

## **A Critical Study of Planning for Integral Rural Development**

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Four broad phases in the evolution of rural development strategies can be distinguished since independence. At independence, the national government inherited a series of grow-more-food programmes which begun in 1943. On the recommendation of the grow more food committee, they were brought within the frame-work of the national extension and community development programme. The second phase in rural development is represented by the early period of community development (1952-58), prior to the introduction of Panchayati Raj on the recommendation of the study team headed by Balwant Rai Mehta. The third phase was marked by a spate of state legislation on Panchayati Raj. By the end of the decade of sixties, a more balanced view of the possibilities and limitations of 'the green revolution' began to emerge. From the late sixties a series of new programmes were incorporated into the scheme of planning, each of which reinforced the notion of integration in rural development. These, together representing the fourth phase, included proposals for assisting small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, crash scheme for rural development, and programmes for hill areas, for drought prone areas, for command areas of irrigation projects, for tribal areas and for backward districts. Tentative beginnings towards the application of concepts like growth centres and regional planning of infrastructural facilities were also made.<sup>1</sup>

The Community Development Scheme remained in operation with some modifications in the early sixties and later on till it was converted into an Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1976-77. In the latter years of the community development programmes some other special schemes such as the Small Farmer development Agency (SFDA), the Drought Prone Area Programmes DPAP and MANREGA the Command Area Development Programme (CADP) too were introduced. The basic objectives of all these plans were to improve the lot of the poorer sections of the rural population and to strengthen employment opportunities for them. The Community Development Programme was relegated to a secondary place through the passage of time: the special programmes assumed greater importance. In the middle of seventies, it was felt that they should be integrated into an overall rural development programme with a view to catering for the needs of overall improvement in rural life. Thus, the introduction of 'IADP' and 'New Strategy' in Indian agriculture in some selected areas marked the deviation from what the community development stood for, that is, all round development for all members of the society.<sup>2</sup>

### **INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The past experience of various rural development programmes has shown that a sectoral approach of a project approach as such does not lead to an overall development of the area and distribution of benefits to disadvantaged sections of the population. Further, the distribution of unemployment and potential for development in the country vary from region to region and also within the region. It is, therefore, necessary to formulate area specific programmes based on optimum utilisation of local resources and which ensure inter-sectoral as well as intra sectoral integration to enhance the effectiveness of the programmes and their impact on the target groups.<sup>3</sup>

Integrated rural development programme was instituted in 1976-77. Integrated Rural Development has been accepted as the main strategy of development which is based on decentralised micro level planning at the block level. The word integrated rural development, has been, however, defined by different people depending upon the particular objective in view.

IRD means integrated development of the areas and the people through optimum development and utilisation (and conservation where necessary) of the local resources-physical, biological and human and bringing about necessary institutional and structural changes and by delivering a package of services to encompass not only the economic field but also the establishing of the required social infrastructure in the areas of health and nutrition etc.<sup>4</sup>

According to Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, "integrated development means that the planning of the diverse aspects of the development is not done in isolation through the project approach or even the programmes approach but is integrated to take account of their mutual interaction and their linkages-forward or backward, temporal or spatial, friendly or hostile, with a view to achieve total results, what is universalization of wealth and enrichment of the quality of life."<sup>5</sup>

Integrated area development refers to the appropriate location of social and economic activities over a physical space for the balanced development of a region. The idea of an appropriate location is by definition selective. The idea of selective and appropriate location is most relevant under the present economic conditions of our country. Integrated area development is also concerned with the development of backward areas. If the existing hierarchy of settlements in a particular region is utilised for formulating a development plan, then areas far away from the important centres of economic activity may remain permanently underdeveloped. Some inducement for growth is, therefore, necessary in backward areas as in the form of over-heads and infrastructures in selective locations. The nature of investment will, of course, depend on the potential resources of the backward area and the expected multiplier effects of the investment.<sup>6</sup>

Since rural development has to be multi sectoral and multidimensional and since the various components of rural development are interrelated, integrated approach is inevitable. IRD programme, to start with envisages bringing together the following four sectors in one programme:<sup>7</sup>

- (1) Agriculture including animal husbandry, fishery, forestry and horticulture,
- (2) Village and cottage industries and tiny sectors,
- (3) Tertiary sectors,
- (4) Labour mobilization-training in skills and organised mobility to tie up labour with opportunity.

