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STRATEGIES OF IMPLEMENTATION
OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

by

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STRATEGIES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

The impact of a rural development programme (RDP) depends entirely on how well it is implemented. The strategies of implementation are not only crucial, but complex, encompassing a number of functionaries, organisations and beneficiaries in a variety of situations.

I Three Basic Issues for Policy Makers

In order to implement RDP, the policy makers need to understand three basic issues:

- a) The prevailing objective conditions in the rural area.
- b) The Goals and Objectives of RDP.
- c) In the light of past experiences, how, when, what kind and by whom should RDP be implemented in different situations to achieve the goals and objectives.

The issues mentioned above may seem too simplistic to merit mention here. That is why, perhaps, these issues are very often overlooked or not seriously considered by the policy makers. The many imperfections, distortions and dilutions in the implementation of RDP in India amply substantiate the argument. However, this does not mean that the policy makers in India are unaware of the reasons for the poor implementation - if they were continuously aware of the importance of these simple issues, the implementation strategy planning would not be so biased.

II Goals of RDP in India

RDP may have several connotations but it is essentially dependent on the objective socio-economic conditions of the rural areas. The objective

conditions prevailing in rural India are characterized by extreme poverty brought on by the imbalance of the socio-economic structure. In rural areas today, for example 30 per cent of the people at the very bottom own only two per cent of the land, thirty per cent at the top eighty two per cent and the middle thirty per cent in between own sixteen per cent. About fifty per cent of the rural population in India is below the officially recognised line of Absolute Poverty (i.e. earning an income of Rs 25-30 per month). The problem of poverty is compounded manifold by the traditional caste-system; generally the low-caste groups or the untouchables do not own the most important and perhaps the only available means of production - land.

The control over the vital means of production by a few land-rich people has led to an extremely unequal distribution of income, wealth and power in rural India. The social, economic and political power of the land-rich has given rise to strong vested interests directly or indirectly exploiting the land poor or the landless building extreme forms of dominance/dependence relationships. This exploitation not only keeps millions of rural people poor and starving, but also prevents benefits of development programmes from reaching the rural poor.

Recognising the conditions and structural implications of rural poverty is not new. Over a period, there has emerged a consensus on the goals of RDP. Broadly, RDP aims at removing rural poverty and enriching the quality of life for all sections of the rural population, with primary focus on the rural poor. The World Bank defines it as:

..... a strategy designed to improve the economic and social conditions of life of a specific group of people - the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest, among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas.

Operationally, the goals of RDP in India can be defined as a process of asset creation and asset distribution through:

1. Increasing productivity of not only agricultural and related enterprises, but also through secondary and tertiary economic activities.
2. Facilitating access, control and distribution of productive resources (e.g. land, capital, technological know-how and socio-economic power) in a more equitable manner with particular reference to the upliftment of the rural poor above the poverty level.
3. Generating opportunity for gainful employment for the rural poor, particularly the landless labourers.

III Past Strategies of RDP in India

In order to realise the goals of RDP, a mixture of strategies has been employed since independence. One can find all the three development strategies identified by Griffin² - 'technocratic', 'reformist' and 'radical' - with varying emphases.

In practice, however, two view points influenced policy makers in India: the one suggesting structural changes (radical), particularly land reforms, and the other recommending application of modern technologies to increase productivity (technocratic). Depending upon the prevailing political climate and food situation, there have been shifts in the emphasis of the strategies. Even the 'radical' strategy of structural change has been diluted into a 'reformist' one by merely instituting supportive measures in the system to effect equitable distribution, without drastic change in the structure.

