

CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding chapter an attempt is made to present the emerging trends in the area of developmental experience. Before proceeding to do the same, at the outset, it may be essential to state a point clearly. Given the scope and focus of the study, it may not be possible to make broad generalizations about the linkages between environmental forces, political processes and effectiveness of public policies. It is quite risky to make broad generalizations on the basis of a few village studies especially in a country like India, where conditions differ from district to district, block to block and village to village. Nevertheless, the discussion gains some credibility as it provides clues to understand the dynamics of interaction between environmental forces, political processes and public policies.

Considering the attempts that the government has been making to alleviate poverty through interventionist rural development strategies, it is imperative to examine the variation in the proportion of poor in rural India and thus the percentage of poor

that gained entry into the arena of mainstream activities. However, a perusal of available literature on poverty very clearly indicates the absence or negligible decline in the percentage of poor. In other words, it may be stated that the policies and programmes appear to have failed in realizing the set objectives.

As the instances of failure far outnumber the successes, the problem needs careful examination. The need for such an effort persists even in the wake of availability of a plethora of studies as scant attention has been paid to spell out the reasons for poor performance and conditions conducive or non-conducive for success of development programmes and policies. This may be precisely due to the evaluative nature of most of the studies conducted. Hence there is a need to examine the rural development policies and programmes in an in-depth and comprehensive manner and the present study is an attempt at the same. While doing so, the study focuses on linkages between environmental forces, politico-administrative processes and effectiveness of public policies.

As the public policies are shaped by representatives of elite (personnel holding formal political and administrative positions) and reflect

their interests, the study in order to analyze the effectiveness of strategies, addresses itself to the question - whether the policies shaped and influenced by elite bring in the intended results and if not, why the policies are unable to realize the set objectives.

While making an attempt to answer these questions, the study focused attention on implementation process assuming that policy formulation and design is well intended to tackle the problem under question i.e., poverty. It is considered essential to make such an assumption as it is the study of implementation process alone that enables one to pinpoint the loopholes of the policies emphatically with concrete evidence.

✓The study examined the implementation process of IRDP during the period 1980-85 by focusing on the role of politics considered as authoritative allocation or reallocation of resources. Since authoritative allocation or reallocation of resources in the context of implementation process are made by government representatives at district and further below in the name of the 'State', the reasons for success or failure of policies revolve around the question of prevalence or absence of a necessary will on the part of the implementors to implement the policy. The study attempted to answer the question by

examining the role of institutions, implementors vis-a-vis the effectiveness of strategies. While doing so it focused on the interactions and inter-relationships of implementors i.e., officials and non-officials, with institutional arrangements and target groups and among the implementors in the context of implementation process. For this purpose, the study area encompasses three villages selected from three blocks situated in three different zones of a coastal Andhra Pradesh district - Guntur.

Findings of the Study

While attempting to answer the questions raised and thus to realize the purpose of the study, we have been able to arrive at some inferences that substantiated the said points.

The most important inference drawn from the study is that despite the shifts in development strategies, public policies continue to fail in realizing their intended objectives and the study district is no exception to this. However, there is a variation in the degree of realization of the set objectives of the programme across the blocks and villages. Vinukonda, Reddapadu fared much better than the other two blocks and villages - Bapatla, Rajuapalem and Narasaraopet, Kammanda - as benefits at least reached the intended sections. Further there is a variation in terms of

physical achievements and in real terms i.e., reaching and improving the conditions of intended sections. The well performed blocks and villages as per the physical achievements turned out to be poorly performed ones in real terms.

The poor performance of the programme appears to be an outcome of the very nature of institutional arrangements designed to facilitate the implementation of the programme. The nature of institutional arrangements is such that the organizational form appears to constrain the very functioning of the incumbents in the organization. The institutions are designed in such a way that they are embedded with a high degree of centralized decision-making and concentration of powers in the hands of bureaucracy. Further, the predominance of deputationists, absence of clear hierarchy, frequent change of personnel, bleak promotional avenues and problems of co-ordination are also constraining the effective implementation. This kind of an institutional set-up naturally resulted in delays in decision making, red tapism and clogged flow of communication which ultimately affected the performance of the programme.

