

CHAPTER - VII

SUGGESTION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

Section 7.1 Public administration in Nepal : Its new dimensions

Public administration in Nepal has as yet been governed by the traditional ideas and concepts. It has not been able to play a significant role in social and economic transformation. The study that has been undertaken here amply justifies the conclusion. Even though some attempts have been made to weave public participation within the development process, still there is no denial of the fact that no significant result has been achieved so far. All this negate values of classical public administration such as efficiency, economy and coordinated management.

Public administration in Nepal should be embedded in social justice and equity. This is necessary because continued deprivation amid plenty is likely to breed militancy which in turn may follow repression which is most unwarranted. New public administration should try to make satisfactory accommodation of politics and policy making with administration. Administrators' commitment to good management and social justice are things to be achieved. Simply put, such public administration seeks to change those politics and structures that systematically inhibit social equity. A commitment to social equity not only involves the pursuit of change but also an attempt to find organisational and political forms which exhibit a capacity for continued flexibility or

routinized change. It seeks to modify bureaucratic organisational forms through decentralisation, devolution, project approach to management and above all clientel involvement in the implementation process.

From our study it is seen that administering public programmes has not been an easy task. The very nature of Govt. programme, because of their diffuse goals, their unmeasurable or even unidentifiable benefits make effective implementation difficult. The most important factor effecting the Nepalese administration perhaps is the scarcity of resources available for the purpose of development. Bilateral and multilateral aids have been arranged for the use of development. But the most disconcerting feature is that large amount of scarce resources have been misutilized. And instead of popular participation the citizens have become increasingly wary of the power of bureaucracy in the field of development. The Sajha and User's Committees, notwithstanding their presence in the implementation level of development programmes are, by and large, ineffective. In other words, Nepal's public administration has to be reoriented with the emphasis on social justice and equity coupled with devolution of power and more participatory role of the poorer section of the society.

72. Strategies of rural development

While discussing strategies and models for rural development in order to ensure social equity and justice it seems that a brief discussion on Comilla Model being a successful model for rural development would not be out of place here.

The Comilla model for Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) evolved from a long period of trial and experimentation, by the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (before East Pakistan). This IRDP institutional model was initially launched in Kotwali

Thana of Comilla District in 1960. Its main objective was as increase in agricultural production by intensive and rapid use of irrigation, HYV seeds, fertilizers to environmental suitable areas; to create new rural employment based on labour intensive technique; to provide quick delivery services for all socio-economic group by strengthening rural institution; and to improve rural infrastructures in order to decrease risk of farm products and increase non farm employment.

The programme had four basic instrumental interrelated components: (1) The Two-Tier Cooperative Structure — Krishi Sambaya Samitis (KSSS) or agricultural cooperatives, and the Thana Central Cooperative Associations (TCCAS). (2) Thana Training and Development Centre (TTDC) (3) Rural Works Programme (RWP) (4) Thana irrigation Programme (TIP).

The KSS is village based society organised for the use of a low-lift pump or deep tubewell. Individual farmers received government inputs as seeds, credit, fertilizers etc from KSS. Its members are encouraged to save, as well as to form their own capital. The TCCA is the federation at the Thana level.

TTDC is based at the Thana level. It provides a platform for training of farmers in new technologies; and for coordination between different line agencies. The KSS and TCCA members receive regular training by government officials (e.g. Agricultural Development Corporations, Fisheries Department, Livestock, etc).

RWP is executed by Union and Thana Parishads (Council) with a dual objective of protecting land against flooding and

excavation, and for creating infrastructures as drainage, irrigation canals, roads etc. Consequently the achievement of these works would enhance employment opportunities in slack agricultural seasons.

TIP is organised to combine efforts for utilization of low-lift pumps in dry seasons. These groups received subsidized pump, but no credit and training as that enjoyed by KSS. But eventually these groups were hoped to become full-fledged member of KSS as part of IRDPs.²

Physical and social disparities between Nepal and Bangladesh do exist. But in the economic conditions and stage of development there is much similarity. Hence the Comilla model can be suggested if necessary with suitable modification for IRDPs in Nepal. Here agriculture is the backbone of the economy, and rural population forms the majority of its labour force. Hence IRDP should direct its focus on increasing agricultural production, as well as lifting rural masses from conditions of deprivation and poverty.

