

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

D. R. GADGIL

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NEW HALE MEMORIAL LECTURE, 1966

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District Development Planning

I

I find myself today on this platform in an extremely unusual position. The founder of this Institute, my father-in-law, Rao Bahadur R. R. Kale of Satara, died in January 1936. We considered that an appropriate way of paying our tribute to him would be to initiate a series of annual memorial lectures. The first lecture in the series was delivered by Prof. V. G. Kale in January 1937 and since then, with the exception of an unfortunate interruption in 1947, the memorial lecture has been regularly delivered each year. We have been singularly fortunate in having secured the services of a series of eminent lecturers who have delivered discourses on important subjects year after year. The lectures are ordinarily delivered during the first quarter of the year. When some months ago, I as Director of the Institute asked Prof. V. M. Dandekar, who was then the Joint Director, who should be invited to deliver the lecture for 1966, he suggested that I should deliver the memorial lecture myself after retiring from the post of Director on 1st April. After a little thought, I accepted the suggestion. My reasons were mainly two. In the first instance the change in roles, from one who welcomed and introduced the lecturer every year to that of the lecturer himself would help to mark definitively and publicly the end of my administrative responsibilities as Director of the Institute. Secondly and more importantly it would enable me to pay my own personal tribute to the Founder.

Before doing this in the form of an academic discourse I may be allowed to say a few words regarding the founder personally. I do this because it is thirty years since he passed away and there would be few in this audience, as among the staff of the Institute, who have any personal knowledge about him. Rao Bahadur Raoji Ramchandra Kale was a distinguished and highly successful lawyer of Satara City. He was also keenly interested in public affairs and actively participated in them. He played a prominent part in the provincial legislature and in the University. He was a Sanskrit

scholar, a deeply religious man, and was attracted towards the Prarthana Samaj. However, like Ranade whom he revered greatly, he was averse to breaking off connections with traditional society. In politics, he was a follower of Gokhale both in the insistence on a deep and careful study of problems and in the belief in need of moderation in the expression of opinion. Though living well, he was able to put together a modest fortune, three-quarters of which he gave away, in part during his lifetime and partly by donations and by creation of a charitable trust at death.

The manner in which he founded this Institute exhibits some of his salient characteristics. I was serving as Principal of the College of the Sarvajanic Education Society at Surat since 1925. I had the option of leaving the college in 1930 and a year earlier made up my mind to do so, because as Principal I had little opportunity to engage in research. In the prevailing circumstances I decided to seek an opening in Poona where I could combine teaching with research. When Rao Bahadur Kale learnt of this, he made, without my knowledge, an offer to the Servants of India Society of an endowment which could give me a chance to do what I desired. He did this at a time when he had retired from active legal practice and though it meant giving away immediately a significant part of his capital resources.

The Institute was established in June 1930 as a result of the negotiations which followed this initial offer made in June 1929. The President of the Servants of India Society made the suggestion initially* that the Institute might be named after the founder. However, he felt that naming it after Gokhale, the founder of the Servants of India Society, would be more appropriate and that the Institute might more readily* attract wider support in this case. Therefore, he quietly substituted the name of Gokhale in the final proposals and his own name was put into brackets as founder. The assistance and co-operation of many have been responsible for the growth of the Institute in subsequent decades. However, these could have had no chance to operate but for the imaginative, courageous and generous initial endowment by the Founder. As the greatest single beneficiary of that action I have great pleasure in paying this tribute, on this occasion, to his memory.

It is only proper that I should take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the President and members of the Servants of India

Society for their co-operation and assistance through all these years. In accepting the endowment the Society agreed to house the Institute and to give it the use of its library. Though in later years the Institute was able to command its own resources for these purposes, the use of the premises and the nucleus of the library have been vital to the growth of the Institute. The terms of the endowment created a Board of Management for the Institute in which naturally the major role was that of the Servants of India Society. It is a pleasure to record that this responsibility has been discharged by the President and connected members of the Society with such great consideration and understanding that the Institute has, in fact, functioned during its entire existence as an essentially autonomous academic Institute.

II

The subject of my address today is District Development Planning. In terms of the division of the main functions of government there are in India three tiers, viz., the Union, the State and the District. The constitution of the third tier is not uniform in all states. In some states the main unit of self-government is the District, in others it is the Block. In Maharashtra after adoption of the Zilla Parishad scheme the Zilla (District) authority has been definitely established as the local development planning authority. For a number of reasons this appears to me to be the most appropriate arrangement and for the purpose of this lecture, I shall confine attention to problems of planning where the District authority is in this position.

District Development Planning as I consider it is an integral part of national development planning. In a state in which there exists a constitutional division of functions between a tier of authorities the planning powers are likely to follow this division of functions. However, it is general experience that the actual operation of the division of functions may be greatly modified by the distribution among various levels and authorities of the total financial resources of the state and by arrangements connected with this distribution. Moreover, the effective exercise of planning powers is associated with the existence of appropriate organs and the availability of adequate knowledge and efficient agencies for the purpose, in case of each tier in the federal structure. An appreciation of the problems

of planning at any level, therefore, requires a detailed study of these and of actual operations.

In terms of the division of powers and functions between the Union and the States and the actual operation of the planning process a certain pattern of division of activities and responsibilities had developed in India by the end of the second five year plan. In a paper written in 1960 I described this pattern in the following words : "The fields of action of the centre and of the states are, to a large extent, distinct. The centre builds up and maintains the overall instrumentalities of national economic life such as the credit and the monetary system, the railways and ports. It also acts in relation to the basic requirements of the long-term plan of industrialization, with emphasis on large industry and exploitation of mineral resources. The states are concerned, on the other hand, with acting on the total life of all the people in their charge and on all the diffused, dispersed small-scale units and activities. The centre is concerned with the most generalized features of the national frame and with highly concentrated action at a few strategic points; the states must affect all areas and localities, all the relevant fields and all units. [The centre is concerned with the strategy of the long-term plan and with initiating the crucial movements; the states have to engage themselves in transmitting the forces impelling economic development to all areas and units, and with concretizing for the individual units the fruits of development. The generalized objectives of a state plan are, therefore, making possible, initiating and encouraging economic development in all activities and sectors, and areas and localities, and protecting the standard of living and improving and ameliorating the situation, social and economic, of all individuals within their territories. The objectives and the constituents of plans of individual sectors and departments must conform to the requirements of these general objectives. In the light of the above, the locality and the individual are placed at the centre of the activities of states, and providing for the universal impact of the developmental process and for a diffusion of its effects becomes their primary aim."¹]

When this was written the development of district authorities endowed with specific planning powers had yet to take place. How

¹ Gadgil, D. R., *Planning and Economic Policy in India* (3rd edition, 1965) pp. 237-8.

ever, the objectives and fields of state planning activity as described in the extract quoted above may be taken generally to apply to the existing situation in relation to district development planning.

Before proceeding to a detailed discussion of problems of district development planning in India, I would offer a few introductory remarks on some theoretical aspects of the general problem and on experience with the effort in some other countries. It is interesting to note that most of the theoretical work has been done in relation to what may be termed regional planning.