Nevertheless, several approaches have been used in India in order to operationalise the strategies of RDP. Starting from 'community development, cooperatives and panchayats' in the fifties, the operational approach has shifted to 'intensive agricultural development programmes (IADP) and high yielding varieties programme (HYV)' in the sixties and finally in the seventies to the 'integrated rural development' approach with a package of special programmes directly aimed at the welfare of the deprived sections of the rural community - small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, village artisans and tribals and rural poor in drought-prone areas. Thus, over the three decades the attempts at RDP in India have progressed from the 'sectoral approach' with emphasis on agricultural development to the 'area planning approach' and finally to the 'target group-oriented approach'. But in reality, except on rare occasions, sectoral considerations, with emphasis on agriculture have dominated RDPs because of the overwhelming pre-occupation of the policy makers with food problems and politico-administrative expediencies.

There have been attempts to change the basic strategies and approaches over a period of time, but, interestingly enough, the strategies of implementation of RDP in India remain unchanged. Essentially, the actual implementation of RDPs has been the responsibility of the government-run, bureaucratically structured, public administration agencies. The rigid hierarchical structure of the bureaucratic system making the required flexible approach according to varying field situations almost impossible, the emphases on accountability, control and a time-bound physical target-oriented appraisal system, all render the official functionaries at the implementation level ineffective for people-oriented development programmes.

On the one hand, the long chain of command in the bureaucratic system, and its multiplicity, hampers co-ordination and co-operation between the sectoral departments, on the other hand, the concern over the increasing marginal costs of reaching the dispersed and unorganised rural poor makes it convenient to push a standardised 'blue-print' of quantitative tasks for a broadly categorised target group, rather than treating situations independently. Added to these inherent limitations, there has been misguided over-reliance on the 'percolation theory' about the flow of benefits of development programmes from a few to larger masses of the rural population.

These and similar influences have alienated the government functionaries from the masses, particularly the rural poor. The action plans and projects are centrally planned and removed from the local situations, while in the 'top-down' process of development the field level functionaries find it easier to contact the rural-rich in order to fulfill the targets assigned to them. As a result, a collusive alignment has developed between the rural vested interests and the implementing functionaries, who, in most cases, also represent the similar class-interests, attitudes, and concerns as the rural-rich. To the rural poor, therefore, the bureaucratic implementing machineries have remained a remote, insensitive and inflexible system which has been totally blind to the needs and aspirations of the poor in a purely 'giver-receiver' relationship. Even when there have been limited attempts to involve the poor in planning and implementation of development programmes through the panchayati raj system, the interests of the poor have been totally

neglected by the same collusions between the vested interests and the bureaucracy. Similarly, the legislative and administrative measures on land reforms have been swindled by the land-owning classes, with the connivance of the government officials.

This is not to suggest that there has been no impact of RDP efforts in India - it has contributed a great deal to the National Growth. India, for example, produced nearly 126 million tonnes of foodgrains in 1977-78 and is likely to harvest an equally large crop in the current year. Further, the 50 per cent rise in fertiliser consumption in the last two years, after five years of stagnation indicates the second wind of Green Revolution. But this increasing growth rate has not helped the land-poor and land-less categories. The overall impact of the RDP efforts has not altered, but reinforced the pattern of distribution which steadily polarizes the rich and the poor. All those in the rural areas who either own no land, or do not produce enough to meet their needs (e.g. small and marginal farmers) have been steadily impoverished, while the vested interests, comprising of the land-rich and the traders, profited from RDP, strengthening their socio-political power base. Consequently, in spite of increasing National Growth rates, the wave of disenchantment and distress among the rural poor leading to a crescendo of violence and unrest is observed.

Partly in response to the continuing failures and negative trends in implementing poverty-oriented development programmes, a number of interesting and innovative micro-experiments on RDP have sprung up over the country outside the government bureaucratic systems. Included in

these experiments are the efforts of a large number of voluntary agencies. Some of these experiments have made some 'success' in the right direction and provide useful learning experiences. But, so far these experiments have been restricted to a limited geographical area. Many of them are either merely an extension of sterile ideologies, or utterly dependent on the government or foreign financial aids and therefore subject to control; or they aim at partial interventions without confronting the complex structural problems, or tend to perpetuate their existence in their micro-areas of operations considering themselves indispensable. All these and other constraints of these micro-experiments have thus far failed to generate the minimum level of 'push' to facilitate the implementation of poor-oriented RDP.