Our study in Nepal finds that in spite of emphasis on irrigation projects, funds were greatly diverted to roads and bridges. Beneficiaries or users committee were formed only for utilisation of surface water. Hence the combine efforts for utilisation of surface water. Hence the combine efforts for utilization of ground water committees could be formed in the light of Comilla Model.

The Sajha (Co-operatives) institution at the village level, were generally functioning only as agricultural input suppliers.

Although Sajha's are based on hierarchical system, there was lack of uniformity in powers and functions. It seemed there was poor link between the centre, district and the village level Sajhas. The village level Sajha in our study area were not functioning uniformly. Some Sajhas were supplying consumer goods in addition to agriculture inputs. While other Sajhas limited their function to agricultural inputs. Besides this in some Sajhas, staff were permanent and in some Sajha staff were temporary even when they were working since twenty years, as was found in Katari Panchayat. Therefore the two tier co-operatives under Comilla model may be suggested here for encouraging self-help and partnership growth.

In Nepal there are various IRD Co-ordination Committees at the Centre, district and village level. These could be utilized as training and development centres similar to TTDC. Under Comilla model, emphasis should be on training the members of Sajhas and Users Committees. For creating rural infrastructure as well as generating employment opportunities, a special Council at the Centre and district level could be formed closely interrelated with the activities of IRDP. The remoulding of IRDP in the Comilla model might go in a far way to establish self-help and viable village institutions.

In development strategies two contradictory process has attracted lots of discussion to planers and implementors. These are to-down (Model A) and bottom-up (Model B) plannings³. However, in practice there is no strict adherence to only one model, the philosophy of Model B is often mixed with assumption of Model A. The conception that is developed of Model A is the conformity between Government's objectives and rural development needs. Programmes

achieving these objectives will naturally help in the prosperity of the rural populace. The orientation is technocratics; experts are aware of what is required. Therefore any resistance displayed by the communities is irrational. With education and persuasion they will come to see that their own self-interest coincides with the national interest.

Model B recognises the deprivation condition in the rural areas, continuing from centuries, brought about by gross inequalities of wealth. This has generated demoralization, apathy, fatalism and submissiveness. As such, the initial work of Model B is to come forward "to restore the self-confidence in the rural mass that will release energy and motivation for self-development". To achieve this objective, the first process is adult education. This will help the rural community to realize, that their deplorable condition is not what is destined, but a consequence of historical process. They will learn to react to government policies and actions unfavourable to them, and became more aware that government facilities is their right and they can even fight to demand it.

As a combination of these two models is the Negotiating Model. The principal task of this Model is to mobilize resources, to formulate negotiate and implement its development programmes. Hence there are three characteristics of this Model. Rural communities should formulate their own plans. Consultancy services and resource mobilization should be assisted by the State. The second element advocates for joint planning and programming. The third involves a contractual relationship negotiated between the Government and the community, for contributing resources for community development.

While summing up we find that the top-down model fills the gap of know-how and financial constraints lacking at the village level. The Bottom-up model provides a sense of security and freedom, which is equally important. But it is again lacking in rural communities. The negotiating model, seems most important, for it requires the involvement of the rural people to plan, implement and manage the work for their own development. But much depends on the negotiating capacity of the two parties. This is absent in Nepal. People have still to come out from their socio-economic and political backwardness.

In the light of the suggestions made in the study on rural development management in Sikkim, for augmenting organizational effectiveness a few words would be in order here in the context of rural development management in Nepal. The author purposed top-down in initial phase of development as appropriate remedy for removing the bottlenecks of development. In the later phase bottom up and negotiating model should follow. So as to encourage the rural leadership and initiative⁴.

