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TECHNIQUES OF MOBILIZING RURAL  
PEOPLE TO SUPPORT RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

by

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## I Introduction

The general socio-economic conditions prevailing in most of the developing countries in Asia and Africa have brought added urgency to the quest for more effective programmes and institutions to assist rural population, specifically the "rural poor". This overriding consideration for rural population is for the simple reason of demographic characteristics: the largest majority of population of these countries live in rural areas and a major bulk of them are small/marginal farmers and landless labourers, which constitute the proverbial 'rural poor'. Consequently, there seem to be a special emphasis and expressed commitment to the pursuit of rural development strategies among increasing number of Asian and African governments. To the extent the emphasis and commitment for rural development programmes are genuine, it is reasonable to expect a growing demand for advice for practical guidelines on the kind of administrative and institutional changes required in rural areas and on possible ways of introducing them.

## II Some Lessons from Past Rural Development Programmes

The concern for proper rural development strategies is nothing new. There are several attempts of rural development made in various parts of the Asian and African countries, many of which are still continuing. It would be a mere caricature to generalise the characteristics of the situations wherein various rural

development strategies are attempted in all these countries. Nevertheless, some important generalisations about types of situations can be made in relation to the : (1) the range of administrative and institutional possibilities; (2) the range of physical environments; and (3) the range of social environments. To illustrate, the following general characteristics of the situations may be identified:

- 1 A widespread poverty, particularly in the rural areas, characterised by low per capita income, high degree of unemployment and under-employment and a low level of nutrition;
- 2 Increasing rate of population growth;
- 3 Dominance of the primary production sector in the economy, i.e. agriculture;
- 4 Dependence of a large majority of population on agriculture and land;
- 5 A relatively low level of technology and low productivity
- 6 A highly imbalanced land-ownership structure with a majority in small/marginal categories of farmers with uneconomic holdings, and/or landless labourers or share croppers, resulting a dominance of subsistence activities;

- 7 Dualistic situations characterized by modern enclaves within traditional economies resulting various unhealthy 'pulls' and 'pushes';
- 8 A traditional social and economic system based on personalized relationships and ascribed status which makes it possible for a small 'elite' group to control major resources and the socialization process.

Given these generalized characteristics, which are present in these countries with varying degrees of emphasis, and notwithstanding the substantial variations in different situations and people involved, we came across instances of relative successes or failures of the attempts of rural development programmes. In all these cases two major categories of mistakes emerge: (1) the tendency to introduce programmes and institutions into a locality without sufficient understanding of their relevance to the needs and capacities of the communities, and (2) to invest projects and programmes with elaborately modern administrative/management structure demanding irrationally from the scarce administrative resources instead of making use of potentially useful local resources and institutions. In other words, there seems to be a little tendency to innovate in organising services and little willingness to delegate responsibility to the local people. On the other hand, some of the most successful

approaches to rural development to date tend to exhibit, inspite of some basis differences in situations and approaches, some fundamentally important characteristics: imagination, devotion to detail, a comprehensive and scientific understanding of the prevailing socio-economic situation, willingness to listen to and learn from the local community and insistence on the stimulus of local initiative. Thus, one of the critical factors which emerges from the past experiences of relative success or failure of rural development programmes is the problem of active support and participation of the local community or the beneficiaries in the implementation and internalization of the rural development programme. It is now increasingly realised that without active association and cooperation of the rural people, the processes of social and economic development programmes in the rural areas do not make much headway and often fail to enlist local participation on a continuing basis. For, a rural development programme in a developing country is not merely meant to accomplish a task or a job efficiently, but more important is the question of how effective it is as a learning process for others, what has been learned, how much of what of it is continued and repeated. Examples are abound when an apparently successful pilot programme has been abandoned by local people as soon as the initiators withdrew or even in the middle of the course. The crucial stage of the acceptance or rejection of a rural development programme, is therefore, the transmittance of learning to the group whose social behaviour is directly and immediately affected by it, Unless this group becomes the carrier of the programme and actively engaged in

behaviour supporting its introduction and continuance, it may never be adapted and repeated. Although, as will be illustrated, some programmes may not take root or may require for their successful adoption continuing external support and interventions, the first and original impact and the responses of the group upon which this impact is exercised occupy a strategic position in the eventual success of the rural development programmes.

### III Introduction of Innovations: The Vehicle for Rural Development Programmes

The question therefore is: how to mobilize rural people to enlist their active support and cooperation in the rural development programmes? The basic problem can be stated in terms of the need to consider how what is brought to a particular group of rural people is integrated into their ways of living, as against the manner in which their established patterns of behaviour are adapted to requirements of a new economic, social and technological system. For, the process of rural development programmes or for that matter any development programme, is essentially an attempt to introduce modern techniques or innovations in order to bring about a change in a desirable directions. In the fields of rural development strategies we may distinguish three classes of innovations: (1) in the area of productive activity such as new techniques of agricultural production, livestock production and industrial production;

(2) in the field of government administrative processes, social and economic organisations and other institutional arrangements and lastly (3) in the field of social welfare activities, notably changes in socio-economic structure, health and educational facilities.

It must be noted, however, that no innovation can be exclusively compartmentalised into any one of these classes, but require for their introduction alterations in more than one field. In other words, all these three classes of innovations are interrelated in the sense that an innovation being thought of purely economic or in the area of productive activity has political or social or administrative implications and vice versa. In fact, lack of widespread use of productive innovations in the developing Asian countries is precisely because of the weaknesses in the socio-economic, administrative and organisational structures prevalent in the society. This becomes strikingly clear in the process of introduction of innovations as a vehicle of rural development strategy, which inevitably introduces new forms of participation in association of a more specialised nature. This kind of participation implies an attack on or even the destruction of local traditional structures and their integrative function. The net result of it is social dislocations, institutional tensions and strains characterised by confrontations and conflicts.



Development implies change in structural relationships which can only be brought about by organisations of more than local nature in order to mobilize people to support the programme. Admittedly, such transformation may be accompanied by chaos and suffering. We often too readily forget the price paid for the development of what are now the economically advanced countries. It is crucial to anticipate the importance and scale of social problems associated with the changes to be attained through rural development programmes as a means to work out the strategy to cushion the impact of these dislocations and tensions and ultimately encourage productive efforts. No process of development can be peaceful and those who advocate the peaceful process of development live in a 'myth'. What is important is to create, sometime deliberately, productive tensions and conflicts instead of dissipating energies in unnecessary non-productive hostilities or harmonies or status quo and then directing and motivating the tensions generated into more productive and creative activities. Again, this is possible only by mobilizing and organising rural people in order to enlist continuing participation in the process of change. And 'participation' in such development process taken on a somewhat special meaning implying stimulating individuals to take the initiative and mobilizing people to work for the overall development plan of the society rather than stimulating them to merely work on their own plans. In other words, this is not

the sort of 'participation' which is obtained by virtually buying it, by making it financially attractive, for individuals or groups to become involved in an enterprise, without too much concern over whether they are very much influenced by it. Neither it is a 'participation' stemming from coercion nor is it a process which is entered into without conviction. The kind of 'participation' of rural people in the rural development programmes that we are talking about here perhaps have all the above mentioned dimensions plus a more important dimension of what Paulo Friere (1972A and 1972B)<sup>1</sup> called 'conscientisation process' meaning a self-reliant commitment of new development styles implying the use of fruits of science and technology as a means to establish not only distributive justice but also to assert the rights and demands of those who are in the greater need of succour in the developing countries. In other words, this 'participation' is obtained through a conscious and emotional commitment to an ideology which not only benefits him but also others like him. It is only through such participation, mobilization of rural people to support a rural development programme can be realized.

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<sup>1</sup> Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin Books, 1972A, and Cultural Action for Freedom, Penguin Books, 1972 B

#### IV Preconditions for Mobilization

How and under what conditions the rural people can be mobilized for active 'participation' in the rural development programmes? The objective conditions which will enhance the possibility of mobilizing and organising the rural people is the prevalence of dissatisfaction among them about the existing situations, - a reaction to inequalities either in the land tenure situation or the social structure or the inequalities of opportunities to utilise resources and technology and particularly to the growth of such inequalities. But it is one thing to have prevalence of inequality, it is a completely different matter to feel dissatisfied to the level that the individual or the group is ready to act on it. Unfortunately, in most situations in Asian countries the rural poor have a vague feeling about the repressed conditions without clear understanding of the constraints and exploitative conditions and the possibilities of changing them. In some cases, they might be aware of the objective conditions, but because they feel structurally bound<sup>2</sup>, they perceive that they cannot redress this unequal power-balance by themselves. This structural boundedness many often blunts the process of their conscientisation and their level of dissatisfaction.

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<sup>2</sup>Young, F.W., "Reactive Subsystems", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 35, No.2, 1970, 297-307.

At this point it is necessary to distinguish 'dissatisfaction' from the familiar concept of felt needs as the basis for mobilising rural people. The concept of felt needs in this context has several shortcomings and in fact questionable. Firstly, felt needs are usually more of a consumptive than of a productive nature and mostly related to personalised problems with less threatening solutions. Secondly, there may be several reasons why rural people who may feel the need to solve a particular problem fail to support actively an action programme designed to attack it: (1) They may lack confidence in their own ability and integrity to solve the problem; (2) The project may be opposed by individuals or groups whose power over them is threatening; (3) They may lack faith in the competence or integrity of the organisers of the project; (4) They may be diverted by their involvement with other problems; (5) The proposed project may be dealing with a phase of the problem that seems unrelated to their interest; (6) The proposed project may be organised in a way that they may feel that their own contribution is unimportant; (7) The objectives of the project may be defined either too broadly or too specifically to coincide with their interests.

On the other hand, the precondition of a level of 'dissatisfaction' which arouses cognitive and emotional readiness to act will necessarily overcome all the above mentioned limitations. The heightened cognitive and emotional commitment to act to remedy the situation will ensure the continued support inspite of all difficulties. But such a level of dissatisfaction as mentioned earlier is rarely obtainable in the rural areas. In most situations, it needs provoked participation and mobilization about which we will come later. For the present, suffice it to say that it seems that even though objective conditions may be bad or gradually worsen, the rural poor will mobilise only when there is hope for some tangible benefit. For the rural poor or the peasants, although sometimes motivated by a great deal of resentment against the existing repressing system, they are on the whole respectful of law and order and the objective conditions psychologically condition them to be highly risk averse and therefore mobilising them for a radical measure advocating a drastic change is extremely difficult unless such measures are seen to lead towards a new desirable just society. What apparently looks like hopelessly apathetic rural mass may be the lack of process of conscientisation to the level that they remain structure-bounded due to simply lack of opportunity to exercise responsibility and take risk.