IV Alternative Strategies of Implementation of RDP

It may be argued that the patterns of objective conditions (briefly delineated above) are too subtle for the average rural poor to grasp. But this is far from true - it is not difficult to understand that the failure of the poverty-oriented RDP in India is due to the fundamental conflict in the structure of economic relations in the village society. What is absolutely clear, therefore, is the urgency for alternate strategies of RDP which call for a radical re-designing of institutions and processes in many respects.

Fundamental Policy Parameters

The evolution of alternative strategies of RDP must be based on fundamental policy parameters which have implications both at macro and micro levels of the implementation structure:

Whether through the processes of asset creation or asset distribution, the aim of distributive justice for the rural poor is to be the criteria by which the effectiveness of RDP should be judged.) Since the existing power structure in the village society comprising of a privileged few totally vitiate this primary aim of RDP by siphoning off the benefits intended for the large masses of rural poor, it is logical that RDP should first attack the very structure. This means attacking the existing property relations and transferring of productive resources in order to shift the socio-political power towards the rural poor. Any policy designed to bypass the basic structural barriers rather than confront them is bound to fail.

Since no power structure would voluntarily liquidate their power-base themselves, RDP as a process of social change is bound to evoke conflicts and resistance from the existing power structure. At a policy level, therefore, it must be accepted that the aim of RDP cannot be achieved painlessly - rather it has to pass through a dialectical process of struggling against a powerful resistance which may, in certain circumstances, lead to revolutionary situations.

Whether they be 'radical', 'reformist' or 'technocratic' strategies, the existing bureaucratic government machinery is completely inadequate, even dysfunctional in many instances, to implement poor-oriented RDP. It is also pointless thinking that through lecturing or preaching the existing system of bureaucratic functionaries can be reorganised and reoriented to inculcate proper commitments and attitudes towards the rural poor. Either RDP should be implemented by ideologically committed party cadre supported by the government in power (as in China) or by intervening non-government-systems with non-binding but working linkage with the government system.

Since the bureaucratic government machinery - the prime actor of RDP in India - is closely identified with the village power foci resulting in total loss of its credibility to the rural poor, and since rural development programmes are very rarely generated spontaneously, the importance of an ideologically committed group of outside intervenors is clear. Essentially the role of outside intervenors is to develop the rural poor into self-reliant and self-generating groups to uplift themselves from degeneration and deprivation.

It is evident that the policies should evolve a strategy to ensure wider participation of the rural poor in the processes of RDP. In the democratic set up in India today, this is possible only by mobilizing the rural poor to organise themselves

in a viable and self-reliant organisation of their own. The role of the outside intervenors is, therefore, to initiate mobilisation through RDP activities by utilising or creating opportunities on a continuing basis with a view to becoming dispensable at the earliest.

Since the basic objective of RDP is not only to achieve distributive economic justice for the poor, but to stimulate their creative urges in productive and meaningful ways, the policy framework cannot be restricted to time-bound quantitative targets. It has to emphasize development of creative faculty of the suppressed rural poor, leading to a collective consciousness about their rights and aspirations as a group. Structural changes and socio-economic activities initiated through RDP should then be used as a means to achieve the qualitative transformation of the rural poor into a collective consciousness, consolidating their actions.

As a policy, RDP has to be specific target-group-oriented, and for India the target group is rural poor. An undifferentiated RDP strategy is bound to perpetuate the 'old order', unless preceded by a firmly established egalitarian system. Because the rural poor are extremely disorganised, dispersed and heterogeneous, with asymmetric interests and dependency/dominance relationships, the focus of actions have to be specific - a village or a small cluster of linked villages rather than to a district or a taluka.

