

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE DURING THREE FIVE-YEAR PLANS

(Based on a study of rural communities during 1953-1966)

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INTRODUCTION

DURING 1951-66 the period for the first three Five-Year Plans, some effective and non-effective attempts were made to change rural India. The idea was to raise and help emerge a new personality structure in rural areas suited for the production of wealth and mitigating poverty. The main tool used was the effort of the five year plans. Community Development programmes formed a part of the planned effort. These included health and family planning programmes. A number of social legislations also aimed at change in the whole Indian society. Such legislations included :

(a) Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 aimed at the restitution of conjugal rights, judicial separation and divorce aiming at raising the status of the female.

(b) Hindu Code Bill giving the right of inheritance to daughters to mitigate the social-status-difference between sons and daughters.

(c) Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955 making punishable certain discriminatory practices regarding the untouchables.

(d) Special concessions and treatment granted to backward classes in fields such as education, scholarships, government employment, welfare programmes, land occupancy and tenancy.

(e) State legislations regarding tenancy contracts, maximum rents, establishment of land ceilings, abolition of zamindari.

(f) Laws raising the age for marriage, regulating giving or taking of dowries.

(g) Universal suffrage.

(h) Establishment of Panchayati Raj.

Beside the above legislations, Agricultural Extension Services aimed at raising the productivity of land. All-out effort to lift the rural people out of their stagnancy was almost engineered on war-footing. The question now arises : Have all such measures any impact on the socio-cultural behaviour of the villages ? Have these stimulated technology and productivity ?

All the above kinds of changes mean institutional changes not depending on foreign aid or loans. If the desired change has not