### **AREA PLANNING FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

To achieve the various objectives of integrated rural development, area planning approach should be utilised. Different levels of spatial units are implicit for the integration of various programmes. In case of programmes which require major investment and have regional implication, area-wise approach should be preferred, while, in the case of other programmes more local-level planning may have to be resorted to. In other words depending upon the nature of the project, different units of regional planning are going to be used for different programmes.<sup>8</sup> The main objectives of integrated rural development are: (i) maximum employment, (ii) maximum utilisation of local resources, and (iii) economic viability. The planning for such utilisation is intended to be at the block level. The programme includes agriculture, allied activities (agro based as well as cottage and small industries) etc. and the target groups are supposed to be primary and first round

beneficiaries of the programme. The programme seeks to coordinate the various programmes that are going at the district/block level. The main technique of the development is to maximise utilisation of local resources (both physical and man power) with the help of appropriate science and technology inputs. Draft Five Year Plan stated, "A major effort will be made to area specific plans at the grass root level. With this in view, it is proposed to formulate comprehensive block level plans and identify' programmes for development of the area which aim at making full use of the local endowments."<sup>9</sup> For rural development, a well defined area has to be taken as unit of area plan, because development, whether of natural or human resources, is area bound. In IRD, the area that is talked of is the village, and the decentralized micro level block/village planning is the primary instrument of realizing macro level objectives.

Approach to rural development has so far remained piecemeal and fragmented rather than integrated and comprehensive. It tends to emphasize the parts and concentrates on a few aspects from different angles and perspectives. Investments under the sectoral programmes are normally not coordinated and integrated, by a single plan frame and services are provided in haphazard locations and do not converge in desirable combination at the most optimum locations. There is likelihood that the facilities may be located at different places under the sectoral programmes mainly guided by political "distributive justice" and guided by ad hoc decisions where settlements will compete with each other and, ultimately, none of them will be able to achieve either viability or deliver the goods and services.

To make an area productive, a comprehensive spatial development plan at micro level is needed. The outstanding feature of which is co-ordination of various economic and social activities in space, simultaneously taking note of all interdependent aspects of development and systematic and conscious location of the services in relation to human settlements for maximum advantage. The kind of support which the development of resources and the welfare of population require is to be organised within the total system and the main support for the organisation of those services is normally to be located within the settlement system namely, villages, towns, mandies, etc. The systems of settlements serve as a vehicle for making available the necessary support both for production as well as for social welfare, and where such a system is weak or inadequately equipped, then the development will suffer whether of land or human beings. The component of settlement system designed to serve the needs of the area may be termed "growth stimuli" as they would aid both economic growth and social development.<sup>10</sup>

## **ROLE OF GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRES IN INTEGRATED AREA DEVELOPMENT**

In India growth centre concept has been accepted as a strategy for local planning and rural development; with the beginning of Fourth Five Year Plan. Although community development programme begin in 1951 with one objective being to achieve functional integration of development administration by establishing integrated staffing patterns at block levels. However, community development had not been concerned sufficiently with spatial planning at the block level. The pilot research project in growth centre was introduced by the Government of India in the year 1970 at selected 20 community development blocks; the project envisaged the preparation of integrated area development plan for these 20 centres, village-wise inventories of facilities for 20 blocks were prepared. These growth centre blocks were selected on the basis of some specified criteria (a) existence of a progressive and modern agriculture (b) availability of irrigation (c) existence of a

network of roads and communications, (d) prevalence of trade and banking etc. Growth centres were also chosen as suitable places for the programme of dispersal of employment opportunities in space. This pilot research project in growth centres, research-cum action experiment was designed to develop, test and apply a methodology for an optimum provision of economic and social activities of all people in a given spatial area. Growth centre thus offered a new approach to regional planning and rural development policy.<sup>11</sup> In Draft Five Year Plan, it was clearly stated that growth centres will be developed in the rural area for integrated rural urban growth. Opportunities for self employment in such growth centres will be developed as far as possible to absorb unemployed educated youth to run service centres, custom service units and retail shops for farmer's requirements. Growth centres can play important role in the transmission of growth impulses from the developed to the backward regions, which is only one part of the process of reduction of regional disparities.<sup>12</sup>