[The newly developed regional science, deals with broad aspects of interrelations between the various forms of organized social activity within the context of physical space. Its development is associated chiefly with the theory of location of economic activity originating in classical economics and greatly elaborated in recent decades. Regional science has progressively attempted to present a spatial framework for social science disciplines, especially economics, through the development of a general theory of location and of space economy. It is thus concerned with human social activities distributed over a given territory. It starts with the assumption that such activities are distributed over any region "in certain rhythms and patterns that are neither arbitrary, nor the workings of chance. They result rather from the interdependencies that give form to economic space. Spatial patterns will change with shifts in the structure of demand and of production, in the level of technology and in the social and political organization of the nation."²]

With the development of the concept of stages of economic growth, regional science has begun to concern itself with the question as to whether there are spatial patterns corresponding to each stage of economic development, and whether there is an optimum strategy for spatial transformation from one stage to the next. In the context of an economy, which is neither directed nor regulated externally and appears to develop in a naturalistic manner, regional science directs attention to the analysis of various forces that appear to determine existing spatial distribution of activity; and in case of change, to the search for originating causes, the reactions and interactions, so as to help in assessing the manner in which any change is brought about and proceeds. All this is attempted in the same way as the analysis of a free market economy. Similar analysis

² Friedmann and Alonso, *Regional Development Planning* (1964), p. 2.

utilizing historical data, may help in putting forward a theory of economic development in relation to regions. Planning takes the process a step further. In this case it is unnecessary to assume a naturalistic frame and conscious purposive human effort may be studied in relation to its possible impact on an environment. Regional planning, as such, may take the planning objectives and strategy at the national level for granted, and specially address itself to the specific spatial features emerging in the formulation and operation of a national plan in a particular region. Given any theory of economic development and of pattern of transformation of economy from one stage to another, certain expectations of the formation of agglomerations or of regional imbalances, may be formulated, as a result of such regional analysis. These expectations may be looked upon either as inevitable or logical stages, in the process of development which have to be accepted, or alternatively, as tendencies which could be curbed and regulated in case certain objectives of national plans are desired to be fulfilled. Regional planning, in this context, ceases to look upon the interplay of socio-economic forces within the space economy as working in a naturalistic manner and begins to consider them as capable of being directed and regulated with reference to assumed objectives. [Regional analysis then helps the planners to understand operations of forces generated in a given situation or through particular policies, and enables them to visualize the possibilities and limitations of external action and of the framing of objectives or policies.]

While a considerable amount of abstract discussion of regional planning and planned development on lines described above exists today, detailed attention has so far been paid only to a few specific problems. This has been largely due to the fact that complex and elaborate analysis, such as is required in this context, has been attempted only in the highly developed countries. The two major sets of problems of space economy which these countries confront today are those connected with the growth of large metropolitan centres and those connected with the existence of patches of depressed economy within a fast growing and affluent society. Most of the detailed work has been done in relation to the planning of what are called metropolitan regions. The importance of this is so overwhelming that it is possible for writers to say that while infra-urban space is of primary importance in city planning, regional planning

"focusses attention on supra-urban space."³ This definition of regional planning as the ordering of human activity in supra-urban space has to be understood against the background of economies in which urban population vastly predominates and most activity is oriented towards city centres.

[While concern with regional planning in the context of metropolitan growth has been in evidence for many decades, attention to the planning for development of backward regions or depressed areas has been relatively recent.] The depression of the 30's first brought into prominence the problem of areas suffering in a specially acute manner from the effects of economic decay or stagnation. Measures to relieve such conditions were widely discussed and studies were undertaken at universities, for example in England, specially in relation to them. However, it is with the post-war vogue of planning that this problem has come to have special importance. [In this context, the region is defined as territory which has relatively homogeneous economic characteristics and which appears to a significant extent, to have been uninfluenced by forces which have brought about, growth and diversification of the economy, in other parts of the country. Regional analysis is concerned here with a study of the factors making for stagnancy and of the possibilities and means of activization.] We thus note that advancement of regional science and, in particular, use of techniques of regional analysis so as to render significant assistance in the work of practical planning, are in evidence, chiefly in the two areas indicated above and that the techniques are not immediately available in relation to the problems that we face in district economic planning.

It may be noted that though district economic planning is concerned with aspects of spatial organization, the district is not a 'region' as the term is usually understood. It is important to emphasize this initial point. The district is essentially a local administrative division and the area divisions of governmental authority or administration do not necessarily or even usually coincide with regions defined as contiguous territory sharing common economic characteristics. Economic homogeneity to the extent that it is present in a district, would be a matter, in part, of accident, and in part, of the fact that the district forms a part of a larger region which may be economically homogeneous. The objectives and rea-

³ Friedmann and Alonso, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

sons for the formation of districts are related to administrative convenience, historical traditions and other such factors. Obviously physical features and barriers also play some part in determining district boundaries. In India districts, for the most part, are composed of component areas of a sufficient diversity of conditions and interests; and the methods of regional analysis and planning could be appropriately applied only to the relatively homogeneous economic sub-areas in them. It may often happen that a belt of territory in a number of contiguous districts constitutes a homogeneous region while none of the districts are themselves homogeneous. In such a case the development plans of all the districts will have to adopt the appropriate approach for regional development in relation to the particular part of a homogeneous region contained within them.

Further, in some districts the predominance of large urban or metropolitan centres may affect plans of development. In this case, the lessons of metropolitan regional planning will have to be applied. Thus district development planning presents problems which are comparable with those of planning for the development of a large state with a heterogeneous composition. The problems of planning at the state level are all met in a somewhat simpler form within district development planning; somewhat simpler, because the degree of heterogeneity and complexity in a district would be necessarily less than that in a state.

The above characteristic of District Development Planning follows from the identification of planning areas with administrative and local self-government areas. Where regional planning is undertaken for a specific homogeneous region, with special characteristics and to attain a particular objective, it is possible to define a region independently and to set up a planning or development authority for it. This could happen with a river valley region, or a metropolitan region or territory defined as backward or depressed and in relation to which special measures are undertaken. In India, we are engaged in planning for the development of the entire country and though the situation and requirements in different areas differ radically from each other, the effort undertaken in each area is a part of the total national planning effort. Moreover, the development planning undertaken in each area has to be equally comprehensive. The total national plan of development, of all activities and classes and all regions, is a multi-objective plan with universal coverage. It follows

that the development plan of any area or district, however small, has to be equally comprehensive, in the definition of its objectives and the scope of its action. The development attempted must affect all areas, within the district and must touch all activities and all classes. This characteristic sharply distinguishes our district development planning from the regional planning undertaken, for regions, formulated in relation to limited objectives, in an *ad hoc* manner.

Inevitably, the areas of local planning in India, have to be so constituted that, taken together, they cover the entire area of the country. (As local planning has to be undertaken for all areas, it is obvious that the effort should be associated with the administrative and the self-government areas into which the country is already divided.) This special aspect of District Development Planning also makes it desirable and necessary, (that the planning authority be identified with the local administration or the local self-governing authority.) In specific *ad hoc* regional planning, where the region is specially constituted for a specific purpose, the planning or the development authority may also be specially created or constituted for the limited objective. It is likely in such a case that neither the area nor the functions to be carried out coincide with the area or the functions of any existing authority or administration.)

III.

Indian planning is highly centralized. Planning in the sense of attempting formulation of an integrated plan of development is undertaken only by the Planning Commission at the centre. Planning thought and information, to the extent these are in evidence, exist only with the Planning Commission, and this body alone is concerned with planning techniques. The central plan is influenced to some extent by a perspective plan and there is some discussion at the Planning Commission of desirable strategy, especially in relation to decisions regarding allocations and priorities. However, even the central plan is not built up in an integrated fashion. It results essentially from putting together recommendations of a series of working groups or committees concerned with specific subjects or departments. There is little effort at integrating, coordinating or dovetailing the separate schemes or programmes either at the time of their preparation or later. They are all more or less mechanically

combined to form the plan and when, as a result of decisions regarding allocation, adjustments have to be made upwards or downwards they are made independently for each separate set of programmes.

The situation at lower levels is much worse. At the state level planning is highly officialized. Non-official leaders or experts are consulted to some extent by the Planning Commission which has set up a large number of panels, committees, etc. No mechanism through which this may be done exists in the States, at least in most of them. The Maharashtra Government set up in 1960 a consultative plan committee. This met twice in the first year and, among other work, set up two sub-committees which produced important reports. No meeting of the Consultative Committee was called after 1961. Planning at the State level is not only highly officialized but is essentially a secretariat affair.