Lastly, considering the magnitude and complexity of the problems of the rural poor, the policy framework of RDP has to be designed in a scale so as to generate a critical minimum country-wide 'push'. For however well-intentioned RDP may be, a gradually incremental and partial intervention in micro-situations can at best be of some value as learning experience, but tends to be exploited ultimately by the larger force of the vested interests.

Implementation Structure

Having discussed some of the broad policy issues, it is now possible to objectively evolve a suitable implementation structure for RDP in India (See diagram 1). The implementation structure proposed in the paper is essentially based on our understanding and experiences from the study of a score of ongoing micro-experiments on RDP in India.³

The crucial element in the proposed implementation structure is the outside intervenor system (OIS) outside the government system, but with supporting linkages with both government and non-government institutions. While the supporting systems usually have functionaries at various administrative levels (e.g. national, state, district taluka/block and village), proposed OIS is provided with an umbrella federal structure at the national level, named the Rural Development Foundation (RDF).

The RDF is an autonomous corporate body administered by a Board of Trustees with the Executive Director who may be nominated by the Board of Trustees every five years. The members of the Board of Trustees, including the Executive Director, should be drawn from various organisations and institutions in India interested and committed to the alternative strategies of RDF.

Below the federal structure, the RDF will have a State Level Coordinating Body and an army of Independent Volunteer Cadres (IVC) spread over a state in districts and talukas/blocks. While the State Level Coordinating Body may be a small-scale RDF, IVCs are to be recruited jointly by the RDF and the State Level Coordinating Body. The IVCs will be mostly fresh graduates - both men and women. The essential qualification of the IVCs should not be the degrees or subject of specialization but the willingness and motivation to live and work in the villages among the poor for a two year minimum. Given the prevailing rate of educated unemployment and frustrations with the formal education system, it is not difficult to attract sufficient numbers of IVC in India for the challenging experience of working on RDPs.

Apart from recruiting IVCs, the functions of the proposed corporate bodies at the national and state levels (RDP and State Level Coordinating Body) would be to: (a) raise finance to provide minimum living stipends to the IVCs, and other administrative expenses;⁴ (b) legitimize the existence and functions of the OIS with the government and non-government organisations/institutions at various levels and so establish supporting linkages; (c) act as an umbrella organisation for facilitating, coordinating and protecting (legally and politically as and when necessary) independent actions and initiatives of the IVCs at the village level; and (d) brief and orient the IVCs in the broad philosophy and purpose of the alternative strategies of RDP, and to provide a forum for sharing experiences.

The onus of action on RDP in order to mobilize rural poor will lie on the IVCs depending on the local village situations. Since the focus of action on RDP is the village, each of the IVCs should be based in a village in the area to be covered by him/her. With the supporting linkages developed, 3 to 4 IVCs should be adequate to cover a taluka/block. This means, for 5004 blocks in the country about 15,000 to 20,000 IVCs would be needed to cover at any point of time.⁵

The IVCs are the initiators and activists for the poor-oriented RDP at the micro-level. Over a period of time, a lot of micro level action/movements are likely to develop in the country. However, these micro movements cannot by themselves survive or be sustained unless they are coalesced into a macro movement - a long drawn process given the widely differing situational responses. It is therefore necessarily expedient, for sheer survival of the micro movements, to be initially (if not on a continuing basis) linked with macro level organisations and policies as a

supporting system. This is basically a compromise in order to evolve a wider national alternative out of a large number of micro movements, keeping in view the time constraints and facilitating factors for entry and survival of micro actions at the village level.