In view of the fact that Nepal represent backward socio-economic profile with high rate of illiteracy coupled with deep and pervasive poverty it is not possible that bottom up or negotiating model can be introduced here. The study also provides strong support to the almost non-existent rural leadership and initiative in Nepal. Under these circumstances it is not advisable nor desirable to suggest bottom-up and negotiating model as strategies of development. At the initial stage there should be top down model for rural development management. When rural leadership and initiative will gradually develop bottom-up and negotiating

model either exclusively or in happy blending of the two may be introduced.

7.3 I.R.D.P. Model : Control and Coordination

Integrated Rural Development Project came with a purpose to make an integrated effort to attack poverty, persisting in the rural community. The method for undertaking this task is based on decentralization of power and functions in planning, implementing and managing rural development works. The fundamental objective is to deliver goods and services nearer to the rural community.

The evolution of rural development organization of IRDP was explored in Chapter III, reflects the continues efforts of Nepal government, for achieving the decentralization goal. The introduction of the district development plan, the three tier panchayat polity, Shajhas, service Centres, Users Committee etc are the vehicles for diffusing the decentralization concept. But even with these attempt different evaluation of rural programmes supported by this study shows a disheartening results. These studies all press for more implementation of decentralized policy.

To improve the decentralization pattern in order to make IRDP more effective, we suggest for consideration of the thinking put forward by John D. Montgomery. He explores four questions which are actually the core of decentralization. The questions are

"(1) How much control should an integrated rural development project have over resources and services needed to accomplish its goal? (2) What kind of linkage should a project have with the central agencies and with local organizations? (3) What kinds of goals can be appropriately assigned to managers attempting to coordinate IRD functions at local levels? (4) What organizational arrangements are needed at the national level to provide local managers with appropriate support and guidance?"⁵. In answering these questions he puts forth two models of IRDP namely Control and Coordination Model based on the theories of organization. In the control Model resources are budget-based, linkages or managerial styles are in a form of command, goal or operating responsibility are direct, organization or structure of major relationships are vertical or hierarchical and functions are sectoral. The reverse is the case of Coordination model. These resources are derived through negotiation, linkages are established on bargaining basis, goals are indirect, organizations are horizontal or cooperative and functions are diffused.

IRDPS do not follow purely one model. There is a mixture of these functions. Hence in practice it is the Mixed Model that is applied in IRDPS. In following the mixed model for decentralization such projects should incline towards "(1) assigning resources to the project management or a unit as close to it as possible; (2) specifying as precisely as possible the procedures to be used by central support administrators, basing them carefully on existing linkages but setting up standards of promptness that correspond to the best practise of the responsible agencies, (3) specifying

multisectoral goals that conform to prevailing norms currently followed in the technical agencies in performing similar functions in other rural areas; and (4) placing primary logistical responsibility in a dominant agency that already possesses adequate communications and supply links to the region in which the project is to be located".⁶

7.4 Lessons from Programme evaluation:

There is no denying that the Sagarmatha and Rasuwa/Nuwakot integrated rural development projects has had some positive impact. It has laid the base for further development in these areas. Hence such programmes should be made a continuous process; at least ten to fifteen years should be the perspective time frame of IRDPs.

We can trace examples of viable local institutions in different parts of the country. It is, therefore, wise to reshape the existing socio-economic institutions for meeting the changing demands of the rural community. The limited impact of IRDPs has been the consequence of poor micro-level data of the concerned areas. This fatal error should be avoided. With limited time and resources trial-error should be stopped. In other words before launching such projects a detailed survey of the rural household conditions in concerning villages, its resources and prospects should be undertaken.

Increase of crop production should indeed be the top priority in fund allocations. But unless pressure on land is decreased there is limited chance for breaking the vicious circle of poverty. Vehement criticism of IRDP has come forth, levelling it as area

bias and class bias. Hence simultaneous priority should be given to farm supporting areas (as animal husbandry and poultry farming) and non-farm labour intensive areas (cottage and small scale industries and service based activities). It is an open fact that development plans as IRDP have neglected the women folk. That is funds should be allocated for the development of this labour force. Our observation found that except for some castes in the tarai villages, women labour participation was not much low than its counterpart. Hence it is justifiable that they being the weaker section of the rural community, special programmes for their upliftment is advised.