Other factors which facilitate conscientisation of the rural people in the process of creating preconditions for mobilization

for participation in the rural development programmes are:

- (1) The increasingly important role education and other forms of contact and acquaintance with the world that differs considerably from the traditional frame of reference ;
- (2) Better communication by road and modern means of transport with urban areas ;
- (3) The industrialisation process give many rural people the chance to participate in urban life and new forms of organisation and such people returning to their villages where the potential for new forms of organisation and solidarity increased ;

#### V Provoked Participation and Mobilization

Whatever preconditions there may be for mobilizing rural masses for active support for development programmes, little will happen if they do not realise their position and believe that something can be done about it. 'Class-consciousness' in the Marxian sense is rarely found among the rural mass but this does not mean that there is complete lack of clarity. What is lacking is Paulo Friere's 'conscientisation' or politicisation—a process in which socio-psychological factors play purposeful role in mobilizing and organising themselves around a development programme meant for their own benefit. This last mentioned essential process of

mobilizing rural people happens most often than not by what is mentioned earlier as 'provoked participation'<sup>8</sup>. By 'provoked participation', I mean that better understanding of the existing objective conditions and the possibilities of changing them are stimulated among the rural mass, mostly through the influence of outsiders (external source) and rarely through a charismatic leader from within the community (internal source). Among the external source there are the examples of field-workers of Paulo Friere's Conscientizacao programme in Brazil, political party cadres in China, Vietnam and Indonesia. The social workers, extension agents, other government development agents, Missionaries, voluntary agencies, urban-based organisers, teachers and students, and various specially organised institutions are also the examples of outside stimulators. On the other hand, there are several successful instances of mobilization of rural masses as a result of the almost accidental presence of a charismatic leadership among the rural mass itself: Emiliano Zapata in Mexico, Luis Taruc of Philippines and Jose Rojas of Bolivia are cases in point.<sup>5</sup> But unfortunately such phenomenon of charismatic leadership from within the rural communities is extremely rare to happen and it is not necessary to wait until such things happen. Hence the importance of provoked mobilization from outsiders or external sources which can and do perform similar functions as the

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<sup>5</sup> for detailed descriptions, see, Rodolfo Stavenhagen (ed.), Agrarian Problems and Peasant Movement in Latin America, New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1970, and Luis Taruc, Born of The People, An Autobiography, New York, International Publishers, 1953.

local charismatic leaders. Since it is not possible to wait indefinitely for the appearance of local charismatic leader to mobilize rural people and also because it is not possible to replicate or repeat the charismatic local leadership in various socio-political situations, it becomes necessary to depend on external sources for 'provoked participation'. But the mere fact that these stimulators are outsiders have serious limitations and constraints, at least in the initial period of their mobilizing efforts. Invariably to start with these outsiders encounter stiff resistance and distrust from the villagers. Most often the villagers, not without considerable justification, actively or passively reject an outsider. The rural people, particularly in Asia and Africa (with colonial past), lack basic confidence in the outside agents proposing the change—because of their experience of having been deluded, cheated and exploited in the past. The profound nature of the villagers' distrust to outsider is strikingly portrayed by Leo Tolstoy in his novel, Resurrection, in which the here, the absentee landlord Prince Nekhlyudov offered the peasants his land altogether in an arrangement where the peasants should rent the land at a price fixed by themselves, the rent to form a communal fund for their own use. This was a genuine benevolent offer and the peasants were equally genuinely remained unconvinced.



Here is what Tolstoi has to say:

"The experience of many generations had proved to them that the landlords consider their own interest to the detriment of the peasants. Therefore, if a landlord called them to a meeting and made them some kind of a new offer, it could evidently only be in order to swindle them more cunningly than before".<sup>4</sup>

There is also the constant fear, of the disastrous consequences of failure. For a poor rural family to adopt a technological innovation or to join an organisation or to flight against the repressive landlords or the elites that do not work can mean literally starvation and death. The outsiders, therefore, has to build his credibility to the rural people by proving his trustworthiness and dedication to the cause of the rural masses. In other words, the outsider has to identify himself completely with the rural people by gaining sufficient understanding of their life and culture and with proper empathy as a part of the internal system of the rural society.

This is, of course, easier said than done. As Francisco Juliao

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<sup>4</sup>

Leo Tolstoi, Resurrection, Progress Publishers, 1972, p.293.

(1972)<sup>4</sup>, based on his deep involvement with the rural poor in Brazil, has made these observations:

"It is not enough to reflect on peasants' lot and think of the correct way of liberating him. One is to live with him and share his experience and one must learn to accept him as he is, with all his individualism, impulsiveness and mysticism. There is no other way of winning his support. I speak from my experience, because a life time spent with the peasants - first as a child and later on as a revolutionary, has taught me how to approach him and what language to use to bring him out of shell into bolder and effective attitude". .

What Francisco Juliao observed in Brazil is equally true for the Asian/African countries, perhaps all over the world. This is well documented by HO Chi Minh's four recommendations to his colleagues:

- " a) To help the population in their daily works: husking and milling rice, fetching water and firewood, looking after the children;
- " b) To get acquainted with local customs and habits: to respect strictly all 'taboos' observed in the region and by the family with whom one is staying;

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<sup>4</sup> Francisco Juliao, Cambao - The Yoke, Penguin Books, 1972

- c) To learn the local dialect: to teach the local people to sing, read and write: to win their sympathy, and little by little, to contact revolutionary propaganda; and
- d) To win the peoples' confidence and support through one's correct attitude and good discipline."<sup>5</sup>

The emphasis on discipline and correct attitude is more pronounced in the Chinese Revolution. As early as in 1928, emphatic efforts to enlist the support of the peasantry for the Red Army were made and eleven simple rules of discipline were imposed on the Red Army (in this case, the Red Army was the outside stimulators for mobilization of rural masses). These were as follows:

- 1) Prompt obedience to orders;
- 2) No confiscations whatever from the poor peasantry;
- 3) Prompt delivery directly to the government for its disposal of all goods confiscated from the landlords;
- 4) Replace all doors when you leave a house;
- 5) Return and roll up the straw matting on which you sleep;
- 6) Be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can;
- 7) Return all borrowed articles;

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<sup>5</sup>T.Hodgkin, "The Vietnamese Revolution and Some Lessons", Race and Class, January, 1975.

- 8) Replace all damaged articles;
- 9) Be honest in all transactions with the peasants ;
- 10) Pay for articles purchased ;
- 11) Be sanitary, and especially, establish latrine at a safe distance from peoples' houses.<sup>6</sup>

Thus it has been realised, even during the bitter fight in Chinese Revolution, that a mere identification with the rural masses is not sufficient to enable an outsider Red Army to mobilize support from the rural people: besides proving his trustworthiness and devotion to the cause, he must have a discipline to prove his ability to deal with the power holders against whom the grievances of the peasants are directed.

#### VI Establishing Leadership Through Intervention Techniques

Leadership either from internal source or from external source is essential for provoking mobilization and participation of rural people. On the one hand a strong leadership helps the rural people in their process of conscientisation. On the other hand it facilitates strong identification with the leader resulting solidarity with each other. But there is also a danger in the development of strong leadership as 'fatherly' role, for the

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<sup>6</sup> Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, Pelican Book, 1972, pp.200-201.

mobilizing force may become too dependent on such leadership to be a continued movement in the absence of such leaders. This happened in the case of several rural development programmes because there was no suitable replacement of the charismatic leaders as in the case of Zapata's movement in Mexico after his assassination in 1919 and to some extent also in the case of Huk movement in the Philippines after Luis Taruc surrendered in 1954. The continued mobilization is possible only when a core of new leadership is developed as a deliberate strategy. To that extent it is the responsibility of the initial leaders to stimulate leadership qualities in potential successors. In Japan and Indonesia, for instance, one of the first activities of the outside stimulators was to look for aides both from internal and external sources and to give them a kind of in-service training. In case of China and Vietnam, this process has been methodically followed as an essential strategy to arouse in the rural people enough self-confidence to replace the dependence on the initiating charismatic leaders.

Once the stimulator from external or internal sources establish their identity with the local rural communities and take up a vanguard leadership role, a process of consolidation should follow. It is recognised that to start with helping to achieve

some concrete benefit to the largest number of the rural people in the community is the best way to consolidate the leadership position and also for strengthening the force of mobilizing rural people in support of the various developmental actions to follow.

These concrete benefits may be achieved by the leader through four main intervention techniques depending on the local conditions and situations:

1. Structural interventions, such as, agrarian reforms, reform in the existing social structure such as 'caste' in India etc.
2. Institutional interventions, such as, cooperativization, collectivization, communization, creating special supporting institutions, organisations and associations etc.
3. Technological interventions, such as, introduction of new agricultural technologies and inputs, new processing technologies, new technologies in livestock production and industries etc.
4. Political interventions, such as, politicization in relation to certain ideologies.

It is clear that intervention techniques as broadly categorised above almost follow the categories of innovations as discussed earlier. In other words, the intervention techniques are nothing but the methods by which to provoke participation of the rural

masses in accepting innovations in order to derive some concrete benefits. It must be noted therefore that to derive concrete benefit for the majority of the community there cannot be purely and exclusively any one category of interventions without concomitant interventions in other spheres. The intervention techniques are interdependent in the sense that any one kind of intervention will eventually necessitate other kinds of interventions in order to provoke wider participation and mobilization among the rural people.

Which kind of intervention technique should one choose to start with? This may seem to be a chicken and egg problem. However, in practice it depends on the understanding of the leader of the prevalent objective conditions and the interpretation and evaluation of the conditions made by the leader. Also, it depends on the value-orientation of the leader and his ideological approach, towards the problems of rural development programmes. Given these parameters, an idea germinates in the mind of the leader which points him towards a particular category of intervention technique to start with. At this stage two most interdependent important points of considerations are: firstly, whether the intervention will provoke wider participation and mobilization of the group of rural people for which it is being planned, and second, whether it will bring some desired concrete

benefits to the group. This assessment is generally done by informally discussing the idea of intervention techniques with relevant groups of people, institutions and prominent influential people within the group. After this introductory initiation, the consciousness for need of such intervention are spread within the group and institutions with much more planned and vigorous discussions resulting in some kind of formal or informal community meetings where pros and cons of the intervention techniques are debated. At this stage, the support and help of the influential people in the group as well as the group as a whole are enlisted which may lead to establishment of some kind of organization or association. At first, the form of the organization may remain loosely structured which is expected to take a definite shape and structure once the action programme progresses according to intervention techniques. It is the organisation or association which then collect all relevant data about the group or community in question and its problems, which are again presented and debated in meetings and ultimately a commonly acceptable action programmes are determined and acted upon. The results of the action taken are periodically evaluated according to the objectives and changes or modifications made in the action strategy accordingly.



## VII Implementation of Intervention Techniques

The foregoing step by step procedure in selecting and acting upon a particular intervention techniques may seem to be too idealistic and mechanical. But to a leader who wants to mobilize rural people in support of a development programme these steps are essential and in some way or the other these are followed by such leaders, may not be in the same sequence but keeping the same principles in mind. But, more than anything else, the selection of intervention techniques and the method of implementation of these techniques will depend on the ideological approach of the leader.

There are two basic approaches of implementing intervention techniques : 1) Harmony Model and 2) Conflict Model. In many newly independent Asian and African countries harmony model is often being used for rural and community development programmes as influenced by the so called developed Western Model of development. The basic assumption in the harmony model is that all different interests at the community or regional level can be developed simultaneously. In other words, ideologically this model assumes too optimistically that development can take place and mobilization of the masses is possible without profound social conflict. As in the community development programme in India, this model assumes that the rural people want and can sustain economic progress themselves as soon as

they have been shown its advantages and that the changes must and will come about democratically and through voluntary participation, that is, in response to the 'felt needs' of the villagers. It is also believed in this model that innovations, - be they technological, institutional and structural, - can be introduced in a rural community through proper extension and service activities over a period of time utilising established local leaders, influential people and progressive farmers. A large majority of the rural people may not participate in this innovation-introduction programme, but through democratic influence, demonstration and percolation effects over a period of time the majority can be mobilized to support this programme. All in all, the major assumption in harmony model is of status quo orientation of the social system in which a technological change is certainly favoured but without change of the social and political structure. This is an assumption influenced by Jung's idea of development of individual self, a concept which cannot remain neutral to the objective social conditions in most of the developing Asian and African countries. Asian reality of class, caste, colonial past, feudal and exploitative situations cannot remain unrelated to the kinds of innovations introduced through rural development programmes. This does not mean that this approach of harmony model as enunciated in community development programmes cannot stimulate rural people's awareness and readiness for action in support of the rural development programmes. But in the existing socio-

economic conditions of the developing Asian/African countries this approach has serious limitations and may even become disincentive for mobilizing rural people. For example, when the development programmes are channelled through the established traditional leadership in a community, it is most likely to strengthen their hold over the rural masses thereby reinforcing the exploitative patronage relationships and making the rural mass more dependent on the elites and remain structurally bounded. Even a new and powerful institutional intervention in the form of cooperatives and Panchayats become in the process a vehicle of exploitation and powergaining mechanism in the hands of the richer, traditionally powerful, larger landholders rather than benefiting the rural poor for whom the intervention was originally initiated. Thus, neither the technological intervention nor the institutional intervention is able to prevent the increase of socio-economic differentiation creating potentiality for a bigger social conflict. The United Nations has rightly identified the reasons why the harmonious model of community Development Programmes are so often ineffective in mobilising rural people for its support, without bringing structural change to rural societies controlled by traditional elites. The UN noted, that conflict and disagreement rather than cohesiveness is more true and realistic measure of development of communities and in that way success of community

development.<sup>7</sup> It has been increasingly realised that the potential conflict and confrontation can be the most effective mobilizing force for provoking participation of rural people in support of development programmes.