In all the major states, there is practically no machinery for planning as such at the State level. The state plans are not made as the result of any wide consultation or effort at co-ordination. There is no specific definition of the objectives of state planning and no thinking out of a strategy appropriate to it. This follows from the fact that the State plans are prepared, basically, in the same manner as the annual state budget. The departmental proposals in relation to each section, and sub-section are formulated in the departments, are put together by the heads of departments and forwarded to the secretariat. The plan is then prepared in the sense of being pieced together in the secretariat. Except for the debate in the legislature, there are no public discussions or consultations of general or specific plan objectives or proposals and no information is available outside as to what is contemplated or proposed. In the secretariat itself there is neither any attempt to obtain special knowledge or information nor any personnel specialized in planning techniques.)

Moreover, State plans, which are prepared entirely at the departmental and secretariat level represent, in essence, the reactions of the state government and its officers to the known wishes and proposals of the Planning Commission. The standard Planning Commission schemes or similar departmental schemes, prepared in the states which have obtained the approval of the Planning Commission, are the basic materials from out of which the state and district plans are constituted.

The Second Five Year Plan contains an entire chapter—Chapter Seven—on District Development Administration. This chapter is concerned chiefly with what might be attempted in the future in relation to District Development Administration. Considerable emphasis is placed on the lines on which District Development Councils should be built in the future and on the preparation of village plans. A great deal is written about the establishment of village panchayats and their functions such as of land management and the framing of programmes of production. The district Development machinery contemplated, is that of an *ad hoc* District Development Council and of the development committees constituted for blocks and talukas. At this stage, what are now called the Panchayati Raj institutions, had not been universally established at the village level; and though there were in most states local self-governing bodies, such as taluka or district boards, there was no thought of entrusting these bodies with any aspect of the development planning work. The share of the administrative officers of the district was highlighted in this Plan document, and the responsibility of the collectors, the sub-divisional officers and the block development officers as leaders was emphasized. In fact the district administration was described as “an agency of change towards a new social order.”⁴

In the Third Five Year Plan, there is no separate chapter on district development administration. The matter is dealt with, in part, in the chapter on Community Development. This deals with the possible effects of the recent establishment of the Panchayati Raj institutions and raises the wider question of the reorganization of the district administration consequent upon the introduction of Panchayati Raj. The emphasis on village production plans is still continued and there appears little appreciation of the existence of grave deficiencies in the machinery for the formulation or implementation of plans at the state and the local level. In fact, as the following quotation will show, the planners were obviously well satisfied with things as they were. “Large burdens are being placed on planning organizations in the states. States are called upon to interpret national objectives, translate them in terms of the needs, resources and possibilities open to them, carry the plan to the remotest points and find ways of mobilising local resources and enthu-

⁴ *Second Five Year Plan*, (Govt. of India, Planning Commission) 1956, p. 164.

siasm. Within the limits of its tasks as conceived thus far, the machinery for planning in the states has served well.”⁵

The activities of the district development councils set up from the period of the Second Five Year Plan were entirely of an advisory nature. These councils were composed mostly of local political leaders who had little special knowledge or expertise in any direction. There was also no agency or arrangement for the procurement of local data or for identification and study of local problems. The councils put together a series of more or less popular demands regarding the construction of irrigation works, roads or the setting up of educational institutions, hospitals, etc. These had no relation to a strategy of long-term planning or to any definition of priorities. The councils put together a list of recommendations which was usually fairly comprehensive and large. The preparation of plans by the heads of state departments or by secretariat officials was not likely to be influenced in any significant manner by the recommendations of these councils as no significant ideas, specific constraints or compulsive recommendations emerged from them.

The situation continues to be similar, at least in Maharashtra, even after the establishment of Zilla Parishads. The preparation of the 4th five year plan by Zilla Parishads was undertaken in most districts on lines which did not differ materially from the operations of the earlier district development councils. "There was no greater volume of information specially collected or made available to the Zilla Parishad, or its sub-committees engaged in planning. Secondly, though the work of planning by the Z.Ps. was more elaborate, in the sense that more attention was paid to preparation of plans at the block level and to the co-ordination of plan proposals by subjects, its essential character remained unchanged. This was because the district plan was not looked upon as a realistic document which was part of a long-term development plan framed by the Zilla Parishad and to be implemented by it. It was, as before, a set of proposals sent up to the state government or more correctly to the secretaries from which the Secretariat would put together the plan which the Z.P. would in due course have to implement. This was emphasized by the fact that no realistic financial limit as to the size of the plan to be prepared by Zilla Parishads was indicated to them. In fact,

⁵ The Third Five Year Plan, (Govt. of India, Planning Commission) 1961, p. 289.

hey were encouraged to prepare plans of a size very much larger than the most optimistic estimate that could be made, of allocation of resources to the district. Moreover, working groups in the secretariat were preparing departmental plans while the Z.Ps. were engaged in their work and with the continuous pressure for early completion from the Planning Commission it was the Secretariat work that really counted.)

The working groups whether in a State secretariat or in the Planning Commission, it should further be noted, operated *ad hoc*, without any clear guide lines and without the help of specially collected data which were critically analysed. As a natural consequence, experience counted for little, no attention was paid even to obvious past failures, and schemes and programmes were carried over from plan to plan with little change or modification. In such a situation was futile to expect any attention being paid to variations in a local situation or provision being made for a study of them.

Planning in India at the lower levels continues to be, in the main, matter of putting together standard schemes for each department each activity, schemes known to be acceptable to the Planning Commission, in such a manner as to attract the largest amount of assistance that the state or the department can obtain from the Centre.) It is only fair to add that since 1962, the Planning Commission has begun to pay more attention to problems of district development planning, and a good deal of what I say in this lecture is based on experience gathered in the course of an effort in this direction, which was sponsored by the Government of Maharashtra, and which received valuable assistance from the Planning Commission.

The almost entire absence of proper planning at the state and district level has imposed a grave handicap on development of Indian rural economy and is reflected in the relatively slow and patchy progress in agriculture, rural industry and related fields. Problems of planning in agriculture have been discussed by a number of official committees and there has been general emphasis on the need for relating targets and programmes to local circumstances.⁶ This, however, cannot be done *ad hoc* or piecemeal and can only follow appropriate organization of state and district development planning. The situation today is thus that where improvement is attainable through

⁶ See Gadgil, D. R., "Planning for Agricultural Development", *Planning and Economic Policy in India*, 3rd Ed., 1965.

programmes involving simple uniform action over a wide area success is achieved; where, however, close study of particular complex problems is necessary for progress, the problems are either unidentified or are dealt with inadequately.⁷

The reasons for this are two-fold. In the first instance, the administrative machinery is geared to uniform operations over a wide area and not to specialized local work. Secondly, no arrangements are available through which complex, particular problems could be studied closely on the spot. The targets approach of our type of centralized planning accentuates these basic tendencies.

The propositions, made earlier, may be supported by reference to an analysis of the relative successes and failures of the latest intensive district programmes in agriculture. Where, as in the districts of the Punjab, the conditions of agricultural operations were fairly uniform and the overheads and the organizational structure were already available, the progress was striking; where similar conditions did not obtain the progress has been unimpressive. In a like manner, major schemes of irrigation and power are completed fairly successfully but schemes of minor irrigation, especially those where nature is unfavourable locally, make little progress. Apart from the structure of administrative arrangements and the discouragement of local initiative, the attitude of government towards programme of agricultural improvement is also responsible for the phenomenon. Campaigns are still the most important features of these programmes. Inevitably programmes in a countrywide or statewide campaign can only consist of generalized prescriptions which ignore local variations. There is no problem-orientation and

⁷ Preliminary surveys in Wardha district brought to surface a number of local peculiarities that had been previously ignored in all development work. Illustrations may be given from one sector, that of land and water resources development. For example, the problem of a type of waterlogged land common in the district had not been noticed; the potential of utilizing water in streams for winter crops had been ignored; contour bunding in black cotton soils raised a number of problems which had not been tackled. Moreover, a detailed survey of wells in Wardha district revealed that a very large proportion of these were in disuse and that the reasons for disuse varied from area to area. (Wardha : District Development Paper I : Irrigation, 1963). These facts were unknown and had not been taken into account in previous plans. As a general rule, even the loaning operation of land development banks for new wells in any district are not today accompanied by a survey of successes and failures in well-digging or of disused wells in any area and do not utilize any information relating to the subject that might be available.

no inclination toward evolving a long-term programme based on close study of particular problems. Constant campaigning inhibits the attitudes and dissipates the energy needed for study and long-term action. It also leads to ignoring the total complex of conditions related to improvement of agriculture. A single item, e.g., fertilizer use, is pushed with no consideration of related technical or financial factors. In an old country with a relatively intelligent peasantry it may be assumed that the scope for obvious improvements capable of being brought about easily in existing circumstances is small. Therefore, campaigns or crash programmes inevitably give diminishing returns and the next stage requires a changed outlook and altered administrative arrangements.

