

CHAPTER - IV

OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

SAFR. BULENANTI KEMENTERAN LIBRARI
KEMENTERAN KULTUR DAN KOLABORASI

CHAPTER IV

PROCESS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES

We have seen in the opening chapter how during the British rule a new class of landless agricultural labourers emerged. With centralized colonial rule and industrial development the traditional village community slowly began to break-up. Foreign rule also curbed the growth of India's productive forces. The country became a source of raw materials for the British factories and a market for their manufactures. Further, agricultural development was checked as a result of agrarian policy and new system of land revenue collection. The choice of livelihood became strictly limited. To make the situation worst population rapidly increased and turned more and more to land. On the one hand the traditional social order was broken, but, on the other, no systematic attempts were made for modernization

When India became independent it was imperative to bring India's hundreds of thousands of village communities into the orbit of a well knit democratic structure and to mould their thoughts and behaviour into patterns compatible with the modern age of science and technology. This involved basic socio-economic reforms and far-reaching changes in social customs and institutions. Our constitution laid down that "The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively

as it may, a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life". Accordingly, many positive steps have been taken to achieve the goals. Education has been given due importance. Extensive provision has been made in five year plans for extending education to all children belonging to the age group 6-11 and to make it free and compulsory.

To eliminate exploitation and to provide social justice, various legislative measures have been taken. The land reform policy was framed to provide security to the tiller of the soil and to assure equality of status and opportunity to the rural section of the population. Social reforms were also introduced such as removal of untouchability, dowry system discrimination of caste, religion etc.

Various development programmes were planned and implemented, such as irrigation projects, power supply, co-operative industries, means of communication and others.

The most important and well known programme was the community development programme introduced in 1952. The aim was to uplift the under privileged sections of the rural community and generating in them the spirit of self reliance and desire to go ahead. The process of community development is meant to be applicable to the community as a whole and not only to certain stronger and privileged sections of it, which, due to larger resources, are able to derive the maximum benefit from government schemes. In fact, the community development programme seeks to



MR. BALASOBIHA WADKAR LIBRARY
SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR

awaken in the stronger sections of the community a sense of responsibility towards their weaker brethren. This programme gradually expanded and modified from time to time alongwith the panchayat Raj system.

Keeping in view the need for improving the conditions of agricultural labourers, the government has made efforts in several directions. Some of the main measures adopted under the various plans - (i) Minimum Wages, (ii) Resettlement on land (iii) Special Programmes for weaker sections, (iv) other measures.

Accordingly several area development programmes were incorporated like Small Farmers Development Agency (1969), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development (1971), Drought Prove Area Programme (1970), Hill Area Development Programme (1972), Canal Area Development (1979), Special Live Stock Production Programme (1975), Minimum Needs Programme (1977), and Antyodaya etc. However, all these programmes due to their adhoc and piecemeal nature and low quantum subsidy have not been much effective in removal of massive problems of rural poverty and unemployment.

On the problem of abject rural poverty and unemployment, the government, therefore, came out with a new strategy of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the year 1978-79. Unlike earlier efforts, governments attention is focused on targeted population. The IRDP is based on microlevel planning and offers a package of action programmes covering marginal and small farmers, landless labourers, subsistence farmers, Share croppers,

artisans, women, unemployed youths and Ex-serviceman, etc.

IRDP is a multi-level, multi sector and multi-section programme covering mutually supporting projects and activities concerned with different sectors or rural communities. It involves a process of changing in rural sub-system and their interaction leading to desired improvements in rural income and income distribution, employment opportunities, rural welfare and other aspects of rural life.

The main objectives of IRDP were to increase the productivity of agriculture and other sectors to provide the income generating assets, to build local capacity for sustained area development.

NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT SCHEME:

It has been accepted that the initial measures for rural development in the form of Community Development Programme, Land Reforms and Co-operative Institutions had not been particularly effective either in increasing farm productivity substantially or in removing the spectre of rural poverty, unemployment and also of the ever growing social inequalities. Later on the green revolution was accepted in India with great hopes. It was thought that the green revolution would improve farm production and solve the perpetual problems of rural poverty and hunger. Moreover it was expected that the green revolution would help rural industrialization and would create new employment opportunities and would improve the quality of life at the grass roots. But it has not succeeded in reducing socio-economic inequalities and poverty in rural India. In recent

years the government with genuine interest in removing poverty have introduced National Rural Employment Programme. It has been successful to some extent but the poverty ratio has declined only by about 20 percent.

It may be said that government, both the central and the State, have been doing all sided efforts for peoples' development. At the same time it is the duty of all concerned to evaluate every now and then the results of these programmes and to point out the faults of the programmes and the obstacles in their implimentation. We may briefly see what impact these programmes have made on our respondents.

1) LAND HOLDING: It is a well known fact that in rural India Land holding is very much unequal. There are some landlords who somehow directly or indirectly possess hundreds of acres of land. On the other hand their is a large section of farmers who are really small farmers. Some farmer families hold only half or one acre of land. This much holding of land is not at all enough for daily bread of even a small family of a four persons. Such a family has to seek other sources of income and especially earning by working on the farms of rich farmers. We were interested to note whether any of our respondents who are now landless, possessed in earlier days any peace of land. It is interesting to note that three of our respondents told us that they had some land of their own. After further enquiry it was found that these pieces of land were sold by them for folowing reasons.