All IRDPs in Nepal are heavily funded by foreign assistance. Donors are therefore vigilant of the performance of these projects. But their over-bearing attitude and the high cost paid to foreign consultancy and technical know-how has been questionable by Nepalese economists. Hence it is prudent to lower such assistance and quickly develop indigenous expertise. The two projects Coordinator Office should be strengthened. Here a technical pool must be created, and training the personnels of line agencies should be made a regular feature. Such provisions will help in increasing administrative and technical efficiency of the personnels; it would also create administrative capability.

Besides line agencies, the implementation of IRD Programmes can be aided by private sector and the voluntary organizations. IRDPs in India have this provision and are fruitfully utilizing their services. The private sector can be most efficient in mobilization of labour for jobs, and for labour mobility in scarce

labour areas. Physical concessions should be given as incentives to attract this private sector. A continuous flow for supplementing rural development works, can be the mobilization of professors, teachers and students. We suggest some remoulding of the National Development Service (NDS) continuing since 1974 in Tribhuwan University, Nepal. NDS is a compulsory service for Post Graduate students, requiring them to participate in village development works for a period of one year. In its initial stages the programme was introduced with much enthusiasm among leaders, professors and students. No doubt it had very successful impact on the villages. But this euphoria was short lived, when financial constraint and political pressure came up. At present NDS is done only for a month, with no development work but only a collection of cursory village data. We would, therefore, advocate for the extension of this service for at least six months, with resumption of development works, in addition to rural household survey.

To continue rural development work, Development Committees were formed in replacement of village and district level Panchayat institution. This Committee consists of all nominated members. It may be suggested that gradually the elected members should constitute the Committee so as to ensure participation of rural people in rural development management in Nepal.

IRDP is basically for eradication of rural poverty. But strong suspicion is surfacing up as regards its role of poverty eradication. Even the Comilla model is criticised and brunted as "doomed to failure". The only saviour is the organization of rural poor. Hence the organization for implementing rural projects should

come from the rural poor, consisting of small land holders, tenants, landless and village artisans. West Bengal in India, projects a good example of the landless rural poor organised under the aegis of Farmer's Service Societies who own shallow tube-well, irrigation facilities. They motivate landowners to use irrigation facilities for multi cropping farm. As a result more employment and income is generated, benefitting both land owners and landless. Nepal IRDP can follow this foot step.

For enhancing the participation of these local institutions, a mixed approach of both Blue Print and learning process is suggested⁷. The Blue Print is the text book providing explanation of how development programmes should work. Its focus is on careful pre-planning. Different pilot projects evaluation data and studies, form the basis for planners to select the most cost-effective project design. The implementing agencies are then to follow this blue print sincerely as a contractor would follow construction blue prints.

The learning process approach is based on the pre-requisites of an organization as (1) to embrace error (2) to plan with the people (3) to link knowledge building for action. The first presupposes an error in socio-technical system and looks at this error as a vital source of data and adjustment as required. The second suggests planning should consider different local setting and the indigenous technology available. The third element points at the drawback of the blue print approach, which reflects that the preparation of programmes design can be generated independently of the organization capacity required for its utilization. In short

the blue print approach recognises different role played by researchers, planners and administrators. But the learning process presupposes some kind of integration between the roles of planners, researchers and administrators. This approach embraces three states (1) learning to be relevant (2) learning to be efficient (3) learning to extend.

The IRDP in Nepal, cannot rely on only one approach. In India where local institutions are well developed and mass consciousness is also quite high, the learning approach may be suitable. Such strong institutions are virtually non-existent in Nepal. Therefore in a democratic set up the learning process can be effective. But it is time consuming. Hence an integration of both blue print and the learning approach should be the selection.

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