It is on the basis of the compromise that the proposed implementation structure builds the supporting linkages with the macro and micro level government and non-government organisations and institutions, a process which supports and makes legitimate the initial entry and action by the IVCs at village level. Also, such linkages may provide a legitimate base for initiating micro actions parallel to the radical policy measures and programmes already undertaken at the macro level by the government due to political and other expediencies. In fact, some of the macro changes set into motion by the national and state governments in India (e.g. Land reforms and land-ceiling acts along with loop-holes, laws against moneylenders and bonded labour, investment allocation for creating social and economic facilities in the rural areas, budgetary allocation creating employment, various schemes directed at small/marginal farmers/landless agricultural labourers, drought-prone areas, and tribal areas, and bank credit facilities in favourable terms to the poor etc.) can be used by the IVCs to gain time, credibility and legal protection, which will firmly establish micro movements on a sound footing before they become coalesced into a nationwide movement. On the other hand, as the micro movements become stronger on a nationwide scale, they are likely to generate sufficient pressure on the existing macro system (government and non-government) to force a qualitative change in the planning and policy priorities in favour of the rural poor.

Strategies for Micro Level Action

It is clear from the proposed implementation structure that the success of the alternative strategies of RDP is dependent solely on the success of the IVCs in initiating micro movements. The crucial question is, therefore: how do the IVCs initiate micro movements? Obviously, the modus operandi have to be flexible to respond to varying local situations. This does not mean that planning for a common model of micro level project design is meaningless. What it means is that while the specifics of the micro action have to be devised individually in response to the local situations, some generalised guiding principles can be planned on the basis of our learning from various attempts on RDP.

What is proposed here as a modus operandi for micro level action is essentially based on 'conflict model' of development.⁶ The basic assumption here is that the rural poor can be mobilised when they are sufficiently discontented and excited about any concrete event/situation arousing conflict, such as property relations (e.g. land tenure), unequal distribution of productive assets, corruption and exploitation, discriminating social structure, inequalities in income-earning opportunities and so on. But merely identifying existing conflict situations cannot mobilize the rural poor. The approach is to plan a strategy of interventions on the existing conflict situations, to ensure some tangible benefits in the shortest possible time and at minimum risk. To the rural poor, the most important benefit is necessarily economic - income-earning opportunity. Thus, the intervention strategies aimed at removing existing conflicts or contradictions should be seen by the poor as measures which would help them essentially achieve concrete economic benefits.

In implementing the 'conflict model' of RDP, the IVCs need to follow a logical pattern. As an outside intervenor, the IVC is likely to face stiff resistance and distrust from the villagers, apart from constant fear of the disastrous consequences of failure in involving themselves in the process of structural interventions. The IVC, therefore, has to build his credibility by proving his trustworthiness and dedication to the cause of the rural poor. The only way to achieve this is to live in the villages and establish an intimate dialogue with the villagers through meetings and discussions about the existing situations and the possible remedial actions which could be initiated by them. Also, it is important as an entry strategy for the IVC to be uninvolved with existing official and non-official organisations/functionaries beyond the stage of legitimising his presence, and certainly not at the stage of establishing dialogue or implementation of interventions.

It is during the strenuous and most difficult process of establishing credibility that the IVC will acquire sufficient understanding of the prevailing conflict in the village and be able to identify specific cases for initiating action which can generate immediate economic benefits to the poor. The IVC will be able, in the process, to identify the actual target group, i.e. the rural poor.

It must be noted here that in order to understand the prevailing conflict and to identify the actual target group, IVC should never attempt any formal academic surveys/research, which are not only dysfunctional, but also are a wastage of money and time. However, for his personal record, understanding and reference, he may document his views and facts gathered in the dialogues with the villagers.

Having grasped the nature of the existing conflict situations in relation to an identifiable target group, the IVCs should decide an entry point in terms of a viable village project. In deciding the entry point, the IVC needs to consider two basic issues: firstly, the project must bring immediate economic benefit to the target group simply because the material incentive is the most important, and perhaps the only motivating force for the rural poor to organise themselves, also it provides the essential economic staying power against the exploitative system. This does not necessarily mean that other entry points like health or education should not be used in specific situations. The IVCs' most important consideration in deciding the entry point is gaining rapid acceptance and credibility in the eyes of the target group. What is, therefore, emphasized here is the fact that even if the initial entry point is non-economic, which essentially lacks the strength in motivating the rural poor, it soon has to move towards economic activities benefitting the target group.