Further, the poor performance of the programme in general and variation in performance in particular across the blocks and villages and in terms of

physical achievements and actual terms (reaching the intended sections and enjoyment of benefits by the assisted groups) appear to have emanated from the prevailing variations in socio-economic characteristics of the environmental setting, nature, attitudes and orientations of non-officials and officials and position of target groups.

The situation in Rajuapalem is such that there appears to prevail cumulative inequalities, a high degree of conflict of interests and some sort of dependency relationship between different groups. The socially dominant group - Raju is also dominant numerically, economically and politically.

This kind of a situation obviously resulted in the development of a political leadership with a narrow social base i.e., dominance in socio-economic arenas constituted the basis of political power, attitudes and orientations inimical to the interests of target groups and objectives of the programme. The same appears to be the case even with officials though they are appointed personnel. The officials of this village appear to have some sort of linkage with their counterparts i.e., non-officials, and have a narrow social base representing socially and economically dominant sections. Further, though there is a high degree of dissatisfaction with their jobs due to absence of promotional avenues and insufficient degree

of empowerment, officials appear to be somewhat contented as their place of posting is congruent to their native place.

The cumulative effect of all these factors has resulted in the emergence of a situation in which there is a hiatus between implementors and target groups. Being weak, vulnerable, unorganized and in the absence of accessibility to the implementors, most of the target group members sought the assistance of a middleman - son of the sarpanch - in order to gain access to the programme. This ultimately contributed to not only a high incidence of leakage of benefits (62 per cent) but also prevented those few genuine beneficiaries (38 per cent) from utilizing the benefits. Thus the programme implementation in this village instead of eradicating poverty appear to have facilitated its perpetuation.

Though a more or less similar situation appears to prevail in Kammanda, the subtle variation in degree of pronouncement of certain socio-economic characteristics seems to have contributed to a somewhat better performance of the programme in this village vis-a-vis Rajuapalem.

The situation even in this village is such that there appears to prevail cumulative inequalities, a high degree of conflict of interests and dependency

relationship between various groups. The socially dominant group - Kamma, is also dominant numerically, economically and politically. However, unlike the Rajus of Rajuapalem, the Kammas of Kammanda could not emerge as a decisively dominant group due to the presence of yet another group, Muslims, with more or less similar characteristics albeit to a lesser degree.

This kind of a situation naturally resulted in the development of a political leadership with a narrow social base i.e., dominance in socio-economic arenas constituted the basis for political power, attitudes and orientations inimical to the interests of the target groups.

Further, even here the nature of officials is such that they have a narrow social base and are dissatisfied with their jobs due to the absence of promotional avenues and insufficient degree of empowerment coupled with heavy responsibilities. In addition, though officials and non-officials come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, they appear to have been at logger-heads with each other and have not been able to develop a healthy working relationship. This appears to have emanated from the very urban bias of officials, incongruence of their place of posting with that of native place and sympathies of officials

and non-officials with rival political parties - Congress - I and Telugu Desam respectively.

Having the advantage of obtaining the information first, the officials of this area appear to have overlooked the necessity of consulting the non-officials with regard to any aspect of implementation of the development programme. This in concomitance with the hiatus between implementors i.e., officials and non-officials and the dependent, unorganized target groups, resulted in a situation in which both officials and target groups sought the services of a middleman - Karanam to cover the fixed targets and to take assistance respectively. Given the fractitious relationship with the non-officials, the officials while attempting to cover the fixed targets, being conscious of unpleasant repercussions of complete collusion with the Karanam, have allowed a certain number of benefits to reach the intended sections of the programme. The cumulative effect of all these factors contributed atleast to a lesser incidence of leakage of benefits (44 per cent) in this village in comparison to Rajuapalem if not their successful utilization by the beneficiaries. Thus the programme implementation even in this village appear to have failed in eradication of poverty though not its perpetuation.