What is this conflict model? The basic assumption in this model is that the rural poor can be provoked and mobilized only when they are extremely discontented and excited about any concrete event or a situation signifying the potentiality of an acute conflict. In order to identify the potential conflict situation, an organised effort is needed to first evaluate the class contradictions prevailing in the system. Having identified the potential conflict situation, a deliberate escalating actions are to be undertaken first through a conscientisation programme. This is basically an educational and politicisation process utilising certain elements of the rural life and culture (e.g. folk tales, village history, present and past land tenure system, jokes and tales etc.) which are essentially considered as 'counterpoints' to the 'culture of

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<sup>7</sup>United Nations, popular Participation in Development:Emerging Trends in Community Development, New York, 1971, 6 ff.

repression' in which the rural poor live.<sup>8</sup> These counterpoints make the rural poor aware of their position in the society, their rights and in a sense make them class-conscious. Once this happens it becomes relatively easy to organise and mobilise the rural people for the action programme to follow. The very existence of a negative reference group in the form of landlords, rich peasants, money lenders, merchants, urban exploiters, corrupt bureaucrat and officials and all the host of various exploitative elements in the existing social structure fosters a solidarity and cohesiveness among the rural poor, which helps to form their own representative interest group or association. And this interest group or association becomes the mouthpiece for voicing resentment in the open and organise actions to remedy the situation.

The conflict model essentially begins with the structural interventions because in most situations the potential point of conflict lies in the existing socio-economic structure, particularly, in the developing Asian/African countries. The issues such as security of tenancy, better tenancy legislation, sharecropping arrangements which are

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<sup>8</sup>For a detailed discussion on the concept of 'counterpoints' see W.F. Wertheim, Evolution and Revolution, Penguin Books, 1974.

more favourable to tenants, and eventually land reform as the final demand are the conflicting situations usually utilised in the conflict model. There are also important issues which can be utilised for conflict model such as exploitation by moneylenders and merchants, exploitation by higher castes, control over service institutions such as cooperatives, health and educational institutions and other developmental agencies for favourable terms for credit, marketing and supply of essential agricultural and other inputs, bargaining for favourable wage-rates, and exclusive employment programmes for the rural poor. One can go on adding to the list. The important point is to mobilize and organise the relevant groups whose interests are to be served in the model. For example, on the issue of land reform, only the small landholders, the tenants, and the landless labourers should represent in the organisation of the interest group or the association. Obviously, efforts will be made by the traditional rural rich and elite to resist and suppress the growth of such threatening associations and various legal and illegal measures may be taken to scuttle their demand, which in effect will further escalate the process of conflict and accelerate the process of conscientisation and mobilization.

For the leaders or the stimulators, it is always advantageous to take up the specific and concrete cases of abuses, or excesses or grievances. To start with only such steps are undertaken within the existing framework of the law. Petitions are made to the competent authority in the government or in the court, mass meetings are held to rally support for the petition. In most cases initial strategies of action are purposely made non-violent or a form of civil disobedience in the form of strike or demonstrations culminating into a symbolic direct action, such as, occupation of land in the case of land reform issues. These actions are undertaken in order to make it clear to the authority or to the vested interest group the seriousness of the demand.

It is extremely facilitating for the mobilization process if the authority or the government is tolerant and tacitly approve the demands for gaining strength for the rural masses. The case in point is Sukarno's government in Indonesia which we will discuss later.

In the process of activating conflict model, if some demands are fulfilled and benefits accrued to the participant group, the mobilization get an added momentum with the taste of success. On the other hand, if the main initial demands are fulfilled

there is the possibility of losing interest on the part of the participants in continuing mobilization unless various other related issues and actions are brought into focus simultaneously. Similarly, a continued frustration in the fulfillment of demands may leave the participants embittered and resigned to the old situation, which can only be counteracted by a renewed process of 'conscientisation' process. Believers of armed revolution may at this stage like the rural masses be equipped with weapons to defend themselves and their rights.

The conflict model as discussed above may seem to be the familiar Marxian class-struggle. Be that as it may, the important point to note here is the potency of the model in mobilizing rural people at the grassroots for effective and active participation in the rural development programmes. Because it is not only used for escalating class-struggle, but simultaneously also can be channelized for mobilizing and organising rural masses into various other developmental activities.

One of the major problems in this process is to mobilize people into an active organisation or association without which a sustaining participation in the programme and effective results in some activities can not be obtained. Take the case of cooperatives, a major institutional interventions in the rural development programmes. In this case also, conflict model can be very effective.



One of the crucial problems of the cooperatives of the rural poor is the solidarity of the members. The structural characteristics of the rural poor is not homogenous in terms of their immediate interests; the small and medium farmers, the tenants, the landless labourers, the village artisans - all these put together make the rural poor. It is the effective conscientisation process which make them conscious of their unity as a deprived lot or class. But based on this cognitive value a continued and sustained solidarity in participating in an institution like cooperatives sometimes become difficult to achieve. This is particularly true if the economic success of cooperative is inordinately delayed. However, following the conflict model, solidarity can be enhanced by:

- 1) Making it obvious to the individual member that he cannot hope to obtain alone what he can obtain through cooperatives, that is, better results;
- 2) Propagation and spread of solidarity creating values, not by sermonising but by actually demonstrating with rational and scientific information about the future desirability and necessity of cooperation ;

- 3) Social control in the sense that one has to assess the quality and quantity of work done by others in the association;
- 4) If necessary, coercion and material rewards must be used to solicit the desired behaviour in the association.

Once the rational concepts of cooperatives is understood, it is not difficult to incorporate the last two, i.e., social control, and coercion and material reward incentives, in the conflict model in accentuating solidarity. The Chinese and Vietnam experiences are good examples of such convictions.

#### VIII A Comparative Analysis of Some Mobilization Programmes in Five Countries.

Having presented the conceptual framework for mobilization of rural people and two main approaches of implementing the intervention techniques, we may now examine on a comparative basis, some of the experiences of various Asian and African countries.

#### CHINA

On 19 July 1936, Mao Tse-tung told Snow:

"The Chinese revolution, being of bourgeois-democratic character, has its primary task the readjustment of the land problem—the realization of agrarian reform. Some idea of the urgency of rural reform may be secured by referring to figures on the distribution

of land in China today. During the Nationalist Revolution I was secretary of the peasant Committee (department) of the Kuomintang and had charge of collecting statistics for areas throughout twenty-one provinces.

Our investigation showed astonishing inequalities. About 70 per cent of the whole rural population was made up of poor peasants, tenants or part-tenants, and of agricultural workers. About 20 per cent was made up of middle peasant tilling their own land. Usurers and landlords were about 10 per cent of the population. Included in the 10 per cent also were rich peasants, exploiters like the militarists, tax collectors, and so forth.

The 10 per cent of the rich peasants, landlords, and usurers together owned about 70 per cent of the cultivated land. From 12 to 15 per cent was in the hands of the middle peasants. The 70 per cent of the poor peasants, tenants and part-tenants, and agricultural workers, owned only from 10 to 15 per cent of the total cultivated land.

The revolution is caused chiefly by two oppressions - the imperialists and that 10 per cent of landlords and Chinese exploiters".

Mao-Tse-Tung then continued:

"Without confiscating the estates of the landlords, without meeting the main democratic demand of the peasantry, it is impossible to lay the broad mass basis for a successful revolutionary struggle for national liberation. In order

to win the support of the peasants for the national cause it is necessary to satisfy their demand for land.<sup>10</sup>

Here is then the clear and scientific understanding of the prevailing objective conditions in China by the highest authority. The point of conflict in the existing situation was analytically identified as the basis for mobilizing rural people in support of the programme. The immediate basis of support for the Reds was obviously not so much the Marxist's idea of "from each according to his ability to each according to his needs" as it was something enunciated by Dr Sun Yat-sen: "Land to those who till it". Followed from this understanding of the existing conflict situation came the strategy of structural interventions as a technique to mobilize rural people in support of the revolutionary development programmes.

A policy of land reform was promptly set forth, the basic objective of which is, abolishing the system of land ownership based on feudalistic exploitation,

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<sup>10</sup>Edg Snow, op.cit., pp 506-507

enacting the system of land ownership by the cultivators, so as to liberate rural production capacity, to develop agricultural production, and to create a vast market in the country side to make possible the nation's industrialization. The general strategy was to unite the poor peasants, agricultural labourers, and middle peasants and to neutralize the stand of rich peasants so as to isolate the landlords. The central land reform was supplemented by special regulations of land reform for individual regions and with provision of flexibility in implementing the policies.

The details of how the land reform measures were implemented in the villages are elaborately documented in various publications,<sup>11</sup> Essentially, this was implemented by the land reform cadres, the outsider stimulators, composed mainly of student party cadres of urban bourgeois background sent to the villages. The first step of this cadre was to select 'active elements' among the peasants to serve as a core for the organization of the peasants' Association and the new 'Peoples' Militia.

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See, for example, C.K. Yang, A Chinese Village in Early Communist Transition. The MIT Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955.

Simultaneously, the cadres went on with their conscientisation and escalation programme by moving a few peasants into pouring out their woes and their hatred for the rich and the powerful in the village while explaining to the peasants the liberating mission of the party.

With leadership and identify of the outsider stimulator, (i.e., the party cadres) established among the aroused portion of the poor peasants, the stage was set for the first act of land reform, namely for refunds of rent deposits and the excessive portion of rent to the tenants. The reduction of rent and the refund of reduced rent and rent deposit were the initial material enticements.

The process of land reform advanced to another stage, and that is, the identification of landownership and class status of the individuals in the village. Accordingly, the whole rural families were grouped into landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, and farm labourers.

Having defined the class status of the rural families and identified the landlord class, the next act was to force the landlords to surrender all surplus grain, leaving them enough for subsistence until the harvest of the next crop and enough for investment in the next crop. This was done to obtain production capital for the poor peasants and to make sure that the landlords were shown of economic power.

It was at this stage the situation was deemed to be ripe for the confiscation of landlords' land and property and subsequent redistribution to peasants who had 'insufficient or no land'. The land reform process have given the majority the economic status of lower-middle or upper lower middle class - a situation representing a certain improvement for the rural majority over their pre-communist economic conditions, providing immediate benefit to the majority through structural intervention of land reform measures, fulfilled a major criteria of conflict model approach to mobilize rural people in support of other development programmes. However, the initial land reform measures had retained the small family farm economy with all its political and economic limitations which denied a substantial rise in agricultural productivity.

To overcome these limitation a major institutional intervention was made by reorganising the family farm along the collectivist line. A three stage national agricultural programme was intended to make collectivization process a gradual one that would be acceptable to the peasants. The first step was the organization of Mutual-Aid-Teams in order to bring the peasants out of their family farm as a working unit beginning as a seasonal organization and later be transformed into a year round team. The second step was the consolidation of groups of successful year-round teams into a lower or elementary Agricultural Producers' Cooperative in which

the land was pooled and farmed as a collective unit, but with each member retaining the ownership of his land and remunerated partly according to his labour and partly according to his proportionate share of that part of the yield set aside for the recognition of land ownership. Members were also required to transfer to collective ownership their heavy farm equipment and draft animals, and receive appropriate compensation from the cooperative. The third and final step was the transformation of these elementary producers' Cooperatives into a higher or Advanced Agricultural Producers' Cooperative which in effect was a full-fledged collective farms. In this set up, private ownership of land was abolished and a member would be rewarded only by the quality and quantity of his labour.

