

CHAPTER - V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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Community Development was regarded as a method and rural extension as an agency through which the social and economic transformation of village was to be brought about under the first Five Year Plan of India. The development blocks were established under this programme as an administrative and functional unit to achieve the objectives of CD programme. These became a key unit of area development in all the facets of rural life. The Block Development Officer (BDO) was appointed as head of the block, who functioned as a leader of the team for planning, implementing and coordinating various developmental activities in the area.

The blocks were a hub of activities in the early days of CD programme. Their importance was further elevated with the introduction of 'Democratic Centralization' i.e. the establishment of 'panchayat samities' at the block level. With this the role, function and responsibilities of BDOs for rural development also increased tremendously.

With the passage of time, the CD programme and the CD blocks have also undergone a sea of changes in the last about 40 years. During the first two Five Year Plans, the

programme grew rapidly and then started a phase of decline and disintegration. The emphasis and focus was initially shifted to the programmes of agricultural development. New programmes like Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP) and Intensive Agriculture Area Programme (IAAP) clouded the multipurpose aspect of the CD programme and resulted in the attenuation of the blocks and withdrawal of key functionaries into line departments. Health, animal husbandry, cooperatives and rural industries had all become out of the purview of the blocks. The agricultural developmental activities were also completely separated from the block with the introduction of 'Training and Visit' system of extension in various states of the country. On the other hand, the blocks were assigned the responsibilities of implementing various other types of developmental activities after the launching of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

In spite of several changes, blocks and the BDOs have come to stay the blocks still provide a nation wide elaborate infrastructure with a net-work of basic administrative set-up upto the village level. The whole set up has witnessed ups and downs but has attained permanency. The efforts are now being made to revitalise and strengthen this institution.

It was, therefore, felt desirable to study the role and functions of the BDO in the changed context. Hence, the present study was taken up with the following specific objectives:

1. To delineate the present assigned role and functions of the BDO.
2. To systematically trace the changes in role and functions of the BDO since beginning (1952).
3. To find out the self perceived role of the existing BDOs.
4. To study the role and functions of BDOs as perceived by the village panchayats.

Three aspects of the role and functions of BDOs were studied, viz. the role assigned to them, the role perceived by them and their role as perceived by the village representatives and leaders. The study was conducted in Haryana and all the 100 BDOs (now designated as BDPO in the state) were the respondents of study. However, valid and useful information could be obtained only from 62. A sample of 78 Sarpanches and Panches was drawn from ten village panchayats in district Hisar. Some information was also gathered from secondary sources.

Some selected personal and psychological variables of the respondents were also studied. A list of 62 specific jobs was prepared which were classified under seven different

job-categories. Each job was studied from three angles i.e. responsibility, importance attached to the job and interest or liking for the job.

The data were collected through mailed questionnaire from the BDPOs, and personal interview from the Sarpanches and Panches of village panchayats.

#### Assigned Role and Functions of BDPOs

It was found that the present assigned role and functions of the BDPOs consist of the following types of activities:

- a) Supervisory role as head of the block team: This includes administrative supervising and guiding the staff, conducting inspections, calling and conducting meetings and discharging responsibilities as drawing and disbursing officer.
- b) Developmental Functions: These included jobs pertaining to various development programmes of the government such as IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, TRYSEM etc. These are generally construction oriented and beneficiary in nature.
- c) Functions pertaining to panchayat samiti: The BDPO is also the executive head of the panchayat samiti. Hence he has also to discharge all administrative functions relating to the panchayats.

d) Other duties: The BDPO is also assigned duties pertaining to different areas and departments which require people's participation such as small savings, family planning etc.

It was found that a large proportion of his time (41%) is spent on attending to office work and VIPs. He is overburdened with multifarious work and had to spend most of his holidays on official work. Almost all the BDPOs (90%) reported that about half of their holidays are spent on official work. The BDPOs had to maintain contact and interaction with about 20 different departments and agencies, of which his interaction is very close and frequent with the departments of Forest, Social Welfare, Cooperative Banks, Revenue etc.

#### BDPOs perception of their role and functions

In the list of jobs prepared for this study, the BDPOs were asked to indicate against each job whether they considered it as their responsibility or not, importance attached to it, and interest and liking in performing it.

It was found that there were as many as eight jobs on which there was confusion, with regards to responsibility, among the BDPOs. These were listed in the official job-chart of the BDPOs but they did not consider them as their responsibility.

The BDPOs were found to attach greater importance in jobs pertaining to construction work, panchayat samiti and some miscellaneous jobs such as attending to VIPs. Least importance was attached to jobs pertaining to agriculture, animal husbandry and cooperatives, perhaps because these are no longer the jobs of the BDPOs. It was seen that they considered those jobs more important which they also considered as their responsibility. They also indicated their interest and liking for such jobs. This shows that the BDPOs attach more importance and interest only to the jobs which have been specifically assigned to them. On the other hand, certain important areas which were not clearly mentioned as their responsibility failed to get due importance, interest and liking from the BDPOs. It provides an inkling that the BDPOs are probably performing their jobs in an impersonal way.

Role and functions of BDPOs as perceived by Sarpanches and Panches

By and large there was uniformity in the perception of role and functions of BDPOs by themselves and the village representatives. However, some important gaps have also been identified. For example, the BDPOs did not consider their responsibility for implementing old age pension scheme, the Sarpanches and Panches felt it to be a job of the BDPO.

