

CHAPTER V

A MODEL BLOCK PLAN - FOR ADOPTION IN INDIA

A Model Block Plan, for adoption of Block Level Planning in India, has been attempted in this Chapter. The Block Level Planning process will have four phases viz. (a) undertaking a preliminary Study of the Block, based on available secondary data; (b) conducting detailed household Survey of each and every village in the Block and collecting primary data; (c) deciding upon the Model which can be used for formulating the Block Plan, on the basis of the data collected and finally (d) the formulation of the (Block) Plan.

PHASE I - PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE BLOCK

The first Phase of the Planning exercise at the Block Level would be to undertake a preliminary Study of the Block, based on the available secondary data. The purpose of the Study is to analyse and understand the Block completely, particularly in terms of its topography, peculiar characteristic features, natural resources, infrastructural facilities available etc. This Study will also enable the Planners to know the strengths and weaknesses of the Block and thereby draw up the Plan in such a way that the strengths of the Block are fully exploited for the promotion of the welfare of the people therein and the weaknesses are got over. Further, the Study will enable the Planners to identify the areas where there are gaps in regard to availability of data, so that the data that may be necessary for the purpose of Planning may be collected, later, when the Household Survey is conducted in the Block. Moreover, such Study and collection of primary data would help considerably in

checking and confirming the veracity of the secondary data so that the Block Plan to be formulated on the basis of these (primary and secondary) data will not go wrong or lead to wrong conclusions.

In view of all these advantages, it is necessary that the preliminary Study is undertaken before commencing the process of drawing up the Plan. The Study can be done in three Stages:

Stage 1 : Collection of secondary data

Stage 2 : Comparison of the Block's growth vis-a-vis the growth of the District and the State in terms of ratios and

Stage 3 : Critical evaluation of the growth recorded by the Block vis-a-vis its potential available and the needs of its people.

Stage 1 - Collection of Secondary Data:

The Planners should call for various data relating to the Block such as total area, extent of agricultural and fallow lands, types of cultivation, crops grown, quantum of agricultural production, irrigation facilities, population, male-female ratio, literacy rate, labour force, agricultural, industrial and other production, income, particularly from Small, Medium and Large Scale Industrial Units, Trade, Commerce, exports from and imports into the Block, Transport, Social Services, Welfare Schemes, infrastructural facilities such as roads, electricity, Schools, Post Offices, Telephone Exchanges etc. These and the other items on which secondary data are required to be collected for the Blocks have been listed in one of the following Chapters wherein the findings of a Study of the Nagari Block of Chittoor District which was conducted for the purpose of the formulation of the

Model Block Plan as suggested in this Study have been reported. Similar data relating to the concerned District and State as a whole should also be collected so that it will be possible for the Planners to undertake the Study relating to the Block as envisaged in Stage 2 detailed here-under. After the collection of data, the Planners should conduct a Study of the Block (based on the collected data) so as to acquaint themselves fully with the Block.

State 2 - Study of the potential and needs of the Block:

A comparative Study of the Block, District and the State should be made on the basis of the collected secondary data. This Study would reveal to the Planners the areas in which the Block lags behind and the areas in which it is ahead of the District and the State. This would help, in a large measure, the Planners to understand fully the nature and problems of the Block and thereby fill in the gaps carefully while drawing up the Plan. The major objectives of this Study would be to:

- a) find out the level of economic development of the Block vis-a-vis that of the District and the State;
- b) identify the areas in the Block which require intensive attention and development;
- c) assess gaps in the growth recorded by the Block;
- d) identify areas of potential for growth and
- e) decide tentatively the Model that may be used for the formulation of the Plan relating to the Block.

Stage 3 - Critical evaluation of the Block's growth in the past

The third Stage relates to the critical evaluation of the Block's growth profile. This Study is to be made in order to identify (a) errors, if any committed earlier in the Planning process so that they may now be sought to be rectified, under the present Block Plan & (b) gaps that might

have been left unidentified earlier so that due attention may now be paid to bridge them. Further, this Study will also help the Planners to decide upon the best methodology to be adopted for formulating and implementing the Plan for the Block.

The First Phase of Block Planning process will be over now. The Planners may require about four months to complete this first Phase, depending upon the availability of (a) data at the various levels and (b) the proper machinery required for formulating the Block Plan. However, the time span required for the completion of the First Phase may be longer depending upon the prevailing conditions and circumstances. However, it will be quite essential for the Planners at the Block Level to initiate the process a little early or a little later so as to ensure that they would present the Block Level Budget, in time, to the District Level authorities. As this Study is very important from the Block's point of view, it should not, at the same time, be hurried through and as such, necessary and adequate time should be earmarked for the purpose.

PHASE II - HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

The Second Phase is the most important part of the Planning process envisaged for the Block. It relates to undertaking a detailed Household Survey of the Block and collection of data, village-wise, in detail. This job, in turn, involves 2 Stages.

Stage 1 - Conduct of Household Survey:

The first Stage would relate to the conduct of family-wise or Household Survey. First of all, a suitable Questionnaire should be devised for collection of data for the purpose of the Survey. Enumerators may be recruited specially for this purpose or the Government may utilise the services of teachers or its other servants in this regard.