This process of institutional intervention in the form of complete national collectivization was effected mainly in the compressed time-schedule of the three year period of 1955-57, especially the year 1956. Chou En-lai, the Communist premier reported: "By the end of June 1956 a total of 992,000 agricultural producers' cooperatives have been organised throughout the country. Their members make up 91.7 per cent of the country's peasant households; those joining cooperatives of the higher type constitute 62.6. per cent of all



peasant households."<sup>11</sup> By the spring of 1957, although consolidation of smaller units reduced the total to 752,113 cooperatives, with 93.3 per cent of all farm households in the nation, belonging to the higher type and only 3.7 per cent belonging to the lower type, these cooperatives comprised 118,908,965 peasant households or 97 per cent of the nation's total.<sup>12</sup> This was indeed a glorious achievement in mobilizing the rural masses. It was certainly the result of enormous determination and confidence of the communist leaders who were seasoned in mobilizing millions of people into different political and military organizations in their long struggle for power. But in the changed context, when there was no more the single focus on winning the battle, this successful mobilization of the rural mass through institutional interventions of collectivization was largely possible for the initial support ensured through the structural interventions of land reform.

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<sup>11</sup>Chou En-lai, Report on the Second Five Year Plan, delivered to the Chinese Communist Party Eighth National Congress on September 16, 1956. New China News Agency, Peking, Sept 20, 1956.

<sup>12</sup>"China's APC Achieved Great Results in Past Six Months", New China News Agency, Peking, July 4, 1957.

In this great transitional process there was of course widespread difficulties and shortcomings which were not unexpected and which were overcome by modification and rectification of strategies keeping the final aim of collectivization intact. Political pressure and propaganda were employed along with other policies to stabilize the cooperatives. Coercion was not the only means by which these cooperatives were stabilized. As a strategy of propaganda one of the major techniques used to raise agricultural production teams was the emulation campaign to stimulate greater labour exertion. This campaign mainly rested on the collective participation of the mutual aid teams, with one team setting up a quota of production per mow as a challenge to other teams. Similarly, mutual aid teams were instrumental in the selection of 'model labourers' who were propagandized as local heroes for their personal achievements at farm work. On the other hand large state farms were set up in different regions partly to demonstrate how large farm units should operate and what were its economic and technological advantage.

It was through these cooperative organizations major technological interventions were implemented in order to increase agricultural and industrial production. The members of these cooperatives were collectively spurred to collect more fertilizer, improve

water control and irrigation works, and adopt new methods of cultivation such as using better high-yielding variety seeds and close-planting of rich seedlings. A leading measure was the expansion of cultivated land through reclamation by collective labour and land site could be easily provided to construct the long-deferred hydraulic projects which expanded the double-crop areas. Similarly, more credit supply were mobilized by organizing credit cooperatives and through Peoples' Bank at a low rate of interest.

Simultaneously, several interventions were made in the sphere of social welfare in order to mobilize rural masses. The new marriage law, for example, granted women a higher status in the family and in society than before: and the new legal freedom of divorce gave them the security, status and rights. Womens' Association was formed which became a very popular organisation for the women.

One significant phase of educational interventions was the introductions of a large number of short term training courses set up for peasant leaders in various types of political and economic projects.

Several other organizations were created among the peasantry which what the Communist Party called three-in one: economic, political and cultural in their utility. Thus, in the field of recreation, the village theatrical groups were organised and the 'rural opera troupes' were sent to the countryside. Youth League and Young Pioneers group were organised which took interest in the

participation type of recreation, which were vigorously introduced.

The above list can be lengthened immeasurably. The important point to note here is that the breathless pace of development in mobilizing rural masses in support of the various interventions was made possible basically through the use of conflict model which began with the structural interventions of land reform. There was of course the alround official support ensuing from the policies of the Communist Party of China and its administrative wing and a deliberate attempt to enforce militarization of life through militia enforcing military disciplines. Be that as it may, the Chinese model ideally represents the conflict model approach for mobilizing rural masses in support of development programmes.

#### INDONESIA

One of the striking mobilization programmes in Asia was launched by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) through organizing an Indonesian Peasant Front, Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI).

The strategy of the PKI was set out to implement a more peaceful variant of Mao Tse-tung's conflict model.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> for detailed account of PKI's movement, see, Donald Hindley, The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951-1963, University of California Press, 1964; and W.F. Wertheim, 'Indonesia Before and Aft Uniting Corp.,' Pacific Affairs, Vol.39, Nos. 1-2, 1966, pp.115-12f.

From the time in 1950-51 when the PKI was reconstructed after Madiun debacle of 1948, it laid emphasis upon the importance of an 'agrarian revolution' in Indonesia to free the peasants of 'feudal remnants' in socio-economic relations. Its activities in the villages during the fifties were mainly of a welfare type, with a relatively undifferentiated appeal, but it also set out patiently to lay the basis for a more vigorous mobilization of the rural masses against village inequalities by making propaganda against landlordism, the onerous terms of share-cropping arrangements, the low level of agricultural wages, and the high interest rates charged on private loans to the poorer peasants. This is the period of conscientisation process during which the BTI activists systematically studied folklore and culture, the present and past tenure system and understood the background of the peasants' grievances and the forms of expression that were generally tolerated by the establishment.

Consequently, the PKI adopted the conflict model approach through the familiar land reform or structural interventions and this was viewed as a necessary stage in mobilizing the poor and middle peasantry behind still more radical rural development programmes. To the PKI, the necessary basis for rural development is collectivization and not land reform. Yet, the PKI chose to present land reform to the peasant in terms which perhaps exaggerated the socio-economic benefits following merely the familiar political practice in mass mobilization. In other words, the PKI was well aware of

the limitation of land reform under which it can operate as the basis of rural development in Indonesia, particularly, in Java where the PKI initiated its programme. The limitations were the weak base of social cleavage characterised by a situation where landlordism was a marginal economic phenomenon, the average size of landholdings miniscule and the degree of landlessness distressingly high.<sup>12</sup>

One major factor determining the choice of land reform as an issue around which to mobilize the peasantry was that, as an official government policy from 1960, it provided legal umbrella under which the party could activate the peasants against those village and extra-village groups which exploited them.

The PKI turned its attention seriously to the villages in April 1959 which contained two objectives: to place the local party and peasant league activists (local organisation created around the strongest grievances by the PKI which varied for each village or area), leaderships firmly in the hands of the village poor, and to sow class consciousness and agitation in the villages. The

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<sup>12</sup>See G.J.Pauker, "Political Consequences of Rural Development Programmes in Indonesia," Pacific Affairs, XLI (Fall 1968).

See also, Clifford Geertz, Agricultural Involutions: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1963. Geertz seems to have underplayed the potentiality of exploitative element in the villages which might be grown into significant fact of social conflict under the impact of political and technological change.

sharecropping law passed by the government in 1959 proved useful in this regard. It enabled the PKI to mobilize the peasants in those areas where the share terms were more unfavourable (or not followed) and popularize its more radical demand of 60:40 share in favour of the sharecropper. At the same time, the PKI realised that the mobilization of the peasants would be facilitated by linking the two officially sanctioned reforms with respect to sharecropping arrangements and land reform on the one hand and other common forms of exploitation of poor and landless peasants within the village nexus.

Between 1959 and 1964, this linkage was effected under the slogan of the "Six Goods", which directed Party and Peasant League Cadres to campaign for lower land rents, reduction of interest on money borrowed, and higher wages for agricultural labourers, as well as the promotion of higher productivity and heightened political consciousness among the poor village strata.

As a strategy, small but successful actions were considered to be the best. Actions directly affecting the relationships with the landowners were not undertaken until the local organization had gained sufficient strength to withstand, after which demands for joint land-rent agreements or for lower interest rates or lower rents were made.

As the rural masses became conscientised and the outside stimulators in the form of party cadres established their identity and credibility the new leaders were able to capture in an election the positions of village heads (lurahs) and higher positions in the local government. In fact, through this process, in several areas in Central Java, BTI or PKI leaders gradually took over official positions.

By September 1964, BTI membership came to 8.5 million. This growing strength provoked strong response by the armed forces, but President Sukarno tried to keep the balance for political expediency and accepted the PKI demand for land reform.

A Land Reform Law was promulgated in 1960, but its implementation was slow and defective which made the BTI more militant in their strategy. In 1963, Aidit, the Secretary General of the PKI, endorsed and encouraged the so-called "unilateral movement". It is difficult to assess whether this direct action was instigated by the PKI or a spontaneous reaction of the organised peasants to doubtful practices of the landowners, such as eviction or ineffective implementation of land reform laws. Whatever may be the background reasons, the PKI became militant. The usual tactic was to occupy land to which landless peasants were entitled according to law. In August 1964 President



Sukarno more or less endorsed the movement and measures were taken to drastically accelerate the stagnant land reform programme.

The whole process generated an enormous amount of peasant inventiveness, self-help and organisational activity. In material terms, about half a million peasants benefitted peacefully from land reform in the second half of 1964. However, after October 1965 when a military regime came to power after an abortive coup by leftist officers, the mobilization of rural masses became violent and hundreds and thousands of peasants, peasant leaders and BTI cadres were liquidated and the mobilization became virtually non-existent.

The BTI's mobilization strategy seems to be almost a copybook presentation of a conflict model. It may not be successful in its ultimate objective, but it was certainly able to mobilize peasants on a mass-scale particularly in Java with strong dominance of traditions and respects for harmony and established leadership.

In contrast to PKI's mobilization programme, the present Suharto's Government took up the programme of mobilizing the rural people through technological interventions particularly for expanding rice production.

This programme has been greeted as success by many because the increased productivity achieved is seen as the principal ingredient of rural development.<sup>13</sup>

But as happened with the technological intervention of "green revolution" in many other Asian countries such as India, it further created and widened the socio-economic differentiation between the 'haves and have-nots' and thereby creating more favourable potential conditions for radical populist movement based on conflict model.

#### TANZANIA

Tanzania's Ujamaa village programme is a bold attempt to tackle mass mobilization for rural development. The original ujamaa programme affected approximately 15 per cent of Tanzania's population in the period of 1967-63. The more recent programme of villagisation initiated in 1974 had grown out of the experiences of the original ujamaa programme and it had, while not yet completed, touched on the life of approximately half of Tanzania's population.

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<sup>13</sup>See, Heinz Arndt, "Indonesia - Five years of New Order", in Australia and Asia: Economic Essays, Canberra, 1975.

But Tanzania's ujamaa programme is not in response to intensive class conflict within the society. President Nyerere was highly impressed by the Chinese rural development programme based on people's communes and ujamaa programme is sometimes referred to as a modified version of the Chinese model. In effect, however, ujamaa programme represents a deliberate choice made within a narrow circle of policy-makers and subsequently carried to the rural people. Ujamaa programme is basically a process of mobilizing the rural people in support of a revolutionary socialist development programme without the preconditions of class conflict that facilitated the implementation of such policies in countries like China, North Korea and North Vietnam. As a result, ujamaa programme could not acquire the basic approach of the Chinese model, that is, the conflict model, but remained, by large, a harmony model approach closely related to the approach of India's Community Development Programmes as referred earlier in this article. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, Ujamaa programme aimed at a structural change employing structural interventions of a profound nature.

The official juamaa policy as launched in 1967 had the following principles:

- a) people should live together;
- b) they should own the means of production jointly;
- c) they should work together;
- d) they should share their fruits of labour equally.