However, the very absence of these factors in Reddapadu village appears to have resulted in the success of the programme at least in terms of reaching the intended sections. The situation here is such that inequalities appear to be dispersed rather than cumulative. A lesser degree of conflict of interests and a higher degree of homogeneity between various groups is also noticed in Reddapadu. This kind of a situation naturally resulted in the development of a political leadership with wider social base i.e., arenas other than socio-economic ones constituted the basis for political power, attitudes and orientations congruent to the interests of target groups and favourable to realization of objectives of the programme.

Moreover, just like the non-officials, the officials also have a wider social base - in terms of their representativeness - and appear to be contented with their jobs despite the absence of promotional avenues as their place of posting is congruent to their native place. They also maintain a healthy working relationship with their counterparts i.e., non-officials. Further, the exposure to the ideals of egalitarian society and communist movement, helped the officials to emerge as committed and conscientious workers. This coupled with prevalence of active, economically independent, less vulnerable and

somewhat organized target groups, has contributed to the negligible percentage (4 per cent) of leakage of benefits and success of the programme at least in a limited way in Reddapadu.

The point that ultimately emerged from the study is that there appears to prevail some sort of correlation between the general level of development of an area, nature and extent of inequalities, nature of leadership, position of target groups and outcomes of implementation process. In other words wherever development in economic and infrastructural terms is high, there inequalities are high, political leadership is decisively dominant, position of target groups is weak and implementation of development programme failed to realize the set objectives.

Thus the nature of linkages between environmental forces, political and administrative processes and effectiveness of public policies is such that it is contributing to the ineffectiveness of public policies in realizing their set objectives. Though the policies shaped by elite are apparently inimical to their interests, in reality they are helping them to reap the benefits by virtue of their hold over the environmental forces.

Since presence of certain conditions in uniform terms across the blocks and villages appear to be

causing the slackening of the implementation process and thus the failure of development strategies, it may be essential to make some suggestions so as to improve the prevailing situation.

Policy Recommendations

It may be possible to improve the prevailing situation and thus the implementation process of strategies to some extent by initiating measures that strengthen the institutional arrangements, position of officials and that of target groups. But, given the linkages of non-officials with environmental forces it may not be possible to do any thing as it requires radical structural changes.

The existing institutional arrangements may be strengthened to some extent by initiating measures that facilitate:

1. Empowerment or delegation of powers to the functionaries at the actual level of implementation along with responsibilities;
2. Empowerment or delegation of powers to officials and non-officials in more or less equal terms;
3. By providing some organic link between the implementing institutions;
4. Strengthening block level administrative structures by appointing some more personnel.

Empowerment or delegation of powers to the functionaries at the actual level of implementation is essential in order to repose confidence and involve them completely in the implementation process. This may be facilitated by adopting measures of decentralization or delegation of powers. As per this, instead of allowing the functionaries at levels higher than the actual point of implementation to fix the targets to be covered - assuming the prevalence of 20,000 poor people in an average block - same may be entrusted to the district and lower level functionaries through exhaustive surveys. In addition, since the development programmes are intended to ameliorate the conditions of poor, the lower level functionaries may be empowered to formulate schemes in consideration with the potentialities, resource inventory of an area and needs of people. Further, since sections intended to be assisted are located at block and village levels and in view of familiarity of the area, decision-making powers concerning selection and identification, supervision and monitoring of the assistance may be entrusted to the lower level functionaries.

While empowering the lower level functionaries with responsibilities, it may also be essential to maintain some sort of uniformity between official and non-official functionaries. This not only helps in

avoiding the entry of ineligible beneficiaries into the stream of developmental assistance but also in better supervision and monitoring of the assistance.

In addition, institutional arrangements may also be strengthened by providing some sort of organic link between the implementing institutions and by appointing some more personnel at block and village levels. Organic link between the implementing institutions may be provided by merging of Panchayati Raj institutions with DRDA. While doing so, the implementation of the development programme may be entrusted to the DDO and chairman of Zilla Parishad under the overall supervision of district collector. This kind of an arrangement may not only solve the problems of co-ordination among the functionaries but may also result in the involvement of both officials and non-officials more or less equally. Further, while initiating the measures to merge the DRDA with Panchayati Raj institutions, some of the DRDA functionaries may be stationed at block level so as to help BDO and thus to strengthen block administration.