Secondly, as a tactic and evolutionary strategy, it may be necessary to choose the initial entry point which most unlikely to arouse hostile opposition from the village power foci, so that the project and the IVC can have some breathing space to establish themselves for higher order interventions later. Again, tactically it may need, in certain circumstances, some collaboration with the existing vested interests to the extent it is necessary, to use their resources for the initial success of the entry project, which may create problems later in achieving the objectives of the RDP.

Given these two considerations it is better to choose an economic activity as an entry point, which seemingly looks innocuous enough, to threaten the village power foci. This economic activity should naturally be, to start

with, a process of asset creation rather than asset distribution. This process can be initiated either by introducing new technology in the existing production process, by financing the traditional economic activities, by organising better marketing facilities or by combinations of the three basic functions of economic activity (e.g. technology, capital and marketing). Whatever may be the economic functions emphasized at the entry point, the target group would need and depend on re-assurances from the outside intervenors, i.e. the IVCs to start with - the more complex the functions of the economic activity, the higher the dependence.

The OIS or the IVCs should provide re-assurances to the extent needed in the situation. These would essentially be in the form of assured economic-benefits, which in turn would be tied to technological/financial/marketing aids. In the absence of internal resources for such re-assuring aids, the OIS or the IVCs should take advantage of the existing government schemes or other semi-governmental or non-governmental institutional schemes through the supporting linkages, which are legitimised and developed by the OIS. Thus, the entry project starts within the existing legal, political and administrative framework without creating immediate hostility from the old power foci of the village. This does not mean that the entry project need always be started with the aim of not arousing hostile opposition from the vested interests. There could be situations, for example, where the target group is already organised and conscientised sufficiently for implementing a radical programme of asset distribution, like, land reform, stopping official and non-official corruptions, or laws against the exploitation of moneylenders and traders. There also could be situations where

such radical programmes are currently being implemented by the government administrative machineries. It would be worthwhile for the IVCs to involve themselves rightaway in these programmes in spite of potential opposition to build their credibility and trustworthiness. In either situation, the entry project would remain within the legal and administrative framework, but directly confronting the vested interests of the village power foci.

The entry project as well as the subsequent interventions must be planned and implemented by the target group themselves rather than be imposed by the IVCs. The role of the IVCs is to initiate and stimulate discussions among the members of the target group through creating suitable forums. Through intensive dialogue with target group both individually and in groups (weekly or fortnightly meetings), the IVCs are to stimulate ideas about the possible action projects and its implementation strategies from among the target group itself.

Planning and implementation of action projects in the village by the target group provides a basis of training and education in the principles and utility of collective action leading to viable organisation of the rural poor. While no particular form of collective action or organisation is imposed or prescribed, the necessity for effective functioning of the project will lead the target group to evolve the norms for group work and functioning, which ultimately may take the shape of a formal structure according to the requirements and desire of the target group.

It should be understood that the process of evolution of a somewhat structured form of an organisation of the target group requires patience and persistence of the IVCs. There will certainly be a lot of hesitation, apprehension,

distrust and conflicting claims among the members of the target group, which the IVCs have to get resolved in a dialogical process by the target group themselves. It is in this process that economic activities pose certain limitations, particularly, if these activities are new in the situation. Given the initial amount of re-assurances and dependency, there will be greater oscillation in learning self-reliance and self-generating group work according to the levels of success and failure of the economic activities, as compared to non-economic activities, like, health and education. On the one hand, when the economic activity succeeds to the extent that there is continuous flow of economic benefits, then there is likely to be complacency among the target group in learning to be self-reliant. On the other hand, learning tends to become negative if the economic activity is a failure in the sense that there is no flow of economic benefits for a long time. The only way the IVCs could tackle the situation is to deliberately involve the members of the target group in all the major functions of the economic activities (finance, marketing and technology) as a learning mechanism in order to make them aware of the limitations and thereby evolve suitable norms of group functioning. There cannot be any readymade formula for tackling such situations - only a strategy of creative manoeuvring by judiciously balancing the amount of re-assurances and withdrawal of supporting interventions by the IVCs.