1) One respondent frankly told that he sold the land to meet

the expenditure at the time of his daughter's marriage and has now become landless.

2) Another respondent had mortgaged his half acre of land and had taken loan from a rich farmer. During the famine period he could not repay the loan alongwith exorbitant amount of interest and hence had to sell the land.

3) The third example is also typical and shows the problems of very poor people. He had to sell his land (half acre) to meet the medical expenses at the time of delivery of his wife.

Even though these instances are not enough to make any generalization, it is a common knowledge that very small holdings are not economically viable and poor farmers have to sell their lands to face to various types of economic difficulties. The land reforms and particularly tenancy acts have not been very useful in case of very small farmers.

2) MINIMUM WAGES: The minimum wages act is in existence through out the country and the amount of minimum wages is being determined from time to time on the basis of changing price index. At present a small family of five members having annual income of less than 7500 is regarded as below poverty line. If we carefully look to the annual income of our respondents presented in table No.10 , in Chapter III, it can be seen that all the landless labourer families in our sample are below poverty line. The main reason that we can point out is that they do not get their daily wages as per the prescribed rules. As is shown in Table No.7 in Chapter III, 38 respondents (85 percent) get only about half of

the standard rate of daily wages for agricultural labourers. Moreover in our sample of 45 families only a few labourers get work throughout the year. The situation in case of all the respondents is presented in Table No.1.

TABLE NO.1

AVAILABILITY OF WORK-DAYS IN A YEAR

=0=			
No.of working Days	Respondents	Working members (in the families)	Percentage

Whole year	2	4	4.44
More than 300 days	3	9	6.68
251 - 300 days	6	14	13.33
201 - 250 days	12	34	26.67
151 - 200 days	16	52	35.55
Less than 150 days	6	21	13.33

TOTAL	45	134	100.00
=0=			

As the table shows only five respondents and 13 workers out of 134 workers in the family get work for most of days in a year. All the others remain partly unemployed every year. This explains the reason of their extreme poverty.

The minimum wages act is not properly implemented. The work is not available throughout the year. The employment guarantee scheme is there, but the labourers, some how, are unable to take advantage of the same. The result is the existence of a sizable section of population remaining below poverty line.

3) EDUCATION: Education should be looked upon as a base of development and also a motivating factor of development. Universalization of Primary education is the high aim of our

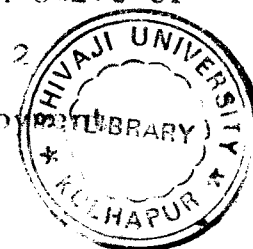
government since independence. But we have not yet reached even nearer to that aim. Both the situation in this context and the reasons why the children remain away from schools can be understood from our survey.

Table No. 2, classifies the educational level of our universe taking into consideration different age groups. It may be noted that in the sampled families there are in all 29 children below 5 years. We may therefore consider the educational level of all the members above the age of 6 years.

TABLE NO.2
EDUCATIONAL LEVELS - TOTAL MEMBERS OF THE RESPONDENTS'
FAMILIES

Education	AGE GROUP											
	6 - 10			11 - 20			21 and above			Total		
	Male	Fe- Male	Total	Male	Fe- Male	Total	Male	Fe- Male	Total	Male	Fe- Male	Total
Illiterate	3	6	9	3	7	10	25	67	92	31	80	111
primary	22	10	32	-	-	-	35	20	55	57	30	87
Secondary	-	-	-	15	10	25	15	-	15	30	10	40
Higher Secondary and College	-	-	-	5	0	5	3	0	3	8	0	8
TOTAL	25	16	41	23	17	40	78	87	165	126	120	246

Our respondents are themselves land labourers and hence are not expected to be benefited from any self employment schemes. However during the interviews we asked the questions pertaining to rural employment programmes. It was observed that in spite of lack of continuous employment throughout the year only 2 respondents availed the opportunities under rural employment.



programme. These two belong to the scheduled caste group. Thus as far as our respondents are concerned the impact of rural employment programme is almost negligible. We shall see in the next chapter whether there is any change in the second generation that is the younger brothers or children of the respondents, due to IRDP or NREP. As far as the respondents are concerned development programmes of the government have not affected in any positive way the working conditions and the income pattern.

Here we may point out some of the prominent obstacles in the process of development of the respondents themselves. First of all most of them are illiterate or poorly educated and hence they could not get any job other than unskilled work on the farm. Secondly most of the respondents are in the advanced age group and because of traditional poverty and need for work at an early age, when they started doing work on daily wages the programmes like IRDP had not reached in this backward region. They, therefore, are not in a position to do any other job except physical work for their daily food. Thirdly rich farmers required large number of unskilled labourers, on daily wages. Tractors and other machines were not yet in vogue. Thus the conditions were such that improvement of economic conditions through other jobs than agricultural labour was not possible for our respondents. The situation has slightly change in case of the second generation persons in the families of our respondents. We shall see the extent of this change in the next chapter. We may conclude this Chapter, with the reveal that the various schemes of development



have not been of any benefit to the respondents themselves who form the lowest stratum of the rural community. The schemes like 'Antyodaya' have not been very successful in removing the extreme poverty of our respondents. It is a problem of both reaching the poor and also of generating aspirations of development among the poor.