It was an extension of the old African principle of Ujamaa (familiarity) that President Nyerere had already incorporated into his political rhetoric in order to mobilise people by reviving and idealising the communalistic principles of the past. But to many it remained a mere extension of the idea in the sense of 'cultural ideological mystification'. Because, traditionally ujamaa referred to the organisation within an extended family unit, and for cooperation with other people in the neighbourhood there was the concept of ujima which did not mean common ownership of the means of production but mutual aid effected by social sanctions and ceremonies. Thus, there was a wide difference between the new ujamaa programmes and the old traditional concept of ujamaa and ujima.

The ujamaa programme then aimed at two radical changes in the social structure of rural Tanzania: first, extending the practice of ujamaa beyond the narrow circle of extended family and second, opposing and avoiding the growing process of social differentiation in the countryside. It must be noted that the nature of the ujamaa programme was influenced by some specific events in the immediate post-independent period. Firstly, advised by the foreign donors the Tanzania government started a programme of village settlements together with social services and introduction of capital-intensive agricultural production techniques. The costs of these schemes limited the total number of settlements and thereby the benefits. By 1965-66, the government became disillusioned and the ujamaa programme was launched as a child of the charismatic leader, President Nyerere which stood a

greater chance of gaining legitimacy in the countryside and becoming a mass movement. Secondly, the ujamaa programme was introduced as a challenge to the cooperative movement which had been subject to special commission of enquiry in 1966.<sup>14</sup> This cooperative movement was plagued by mismanagement and monopolised by the petty traders and Kulak farmers, which the ujamaa programme intended to rectify by a radical structural intervention.

Thus, it was not true that in the prevailing objective conditions in Tanzania there was no point of conflicts in the form of socio-economic differentiations. Certainly, such differentiation and exploitative situation was not as widespread as in China or in Vietnam and the rural Tanzanian people were not probably as conscious of the situations as in China or Vietnam. That there was the socio-economic differentiation and the potential of the emergence of antagonistic classes in rural Tanzania was clearly perceived by the President Nyerere:

"But the moment such a man (a larger farmer) extends his farm to the point where it is necessary for him to employ labourers in order to plant or harvest the full acreage, then the traditional

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<sup>14</sup>Report of the Presidential Committee of Enquiry into Cooperative Movement and Marketing Boards, Government Printer, Dar es Salaam, 1966.

system of ujamaa has been killed.... Thus we have the beginnings of a class system in the rural areas. As land becomes scarce we shall find ourselves with a farmers' class and labourers' class."<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the potentiality of class conflict on socio-economic differentiation started during the very early period of European colonisation through the introduction of cash crops and commercialization of agriculture. The principle of ujima or mutual aid declined sharply with the introduction of cash crops. Well-to-do farmers could solve bottlenecks by hiring labour. Thus in 1967 in Tanzania's Geita District only 30 per cent of the farmers depended on mutual aid in agricultural production and in the adjacent cotton-growing Sukuma-land proper, 77 per cent of the farmers used hired labour by 1977.<sup>16</sup> Dependence on hired labour was common in all the major cash-crop growing areas in Tanzania.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See President Nyerere, Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism, Dar es Salaam, Oxford University Press 1968.

<sup>16</sup> See Victor Uchenda, "Traditional Work Groups in Economic Development" East African Universities Social Science Conference, Dar es Salaam, 1970; and M.P. Collinson, "The Economic characteristics of the Sukuma Farming System", Economic Research Bureau Paper, University of Dar es Salaam, 1972.

<sup>17</sup> See Manuel Gottlieb "The Process of Differentiation in Tanzanian Agriculture and Rural Society", Economic Research Bureau Seminar Paper, University of Dar es Salaam.

Not only differentiation arose because of cash crop introduction, but a more serious differentiation took place during colonial administration with deliberate efforts of the settlers to keep certain areas 'under-developed' in order to obtain in regular cheap labour supply and also to avoid competition from peasant producers. The underdeveloped Kigoma Region, Dodoma Region as compared to the developed Kilimanjaro, Arusha and West Lake regions are the clear examples of regional differentiation.

It is with this understanding at the highest policy-makers' level, the ujamaa programme was launched with the following policy guidelines:<sup>18</sup>

- 1) It is a programme for social as well as technical transformation;
- 2) It is meant to apply to all parts of the country;
- 3) It is meant to move towards ujamaa in all possible fronts rather than a 'selective approach' of providing a high level of service to a small number of ujamaa communities;

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<sup>18</sup> See President Nyerere, Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism, op.cit., United Republic of Tanzania, Tanzania Second Five Year Plan for Economic and Social Development 1st July 1969- 30th June 1974, Dar es Salaam, Govt. Printer, 1969; and Presidential Circular No. 1 of 1969, "The Development of Ujamaa Villages" Dar es Salaam, 1969.

- 4) The policy set itself firmly against the bureaucratic authoritarianism of colonial 'regulations' and the 'close supervision' of settlements and aimed at implementation 'by persuasion not force' and through partly spontaneous movement. The initiative for ujamaa can be taken by anyone, not necessarily by the Government or TANU<sup>19</sup> official;
- 5) Within ujamaa communities, the people should run it themselves and the Government or TANU officials should only help them to run;
- 6) The ujamaa villages must grow through the efforts of their own members on the principle of self-reliance, not dependent on external source.

All these guidelines are certainly radical enough to mobilize rural people but the changes in method and organizations are not so in practice. In fact, whatever popular energy and enthusiasm there was initially, largely evaporated in implementing the ujamaa programme.

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<sup>19</sup>Tanzanivika African National Union, the only permitted political party.



TANU originally issued directive of a gradual threephase process of ujamaa village development: The first phase was to make people move together, allowing them to build their houses and start cultivating their private plots. The second phase consisted of initiation and development of collective production. The third began when surplus production was so high that the village should be registered as a cooperative society.

The implementation of the programme, however, hardly followed this trend. The actual campaigns, which have been mounted have been largely bureaucratic in tone with constant emphasis on the quantitative expansion of the programme. Every new village started has been taken as an indication of TANU's capacity to mobilise the population. And, in terms of numbers, the ujamaa programme has grown astonishingly, mostly in the overpopulated poorer areas producing mainly food crops. It is no coincidence, therefore, that by mid-1974 only 399 ujamaa village had been registered as cooperative societies.

The creation of new ujamaa villages has only in some cases been spontaneous. In most cases they have come about on the initiative of the party or government officials.

Although direct administrative compulsion was not relied upon in the early phase of ujamaa, officials tended to persuade by promises of government provided funds and services. In these circumstances, ujamaa villages were often over-capitalized and provided, in advance, with social facilities, and are consequently prone to dependent attitude and to commandism.<sup>20</sup> In some cases, the progressive well-to-do farmers in the developed region like Kilimnjaro, Arusha and Lushoto appropriated the name of ujamaa in order to obtain more land and other social facilities.

There is not clear evidence that, as in China during the 1950's, communal production has been given due importance in the ujamaa programme. On the contrary, by 1973, in many ujamaa villages, peasants reverted to private cultivation only. An attempt to improve village discipline by applying the local militia organisation to agricultural production was unsuccessful.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> President Nyerere made some of these observations in a report to the TANU National Conference in September 1971.

<sup>21</sup> Bugengo, "Ujamaa in Mara Region", East African Universities Social Science Conference, Dar es Salaam, 1973.

Although many committed young cadres volunteered to work in ujamaa villages, it became increasingly difficult to involve youths in ujamaa activities even after giving them training. Existing social norms have also prevailed in the election of leaders, most often the well-to-do villagers, simply as patrons and protectors to mediate with superior authorities, not for mobilizing or supervising the fellow villagers.

Under the parental authority of TANU and the strong direction of and intervention in ujamaa village development by the regional authorities the villages became increasingly dependent on the state bureaucracy expecting constant assistance and protection. The bureaucracy also very often failed to respond because of its own inadequacies and the sheer size of the ujamaa programmes.

The whole programme remained an imposition from outside. But unlike the Chinese experiments, the outsiders remained mostly alien distrusted elements in the eyes of the peasants because very little attention was given by the outsiders to the local conditions. The peasants knew that any minor disaster might push them to penury. These bureaucrat outsiders hardly worked from within the villages. Neither there was any conscientisation programme carried out by the party cadres or the bureaucrats making the villagers aware of the situation and their rights.

Certainly in the light of Tanzania's strong commitment to self-reliance, it is surprising that self-help has not played a greater part in ujamaa development. There was too little emphasis on the actual cooperative organisation of production and also some avoidance of how one promotes cooperative activities among those who have not spontaneously expressed their interest in ujamaa. Only occasionally have existing structural inequalities been tackled. Thus the ujamaa programme rarely reduced the inequality among the peasants. The existence, in many cases the prevalence of private individualized farming in the ujamaa villages, and poor work organisation and leadership have undermined the original socialist basis of mobilizing rural people. The result was a vicious circle breeding passivity in the villagers and frustration among party and government officials.

The strategy of mobilizing rural people in Tanzania through ujamaa programmes resemble to the ideas expressed by Gandhi and Nehru in the first years of Indian independence, which is basically the harmony model as enunciated in the Community Development Programmes.<sup>22</sup>

But a mere bureaucratic method is extremely inadequate, to tackle the problem of structural change.

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<sup>22</sup>R. Braibanti and JJ Spenzler, Administrative and Economic Development in India, University of North Carolina Press, Durham, 1963.

This is perhaps now realized by the Tanzanian Government. The Radio Tanzania news commentary on New Year's Eve, 1974 claimed very bluntly that peasants were inherently conservative and to change have to be pushed by other forces in society. Thus, the current strategy of mobilizing for development in the rural areas presupposes an element of coercion along with provision of welfare amenities, surveillance by the party organisation and education of the peasants in the official policy. It is certainly a departure from the original strategy of ujamaa programme.

#### BANGLADESH

One of the few successful attempts of mobilizing rural people for rural development programmes in the developing nations through a harmony model is what is familiarly known as Comilla programmes of Bangladesh. Beginning with experimental activity by the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development in 1959 in villages of Comilla Thana, in what was then East Pakistan, a new system of institutional-cum-technological interventions were developed to mobilize rural people in support of a development programme. In the words of the charismatic Director of the Academy, Akhter Hameed Khan:

"What we are trying to evolve here is a pattern for ..... future administration.....at the Thana level. It is our primary aim. We are not engaged in a little experiment. It is by no means an academic exercise. It is not simply a research project. It is an attempt to find out what can be done to bring about the soundest and quickest economic and social development".<sup>23</sup>

The Comilla Academy for Rural Development was conceived and set up by the government of the then Pakistan in 1959 as an in-service training and research station for public officials responsible for rural development programmes. Fortunately, as a result of the pilot programmes undertaken by the Academy-faculty in the restricted area of Comilla-Thana, a number of rural development programmes were subsequently adopted by the government departments for use throughout the nation.

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Akhter Hameed Khan, "The Basic Principles of the Comilla Program" mimeographed (East Lansing: Michigan State University, - MSU Pakistan Project, 1963).

Basically, Comilla approach for mobilizing rural people for rural development resembles in almost all respects the harmony model of the Community Development Programmes. The felt needs formed the starting point for mobilizing rural people of Comilla Thana for programme planning and administration; strong emphasis was given on organization of cooperatives; and participation in the programme on the part of the beneficiaries was purely voluntary with varying amounts of persuasion, education, and extension efforts.<sup>1</sup>

But the Comilla programme differs in certain emphasis from the Community Development Programmes. In this programme heavier emphasis was placed on the technological interventions through voluntary cooperative organisations with more rigorous demands and sanctions on the participants to follow the agreed-upon policies and procedures. Also, the Comilla programme was basically experimental in nature in the sense that the new ideas were tested in the laboratory area which were, depending on the results, either dropped or modified or adopted in to before being expanded elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup>For a detailed account of the Comilla approach, see, A.I.Raper, Rural Development in Action: The Comprehensive Experiment at Comilla, East Pakistan, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1970.