It is precisely the constraints of the economic activities alone in sustaining mobilization of the rural poor that necessitates direct structural interventions. As soon as there evolves a basic but tenuous collective spirit

around economic activities initiated as entry projects, the focus should shift to the larger socio-economic system in the form of structural interventions through a series of escalating confrontations with the basic conflict situations. An inordinate delay in escalating the process beyond the entry project (economic activity) may cause stagnation submerging the dynamic potential for continuous mobilization of the target group. On the other hand, conscientisation of the target group in their rights and powers as a collective body in bringing about the structural shifts in its favour can be a dynamic strategic factor to mobilize them continuously.

By structural shifts, it does not mean here only land reform and land re-distribution, which certainly are the most important structural relationships to be radically corrected. Perhaps, land reform could be the beginning of structural interventions, followed by interventions in relation to the moneylenders/traders/intermediaries, corrupt officials and non-officials, social discrimination due to caste and religion, wage structure and re-distribution of productive assets other than land (e.g. cattle, agricultural machinery, etc.). As it progresses, there should be a deliberate strategy to escalate the structural interventions for qualitatively higher order collective consciousness in relation to enforcing more budgetary allocations for rural development programmes from government and non-government sources, collective management of landholdings and other production/marketing related activities, building physical infrastructures, such as, roads, irrigation/drainage, and other public utilities and so on.

It should be noted that while the series of structural interventions are planned and implemented by the target group in an escalating manner over a period of time, they should be within the existing legal and administrative framework to start with, which eventually may force required changes in the macro policies. But, in order to create sufficient amount of pressure for required changes in the macro policies, the individual micro movements should be strong and coalesced into a national movement. This can happen within the framework of the OIS suggested in the paper. As a starting point, for example, the IVCs initiate the micro-movements as discussed above in a village or two in a taluka/block and then spread over the whole taluka/block, based on the experiences learnt in the initial villages. By using the volunteers from the target groups in the initiating villages, action projects can be multiplied and extended in several villages in the taluka, for which a strong sense of class-identity and unity need to be developed within the target group. Such a process can never be a time-bound quantitative target oriented programme, but an intensive dialogue aimed to qualitatively change the people, i.e. the disadvantaged rural poor in order to help them be self-reliant and organised for improving their lives.

Once a sufficiently large number of micro movements gain strength in relation to the qualitative changes mentioned above, they can be coalesced into regional and federal structures for organising the minimum critical 'push' for required changes in the policy framework at the state and national levels.

NOTES:

- 1 World Bank, Rural Development : Sector Policy Paper, February 1975.
- 2 K. Griffin, The Political Economy of Agrarian Change : An Essay on the Green Revolution (Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press, 1974).
- 3 As many as 20 different ongoing micro-experiments on RDP in India are closely observed and studied by the author, of which two are summarised and reported to IFDA as supporting materials for this paper. The author himself has been actively involved in these two micro-experiments. Interested readers may contact IFDA for reports referred to here.
- 4 The sources of financial aid should be used very judiciously and cautiously, in the sense that it should not lead to bureaucratic control and unnecessary rigid rules and procedures, and proliferation of reporting system.
- 5 The total cost of stipends for maintaining 15,000 to 20,000 IVCs @ Rs 600 per month would be only Rs 0.9 to 1.2 million per year. Apart from the stipends, the other administrative costs for the entire Outside Intervenor System (OIS) will be minimal.
- 6 For details of the 'conflict model', see the articles of the present author: "Techniques of Mobilizing Rural People to Support Rural Development Programme", in Amara Raksastaya and L.J.Fredericks (eds.), Rural Development (Training to Meet New Challenges, Vol.4., pp. 970-1013 (Kuala Lumpur:Asian and Pacific Development Administration Centre, 1978).