The BDPOs were found to be dissatisfied with their job and possessed high job-stress (Mean 78.90 in a maximum possible score of 95). They belonged mostly to higher age group (Mean 50 years) and had very low level of aspiration (Mean 1.3), but a favourable attitude towards extension (Mean 44.26). Most of them had occupied the position of BDPO by promotion (74%). On the basis of their personal and psychological variables the BDPOs can be classified into two categories, viz. the promoted ones, and those directly appointed to this position. The promoted ones were older in age, have less experience of working as BDPO, very low level of aspiration and moderately dissatisfied with their job. On the other hand, most of the direct recruitees were younger in age but possessed more experience as BDPO. Their level of aspiration was high and they were also highly dissatisfied with the job. The pleasant observation is that all of them, irrespective of their nature of appointment, expressed very favourable attitude towards extension work.

#### CONCLUSION

It is evident from the above discussion that the present study has revealed several very important facts about the role and functions of BDPOs. The most important findings are as follows

1. The BDPOs presently perform several activities related to rural development but their jobs are mainly limited to residual areas.
2. Presently their major functions are supervisory as head of the team at block level and looking after the implementation of rural development programmes such as IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, TRYSEM etc. In addition, the BDPOs are also to discharge the administrative functions as the executive head of panchayat samiti. Besides, they have also to perform and help in the implementation of programmes of various other departments, viz. small saving, family planning etc.
3. Their considerable time is spent in office work and attending to VIPs.
4. All of them reported to be overburdened and worked on most of the holidays.
5. The BDPOs are required to maintain contact with several departments and agencies. Their interaction was found to be very high with seven departments such as Forest, Social Welfare, Banks, Education, Revenue etc.
6. The BDPOs were found to be aware of almost all the jobs listed in the official job-chart. However, there were eight jobs, which were listed in the official job-chart

but the BDPOs did not consider them as their responsibility.

7. The BDPOs assigned great importance to only those functions and jobs which have been specifically mentioned as their responsibility.
8. Likewise, their interest was found to be high on these jobs.
9. On the other hand, their attached importance, interest and liking was found to be wanting on the areas which are not clearly defined as their responsibility.
10. There were a few jobs which have been assigned to the BDPOs but they expressed less interest in performing them. This includes the jobs like attending to VIPs etc.
11. The jobs related to agriculture, animal husbandry and cooperatives were rated least important by the BDPOs, probably, due to the reason that these now do not fall in their domain.
12. The study did not reveal any significant gap in the perception of roles and functions of BDPOs by themselves and that of by the village representatives (Sarpanches and Panches). There were, however, a few exceptions e.g. the village people<sup>feel</sup> that BDPOs are responsible for the implementation of 'old age pension' scheme and attestation of documents, while the BDPOs do not feel so.

13. On the basis of their personal and psychological variables the BDPOs fall in two broad groups: the promoted ones, and those appointed directly on this position. The promoted ones were older in age and have very low level of aspiration. The direct recruitees were younger in age and <sup>possess</sup> high level of aspiration.
14. The job-dissatisfaction was wide-spread mostly on the ground of lack of promotion prospects, poor salary, lack of recognition etc.
15. In spite of these odds all of them reported to have a favourable attitude towards extension.
16. Lastly, it can also be concluded that presently the role and functions of BDPOs have been confined to tertiary areas of development, implementation of welfare programmes and other routine administrative function as an executive head of block and panchayat samiti. They now don't have any concern with agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperatives and rural industries development work.

ACTION IMPLICATIONS

The study suggests certain action implications for the planners, administrators, and policy makers for rural development as well as for the social scientists working in this field. Some of the most important ones are as below:

1. The blind areas, which are listed in the job-chart but not known to the BDPOs, should be made more explicit to the BDPOs. In case these are considered either redundant or unrelated, these may be deleted from the job-chart. As such it would create a gap in the job-expectations of the BDPOs by the authorities and job-performance by the BDPOs, which may lead to more job-stress.
2. The administrative functions need to be reduced to enable BDPOs to devote more time in supervisory and developmental work.
3. Though, the visits of VIPs in the area serve many useful purposes, but these may be planned in a manner, so that the important responsibilities of the BDPOs do not suffer for want of time as they have to spend considerable time on attending to VIPs.
4. The village people still feel that the BDPO is responsible for all types of developmental activities in the village, hence, either the BDPOs should be given more responsibility

of such work also such as old age pension and attestation of documents or the village people may be educated on this aspect.

5. The job-satisfaction among BDPOs was found to be very low. Suitable remedial measures need to be taken to raise their job-satisfaction and morale.
6. Their status also needs to be raised by bringing them in the main stream of administration and hierarchy. One of its means is to appoint young State Civil Servants or persons professionally qualified in rural development work.
7. The BDPOs perform multifarious responsibilities, the researches on their time-use analysis would provide very useful information about their time utilization pattern on different activities.
8. Presently, the BDPOs are either directly appointed to this position or come to this stage after getting promotion, gradually, right from the post of VLW. A detailed study is needed to evaluate the performance of these two categories of BDPOs as the findings would help the administration in adopting an appropriate recruitment procedure.
9. An interesting study can also be undertaken to analyse the interaction pattern of BDPOs with various developmental departments and field functionaries with the help of PERT/CPM.
10. Lastly, the present study was conducted in a small state with 62 BDPOs. Similar studies can be undertaken in different parts of the country to have a national perspective of the entire situation.