The Comilla programme which started basically with the idea of development programmes for the small farmers, became an inter-supportive comprehensive rural development programmes relating to food production, family planning, womens' welfare, public works and irrigation and the involvement of both the private and public sectors.

Before coming to the actual operational strategy of the Comilla programme, let us briefly look at the existing situation of Comilla Thana at the time the Academy started its development programme. Comilla Thana is one of the most densely populated area in Bangladesh with approximately 2031 per square mile (rural population of 163,000). The average number of acres per farm family was merely 1.7 acres with largest concentration in the farm size below 5 acres. About 20 per cent of the total rural population in Comilla Thana was landless. Summer monsoon rice was grown on about 90 per cent of the acreage of cultivated land in the Comilla area. During the dry, winter season only about 5 per cent land was cropped.



Thus rice production was highly dependent on nature's gift of monsoon characterised by uncertainty of the arrival and cessation of the monsoon and to variable flood levels in the immense river delta. Flood conditions in the Comilla area were complicated by 500-year-old levee system on the Gomti River ("Comilla's Sorrow") which caused serious damages to crops, roads and villages every year due to breaches of its levees. Little new technology was used by the farmers. The usually high interest rates of 40-100 per cent from moneylenders prevailed in Comilla Thana. The physical and psychological isolation of the villagers has resulted in a tightly knit social structure causing extreme forms of exploitations and increasing indebtedness. The villagers have been adjusting to these situations with sharp decline in their standards of livings, particularly the small owner farmers who happen to be the majority in the area. In fact, whole development situation in Comilla thana could be described as small scattered-farm, owner-operated, traditional agriculture which were making the living conditions harder and harder every year and they were increasingly becoming restive.

The Comilla programme started within the above mentioned situations with its main focus on the small farmers. The

strategy worked out by the Academy was basically institutional interventions cum technological interventions. There was no attempt to confront the socio-economic structure directly. The conditions in Comilla thana was largely the same as it could be observed in many parts of the developing Asian countries. The Comilla Programme chose a strategy for mobilizing the rural people for development, not by disturbing the prevailing structure following a conflict model, but by a techno-institutional interventions following the harmony model.

The three models of these interventions developed by the Academy were: 1) A new type of effective cooperative credit system as a form of improved organization for the supply of more profitable new technology to the small farmers; 2) The improvement of rural government system effecting a close coordination and integration of government bureaucracies, the people and the Academy; 3) an academy for rural development providing continuous training and research facilities along with its advisory services. It should be noted that the Academy enjoyed active government support and approval for its programmes and to that extent it was similar to Tanzania's ujamaa or many other officially sponsored community development programmes in various countries.

But how did the Academy implement these interventions for mobilizing rural people? The general methodological approach for implementation, as mentioned earlier, was limited largely to improved organisation of people (cooperatives) for the supply of more profitable new technology to farmers. This was achieved by strictly following the principle: "Listening to villagers with respect and understanding". The rigour with which this principle was initially followed by the Academy almost resemble the party cadres of the Conscientisation programme in the Conflict model of China and Indonesia described earlier. Although the village conditions and the problems were very well known by the director, Mr. Khan, a great restraint was exercised in developing a blueprint and prescribing it. Instead, a systematic consultation with village groups and leaders was made. The director and the faculty members intensively toured the villages and held informal talks. Representative leaders and groups - farmers, religious leaders, potters, artists and others were invited to the Academy for long discussions of problems. In the process, small effective technological changes, such as, line sowing, composting, and seed selection, which were within the means of the small farmers and also which could give convincing benefits, were introduced. The process of introducing simple

technologies and finding them beneficial had built up enormous trust and confidence for the Academy among the people. It was this credibility and confidence which was shared later by the bureaucrats when they were associated with the Academy-advised programmes. The central need as evolved in consultation with the villagers was for organizing cooperatives basically for the creation of capital through savings. The broad principles of the cooperative movement - savings, educational meetings, joint planning and action - were adopted even though the past record of local cooperatives in the area was a dismal failure without any regular savings, very low repayment rate and controlled by a few rich peasants.

The process of institutional interventions in the form of cooperative organization was dealt realistically with local conditions and took care to hold the interest and cooperation of villagers and officials. The cooperative organization was therefore formed around a technological innovation meeting a high felt-needs. Use of low-lift pumps for irrigation in the dry seasons for enhancing production of winter rice and winter potato became a very useful innovation in organising cooperatives

at the initial stage. The membership of the agricultural cooperatives was made up almost wholly of the smaller and middle-sized farmers. The larger farmers with 5 to 10 acres usually leased out their lands and often were moneylenders and therefore had no interest joining the cooperative.

The Academy never attempted to force the membership among the rural people. In fact, the idea of compulsory cooperativization and consolidation of holdings were rejected with a view that these measures would "create strong discontent among the people".<sup>24</sup>

The systematic accumulation of membership savings was the primary goal of the new cooperative movement from the very start, then creditworthiness and then loans. Considering the fact that the majority of the villagers were heavily burdened with debts with almost no money income, the Academy's suggestion for regular membership savings looked impossible and queer. In fact, regular savings was taken as a criterion of discipline which tested the willingness of the villagers in participating in this programme.

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<sup>24</sup> Report on Mechanization in Cultivation through Cooperatives and Block farming, Rawalpindi, Ministry of food and Agriculture, Government of Pakistan Press, 1961.

What was important to note in Comilla programme was the discipline and rigour with which these conditions were evaluated. The conditions for the villagers were;<sup>25</sup> 1) They should choose a chairman from among the more elderly and respected members of the group whose position would be largely honorary; (2) Organize itself and become a registered cooperative society; (3) Hold weekly meetings with compulsory attendance of all members; (4) Select a trusted younger, active man from the group and send him to the Academy once a week for training who should become organizer and teacher of the group; (5) Keep proper and complete records; (6) Do joint production planning; (7) Use supervised production credit; (8) use improved agricultural practices and skills; (9) Make regular cash and in kind savings deposits; (10) Join the central cooperative federation; and (11) regular member education discussions.

As the local cooperatives become better organized, the model farmer was selected who emerged as the second most important person in the village cooperative and was trained once in a week in the Academy.

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<sup>25</sup>H.W.Fairchild and M Zakir Hussain, A New Rural Cooperative System for Comilla Thana (Second Annual Report, 1962), Comilla, PARD, July 1962, pp.14-15.

The Cooperative movement initially restricted itself to agriculture sector only, gradually it covered many non-agricultural service sectors, eg. rickshaw pullers, weavers, potters, small traders, tailors etc. The cooperative model developed by the Academy was essentially a two-tier system including a primary village cooperative with a maximum of 60 members and a Thana Central Cooperative Association.

The rural people were mobilized by the Academy staff through a persuasion and educational process in which positive uses have been made of cultural factors, such as, Friday meeting of the men at the local mosque was the precedent for the weekly training of village leaders at the Academy; traditional folksingers who make up their own songs were used to promote new programmes. Also it should be noted that the Academy programme did not disturb the leadership power structure of the villages as a policy of non-intervention in the structure, rather it worked with the existing traditional leadership-power structure and thereby even strengthening their positions. The same process was followed in the case of the rural government model, designed by the Academy. Many often these traditional leaders were the usual exploiters of the villagers and comprised of vested interest group of relatively richer

people with extreme self interest. These were the people who also became the head of the project committee in the village when Academy started through the new rural government two important programmes, public works and irrigation. In many instances, these leaders tried to exploit through malpractices and defeat the whole purpose of these development programmes. The Academy was, however, very strict in the sense that any such instances was dealt with immediately and if necessary the particular programmes were stopped. In the Comilla programmes, many programmes had to be abandoned at different stages of operation because of the misdeeds of these so-called leaders. As mentioned earlier in this paper, this was one of the crucial limitation of the harmony model of community development programmes, Whatever might be the limitations, the Academy did achieve a spectacular result in the cooperative movement over the years and which was expanded in other parts of Bangladesh as a part of the national programme. However, this point should be noted that the landless villagers were very little served by the cooperative system.



The beginnings of the Comilla Academy coincided with the Pakistan Governments' declared plan for Basic Democracies under the strong central leadership of the Field Marshall Ayub Khan. The Academy soon got involved in developing a model of administrative system for local planning and implementation of the development programmes. With the establishment of the 5-tiered basic democracies system of government, the thana became the second lowest level of government administration with the village and union as the lowest. The institutional interventions which the Academy proposed for improvement in the rural government system were three kinds of coordination: 1) of different programmes at the Thana level, 2) of departmental efforts with those of the lowest level of government - the union, and 3) of programmes involving a number of unions.<sup>26</sup> Thus, with these three institutional intervention for coordination, the Comilla Thana Council was reorganized involving Academy staff, bureaucratic representatives of the nation-building government departments and the elected representatives from the union level, that is, local political leadership. The methodological approach

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<sup>26</sup> A.K.M. Mohsen, The Comilla Rural Administration Experiment: History and Annual Report 1962-63 (Comilla: PARD, 1963), p. 12.

of working in the Thana Council was the same as the Cooperative movement in the sense that it was based on patient listening, joint discussions and joint decision making among the functionaries with special emphasis on the views of the local village leaders, that is, the Union Council representatives. In 1963, within less than four years of operation of the reorganised Thana Council, a new institutional intervention was made in which the cooperatives joined with the Thana Council to form the Comilla Thana Training and Development Centre (TTDC). In TTDC all the thana representatives of the various government departments concerned with development were brought together in one location for the first time, on the Academy campus. This continuous association of the officials with the Academy staff in teaching, training, and implementation of the programmes had immeasurably increased the trust and credibility of the bureaucrats in the eyes of the villagers.

In many ways, the new rural government developed by the Comilla Programme resembles the Panchayati Raj System in India except the fact that it was experimentally worked out in a limited area of Comilla Thana under the close guidance and supervision of the Academy and strict adherence to the principles and methods of working, which helped unlike the Panchayati Raj System in India, mobilizing support of the rural people.

As the Thana Council became more effective, two significant development programmes were initiated under the leadership of the Thana Council : 1) the rural works programme providing employment to a large number of villagers in the slack work - season and developing various infrastructural facilities such as, roads, embankment, drainage canals, flood control methods etc;<sup>27</sup> 2) the thana irrigation programme for providing water for cultivation all the year round through lift-pumps and tubewells and some major projects such as "Sonaichari Irrigation Project", The project was planned jointly after a through and lengthy discussions in the Thana Council and was implemented through a Project Committee which was locally organized headed by the union council member resident in the area.

These two development programmes achieved substantial results both in terms of task achievement as well as in mobilizing support from rural people, mostly small farmers. It should be emphasized here that the success of these programmes, as in cooperatives, was dependent on the institutional interventions, a continuous training facilities provided by the Academy and a rigorous

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<sup>27</sup> Report on a Rural Public Works Programme in Comilla, Kotawali Thana, Comilla, PARD, June 1962.

adherence to the principles and concepts of the decentralised planning and approach to the problems of development and implementation. However, as mentioned earlier, working through the traditional leaders without intervening the social structure, created many difficulties and problems due to vested self-interest of the leaders and their malpractices which led to abandonment of many development programmes at the cost of benefit to a large number of villagers.

The most critical factors for the phenomenal success of the harmony model for mobilizing rural people in support of the Comilla Programme could be attributed to the dedicated spirit, energy and charismatic leadership of the director of the Academy, Akhter Hameed Khan. He was equally supported by the collaborative work of his associates, the government and the external agencies. Often this charismatic leadership becomes a limitation because it creates dependence. But the success of the Comilla programme certainly points towards some of the basic elements in making harmony model of mobilizing rural people effective.

