

## Chapter VII

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

#### A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Rural development has been one of the abiding concerns of the Indian polity, but it still suffers from the lack of a well-designed holistic approach. The approach to rural development has been adhoc and piecemeal, shifting emphasis from one aspect to another as and when it has attracted the attention of policy-makers, planners and administrators.

Initially, in the 1950s, the Community Development Programmes were launched with the objective of providing a decent life to the rural poor by inculcating the sense of self-help, self-reliance and self-confidence. But soon this approach was relegated into the background when the need to step up food production arose in the 1960s. The new agricultural strategies, such as, IAAP and IADP were adapted with augmented food production by leaps and bounds. But the 'Green Revolution', unfortunately aggravated the phenomena of relative poverty and was basically in favour of the areas with better resource-endowments and the big farmers. Thereafter, target group-oriented programmes, like SFDA and MFDA and area development programmes, such as CADP, HADP, DPAP, were launched to counter the growing gap between the rich and poor farmers as well as between the developed and the backward region. Sadly, these programmes failed to have any

impact.

With greater accent on equity, basic needs and the improvement of the quality of life of the poor, the integrated rural development programmes were introduced in the late seventies. But so far, these programmes have not been able to fulfil the expectations and have remained largely ineffective owing to the lack of structural and institutional reforms like land reforms, and ineffective implementation. Radical policy and reform measures have to be ruled out in the immediate future in view of the nature of the Indian <sup>polity</sup> and the critical transition it is passing through in its economic policy. Improvement in implementation of whatever programmes have been launched is, thus, one of the alternatives left to us, which mainly depends on administrative and organisational factors.

The attempt to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of development plans and the need to cater to the needs of various target groups and areas have resulted in the politico-administrative structures along with the proliferation of the development agencies at the district level and below demanding better management of organisational relations and linkages, effective coordination, communication, decentralisation and participation and supervision. The primary objective of the study, therefore, had been to examine these crucial organisational and management issues of rural development in the context of the study area. The researcher had faced conceptual

limitations while formulating a theoretical framework for the study owing to an almost absence of a well-defined public policy on rural development and related matters. Thus, as a last resort, considerable reliance was made on the available literature on the subject, foreign and Indian. Development was found to be an elusive and relative concept meaning different things to different people at different times. It is no more regarded as growth-oriented westernisation or modernisation — there is a marked shift in development thinking from such westernised, historicist and teleological paradigm based on 'trickle-down' concept, towards an eclectic humanitarian paradigm which lays emphasis on equity and distributive justice. In tune with this changed perception and thinking, rural development is defined as the improvement of the standard of living of the rural poor and making the process of their development self-sustaining.

Thus, the focus of rural development administration has now shifted to expanding the capacity of organisations to bring about more equitable distribution of benefits of development to the poorer people in the rural areas. But situations in the so-called Third World countries like India continue to display confusion in this regard, making it difficult to adapt completely to the changing circumstances with their centralised and bureaucratic ethos which have failed to develop and foster effective and efficient rural organisation. It has been clear from the theoretical analysis in Chapter 2, that, countries with effective rural organisations, fostering participation and

decentralisation have an edge over those without them in the realisation of the objectives of rural development. Again, the ineffective coordination, communication and supervision tend to worsen, in the absence of effective rural organisations developing effective linkages between national, regional and local centres. As the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 show that various models and organisational alternatives have been suggested to make the organisations adaptable to the changing times and needs. These approaches conceive of organisations as flexible, responsive, decentralised and participatory, which are dynamic and learning from past mistakes. The effective coordination, communication and supervision is not conceived here as external concepts, but is built into the organisational mechanism. However, no universal formulae can be prescribed for the realisation of rural development objectives. A pragmatic approach is required that can deal with the circumstances as they arise in the course of the implementation of rural development.

In the light of such a conceptual framework, the study had attempted to answer some research questions, one of which was related to identifying the major organisational and management problems of rural development in India. Some of the major problems of rural development, as identified in Chapter 3, are 'rigidity of rules and procedures' targetry and empathy, the lack of effective decentralisation and people's participation, poor and ineffective coordination and down-the-line unilinear communication along with departmentalism, administrative verticalism and bad

and erratic supervision. Supervision is mostly centralised and used as a control mechanism and not as a means of disseminating information, knowledge and skills for enhancing the capacity of the organisation. So far as the study area is concerned, in addition to these problems, the administration of development has also been affected by the political process and political development which have resulted in the alination of the people from the mainstream of Indian polity to some extent. Particularly, the recent 'Gorkhaland Movement' has completely halted the process of the already slow pace of development for a few more years. The main efforts, now, are directed to a reconstruction and consolidation of the system, which perhaps will postpone the acceleration of developmental process for a few more years in the near future.

The main thrust of the findings relating to most of the research questions posed in the beginning of this study has been provided in Chapter 5 on the basis of an indepth, empirical analytical examination of the working of the developmental agencies, supplemented by the analysis of the findings of the field survey on the perception of the respondents in Chapter 6.