Position of officials may be strengthened by making provision for incentives, proper facilities and improving the work conditions and broadening the promotional avenues. This is essential as lack of

incentives, proper facilities, poor work conditions and promotional avenues appear to be encouraging the officials to move away from realizing the institutional goals. In addition, to weaken the influence of social factors on attitudes and orientations of officials and thus the decision making processes, to inculcate ideals of egalitarian society and humanitarian outlook, it may be essential to provide rigorous training and orientation course for officials.

Since the vulnerable position of target groups - that flows from economic dependence, absence of secure income, powerlessness, inability to exercise their rights and absence of organizational support - is also affecting the implementation process, it may be essential to strengthen their position. The position of the poor may be improved by initiating measures to strengthen their economic base and encouraging the development of organizations for poor.

Given the complex nature of our socio-economic setup, economic bases of the target groups can be improved only through interventionist strategies. Since poverty is heterogeneous in nature and as the interests and needs of one section of poor differ from other sections, while making any attempt to strengthen the economic base, it may be essential to have different policies for different sections of the

poor. The point here is interventionist strategies like IRDP that emphasize on income generation through assets with limited investment pattern would only be beneficial to the land owning sections of poor and may not help the landless sections much. The reasons may be rooted in the very debilitating nature of poverty of the landless poor that may make them easy scapegoats of exploitation or compel them to misutilise the assistance.

Since non-possession of land and absence of secure income appear to be the main sources of vulnerability of the landless poor, the situation may be improved by emphasizing land distribution under land reform policy. But the point is, given the prevalent social structure and in view of the past experiences one may not feel very optimistic about realizing this objective. Moreover, further fragmentation of land through land redistribution policy may not be all that advisable in view of overall production and productivity.

As the whole issue of vulnerability of poor revolves around the question of presence or absence of some amount of secure income, same may be provided by devising policies that emphasize on employment generation. The employment generation policy, unlike the existing one, may emphasize on wage employment

more or less on a permanent basis through diversification of rural economy. Permanent wage employment through diversification of rural economy may not only help to improve and strengthen the economic base but will also minimise the leakage of development benefits. In addition to this, the poor may also be provided with social consumption loans free of interest at least in the initial stages of implementation of permanent wage employment programmes.

Further, vulnerability of poor also flows from their powerlessness and inability to exercise their rights. As such, while attempting to strengthen the economic base, it may also be essential to strengthen their political base through empowerment. The political base of the poor may be strengthened by encouraging the development of organizations for the poor. The organizations of the poor may not only help in improving the levels of consciousness and degree of articulative capacity but will also provide necessary assertive capacity to the poor to protest against the exploitative tendencies of environmental forces. Though one cannot deny the validity of the argument about the role of organizations of poor, the point that remains to be tackled is concerned with how the organizations can be encouraged to develop. Given the strategy of intervention adopted to achieve

development, the responsibility to encourage the development of organizations has to be taken by the 'State' and its machinery i.e., Government. In addition to initiating some measures for the development of organizations of poor, the 'State' may also urge other forces especially voluntary organizations and political parties to work in this direction.

While noting down these issues especially that of empowerment or delegation of powers to the functionaries at the actual point of implementation along with responsibilities and empowerment of non-officials on par with officials, it may be essential to clarify a point. Given the nature of existing power structure and inequitable distribution of resources, empowerment of functionaries and more so the non-officials may have adverse effects on the implementation process of development strategies.

But, this however may be overlooked as the provision of training, monetary and other incentives may refrain officials from joining hands with non-officials in appropriation of benefits. Further, the empowerment of target groups may also act as a restraint over the activities of the functionaries.

Thus, by initiating measures to improve the institutional arrangements, strengthening the position of officials and position of target groups, it may be possible to bring about palpable changes in the conditions of the poor.

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