The approach through compilation of a plan by reference to separate standardized departmental schemes has many other disadvantages also. For example, it leads to unnecessary proliferation of staff and to its non-integration on the field. This is because the staff proposals are attached to each scheme and are considered separately as for the scheme and its duration. It also results in there being no coordination or synchronization of action among various departments or different agencies in the same department. This is responsible for the familiar phenomenon of a number of targets, especially relating to expenditure, being achieved and yet there being an overall failure of the total programme.

There is little difference of opinion in the country relating to the desirability of changing the present system of centralized, departmental planning. However, relatively little thought has so far been given to the positive content and the administrative and organizational implications of local planning or planning from the bottom. The lowest stratum of governmental authorities in India is, in most states, the District. Planning from the bottom has, therefore, to be associated chiefly with the district development planning effort. It is this which vests the subject with great importance and makes it worth while to consider in some detail the requirements of District Development Planning and the directions, the quality and stages of effort implied by it.

IV

Beginning may be made by drawing attention to two primary

requirements." The first is the basing of the District plan on knowledge regarding local conditions, and the second is the association of local people with the formulation and implementation of the plan. In a sense, both these aspects are implied in development planning at whatever stage it is undertaken. However, whereas in India, there is some appreciation of the need of obtaining technical and economic knowledge and data and consulting people, before formulating planning at the national level, there is in practical terms a complete absence of this, at the local level. The gap in the matter of knowledge and information, is the most glaring at the district level. There are certain series of administrative statistics available and, depending on the system of land tenure and the method of maintenance of village records, some data are available regarding the distribution of holdings and cropping patterns. Also some technical information may be available where, previously, surveys as that relating to minerals have been conducted. For the rest, technical information is inadequate and relevant economic information is almost totally absent. For example, centres of Agricultural Research are few in a state and many districts have no such centres with the result that its special problems of agricultural production technique cannot be dealt with, except on the basis of information relating to some distant area which may or may not be relevant, locally.

(Planning in its technical and economic aspect, is closely related to relevant knowledge and information. Unless there is a minimum base of such knowledge and information, a plan of development for an area like the district cannot be built up. Moreover, the minimal base will suffice only for the preliminary effort at planning; as planning extends its coverage and intensifies in depth, the amount and quality of information will have to be progressively increased. An appreciation of the great importance for local planning of agencies investigating into local condition and collecting information on all aspects of socio-economic life and technical production and other activity, is urgently required for making a proper beginning with district development planning; and provision for continuing extension of investigational and research activity in all the fields at the local level is a necessary concomitant of the continuance and growth of district development planning effort. As long as detailed local knowledge is not available, to test and question the applicability of standard schemes and to provide the base on which to build alterna-

tive proposals, there is no chance of replacing the present approach to planning.

The second aspect, that of local co-operation and participation in formulation and implementation is equally important. This is so for two reasons. In the first instance, any agencies which are employed for the conduct of research and investigation in varying aspects of the local situation will have to work in close co-operation with different strata in the local population. The success of investigational research effort is closely bound up with an understanding by the relevant elements in the local population of the nature of investigation and research undertaken and the objectives to which it was related. Moreover, apart from the limited extent to which technical considerations dictated a certain pattern of the plan and the order of priorities in them, the pattern and the priorities will have to be determined in relation to local choices and opinions. It is true that in a number of directions the margin of such choice would not be wide. The objectives determined, the allocation of funds, the choice of agencies, etc. made at superior levels would impose certain constraints on district planning. Other constraints would be where technical or economic considerations definitely pointed in certain directions. Even though the margin of choice for local decisions might thus, in particular contexts, be small, it is important that within this margin the choice should be made locally and moreover, that a full understanding of the why and wherefore of the constraints as described above and their relevance to local choice are understood by the people concerned.

Another important reason for arousing the interest of local population is that it is only through this that motivation for appropriate formulation and early implementation is created. It is the experience of, for example, regional planning in France that where unofficial bodies had already worked out plans of regional development of their own, progress had been rapid. The case for local interest and participation at the stage of implementation is obviously overwhelming. Whereas the formulation of a plan may be related to technical knowledge and broader objectives, its implementation on the ground once formulated would be impossible without full local understanding and co-operation. This necessary condition further reinforces the need for local participation at the formulation stage. There is no doubt that more intelligence and co-operation in the stage

of implementation would be forthcoming, if in the process of formulation itself the local elements were fully associated with the effort so that there was widespread appreciation of what was being planned and what the planning was expected to achieve.

Before going on to discuss the implications of the two basic requirements indicated above, consideration has to be given to another preliminary problem. This is that of the lowest area unit of planning. It has been pointed out above that ordinarily a district is unlikely to be economically homogeneous and that District Development planning must face problems of planning for a mixed or heterogeneous area. It follows that the basic preliminary work of at least some aspects of the District Plan must be carried out in terms of smaller, homogeneous area units. While this unit should be small and compact, it should also be large enough to serve as a unit of integrated planning. This means that it must embrace within it the variety of economic activity typical of the particular rural economy and that it must be capable of being treated as an integrated economic unit for purposes of planning. The most common factor of integration at this level of rural economy would be sale and supply activity; and in most parts of India where there is some commercialization of agriculture, such a unit may be identified as the primary market area. There are many obvious difficulties of definition and demarcation involved in the concept of a market area. It is here put forward, however, not as a theoretical concept but as a practical operative planning device.

While in terms of the existing situation the area unit may be identified as the market area, in terms of development planning it may be looked upon as the lowest area-unit for the integrated provision of socio-economic overheads and services. It is obvious that this approach to the definition of the lowest area-unit does not lead to an immediate ready cut and dried identification. In conceptual terms the market area has a centre or nucleus and by reason of specially convenient means of communication or other reasons it serves a fairly well-defined surrounding area as the primary marketing, sale and supply centre. In planning for the future it would be convenient to start with such existing centres and provide, for the surrounding areas, the overheads which must precede development as radiating from the centres. One of the most difficult problems in planning for widespread development is that of providing minimum

socio-economic overheads everywhere. The efficient and economic planning of this provision is an important task in the initial stages. For this purpose, it becomes necessary to identify convenient integrated area-units.⁸

This approach clearly rejects the village as the lowest area-unit of planning because it looks upon planning as involving coordinated formulation and execution of a number of socio-economic measures and activities for unfolding a given pattern of development. This concept of integrated planning assumes at each level and in each sector a strategy and a programme of economic activity in the state and public sectors combined with a regime of fiscal, monetary, physical, etc. measures of encouragement and inducement, of regulation and prohibition. The plan is integrated in the sense that the effect of the implementation of the plan is expected, according to the implied strategy, to lead to the initiation and cumulation of different types of public and private economic activity, which will bring about development along the prescribed route. The National Plan is supposed to integrate fully the plans of all tiers and authorities in all sectors. At each lower level, i.e. the State and the District, the plan is formulated within the total frame, with given objectives and external data or constraints, derived from the higher level plans. The District is considered here as the lowest area-unit of governmental planning. However, as it is ordinarily too large and heterogeneous it would be difficult to formulate an integrated plan directly for the entire area of the district. Therefore, while some elements of activity and some integrating factors would operate only at the district level, for the bulk of activities in relation to primary production, dispersed industry, rural trading and transport or urban activity oriented towards serving the rural economy etc., the district has to be divided into convenient areas for formulation of an integrated

⁸ In an actual exercise conducted in the Wardha District it was found that such an area-unit, called in this case for convenience 'the mandi-area unit' usually covered a population of 15 to 20 thousand. The population and area coverage will differ from region to region depending on the intensity of primary production and the density of population. Also, as was the experience in Wardha, while in some cases the centres and the areas served by them are fairly easily and clearly identifiable, in other cases, a selection among centres may have to be made and careful demarcation of areas undertaken. This has then to be done on the basis not only of the existing situation but also of projected future development.

plan for the lowest level area unit. And the concept of the mandal area is offered here as the most appropriate for this purpose.