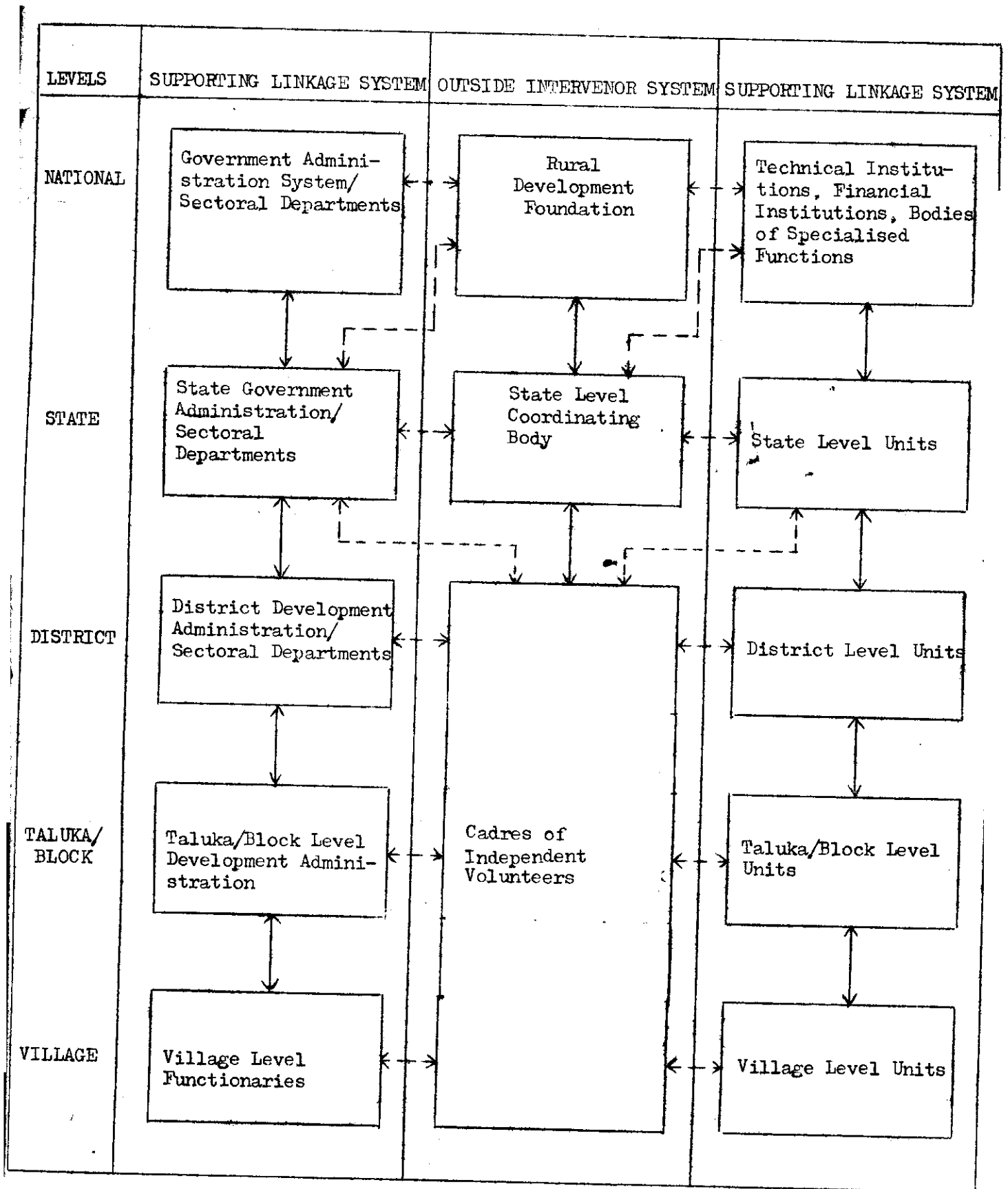


DIAGRAM 1 : IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE OF RDP