INDIA

The case of India is sufficiently important to deserve a special treatment. The picture clearly is mixed. There are numerous attempts in India, official and non-official, to mobilize rural people in support of a various rural development programmes which cover the whole continuum of harmony to conflict models of interventions. The process is still continuing with mixed results.

In India one can find in one extreme, the extreme form of conflict model in the recent land-grab movements and Maoist movements resembling Communist China and Indonesia's PKI, and on the other extreme there are the Comilla and ujamaa type Community Development Programmes. Panchayati Raj System, IADP and special programmes for the small and medium sized farmers. In between, there are government sponsored landreform measures and resettlement programmes resembling in many respects Tanzania's ujamaa programme in its approach to implementation and also there are various localized voluntary efforts of different ideological shades.

In India the history of the attempts for mobilizing rural people for rural development programmes date back to pre-independence days which were often mixed up with the national struggle for independence. The 'grow more food campaign',

the 'Etawah Project', are the two such examples among many others of pre-independent India. It is significant and encouraging for what the attempts in India attained in unprecedentedly difficult and bewildering conditions, and just as significant and discouraging for what it has failed to attain, and for the reasons why .

In this paper, we will be mainly concerned with the attempts in post-independent India. The conditions of rural India at the time of independence was as debilitating and exploitative as in China or in many other parts of Asia in which large numbers of tenants, share croppers and agricultural labourers cultivated somebody else's land resulting acute suffering of the peasants and the land. Of a recently estimated rural population of 434 million, about 103 million owned no land at all and another 185 million operated less than 5 acres per family. Taken together they represented 67 per cent of the rural population, and of these 110 to 154 million lived in abject poverty. In effect, 20 per cent of the cultivators in India owned 75 per cent of all the land while 50 per cent owned less than 10 per cent and multitudes none at all. Within these extremely differentiating structural conditions, acute forms of exploitation relationships flourished resulting bonded labour, indebtedness and evictions.

With the structural conditions in hand, the Government set itself to ease the lot of the peasantry by a drastic overhaul of the land system through a familiar pattern of land reform and through the elimination of the "Zamindari" system, which is, with its absurdities and injustices, was imposed by the British rule and therefore abolition of it became a symbol of freedom from the foreign power. It was rather easy to abolish this system with inherent support of the masses. But abolition of Zamindari system did not improve the tenancy conditions and the fate of the tenants and agricultural labourers cultivating land in 'ryotwari' areas where owner-proprietorship predominated. The government of India then made legislative enactments to provide tenants with security of tenure and reduction of rents, and to confer land ownership upon the tenants through the familiar ceiling device and officially fixed land prices.

Having rightly identified the problem, the conflict point in the structure and the potential for mobilizing rural people, the implementation strategy chosen by the government was administrative-legislative, as in the case of ujamaa programme in Tanzania. The difficulties in implementing the land reform law in India

are enormous. To illustrate the point: there is the sheer size and variations of the country; the administrative decentralization with each state a law unto itself; the fact that a third of the tenanted land belongs to owners with 5 acres or less; the fierce population pressure on land; the illiteracy and lack of peasant initiative and organization (as opposed to Japan and East Europe) and their inability to comprehend the complex laws; the structural boundedness without much prospect for alternative occupations; the paucity of good land records and so on. The more to the point in relation to the obstacles in implementation is the faulty content in many legislative enactments. What is significant is that most of the handicaps, poor content and poor enforcement or non-enforcement are not always causes, but in a large measure consequences of attitudes displayed by state politicians, legislatures, and bureaucrats who do not represent the interests of the peasantry and most of them have, in fact, anti-reform sentiment. But even within these limitations, where some conscientisation and politicisation process has undergone and where the peasants are given a sense of participation in the implementation of land reform programmes, as attempted by Kerala in the name of 'Tribunals', the achievement is quite commendable. But, by and large, the major structural



intervention in the form of land reform is yet unable to mobilize rural people in support of rural development programmes essentially because of the lack of political will to support reform and to be ready to use all instruments and interventions to achieve the goal. It is a bare fact that those against whom reforms are directed are never ready to divest themselves of their property and of political and economic power represented overwhelmingly in the government simply because a government writes out a decree to that effect. While the structural interventions through legislative-bureaucratic actions failed in mobilizing rural masses, a series of official programmes on institutional-cum-technological interventions were planned. During 1950-60 a massive nationwide programmes on Community Development and Panchayati Raj were launched with great fanfare, hopes and heightened expectations. As mentioned earlier, this programme was almost similar to the Comilla Programme of Bangladesh in principles and content with a few exceptions: firstly, very soon, the C.D. programme of India was spread out all over the nations instead of locally testing the new elements and the operating concepts sufficiently in pilot form and thereby diluting the resources and effectiveness of the programme;

secondly, as a result of nationwide coverage, local variations were neglected leading to a generalized blue-print of development programmes covering various kinds of technological and institutional interventions; thirdly, there was no special focus on a particular group of people such as, small farmers or medium farmers or landless labourers (the rural majority); rather the programme was meant for the whole village community without disturbing the socio-economic structure; and lastly, the whole programme was designed to be implemented by a mammoth bureaucratic structure with a typical bureaucratic principles and procedures most often manned by uncommitted and inefficient people. As a result, the programme remained, as in the case of Tanzania's ujamaa, another bureaucratic programme imposed from above lacking in supporting mechanisms of integration and coordination of various departments and agencies involved in the programme. The implementation of the programme became, as in ujamaa, merely a target-fulfilling task for the bureaucrats without any serious attempts to conscientise and educate the rural masses for obtaining their active participation. As it happened with President Nyerere, even the repeated exhortations and appeals from the charismatic leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, could not enthuse either the rural masses or the bureaucrats - one remaining alliented from the other as during the Colonial

period. The basic distrust about the government officials in the minds of great majority of rural people remained as before or even aggravated simply because the benefits of the programme could not reach or percolate to them in the absence of structural interventions. Thus, in spite of enormous amounts of resources spent, various technological and institutional interventions made to serve the majority of rural people, the benefits were monopolised by a minority of rich villagers which further strengthened their power: the panchayats mostly became political rather than the developmental bodies they were supposed to be and the extension service was more shadow to the rural majority than substance. The net effect was the simple fact that the original intention to mobilize rural people in support of self-help type development programmes through C.D. and Panchayati Raj was never realized. This is not to suggest that the programme was a complete failure in all respects and everywhere. Depending on the bureaucratic leadership and commitment, the programme achieved in certain locations impressive successes, but these are few and far between.

To illustrate this last mentioned point the following two instances among a handful few may be cited:

(a) It has been almost a conviction among the bankers and to many administrators that the sharecroppers and poor peasantry are not viable bankable proposition.

In fact, as mentioned earlier, they are most often 'institutionally' excluded from the credit and other service facilities from various agencies and organisations. This mythical conviction has been proven a great misconception of convenience and expedience by the administrative leadership by an administrator in West Bengal, D. Bandyopadhyay. With dogged persuasion and dedicated efforts, he organised institutional finances for these poor peasantry for use in productive purposes. As a result, these poor peasantry, under the favourable conditions and trustworthy administrator, not only increased their agricultural production but also repaid over 70 per cent of the bank loan with interest immediately after harvesting the crop, even before the bank raised the formal demand. In comparison to this, the repayment rate of the owner cultivators over a period of two years was only 40 per cent.<sup>28</sup> But for the administrative leadership of Mr. Bandyopadhyay, bank would not have advanced loan to these poor peasantry.

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Economic and Political Weekly, 1974.

(b) Another instance of a deep intellectual as well as emotional commitment of an administrator for the cause of the rural poor is the District Collector of Dhanbad, Mr. K.B. Saxena. True to the principle of Friere's conscientisation programme in Brazil, he completely identified with the poor majority in the district, built up a tremendous credibility among the people symbolizing justice and truth and became the real motive force and strength behind the action programme of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha <sup>/1</sup>, organised by the poor tribal leaders. But for Mr. Saxena's active support against all odds, the restoration of land under the amended chotanagpur Tenancy Act and the Debt Redemption Act would not have been easy to implement.

Then came the severe food crisis in India in 60's. In response, to the crisis situation and in the light of India's resource position, the Intensive Agricultural Development Programme was started in some selected districts.

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<sup>/1</sup> The literal meaning is the freedom movement of Jharkhand. Jharkhand is the name of the region inhabited mostly by a tribal group.

This programme was launched, ignoring the potential regional imbalances which might be created as a result, with the policy intent of raising productivity. The technological and institutional interventions made in this programme was specifically aimed at farmers with more than sufficient cash resources, whether owned or borrowed, and ample and irrigated land. Soon this programme was followed by a revolutionary breakthrough in the agricultural technology, namely green revolution with particular reference to wheat.

The green revolution in effect means input-revolution in the sense that the combination of an adequate and controlled water supply, high yielding varieties and concentrated doses of fertilizers - to mention only the three principal inputs - has brought about a two fold increase in wheat yields, a rise in double-cropping, and, in consequence, a sharp increase in output. The effectiveness of this technological intervention in raising productivity is unquestioned. It has definitely demonstrated that productivity is bound to grow in the hands of those who do practise the new technology. But it is only a minority of India's 70 million farm families who could use this technology while vast majority of Indian farmers comprising of small and medium farmers, the tenant farmers, the landless agricultural labourers are still only onlookers of the new package of practices for a variety of

reasons. For, the propitious circumstances in which the new technology thrives, like adequate resources to begin with, are not easily obtainable for multitudes of the smaller farmer-owners, not to speak of tenants and landless labourers with additional problems of their own. A vast majority of rural population lack resources or are 'institutionally' precluded from taking advantage of the new agricultural innovations. As a result, just the way it is happening in Indonesia, in the absence of appropriate counter measures, the benefits of development whether governmentally sponsored or not, are reaching to the rich minority the most and the poor majority the least. The green revolution, in effect, is accentuating the already existing sharp line of socio-economic differentiation between the few rich and a large majority of rural poor. Hence the inevitable constraints on its scope and limitations of technological interventions in the form of new agricultural technology in green revolution in mobilizing rural people for rural development.

While all these programmes lead to large majority of rural families being left to their own devices and out of the purview of the new technology, by the same token it also lead to the growing disparities of income at a time when aspirations for betterment are widespread. The green revolution therefore, is unwittingly contributing to the rising sense of social injustice among the rural poor in India creating heightened conflict situation

following the conflict model except the fact that it is happening spontaneously without outsider stimulator.

With this festering tensions and the rising sense of injustice and dissatisfaction, it became easy for the party cadres of extremist political groups to organize in 1970 a nationwide attempts at land-grabbing. This was a familiar technique of conflict model used by these party cadres without a through investigations and conscientisation programme as followed by PKI of Indonesia or by China. But, soon the land-grab movement was hastily brought to a new pitch and turned into a organised armed struggle in the highly politicised areas of India. A violent Naxalite movement started. Apparently, for various reasons and weaknesses in organizing and mobilizing the rural people and the internal conflicts within the party, the movement failed. As a strategy of conflict model, it was a too hasty development to mobilize grass-root support and to wage armed struggle without a proper conscientisation programme. The rich farmers and land-owners could get away with the status quo with the government support and by the extreme use of police force which only served to further heightening the existing tensions between the minority ownerclass and the depressed majority of rural poor. But such a movement could be organized in such a large scale with scanty preparation



and almost no conscientisation programme indicates the potentiality of the conflict model in mobilizing rural people in support of a development programme which benefits the majority. The land-grab movement is a mere verbal affirmation of land reform measures which are legislated but not implemented and the necessity of it is augmented by the green revolution in India and also elsewhere in Asia.