V

It is now necessary to give attention to problems of formulation of a District Plan and to its important component elements, the integrating factors and the constraints and limits within which it has to be put together. Given the assumption that the district plan is not put together as a summation of lists of departmental schemes, and that there is a minimal base of information and knowledge regarding local conditions, we have to begin with an analysis of the main features of an integrated district plan and the procedures or stages by which it could be put together. Subsequently, as long as administration is organized in terms of activities of certain departments, any proposal or plan will have to be translated into terms of departmental schemes for implementation. However, it is one thing to prepare an integrated plan in the first instance, and then transform it into a series of properly coordinated departmental schemes and quite another to start with the preparation of schemes for individual activity and sub-activity of each department and then to put them together as a plan. For the purpose of the formulation of an integrated plan of a district, the stages or aspects that appear appropriate on the basis of some experience are as follows.

The first stage, and an essential one, appears to be that of the preparation of the physico-geographic plan of socio-economic overheads. The preparation of the physico-geographic frame is specially important at the district level. The main business of a district plan is to influence and direct the activities of thousands of small producers. Action in this regard has two aspects. Firstly, the provision of those basic services and amenities without which growth and diversification of economic activity will not come about. Secondly, the provision of such incentives as well as disincentives as will lead to development of economic activity in the desired directions. The first requires, very largely, public action in relation to planned provision of utilities and social services. This, in the context of our country, has to be planned in terms of a physico-geographic frame. It includes the provision of communications which inevitably takes precedence in the initial stages. Most backward regions are cha-

racterized by lack of means of communication.) In the ultimate analysis, no area or territory can hope to profit from the economic development of other parts of the country which is not closely integrated with the economic life of the rest. The establishment of a system of communications reaching out to all areas and all locations is thus the first requirement for a plan of development.) Other connected essential requirements are those of water and power and the development of economic organizations such as those of marketing and credit, storage and processing, on the basis of which, economic activity in each region grows to full capacity and becomes diversified. Social services such as those relating to education and health are also a vital part of the provision of the socio-economic overheads.)

In view of the need to economize and obtain the best results from a given investment, it is necessary to plan carefully, the provision of all these socio-economic overheads. Two requirements of this provision are obvious. In the first instance, the spread must be such as to benefit all areas within the district and secondly, that the provision of the costlier utilities and services must be arranged from a hierarchy of convenient centres. A third condition may be added to the two. This is that it is highly desirable to follow, in the determination of these centres and the areas served by them, to a large extent, existing patterns of marketing and other economic areas. A physico-geographic plan is thus a plan of communications and of the development of a series of centres at and from which certain services and amenities are provided. All of this is obviously closely connected with the concept of the "mandi-area" unit discussed above.)

Attention may also be drawn at this stage to the possibility of looking at location of these centres of services and utilities from two different points of view. In the first instance, the centre would essentially be the main centre of marketing and exchange in terms of a small or large area. Exchange activities and the provision of the services which have to be most widely spread would be the normal function of such centres. In terms of planning development it would be necessary to add to these functions, those of furnishing technical assistance or the more modern institutionalized economic services such as of credit, storage and processing and of social services such as those relating to education and health. However, from the point of view of a development plan, especially, in relation to the growth of non-farm activity, a centre may be thought of as a centre

of growth of industrial or other activity which helps to transform the economy of a surrounding region. It is obvious that the concept and the location of a centre of this type would be different from that of the traditional centre. A district plan must provide for the development of well distributed centres of the traditional type for the entire district. The industrial development plan of the district may select some of these centres for intensive development of some types of non-farm activity or find it necessary, for whatever reason, to develop other centres for particular purposes. However, as the two types of centres will have different functions, the utilities and services located in them and the demarcation of their areas will follow different principles. Whereas the former will adopt a generalized common approach, the latter will be related to certain specific aims.

The second aspect of an integrated district plan appears to be that concerned with the conservation and development of natural resources. Initially, in a country in which rural economy is so predominant and agriculture employs such a large proportion of the working force, the district plan has to be based on natural resources and concerned with their conservation, exploitation and development. The conservation and broadening of the base of natural resources is thus an essential preliminary step in development planning. Special attention requires to be given to it as large parts of these resources have greatly suffered from neglect in recent decades. Conservation and development of resources of soil, water and vegetation are extremely important for our agricultural economy. As in the case of agriculture, problems relating to conservation of natural resources arise all over the country but are at the same time highly local; local in the sense firstly, that there is a great variation in the characteristic of resources and the problems of conservation and development presented by them from area to area and secondly, that full conservation and development of all resources, necessarily requires the most detailed local action. A preliminary division of the district into homogeneous economic areas will have to be made for this plan of conservation and development of natural resources and the mandi-area unit may be found convenient for this purpose also.

It is as against the background of the physico-geographic frame of the distribution and placement of socio-economic overheads and services and of the plan for the conservation and development of

natural resources that the next aspect of the plan of development comes up for consideration. This aspect deals with production activity. The plan of development of production, agricultural and non-agricultural, is at the centre of the planning process. This aspect of the plan differs in one material aspect from the earlier two. Action in relation to the provision of socio-economic overheads is largely action taken by governmental authority or by co-operating groups of persons. The conservation and development of natural resources is also to a large extent either governmental or joint activity of a series of establishments or persons. It is only in an exceptional case like that of construction of wells that an individual on his own might take action in regard to the development of natural resources. In relation to the production plan, however, the operations are essentially those of individual agriculturists, artisans, etc. Planning action in this connection is, to a large extent, a matter of providing assistance and incentives to individual producers. Because of this it becomes important in this context to think out carefully, what may be called the objectives and strategy of development.

What is meant by defining objectives is to spell out the particular immediate goals in each field in relation to the previous development and future requirements of the district. For example, at a given level of progress of co-operative activity it may be much more important to look to the functioning of the co-operatives in relation to particular categories, such as tenants or artisans rather than to pursue the target of universal membership. The concept of strategy may be illustrated by reference to rural industrialization. For example, one may decide to concentrate initial effort on the development of processing in the co-operative sector and on the rehabilitation of traditional artisan industry, because these may not only be immediately important but also because they afforded convenient bases for future progress. Or in another context, a programme of providing improved latrines in schools may be adopted for long-term improvement of rural health habits. Choosing a particular set from among alternative groups of incentives and disincentives may also be determined by estimates of response and the chain reactions that might be set up; this in a sense is strategy.

Such problems of analysis and estimation will be encountered in each programme in this field. The agricultural production programmes today, give very uneven results, because they do not analyse

and take into account the local situation. A threefold classification in relation to programmes of agricultural improvement appears basic. (1) Improvements which are locally accepted but not yet widespread. (2) improvements proved to be useful locally but not yet accepted and (3) improvements which have to be tried out and established in the local environment. In relation only to (1) is a programme of propaganda and appropriate incentives indicated; in relation to (2) emphasis must be placed initially on demonstration; and regarding (3), which is a large class, because of the limited extent of local adaptation effort so far, it is systematic work in local adaptation and adjustment that must precede everything else. Programmes for the development of agricultural and non-agricultural productive activity have to be framed not only to suit local circumstances and conditions but also to suit the requirements of the different classes of producers. The universal present complaint regarding benefits of programmes accruing to the more substantial cultivators flows from lack of differentiation in this regard. Existing programmes have to be specially adapted to or special programmes framed for the small holders and part-time farmers if these are to profit from the planning effort.

