship obligation. The authority of traditional leaders can be invoked in aid of development programme. Popular participation in development is facilitated where there is strong tradition of local origination. It is also necessary that there should be complete transparency between the administration and the people. They should not be suspicious of each other's intentions. Traditional values should not be used as an alibi for failure of government schemes.

(V) In this state of unrealised utopias and widening disparities, Panchayati Raj holds a great promise. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report as far back as 1959 observed that unless representative democratic institutions were established at the local level and these were endowed with adequate powers and resources, local interest would not be aroused and local initiative in development would not emerge. The central as well as the state legislation on Panchayati Raj enacted in 1993 proposes to take democracy to the door steps of vil-

lagers. Through Panchayat Raj power and administration would be decentralised fulfilling Gandhiji's desire of Gram Swaraj. The Panchayati Raj institutions have been given constitutional status. The legislation also provides for the accountability of people's representatives. The Gram Panchayats have been empowered to supervise, guide and control social services. Reservations have been made for the weaker sections of the population.

They had been sidelined so long and their interests were trampled with impunity. In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh most of the Panchayats would have Mukhiyas from this group, as positions have been reserved for them. Participation of women has been ensured with the responsibility for rural development has been given to the Panchayats. Resources for this would also be made available to them. The Panchayats would frame programmes for agriculture, industry, education, health and welfare. Panchayati Raj institutions at different levels would exercise effective control over their staff. It is expected that such control would lead to better delivery of services at the grassroot level. It is expected that with these steps people would have more opportunities for intense participation in social action for shaping their own destiny and social and economic justice would be available to the development at a faster pace and political power which had now flow to the villages and people would be able to shape their future according to their heart's desire. The ideal strategy would envisage a coordinated effort of the government officials, bank and the people in alleviation of rural poverty.

The vital point therefore, BBO or VLW may achieve partial success but these examples are few and far between. The limitations these officials face are many. Their hands are full with the overall functioning of the district beginning from law and order to meeting natural calamities. This critical gap of organizing the rural poor to make the best use of available potentials and resources for development can be best filled by the sector of Voluntary Agencies. The voluntary Agencies by their very nature are flexible informal and innovative approach and some of these agencies have been engaged in various welfare and developmental activities. They can effectively plan the role of catalysts in the process of rural development. The Voluntary Agencies can not only create awareness among the rural people, but also secure their active participation in various self employment projects. In fact the VAS can be associated in all the process including, identification of beneficiaries, choice of assets, technical and managerial services, marketing and above all in bringing them together for their economic amelioration. This will create greater self-confidence and entrepreneurship among them. On their part the administration will have to play a positive role in encouraging the participation of Voluntary Agencies in the process of rural development.

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