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After being recruited, they should be given proper training so as to ensure good quality of enumeration. Then villages should be allotted to the Enumerators and the formats should be explained and given to them for collection of the required particulars. After few samples are collected, it would be advisable to test their validity in order to ensure uniformity of data being collected and their correctness. Thereafter, the full-fledged enumeration may be done. Every family in every village in the Block, without any exception whatsoever, should be enumerated. After the relevant particulars regarding all families in the Block are collected by the Enumerators in the prescribed formats, some samples may be chosen therefrom and studied intensively in order to ensure accuracy of the data collected. By adopting this procedure, it may be possible for the Planners to identify the percentage of error in this regard, which should not be more than 5%. Devising a proper format or questionnaire is very essential for ensuring collection of precise and reliable data. The format should be very simple. At the same time, it should provide for collection of all the important particulars required for undertaking a detailed Planning exercise. Major particulars required to be collected, in the format, by the Investigators in respect of each family in the Block would include the following:

- a) Total number of members in each family and age, sex, marital status, occupation, income etc. of each member of the family;
- b) cultivation of crops, season-wise, possible improvement in cropping pattern, additional inputs required and financial assistance needed;
- c) size of land holding of each family and its other assets, improvements required to be done in the land holding, state of irrigation, crops raised and annual income of the family

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- d) possible improvements that may be effected and the scope for expansion of assets owned in terms of
- 1) livestock and fishery;
 - 2) Industries and arts & crafts;
 - 3) trade & services and
 - 4) employment position in regard to the educated persons
- e) any other information that may be required for drawing up the Plan for the Block.

Stage 2 - Collection of Village-wise particulars

The second Stage in Phase II would relate to collection of village-wise particulars from the Village Level Administration. Perhaps, the Planners might face some problems at this Stage, as, normally, data are not available at the village level. Hence, the Investigators should discuss with those officials who are in charge of the village administration and the elders in the villages, — collect all the necessary information and convert them into data. These particulars would ① primarily relate to occupation, use of lands, irrigation etc. pertaining to individual villages in the Block.

Thus, the second Stage in the Planning process will help the Planners in equipping themselves with data (on the basis of which the Block Plan should be drawn up) on the following:

- a) individual families in the Block throwing sufficient light on their socio-economic life, standard of living etc.;
- b) the potential available in each village in the Block and inequalities in the rate of growth registered by the various villages in the Block and
- c) other relevant items pertaining to the Block.

It may be emphasised that this Stage is the most crucial Stage in the entire Planning process at the Block level. Hence, accuracy of data collected should be ensured to the maximum extent possible so that the Plan will be based on the potential available in the Block and will also be truly reflective of the needs and requirements of the Block.

PHASE III - SELECTION OF THE PLANNING MODEL:

The Third Phase will relate to the Study or analysis of the collected data and deciding upon the Model which should be used for the purpose of formulating the Plan for the Block. Model creation is thus the quintessence of this Phase. There are several established Models that may be used for the purpose of Block Level Planning. The choice of the Model would depend upon the peculiar characteristics of individual Blocks. The most important objective of the Model would be to help the Block realise self-sufficiency or near self-sufficiency or full-employment. However, it may not be possible or even necessary for every Block to achieve hundred per cent self-sufficiency. Hence, the Model should provide for the effective utilisation or exploitation of the natural resources or potential available in the Block so that it will be able to generate, within a reasonable time limit, employment opportunities on quite a large scale which will improve substantially the standard of living, per capita income etc. of the people in the Block.

The Model will, therefore, list the priorities or the various areas in the Block that should be given immediate attention, in the context of the availability of resources, imbalance in the development of the Block etc.

PHASE IV - PREPARATION OF THE PLAN FOR THE BLOCK:

The Fourth Phase will be the formulation or presentation of the Plan. As mentioned earlier, Planning at the Block level will have two parts. Part I will relate to Planning in regard to Subjects that are covered directly by the Block Level Administration and Part II will relate to Suggestive or Indicative Planning for the Subjects covered by the District and State Level Administrations.

As lists of priorities have already been indicated in the Third Phase, the Planning process will now be very simple in that it is merely a question of relating the development envisaged in the Plan to the financial resources available in the Block. Planning, at the Block Level, should necessarily be for both the Private and Public Sectors. The Public Sector outlay in the Plan will be determined in the light of the available resources of the Block Level Administration and its ability to mobilise resources, during the Plan period, through various measures. Similarly, the size of Private Sector outlay in the Plan will be decided upon in the light of the resources available with the people in the Block including (1) their savings, (2) disposable income, (3) investment inclination, (4) loans from the Banking Sector, (5) subsidies, (6) profit that might be earned by them from their enterprises etc., which will be revealed precisely in the said socio-economic or Household Survey to be undertaken for this purpose. Thus, the fusing of the Plans relating to both the Private and Public Sectors, on the basis of the priorities already set, will result in the emergence of a Plan for the entire Block in regard to the Subjects covered by the Block Level Administration.

Phase IV also includes the formulation by the Block of a Suggestive Plan covering the Subjects relating to it but dealt with by the District and State Level Administrations. The primary objective of the Suggestive Plan is only to spell out the needs of the Block in respect of the Subjects covered by the District and State Level Administrations, so that they (the District and higher level Administrations) can draw up their Plans in the light of those needs. However, as all the Blocks in the District/ State are likely to include, in an ambitious manner, several costly projects and Schemes in their Suggestive Plans, it may not be possible, and hence not necessary, for the District and State Level Administrations to include all of them in their Plans. In fact, the District and State Level Administrations also will undertake a similar Study of all their Blocks and arrive at priorities to be accorded for including, in their Plans, the maximum possible number of Schemes suggested by the various Blocks (including the Block in question) in regard to the Subjects covered by them and plan their outlays accordingly.

As mentioned earlier, Planning at the Block Level is primarily an exercise of matching the resources available in the Block with the list of priorities to be accorded under the Plan, in regard to investments in the Block. Hence, if more resources are available with the Block Level Administration, it will be in a better position to cover, in its Plan, more of the Subjects spelt out earlier in this Study while discussing Stage 3 of the Planning process.