While the emphasis on agricultural production is important, activation of the rural economy requires much greater expansion of the subsidiary primary production and of industrial activity. Intensification of agricultural production activity will meet the employment and development needs of only the middling and substantial cultivators, forming everywhere less than half of the rural families. (For the small, effectively part time cultivators, the landless labourers, rural artisans and others supplementary and new activities must be found.) In part, these would arise from planned programmes of the provision of socio-economic overheads and of the conservation and development of natural resources. In part, they must be found in expansion of the field of non-agricultural primary production e.g. animal husbandry, fishery, etc. The importance of this has been recently recognized, but no appropriate developments are yet being planned. In this matter, as in plans of industrialization the technical view dominates the field without reference to the needs of the economic situation. There appears very little awareness that the situation demands the development, for example, of dairy and poultry activities in units and at levels which will be within the competence of at least the average small farmer, if not the landless labourer;

and, if necessary, the individual small units must be supported by the requisite net-work of services and supplies. Finally, the rural economy will begin to move only if industrialization of the countryside is no longer regarded as only a supplementary or side issue but as the main result aimed at by the programme of industrial development.

This naturally leads to a consideration of the immediate problems of non-producers. The provision of socio-economic overheads, the conservation and development of natural resources and steps to improve and encourage productive activity all benefit those who have a minimum viable base of productive resources. All those who command very inadequate or no productive resources cannot hope to benefit directly from any of these programmes of development planning; and as there is little likelihood of the vast majority belonging to this class obtaining productive resources through measures, say, of redistribution of land, the programme required by them and for them is essentially that of provision of adequate employment. At the same time, the programme of providing employment for non-producers cannot be an additional programme not included in the three aspects of development planning indicated above. The concept of the additional rural works of the Planning Commission is illogical and merely shows up the failure to plan adequately. The contents of a rural works programme cannot be of a type different from those included in the programme of providing socio-economic overheads or of conservation and development of resources or the maintenance of these or of existing works. It is obvious that a rural works programme which is conceived of as additive will not be properly integrated with planned programmes and will to that extent be wasteful of resources.

The need to provide for adequate local employment through all aspects of development programming thus imposes an additional requirement on the process of plan formulation. This will operate mainly in two directions. (Firstly in relation to the choice and volume of works included in the plan and secondly as regards their spatial and temporal distribution.) The entire programme of additional economic activity directly undertaken by public authorities together with any expected increase in employment offered by private operators must generate the total employment required. The size and the degree of labour intensity of planned public activity must

be related to this objective; also, as the aggregate employment has to be properly distributed over space and time the distribution, over the area of the district, of planned activity and its initiation and closure in time have to be regulated in relation to specific local requirements. Moreover, the generation of additional employment has to be looked at as not being related to a particular year, but as a continuing long-term requirement. The employment requirement should thus not only affect the size and shape of the annual plan but also deeply influence the perspective and strategy of all planning. The employment aspect of planning thus colours and orients the whole process. It has also an integrating effect, because it gives a direction and a measure to large numbers of planning decisions.

In the dovetailing of the plans, there arises also the problem of priorities. Broadly, these have to be determined by scales of valuation and by accepted ideas regarding the route which planned development is likely to take. Conservation might be objectively given high priority, because logically conservation of resources has to precede development. (Also if high value is placed on simultaneous development of all areas, a communication and services programme must be given high priority.) The problem becomes more complicated in connection with what are called social welfare activities. One may consider a minimum provision of educational and health service for each citizen as an input required for a minimum performance by labour units. From such a point of view a considerable amount of educational and health expenditure would be treated not as welfare expenditure but as investment expenditure. It is obvious that in this field a great deal depends on subjective valuations and judgement. However, limit has to be placed on independent judgement in each local area in such matters. There has to be an accepted framework of overall national objectives and a certain broad valuation must inform all district plans.

The other important integrating factor and constraint is that of financial resources available for the district plan. This is an overall constraint which limits the extent of effort that can be put forward within a period. In a sense it is this constraint that makes planning meaningful. It provides the frame within which given local, natural and human, resources and the local interpretation of national objectives the optimum effort that can be made for the best utilization of the available financial resources has to be defined and determined.

The strategy of the plan as a whole or for the public sector and the determination of priorities and allocations are made fully with reference to this constraint. In its absence, the district development planning is no more than a compilation of desired schemes and projects which are not necessarily connected together and in which no indication of logical relation or chronological order need be given. With the constraint imposed by the overall financial limit, the interpretation of a district plan means essentially the spelling out of the logical relations between various sectoral and departmental plans and the chronological order in which within all of them together particular schemes will be initiated and completed.

Reference has to be made in addition to a number of calculations of availabilities and balances. A road programme of given size would require certain equipment and trained personnel; the seed multiplication programmes have to be based on a given complement of farms and farmers. In education and health programmes, buildings, equipment, teachers, nurses have to be made available in a given measure for any level of desired performance. In the same way the total buildings and construction programmes in all sectors together would be subject to the overall limitation of availability of building materials, e.g., the total output of bricks or the possible allotment of cement. The entire plan, in particular, the socio-economic overheads and the conservation plans, requires labour as an essential input on a large scale. Therefore, the availability of labour would place a limitation on the size of these plans that could be accomplished within any given time. Such calculations in physical terms could serve two purposes; they would indicate limits to possible performance but they could also be taken to present a challenge, so that through, chiefly, better organization the limits could be stretched.

Better organization is the additional input that could be most readily made available in early stages of planned development. Also most new programmes of development require for their success that attention is paid to problems of setting up and operating appropriate organizations. (In district development planning two types of organizations, viz., the panchayati raj institutions and the cooperatives, would be chiefly utilized.) This general approach still leaves unsolved a number of problems. For example, it is general experience that mere provision of a works programme does not, without a special organizational effort, benefit the categories for whom it is

intended. The organization suggested for this purpose usually takes the form of a labour contract cooperative society. However, the organizational pattern and the functioning of this type in a variety of contexts have yet to be experimentally determined. This is also the situation regarding the major problem of the organization of small holders for agricultural production, for which cooperative farming appears to be the logical solution.

(A large variety of other organizational problems are encountered in local planning. Some of these arise out of some aspects of land reforms as for example, the management of forests formerly owned by landlords; some because of a mixture of public and private interest, such as that of the management of a public utility such as a tank which benefits only a limited numbers within the community. There are some fields in which new experimental effort requires mainly organizational improvisation. This happens with problems relating to what are called the weaker sections or with problems of conservation of development of non-arable land in which a number of departments such as forest, revenue, animal husbandry may be interested and where without arousing local interest and cooperation no effective programme could be carried out. Inevitably, problems of organization loom specially large where a departure from the traditional pattern becomes necessary or where the disadvantaged are sought to be benefited. It is thus clear that in the formulation of plans and more particularly in the plan of implementation, attention has to be paid to indicating carefully the organizations entrusted with operation and coordination and, in many fields also to designing and experimenting with new types of organizations for the purpose.)