Another point is that growth centres planning should be concerned with all the aspects of spatial centrality, whether big or small. The planning in future will have to move beyond rejection of rapid industrialization strategies and adoption of accelerated rural development strategies to a fundamental recognition that big centres are not necessarily more important than small centres. In most of the developing nations, as has been realized, decentralized concentration in small growth foci may be of much greater ultimate utility than opportunities for centralized concentration. On some occasions decentralized decentralization may be even more useful.<sup>13</sup>

The important element in the rational allocation and mobilization of resources is the location of a service or function. Investments at appropriate locations not only prevent wastage of resources but it also generates employment and services to the rural population. Other reasons for providing such investments may be described as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- (i) The enormous investment made on development must pay off in the form of a self-generating cycle of growth.
- (ii) With the present level of development already achieved and its uneven impact, it needs to be corrected to avoid any future imbalances.
- (iii) The higher production in agriculture and industry must be channelized through an efficient system of marketing and distribution. This not only requires an overhauling and renovation of the existing market centres by providing proper storage and warehousing facilities, effective transport and communication systems and an efficient road network but also needs establishment of new markets at the potential growths centres to cope with the increasing load of production.
- (iv) The locational importance of banks, cooperative institutions, distribution centres and extension agencies, specially in rural areas, for the most efficient and economic distribution of inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, implements and machines cannot be over emphasized.
- (v) Other services, such as educational, health, communication, consumer goods etc. will also be activated in the rural areas and services for fulfilling these needs will have to be properly located.
- (vi) In the developing countries, these are a paradox of development process. It shows that economic growth and improvement in the conditions of poorer sections of the society do not go hand in hand. On the contrary there seems to be an inverse relationship between the initial increase in G.N.P. and economic production and the volume of employment.

### **CONCEPT OF GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRE HIERARCHY**

This concept has been taken and adopted from various theories, as have already been discussed of Per roux and Boudeville, about the formation and spatial growth of economic development poles, Chris taller and Loach about size, location, distribution and clustering of economic activities, Myrdal and Hirschman about the geographical incidence and spread of economic growth Hager seastrand and Potter about the geographical diffusion of innovations and axes of development and Gilpin and Kolb about the social anatomy of agricultural communities. The purpose of study is not to summarize these theories but to illustrate the use of the concept of growth and service centres for the purpose of planning regional development. In order to understand this concept, it is necessary to assume that:<sup>15</sup>

- (i) People are distributed in various size settlements in, space.
- (ii) They have bio-physical as well as socio-economic needs.
- (iii) They utilize physical and human resources, i.e., goods and services to satisfy their needs.
- (iv) They form settlement in space in the form of homesteads, hamlets, villages, towns and cities and continue to stay together as long as resources are adequate enough to meet their needs.
- (v) They utilize resources for basic needs which are limited or wants which are unlimited; and
- (iv) They migrate to other places in search of goods and services that are not available in their own settlements.

In the process of this continuous search, central places emerge in order to provide essential goods and services to people within their spatial reach. As the range of goods and services on the one hand and threshold of population and their resources on the other hand, increases, growth centres or service centres at different levels in the hierarchy become manifest. Identifying a hierarchy of centres is the first step in developing the General Settlement Plan (G.S.P.) which is based on the following assumptions:

1. The capacity of a settlement to provide services to lower order villages is related to its level of development. Thus the higher is the development the greater is the likely capacity for service.
2. Population, institutional growth, economic activity and people and produce movement to and from the settlement are the useful indicators of the level of development. These indicators can be combined into an index or hierarchy of development.
3. There are trends in which institutions (services/facilities) tend to develop in a given area, although the sequence may differ by area. Thus, certain institutions will tend to be "Universally" in the villages and others found rarely. And the presence of more rare institutions should predict the presence of other institutions.
4. Certain institutions tend to cluster naturally together, either because they have complementary functions and/ or because they serve the same area or population. Thus institutions should be evaluated in terms of their "natural" relationships, as these are important to movement, both inwards and outwards.