The study has also sought to find out the intra- and inter-organisational linkages and to know whether the present pattern of the linkage process is conducive to the realisation of the goals of rural development. In regard to the intra-organisational linkages, vertical linkages have been found to

be effective and stronger compared to the horizontal ones in case of the most of the organisation selected for the study.

But, so far as the inter-organisational linkages are concerned, many linkage-gaps have been identified. In case of the DGHC, with regard to the inter-institutional linkages between the DGHC and the State Government, the findings show that the opposite and the conflicting stands taken by the GNLF that runs the DGHC and the CPI(M), the ruling party in the state, have been the stumbling blocks in developing a harmonious working relationship between the two. So far as the linkages between the DGHC and the district administrative set up are concerned, there are acute linkage gaps. The District Magistrate, the erstwhile pivot of the district administration, along with the Block Development Officer and his organisation, is not organically linked to the DGHC. This linkage gap has not facilitated horizontal and vertical coordination affecting the implementation of the developmental plans and programmes. The importance of horizontal coordination is well recognised in development administration, but the way transfer of departments from the State to the newly born DGHC has taken place, effective horizontal as also vertical coordination and harmonious working relationships have not emerged. Such linkage gaps and coordination problems have destroyed the unity of command and hierarchical chain.

The findings reveal that the vertical and horizontal linkages are established and maintained in an effective way in case of the three-tier Panchayati Raj set-up through the use of

various linkage mechanisms among the organically linked three-tiers and the various committees, such as the District Planning Committee (D.P.C.), the Block Planning Committee and others etc. The newly revitalized Zilla Parishad (ZP) has been assigned the leadership, and a coordinating and supervisory role in the administration of development at the district level, which has resolved the issue of dual command and control. Unfortunately, the three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions could not continue their function normally due to political disturbances arising out of the Gorkhaland Movement. After the formation of the DGHC, replacing the ZP, the linkage network at the district level and below got imbalanced owing to the linkage gaps as already stated, adversely affecting the vertical and horizontal coordination in the administration of development.

In case of the D.R.D.A., the C.A.D.P. and the DCCB, strong vertical and weaker horizontal linkages have been found. It appears that the pattern of linkages have not been helpful in making the horizontal coordination among the involved organisations effective.

In regard to our enquiry about the methods and style of communication and their effectiveness, the findings show that the officials of these agencies used mostly formal methods, while the non-officials used the informal methods. The correspondence had been the most often used methods and the use of telephone, personal talks were not made mostly by the officials. The vertical

communication among the ZP, PS and GP - the three tier Panchayati set up has been found effective compared to the other agencies, for example between the DCCB and DACS, DGHC and Sub-divisional level departments and DRDA and the Block Office. As in the case of coordination, communication at horizontal level has been ineffective between the DGHC and the district level departments, the DCCB and the Panchayats, the Panchayats and the CADP, the CADP and the DCCB. The predominant use of the informal methods of communication by the non-officials was because the political channel was mostly relied on. Though, such methods facilitated the quick flow of information, the system has developed some sort of a 'spoils' that gives weightage to political factors, such as, political affiliation and allegiance.

Another important research question, has sought to know how far the present organisational set-up has been able to foster effective decentralisation and participation. In the case of the HDC, it being consisted of the nominated members and without any block and village level units and direct involvement at the village level, most of the people have even not heard about it, not to speak of their participation. The decentralisation was conceived in a very narrow sense in this set up as 'decentralisation of work and inspection of sites' by the supervisory team consisting of the officials and the non-officials.

The revitalization of the P.R. institutions in 1978 and the introduction of the three-tier system was a great leap

forward in the attempt to decentralise development administration. This has significant implication in the administration of development as the working of these institution has shown. The greater delegation of power, authority and functions to these institutions have made decentralisation meaningful as the findings reveal. The hub-nub of developmental activities at the village level, the making of beneficiary committees and direct involvement of the people aroused interest and participation compared to the working of the other agencies. But, after the formation of the DGHC, replacing the Zilla Parishad, the Panchayati Samiti and the Gram Panchayat were made moribund due mainly to the GNLF's opposition to hold the elections to these bodies. At present, there are no grassroot level organisations, which have created an organisation gap at these levels. This 'gap' seemed to have felt by a considerable percentage of the beneficiaries who are of the opinion that these bodies should be reactivated. So far as the DRDA and the CADP are concerned, being predominantly bureaucratic organisations with strong vertical linkages, are found to be highly centralised and authoritative with a complete lack of people's participation.

The examination of the working of all these organisations reveals that 'supervision' has been used mainly as a 'control mechanism' and not as a means of disseminating information, knowledge and enhancing the skills of the supervised for increasing the efficiency of the organisation in the realisation of rural development objectives. In regard

to the supervision of schemes, a considerable percentage of the respondents pointed out that the supervisors rarely visit the field.