Two aspects of the integration of plans need to be specially stressed. These are co-ordination and synchronization. Any given objective such as that of increasing agricultural production would be related to a large number of schemes and projects and activities of different departments. It would be related to the conservation of land, development of water resources, construction of connecting communications, availability of power, supply of credit both long-term and short-term, institutionalization of marketing, guaranteeing of prices, setting up of co-operative processing units; this is apart from the specific agricultural departmental activities, such as those of supply of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, introduction of improved

practices and implements, the provision of technical assistance and advice, the operation of demonstration and research farms, etc. This small illustrative list would make clear what is meant by establishing logical relations within the activities of different departments and agencies which are intended in part or in whole to subserve one common objective. Given the size of the plan and the framing of objectives, the extent and nature of each activity and its chronological order would have to be determined in close relation to all the other activities which it supports or by which it is supported. If this aspect of mutual relation is not properly taken into account in the formulation of the plan, there would be obviously disproportionate expenditure of energy and financial resources in particular directions, which would be wasteful in so far as for want of necessary support and effort it would not bear fruit. By an integration of district plan is meant paying close attention to all these aspects of other relations and emphasizing the need to maintain a proper degree of proportionality. Coordination and synchronization become specially important for implementation to be effective. The mutually supporting action of different programmes and activities can bear fruit if the activities provided for are not only appropriate and in proportion, but also if in each context, they are in fact undertaken and completed at the appropriate times. Synchronization of implementation of various aspects of programmes is of supreme importance especially in relation to such objectives as annual agricultural production plans.

It is obvious that to construct such a plan requires much more effort than a plan which merely puts together standard departmental schemes and that if adjustments are required to be made in such a plan, they necessitate much greater thought and labour than would be required in relation to a collection of departmental schemes which can be cut down or pared at will.

VI

The preparation of a district development plan has a number of aspects. As indicated above the work has to be undertaken chiefly at two levels, the District and the Mandi area. While the overall frames, the strategies and the comprehensive works and schemes have to be planned at the district level, the details of the conservation, pro-

duction, etc. plans have to be worked for the mandi area. Financial allocations, areawise and sectoral, have to be finalized at the district level and distribution of schemes and programmes in the light of the employment criterion has also to be carried out here. Organizational problems will be most probably common to the entire district, though in some specialized aspects such as forest and wastelands or animal husbandry they may be found to have local peculiarities. The work of integration, coordination and synchronization will have to be undertaken appropriately at both levels, though the overall integrative effort will be in relation to the district plan.

(The task at all levels is twofold. Firstly, there is the work of marshalling all available information, qualitative and quantitative, and judging of requirements, feasibilities, logical priorities and chronological orders from a technical point of view and, subsequently, given the final judgement regarding programmes and priorities, the work of formulation of an integrated plan taking into consideration all the limitations and constraints. Secondly, there is work of taking account of differing levels of local competence and knowledge, local attitudes and preferences and possible local reactions and responses. While the first will be mainly the work of official administrative agencies and official and non-official experts, the second can be achieved only through association of local leadership with the total enterprise. However, while making this formal distinction it has to be noted that the ease and the efficiency with which administrators and experts carry out the first will itself be influenced greatly by the extent of interest they arouse in the local population in relation to it and the cooperation and assistance that they obtain.)

(Local participation in plan formulation and implementation is secured essentially through entrusting a considerable part of district development planning to local authority, i.e. the Zilla Parishad in Maharashtra, and in many other states. An initial difference in the operations regarding the two aspects and agencies may be noticed. While the work of the administrator and the expert can be made to cover the entire area of planning with more or less equal efficiency, the interest and commitment of local leaders and population may differ widely from field to field.)

This is obviously a function of the education of local leadership and of its consciousness of the real meaning of national socio-econo-

mic objectives. From the point of view of possible variations in coverage and depth of local interests, it is necessary to recognize the importance of the national frame. ✓ Given national objectives and the total scope of the national plan of development, all aspects of it would necessarily be reflected in district planning, even though the local leadership may not be equally interested in all of them. Thus, for example, development of the more backward areas or special relief measures in relation to the weaker sections, may not evoke as much interest in local leadership as, say, the programme of agricultural production or irrigation development. The general compulsions of the national frame would then be useful in relation to continuance of minimum effort in those directions which do not evoke full local interest. ✓ However, in the ultimate analysis, it is necessary to ensure that national objectives are, in fact, fully accepted by local leadership everywhere. ✓ This is because no real social transformation can come about through development unless there is full understanding and co-operation from local elements in this regard. Therefore, while in the initial stages, the national frame may serve a useful purpose, the full and meaningful pursuit of national objectives requires an educational effort in relation to local leadership which must be considered as extremely important and essential. In part, therefore, the process of district development planning must be understood as that of communicating, to local leadership and population, aspirations and ideologies with which the national plan is informed. On the other hand, the realism and the effectiveness of the national plan depend essentially on an understanding at the national level of the possibilities and difficulties of local planning.

Most of the discussion has been conducted, so far, in terms of plan formulation. Problems of implementation have been dealt with impliedly. This has happened in two ways. In the first instance, the agencies of plan formulation and plan implementation are in this context, identical. The various authorities and committees and non-official associates of the Zilla Parishad and its administrative set up will be equally involved in both formulation and implementation of plan. It is only the outside experts, official and non-official, consulted in plan formulation who may not be involved in implementation. Secondly, the procedures indicated for formulation of details of the plan and for putting it together in an integrated fashion have relevance also to implementation. If the operating organiza-

tional agencies in each context are carefully thought out and indicated and proper attention paid to coordination and synchronization in formulating the plan and its various component schemes and programmes; analysis for implementation will become easy. Effective implementation requires a clear appreciation by each operator of responsibility in relation to every relevant item and the relationship of that item to others. Clear indication of these responsibilities and inter-relationships should be available from the detailed work of plan formulation. ✓ Extracting this information and putting it in appropriate form for communication to the relevant agencies and personnel is the first step in implementation. ✓ When this is done not only actual operations but also constant cross-checking and supervision of their progress would be greatly facilitated. Moreover, the preliminary analysis will help in concurrent evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan, will bring to surface any difficulties encountered, any assumption or expectations proved incorrect and will make possible continuous adaptation and adjustment. ✓ It is the great demerit of the existing approach, through standard departmental schemes, that it does not provide for or necessitate this preliminary exercise before implementation.

VII

The exposition of the problem of district development planning attempted above has general application especially in those states in which the district is the main unit of the Panchayat Raj organization. However, there arise in district development planning a number of problems out of the special legal and administrative arrangements of each state. I do not intend to deal with these in any detail. However, the nature and characteristics of these may be briefly indicated by reference to conditions in Maharashtra of which I have the greatest knowledge.

Zilla Parishads in Maharashtra are endowed by legislation with specific planning powers. However, the proper exercise of these powers has been hampered by a number of factors. The first is finance. The financial resources available to the Z.P.s are chiefly in relation to their specific administrative responsibilities and to individual development programmes or schemes which have been transferred to them. They have almost no 'free' resources which

they could spend on their own. Moreover, all new programmes undertaken by them or any significant variations in the old are subject to detailed scrutiny and approval by the heads of relevant departments. It has, in fact, been alleged that the budgetary and administrative control of the secretariat and the departments over the Z.P.s is more stringent and harassing than over the district administration. Therefore, while Z.P.s in Maharashtra have been able to spend more money in a few specific directions they have not been in a position to, and have not been encouraged to apply their mind to local problems of long-term development planning.

While a number of subjects have been transferred to Zilla Parishads some important aspects of district development planning remain under direct control of state government. These are looked after by the residual district administration or by regional or state departmental officers. No arrangements exist at present for effective coordination of these aspects with those transferred to the Zilla Parishad, at the stage of plan formulation or after. The non-transferred subjects in Maharashtra include forests, which are in most districts intimately connected with development of local resources and whose protection and exploitation require close cooperation of the local population.