5. Certain institutions tend to flourish, when clustered together, naturally or not, with other institutions, perhaps because they are convenient for the population, *e.g.* those services that facilitate the multipurpose trip. Thus, institutions should also be evaluated in terms of "unnatural" relationships as these are important to movement, both in and out.
6. Different institutions require different minimum numbers of users to be sustained. Thus, the proportion that potential users are of the total service area population must be sufficiently high and accessibility to centres 'sufficiently good.
7. Different institutions have different maximum service ranges beyond which they do not reach the users effectively. Thus, the distance that settlements are from the centres must be acceptable in terms of attracting an effective user population and also for each service, the distance point at which "significant" numbers of users drop off, must be known.
8. The scarcity of resources and the objectives of planning do not or should not permit a completely uniform distribution of services and facilities. Thus, services and facilities should be grouped at selected growth/service centre sites which spatially, socially and economically can support them.
9. And, finally, if more than an optimum number of growth/service centres are selected for locating economic and social services within the micro-area of the block, competition between the centres may hinder general area development. Thus, it is necessary to establish population and distance criteria for limiting the number of centres and criteria for resource allocation that integrate supplies and demands by service areas across each planning sector.

In the G.S.P. besides spatial criteria, other criteria relating to the importance of the place in terms of infrastructure of services and growth potential are taken into consideration.<sup>16</sup>

The pattern of organisation of the infrastructure will have to be conceived in terms of the area, population, intensity of activities and special needs of the area. The location of institutions which provide the infrastructure and services will depend upon the manner in which they are related to one another and have to be located in groups and in hierarchical order. The articulated network of the development of public services are facilities, therefore, must be located in a settlement system consisting of a hierarchy of settlements that provide the necessary pre-conditions for investment in productive activities. Equal rates of return on investment, however, cannot be expected from each and every centre in the spatial system. Public investment in services and facilities, therefore, should attempt to promote change, based on existing comparative advantage and potential for growth at strategic locations, building wherever possible on momentum created by the earlier capital investments. Services and facilities should be located at those points which promise the greatest economic growth and widest spread effects to surrounding areas in consonance with the goal of equitable income distribution as per national objective. Service facilities and productive activities each have an appropriate location in the spatial hierarchy. Investment aimed at integration of urban and rural functions requires careful analysis and the concept of growth centre, *i.e.*, location and development of suitable hierarchy of settlement plays crucial roles in the development process.<sup>17</sup>

## **FUNCTIONAL LINKAGES AND FLOWS AS DETERMINANTS OF POTENTIAL CENTRE**

The direction and intensity of physical movements and the networks of transportation and communications can be related to prevailing economic and social formations and their associated technologies, and then related to characterize a matching "spatial organisation."<sup>19</sup>

However, the movements of people and commodities follow observable tendencies, the volume and direction of movement being related to magnitude, of activity, *i.e.*, progressively greater between areas having large populations and high levels of production. This relationship is extended and shaped by both the 'friction of distance' and the attraction of complementarily migrants move from areas where opportunities are scarce to those where they are abundant, while goods and services are exchanged between centres of production and areas of demand. Other things being equal, the greater the distance, the higher the costs of moving and the less perfect the information available, the less will be the flows involved. Movements reflect the existing order of population and production over an area and are conditioned by the network of routes, which in turn are determined by the spatial configuration of population and production.

Further the movements on networks are closely related to the location of centres or nodes of particularly intense settlement and activity, which are themselves related together in some form of 'hierarchy'. The organization and exchange of goods and services between groups of people over an area is carried on by way of a regular series of functionally specific centres which are 'spaced out' according to population and production densities and levels of productivity, within which these appears a graded structure of centres in ascending order of size and specialization. Taken together these nodal centres form a system through which the distribution of goods and services is mediated from the most diverse production locations to major points of consumption and exchange. This regular pattern of centres is complicated by the evolution of specialized production locations which are at the same time major consumption centres, and thereby incorporate a large part of the support given by the system of centres to minimizing transport and other costs by means of collapsing or 'agglomerating' population and production within a localized segments of different categories, related to available movement opportunities, transport networks, central place and agglomerations, are further consolidated through specific elements of comparative advantage and accessibility. There exist over any given area a complicated and intertwined series of 'distance differentials' which effect the relative density of occupation and activity by their actual and potential contribution to satisfying local and area-wide demands for goods and factors of production. Thus the 'surface' of population and activity and 'levels' of life and welfare are a reflection of underlying configurations and forces a skin stretched over the framework of networks and nodes which rather to themselves the bulk of movements and interaction which supply the needs of economic and social exchange. They are the product of composite of condition, historic, physical, technical and organizational which work together to make some areas or regions comparatively more attractive to new growth than others.

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