One of the research questions emanating from the secondary objectives of this study was whether the present pattern of the relationship between the officials, the non-officials and the beneficiaries was conducive to the realisation of the goals of rural development. The findings reveal that the pattern of relationship on the whole was not that conducive for rural development. Though the relationship between the officials and the non-officials as perceived by them has been 'harmonious', the impression gathered during the field survey by the researcher lead to different conclusions. It was felt as the study advanced that some sort of an 'alliance' between the officials and the non-officials has come to be formed to share the 'intrinsic or the covert benefits of development' in the form of 'percentages' and 'commissions' from the 'tender of contracts' and 'supply of credit'.

It is felt in some quarters that the direct involvement of the political parties in development administration has put unwarranted pressure on administration for maintaining 'impartiality' and 'neutrality' in developmental matters which obviously involve politics and has adversely affected the pattern of relationship among the officials, the non-officials and the beneficiaries. But the findings of this view donot confirm to this view wholly

as a majority of the respondents still think that the 'impartiality' and 'neutrality' have not completely wane out, though, there has been some deterioration. However, most of the respondents expressed that they prefer to deal with the non-officials compared to the officials. The 'accessibility' and 'flexibility' factors seem to have influenced such thinking.

The next research question was related to the perception of the beneficiaries on the working of development agencies and their working. The findings show that a considerable percentage of the beneficiaries think that development programmes have been 'somewhat' successful, and 'not a total' failure. They also feel that certain qualitative changes have occurred in the 'administration' as well as in the 'leadership' of the non-officials. The overall perceptions of the beneficiaries have been that of 'optimism' and not of 'pessimism'. This is a positive outcome of the involvement of the elected representatives in development administration.

On the research question as to the achievements and failures of the developmental agencies and their programmes, the HDC seems to have achieved no remarkable success in its objective of coordinating and integrating the hill plans as it became only a 'compilor of the sectoral outlays', planning in its true sense had never taken place. The P.R. institutions were gradually becoming effective and their contribution in

implementing schemes for infrastructural development has been noteworthy as the analysis in Chapter 5 shows. In regard to the organisation development, the Panchayats in hill areas lagged behind compared to the rest of West Bengal. So far as the DRDA is concerned, it has mainly become a 'funding agency' inculcating the habit of 'dependence' in the beneficiaries, for whom the ultimate end seem to get a 'loan' and 'subsidy'. The lack of coordination, communication and the participation of the people in the CADP's development programme are evident from the complete failure of the CADP to induce the farmer to adopt HYV-C1 (Paddy) despite increased production. In its successful, woolknitting programme, most of the beneficiaries were the middleclass urban background women from Kalimpong town, though one of its avowed objective is 'identifying' with poor. So far as, the DGHC is concerned, it has hardly functioned for 5 years and mostly remained moribund after working for the first two years till 1991 following the 'Financial Embargo' by the State Government. Rural credit is one of the most important aspects of rural development. The main problem of rural credit in the study area has been the 'delay in crop loan' due to the lack of coordination and communication between the DCCB and the PACS. The cooperative movement has also not been able to attract people. The lack of awareness and people's participation has been one of the main obstacles for spreading the movement, which is evident from the enmass absence of the members (beneficiaries) in the general meeting of the PACS at the village level.

The study has revealed that the lack of training of functionaries, both the officials and the non-officials, the absence of job satisfaction and the lack of incentives, such as prospects of promotion have also affected the working of these organisations.

#### B. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Notwithstanding the limitations of the micro-level study of this kind, we may drive home the point that some of the insights gained in such a study may have significant relevance and bearing on the other parts of the country. The organisation, composition, style of functioning and administrative ethos being more or less uniform in our centralised federal structure the thrust of the programmes like NREP, IRDP being common, it may be asserted that the findings of the study throw light on the implementation of rural development programmes in the country. It is also true that it is only on the basis of such an analysis based on micro-level studies that valid macro-studies can be undertaken in future. And it is the subsequent integration of the 'body of knowledge built up' in the process, that could provide perspective for policy-formulation and effective strategy for implementation of development programmes.

The analysis of the working of the development-agencies in the hill areas of Darjeeling has shown that without

effective coordinative-participatory- and communicative linkages, it is not possible to enhance the implementing capacity of the organisations. Concepts like people's participation and decentralisation should be viewed as a part of continuous linkage process, that helps in developing mutually determined 'reciprocation' between the centre or the national, regional and local centres, inter-weaving the various sections of the people in the development networks. Such a paradigm, if it has been realised, needs a viable, integrated and well articulated national policy of rural development as well as communication, which, takes into account the suitability of specific form of development - support communication in specific regional and local situations in this land of wide diversity, variations and disparities.

Given the paradigm, the local organisations like the Panchayati Raj and other kinds, (such as, the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) should be viewed in a broader perspective, that integrates the urban and rural development processes, sees them as a different points of a continuum.

Such an integrated view, if it could be utilised for developing an integrated structure that dilutes the urban and rural dichotomy, would go a long way in filling the linkage gap at the district level in terms of planning and administering development with an accent on locality.