In considering how the planning apparatus works, attention has to be paid, on the official side, to the secretariat, the state and regional officers of departments, the collector and the residual administration of the district, the chief officer of the Zilla Parishad and the staff under him. Even after the recent exercise at devolution, the secretariat continues to be dominant in planning. Its financial and administrative powers seem to have diminished in no measure and the scrutiny of detail continues as before. Though the Zilla Parishads have been given planning officers and were asked to prepare elaborate documents in relation to the 4th Five Year Plan, the state and district plans were, in fact, compiled in the secretariat and this work was little effected by the Z.P. documents. The role played by the secretariat in finance and overall planning is duplicated by heads of state departments and their regional officers in relation to details of departmental schemes. The departmental officers—state and regional—have usually considerable expertise and have, in many cases, detailed knowledge of particular localities. This expertise and knowledge are, however, not utilized for local development

planning because of, at least, two factors. Firstly, the standard departmental schemes themselves are to a large extent derived from above, i.e. from the Planning Commission and the Central Ministries, and the state technical officers have rarely subjected them to rigorous scrutiny in relation to particular regional conditions. Therefore, they are not disposed to favour such scrutiny at a lower level and to sanction adjustments. This attitude is reinforced by the feeling of estrangement from the district staff created by the establishment of Z.P.s and the transfer of the district staff to them. As the district staff is no longer directly controlled by the state department, the higher echelons of officers appear to have lost interest in the work of this staff. This has created a number of problems in the formulation and implementation of district development plans.

It was expected that with the establishment of the Z.P.s the collector of the district will lose his importance. This has not happened to any large extent, chiefly because the secretariat and the ministers continue to look upon the collector and his administrative staff as their own special agency. A number of local programmes such as of famine relief are still routed chiefly through the collector and this complicates plan formulation and coordination.

Within the official hierarchy itself one vestige of colonial administration, viz. I.A.S. the successor service of the I.C.S., exerts great influence. The collector of the district and the Chief Officer of the Zilla Parishad both belong to the I.A.S. In colonial times, British personnel of the highest non-specialized service were naturally put in control of the entire district administration, which in those days was concerned chiefly with collecting revenue and keeping law and order. The central dominant position of members of the non-specialized service in district administration continues to this day and has been carried forward to the Z.P.s which are patterned on the earlier district administration. Consequently, the functioning of the Z.P. has come to depend greatly on a single I.A.S. officer, the Chief Officer of the Z.P. The relationship with the non-official part of the Z.P. organization, on the one hand, and the effective operation and coordination of experts and of departmental offices on the other depend to a large extent on the efficiency and disposition of this non-expert officer.

(The departmental officers whose services have been transferred to the Z.P.s are of fair average quality and are, in many cases,

sincere and knowledgeable, specially in relation to local circumstances and problems. However, they suffer from two strong handicaps. In the first instance, they feel cut off from their parent departments and are yet uncertain of the shape the Z.P. service will take. Secondly, and more importantly, from the point of view of planning, they still operate within the older tradition which prevents the knowledge and initiative of lower ranks from being meaningfully used. They have been trained and are expected to carry out plans to the letter and not to examine them carefully or to express criticism of them, and they have learnt by experience that it is better to follow instructions blindly rather than to adapt or to make suggestions regarding adjustment to local circumstances.)

Finally, the establishment of the Z.P.s has not yet led to expected rationalization of arrangements of the field staff of the district. There are two sources of confusion. Firstly, the different backgrounds and assignments of the staff as derived from district, local boards, revenue and other departments, etc., and secondly the allotment of particular staff to each new set of schemes. The extent of staffing in the field in most districts of Maharashtra appears liberal. However, the failure to rationalize prevents effective use. Adoption of the integrative approach to district development planning should hasten the process of rationalization in this regard.

The non-official apparatus of the Zilla Parishads cannot be divided into well-marked groups for similar consideration. In one part, the problems are organizational such as that of coordinating the work of the subject and the area committees. The adoption of the mandal area, as the lowest area unit of planning, would require some modifications in existing arrangements regarding area committees and delegation of powers to them. In another part, the problems relate to the socio-economic composition of local leadership⁹ and to the operation of the political party system. Further complication of the latter may result from different parties being in control of different Zilla Parishads and the government of the State. Most of these problems have no direct bearing on district development planning and need not be discussed here.

⁹ For a discussion of some of these in another context, see D. R. Gadgil : "Socio-Economic Factors underlying pattern of leadership" in International Co-operative Alliance : Co-operative Leadership in South-East Asia (1963).

The relationship of the non-officials with the official hierarchy is also an important factor in the working of Z.P.s. In this case also vestiges of the older order remain in the undue importance attached to official position. However, the situation in this regard is undergoing rapid change.

It should be noted that the Zilla Parishad experiment is new and that the present is essentially a period of transition. There is nothing in the basic situation which would militate against district development planning of the type discussed in this lecture being undertaken. Today's problems are chiefly those of the changeover from a highly centralized administration to one in which large powers are vested in local self-government authorities. There exists at present a widespread distrust of lower authorities and a fear of giving large powers to them among those at all higher levels. Therefore, even when legislative arrangements are changed administrative practice continues to block real devolution. This is not expected to be a permanent feature. Pressure of circumstances and changing ideas are bound to bring about greater conformity between intention and operation. It is hoped that a proper appreciation of the existing situation will lead to voluntary deliberate adjustments rather than to *ad hoc* reluctant steps taken under pressure.

VIII

Before concluding, a few observations appear in order regarding the feasibility of the approach suggested above. On a first examination it may appear that the approach requires resources to an extent which could not be expected to be made available and that it also asks for too detailed an operation. A close scrutiny will show that this is not so. In fact, it is experience everywhere that effective rural work is not possible without descending to details and the agricultural production programme envisaged above is, in principle, no different from what is attempted in agricultural extension in any county in U.S.A. Moreover, as of today the personnel resources required for the field work sketched above are for the most part available on the ground in most districts in India.

There are chiefly two directions in which new inputs will be required. Firstly, local survey and research in all fields. This is completely neglected area today. In part, the gap can be filled by

drawing on the resources of existing academic and training institutions in the district. There are three phases to this work. (Firstly, collecting systematic information in relation to each field and identifying problems; secondly, conducting research locally, chiefly in relation to proving, adapting and adjusting standard prescriptions and solutions in relation to local conditions; thirdly, training local personnel engaged in plan formulation and implementation in specialized aspects of the work in each field.) It is true that the existing academic and training institutions are not equipped for this work. However, no insuperable difficulty should arise in making good this deficiency. For example, the staff of the department of economics or commerce in a local college could easily be trained to undertake the preliminary and the later continuous economic surveys; it could also be trained to impart instruction to district staff in appropriate planning techniques. Staffs of local agricultural institutes, polytechnics, public health or medical schools could be utilized in a similar manner. Obviously, existing resources will prove insufficient; more institutions will have to be established and they would have to be properly oriented. However, not only could local institutions play this important role in planning but also their efficiency and competence should greatly increase by this participation. A minimum programme of new institutions is unavoidable. For example, each district must have at least one agricultural research-cum-demonstration centre; but such action is an inevitable concomitant of development itself. As indicated above, the initial survey etc. is no more than a preliminary step. As local planning becomes more detailed and more effective it will have to be supported by systematic collection of a greater amount of data and by greater research in depth in all fields. And with the progress of development planning the resources and competence of local academic and training institutions must also increase.

The second important input required is that of entirely new methods of work and new attitudes towards it. The new attitudes are required chiefly in two directions. Firstly, the adoption of the problem-solving attitude towards all aspects of development planning by all participants in the process; secondly, willingness to trust the judgement and competence of and delegate authority to personnel on the lower level on the part of all on each of the higher levels. The new methods are those required particularly by the

adoption of the problem-solving approach. Even if one begins operations, as a matter of convenience, with a standard departmental scheme this approach requires scrutiny of each of its details in relation to local resources and local circumstances. Defining objectives, translating objectives into programmes of work and putting programmes in the form of a set of schemes will all require new methods of detailed work even when one works on the base of the old. Also the putting together of plans, especially what has been termed above coordination and synchronization will necessitate evolution of new methods as also a thorough analysis of the plan for implementation.

Effective district development planning will thus not require new financial or physical resources in any considerable measure. It will call for a better utilization of old resources, for a reorientation of the existing set-up and, above all, for new attitudes and a readiness both to trust more and to delve deeper.