Having experienced the limitations of the green revolution, the government of India launched some corrective measures. These corrective measures were in the form of institutional interventions by creating special bureaucratic agencies for providing financial facilities and other services especially for small and medium sized farmers. In this also, it remained more as a bureaucratic programme rather than a mobilizing force. Within the limitations of such special programmes, at least some smaller farmers are benefitted without necessarily being mobilized for actively participating in an overall rural development programmes.

So far we have briefly discussed the history of the official programmes of post-independent India for mobilizing rural people in support of rural development programmes. Basically, these are the intervention techniques following harmony model

with its inherent limitations. As mentioned earlier, these attempts achieved mixed results, - some limited successes and some failures. But by and large these programmes failed to achieve total mobilization of rural people in support of the rural development programmes.

Aside from these official programmes, India is probably one of the countries in Asia where a large number of various localized programmes are being successfully experimented in mobilizing rural people in support of some developmental programmes. Here again, there are elements of conflict as well as harmony models present in the strategies of these experimental programmes. Interestingly, almost all these programmes are tolerated, if not supported by the government of India. In the following, a few of these experimental programmes will be briefly discussed.

a) Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

It is an agrarian movement of the Tribals and Kurmsies<sup>1</sup> of Bihar in Dhanbad district. This movement was organised by the able leadership of Shibu Soren, Vinod Bihari Mahato and A.K.Roy with active support from the District Collector, Mr. Saxena as mentioned earlier. These leaders completely identified themselves with the tribal life and their problems characterised

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1 Low caste group.

by land alienation and exploitation by money lenders. As a result of this collective movement, these two evils completely vanished from this area. The movement did not merely stop by merely repudiation of the debts, restoration of land and the harvesting of paddy, but also confronted ideologically the roots of exploitation by organizing aggressive programmes of cultural change. A number of actions were implemented through the process of utilisation of village council where all village inhabitants congregated as equal members. Action programmes implemented covered the norms of total prohibition and fixation of a ceiling of bride-price.

On the other hand, a successful structural intervention through restoration of land has led to a series of economic activities such as piggery and also increasing use of improved agricultural technologies. Farming was done on a cooperative basis keeping the individual ownership intact in the sense that a group of villagers work in the land of a fellow villager and this went on a rotational basis .

Institutional interventions in the form of organising a grain bank with contribution from each poor peasant was organised.

As the collective strength of the tribal group stabilized, a political intervention in the sense of inviting other small farmers, including the non-tribals, were made to join the movement and strengthen the organization.

The whole movement of Jharkand Mukti Morcha seems to follow almost in sequential steps the conflict model starting with structural interventions and gradually expanding the frontiers of influence.

## 2) Shramik Sangathan

Having read a press report about the alleged murder of some labourers by western educated landlord in Shahada subdivision of Dhulia district in Maharashtra, a number of young persons including some students of Institute of Technology, Bombay, came to the place. Observing the hopeless and hapless position of the poor unorganized tribals, these volunteers set up an exclusive organization known as Shramik Sangathan (Tailors' Association). These volunteers started operating through this Sangathan following Paule Friere's approach of conscientization programme. In the process there was direct confrontation with the exploiting rich peasants and in particular with the monopolists of the Sugar Mill Cooperatives which resulted some immediate relief and benefits to these Bhil tribes. Like the PKI cadres of Indonesia, a traditional devotional singer was used to discuss social problems with the poor men and women in order to make them aware of their rights and objective conditions. As a result of the Sangathan's movement, the women were liberated and organised into groups to fight alcoholism and discrimination against women.

In this case, Sangathanana's working principle have the elements of conflict model, stimulated by the outsiders through conscientization process and a modus operandi of confrontation.

3) Kishore Bharti<sup>1</sup>

This is a voluntary organization started with the leadership of a highly educated young man, Anil Sadgopal, in Hoshangabad district in Madhya Pradesh. According to this organization, the basic problem is the vicious circle of poverty and ignorance. This they plan to break by providing the fruits of technology to the rural poor on the one hand and through natural science education on the other. Over the years, this group achieved a commendable success in motivating school teachers in teaching natural sciences to the students of poor peasants in informal situations. A similar experiment under the auspices of the United Nations failed to achieve any significant results.

Kishore Bharti seem to have a different approach in mobilizing rural people with major emphasis on science education as a conscientization process. The working strategy is basically a harmony model of interventions with extreme reliance on scientific

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<sup>1</sup>Kishore means Children and adolescents Bhontic means Indian.

basis of knowledge and awareness as a means to fight poverty and structural boundedness of the poor. Inevitably, any educational programme of this kind will be time-consuming process to yield concrete results in terms of its effectiveness in mobilizing rural people in support of rural development programmes.

4) Jawaja Project: The Rural University

A little over two years ago, the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, (IIMA) under the charismatic leadership of Professor Ravi J Matthal started a development project in Jawaja Block of Ajmer district, Rajasthan with the basic aim of educational development. However, at the very initial stage of field investigation it was found out that educational development could not take place unless the debilitating poverty was removed by providing opportunities for raising income of the rural poor. Consequently, a number of productive economic activities were launched after a long drawn discussions with the beneficiaries with major emphasis on development of the people as a group in order to enable them to fight exploitation and to organize themselves and to manage their own affairs. The whole programme was basically conceived as an experimental pilot project in the sense of a learning laboratory both for the external stimulator, IIMA team and the rural beneficiaries. The aim was to find out a suitable strategy

to mobilize rural people in support of the various developmental programmes and thereby develop themselves, as people, not as an object. To this extent, Professor Matthai's Rural University in Jawaja is similar to Akhter Hameed Khan's Comilla Programme.

As an outside stimulator IIMA team consists of Professor Ravi J Matthai and a handful of independent volunteers, mostly students. These independent volunteers' role resembles, to some extent, the roles of the party cadres of PKI of Indonesia or of the Chinese Communist Party except the ideological biases. The whole team live with the people in the villages intensively discussing various issues with people and local officials, studying and identifying the problems and helping them in organising economic activities. In a way, this is a conscientisation process which has helped in building up the trust and credibility of the team among the villagers.

Although this conscientisation process resemble the conflict model, the programme did not aim at direct structural interventions by confronting the rich exploiting class in the rural areas. Instead, the people were organised around economic activities based on local resources along with technological and institutional interventions.

Initially an attempt was made to identify development activities to be undertaken based on felt needs of the villagers assessed through group discussions. As mentioned earlier about the limitations of assessment of felt needs, the team came out with a long list of projects, many of which were either too ambitious or too big and beyond the capability of the team to consider. In the process the local school teachers and various governmental agencies' were also involved. Ultimately, based on local resources, both human and physical, the activities like weaving, leather products, and bulk tomato marketing were identified and action started.

Although no direct structural interventions were made, the economic activities were specifically organized for the small farmers, artisans, landless labourers, and untouchable caste groups. A deliberate attempt was made to keep away the rich exploiting class in joining these economic activities and the team made it clear from the beginning that they would not extend their help and support to the rich landlords and moneylenders. Joining the economic activities was totally voluntary. In fact, no economic activity was started unless the beneficiaries voluntarily offered themselves to join. The IDMA team's conscientisation programme, however, helped to obtain the voluntary participation. Within a period of two years, the team was able to enlist active participation and interest of a sizeable group of poor villagers in all the three economic activities.



Several technological and institutional interventions were made in organizing the economic activities. A number of national organization and technical institutes were brought in to provide the improved technological inputs. For example, the Weavers' Association of India, gave the improved design of the loom, train the local carpenter to make the looms and train the weavers in the methods of using the loom; the National Institute of Design was instrumental in providing the new designs for the product, train the weavers and marketing the products; the Leather Institute trained the Raigars (low-caste harijans specialised and manufacturing of leather products; the Bank of Baroda and lately the government agency through its special scheme provided the loan to the beneficiaries, and lastly, the government agencies in the Block, District and State levels provided all necessary help, cooperation and other infrastructural facilities in implementing this programme.

On the part of the government bureaucracy, special mentions must be made about the leadership and cooperation of the District Collector and Director of Education, Rajasthan. This integrated intra- and inter-supportive mechanism was made possible however, by the charismatic leadership and wide contacts of Professor Ravi J Matthai.

There were, of course, innumerable problems and difficulties in mobilizing rural people around these economic activities. The IIMA team, deliberately left it to the people themselves to solve the problems through mutual discussions and confrontation which sometimes even ended with a feud. On the other hand, there has been a deliberate attempt by the IIMA team, especially by Prof Ravi J Matthal, to make themselves dispensable as early as possible, knowing fully well the danger of dependence. To this end, as the economic activities stabilized, the group of beneficiaries engaged in the activities were organized into Association (e.g. Jawaja Weavers' Association, Raigar Association for Leather Activities, Tomato Grower's Association etc.) with as less formal bureaucratic structure as possible. At the same time, the beneficiaries were slowly made involved into accounting, marketing, raw material procurement and contacting various agencies to gain experience and knowledge about the management problems of these related activities as a kind of in-service training. This process was supported by organizing occasional training camps for the beneficiaries as well as for the teachers and government officials who were also involved as change agents in the project. The villager participants in the economic activities were also used as change agents for helping and training other fellow villagers willing to join the programme as a

strategy of gradually building extensibility of the programme into wider areas.

The Rural University of Jawaja had achieved considerable successes in a short period of time as a technique to mobilize rural people in support of its development programme. As a strategy, it followed a mixture of conflict and harmony models with extensive support from the government. As a local pilot experiment, the strategy certainly proved its potential in spite of serious difficulties which arose mainly because of no direct structural interventions and lack of ideological focus like the party cadres. But, the programme was designed like that as a learning experiment and therefore the name, Rural University. The future results and further expansion of the programme will tell us the potential usefulness of this technique. For the present, since the project is continuing and in infancy stage, much depends on the charismatic leadership of Professor Ravi J Matthal.

#### IX Conclusions

The foregoing comparative analysis of various techniques employed by rural development programmes in the five countries in order to mobilize rural people points towards some common dimensions. These common dimensions are essentially the prerequisites for effective

use of the techniques for mobilizing rural people irrespective of types of intervention models they belong to. In fact, it is precisely because of these common dimensions often there seems to be overlapping between the conflict and harmony models. Therefore, the utility of clear classification of two exclusive intervention models may sometimes be for conceptual clarity and the oretical understanding. This does not mean that there are no significant differences in approach between the two models. The differences are, in fact, fundamental as could be observed in the foregoing analysis of various programmes of the five countries.

There are five main common dimensions of the techniques for mobilizing rural people irrespective of the intervention models:

- 1) The preconditions of mobilization are a social cleavage and imbalances, most commonly in the form of socio-economic differentiation;
- 2) Stimulating force for mobilization is usually generated from the external sources or outsiders;
- 3) Some form of conscientisation process is necessary to make people conscious and aware of the objective conditions as an educational or politicisation programme, which in turn enable the outside stimulator to establish credibility and trustworthiness and eventually to assume leadership roles

- 4) The mobilization actions should necessarily be organized for the cause of the majority of the rural population, that is, the rural poor and the activities should bring some tangible and perceptible immediate benefits to the rural majority.
- 5) In almost all cases in the developing Asian countries, some form of structural interventions: (commonly through land reform measures) is the greatest potential force for mobilizing rural people, especially at the initial stage because of the imbalance in the socio-economic structure. In fact, mobilization force through other interventions tend to dissipate over a period of time without supporting structural interventions and strict follow-up of corrective measures. On the other hand, mere structural intervention or for that matter any one type of intervention is not sufficient to sustain the mobilization force. All kinds of interventions, structural, technological, institutional and political, need to be applied in support of each other as intra and inter-supportive mechanism in order to sustain the mobilizing force.

As could be seen in the cases illustrated for the five countries, the approach to employ these five common dimensions differs significantly, between the conflict model and the harmony model. . Whatever may be the differences, it is clear that the structural interventions, the strongest potential mobilization technique, can be brought about most effectively by following the conflict model rather than the harmony model.