

# Rural And Agrarian Transformation In India

## Green Revolution And Social Change

The introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds after 1965 and the increased use of fertilizers and irrigation are known collectively as the **Green Revolution**, which provided the increase in production needed to make **India** self-sufficient in food grains, thus improving agriculture in India. It was an interventionist measures taken by state to introduce economic changes. Green revolution had a large impact on social, ethnic and political life of people.

Green revolution was introduced in two phases i.e. Punjab, Haryana and Western UP in the first phase and southern India, Western India in the second phase. If we look into western pocket of India its impact is different from that of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh. Integrating all the facts we can conclude that it changed economic and social set up of Indian society.

From 1960s - 1970, due to drought in major parts of the world it was presumed that millions of people will die in Asian and African countries. **Norman Borlaug** was invited to India by the adviser to the Indian minister of agriculture **M. S. Swaminathan** to show a way out so as to avert large-scale famine which could have killed millions of people. Research was undertaken by Norman Borlough wherein he developed a drought resistant seed more suitable to Indian conditions. He came up with **wonder wheat** that was first tried in Mexico, which increased the production 200 times in Punjab, Haryana and West Bengal.

The Green Revolution led to large-scale production of wheat grains and India's accomplishment in agriculture became unbeatable. In 1970s different sociologist started studying the impact of green revolution. And in 1985 they got published data on green revolution.

To make green revolution complete there was introduction of different kinds of cooperative system e.g. seed cooperatives, rural credit cooperatives, irrigation cooperatives, fertiliser cooperatives etc. National seed Corporation of India provided seeds at cheaper price to different seed cooperatives. But due to large number of members of seed cooperatives belonging to upper class/rich farmers, all the benefits were pocketed by them rather than getting equitably distributed.

In the same way the objective the seed cooperatives, initiated by the villagers with the consensus to get benefit provided by the **state**, but due to entire co-operatives being controlled by families who owned more than 80% of the land, they pocketed all the benefits and small farmers were kept empty-handed. Thus by using new seeds big farmers got maximum return whereas the poor farmers had to go on with old seeds which deteriorated their economic and social condition further.

*In the same way the rural credit cooperative did not benefit the poor farmers. Therefore we can find out that capitalism is becoming much more intensive and institutionalised, cooperatives which were created for the society were catering to the class interest.*

*It was found out that in Karnataka green revolution has established a strong nexus between caste, class and power. It is found out that out of 20 blocks which were surveyed in 18 blocks there was violation of official norms. The lift irrigation were located at the centre of the land belonging to rich farmers who used constructed obstruction which minimised the flow of land to the area situated higher this ultimately led to declining net productivity, pushing poor farmers into distress sale. Thus creating this artificial problem the big landholders consolidate their landholding, multiplied their family income and then encroaching into all cooperatives hijacked all the benefits endorsed by the state meant for the people at large. This ultimately gave rise to a situation where dominant caste evolved into dominant class and controller of power as well.*

*Credit cooperatives are engaging financial in mischief, rampant corruption, manipulation that has ruined many poor families in the countryside. In case of Punjab, the vested interest group, moneylenders and the commercial farmers have used cooperatives for gratification of the self centric goals. It has been found out that in 10 years time these cooperatives have offered loans to 6000 small and marginal farmers out of which 20% have sold out their land to pay back the loans. Therefore cooperative has become a form of capitalist venture, systematically engaged in the exploitation of the poor and marginalised. Therefore green revolution in case of India has given rise to the intensification of capitalist agriculture development in those societies where the state was committed to the ideology of socialism.*

*P Vardhan indicated that real poverty is always estimated not in terms of basic needs but on the factors like economic sustainability to family, whether maximum profit is generated to invest in education, trade and other employment generating activities, whether agriculture is generating employment or disguised unemployment. These factors needs to be undertaken to fully understand the impact of green revolution in case of India.*

*It is proclaimed by the government and economists that green revolution has increased agricultural productivity by several folds and that green revolution has created jobs for millions of people. Rejecting this view sociologist's point out that no doubt green revolution has increased productivity by several folds and provided employment to millions of people, but it cannot be overlooked that it has created a very big gap between rich and poor. The main objective of green revolution was not only to increase food productivity but also to bring about social and economic development of people at the grassroot (as green revolution was part of the overall strategy of rural development programme). It can be said that the objective of food productivity was achieved to a large extent but it has failed miserably as far as a social and economic development of the poor is concerned and thus made rural poverty fragile.*

**Bhalla and Chadda:** conducted study on 200 villages of Punjab and Haryana and found out that the difference in per acre return in case of big and small farmers is 200 times and so the income gap between rich and poor is to the extent of 16 times.

Green revolution also led to massive distress migration of agricultural labour from eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to Punjab and Haryana. These migrant labourers are not skilled and so they have no way out but to work on the rich farmers fields thereby leading to their exploitation.

**Lakshmi Menon and Utsa Patnaik** look into the gender impact of green revolution. When families income goes beyond their consumption needs, it becomes status symbol and so people become status conscious. Women are withdrawn from labour as a result economy dominated by men leads to glorification of gender role of women i.e. men as producers and women should stay at home. The preference for male child becomes more prominent as now people have money to take technological aid for selective abortion of female fetus. This is one of the biggest reasons of adverse gender gap in case of Punjab and Haryana.

Green revolution also had a big impact on the power and politics in India. The beneficiaries from green revolution developed political aspirations. Hence they constituted political parties and peasant leaders made appearance in the political arena to demand massive benefits in terms of subsidies for the rich farmers.

Green revolution has intensified ethnic distinction among the people. It has been found out that to consolidate the benefit from green revolution Sikh's of Punjab distinguished themselves from non-Sikhs of Haryana and Sikh dominated areas of Haryana. It has also intensified conflicts between poor farmers and rich farmers within the village.

**TH Omen** considers that despite all its limitation green revolution contributed for the unionisation of agricultural labourers, generated scope for rural employment, addressed to the problems of rural poverty and changed India from a food deficit country into a food surplus country.

Taking these opinions into consideration it can be concluded that changes taking place in one sector of the society is bound to have influence on the other sectors as well. Therefore green revolution has immensely influenced to local politics, stratification systems, ethnic identity, gender status, inter-caste relationships, regional identities. Therefore what needs to be taken into consideration is to examine the prospects in retrospect effects of social change in India evolving on and after the effect of green revolution.

## Changing modes of production in Indian agriculture

Changing modes of production in Indian agriculture is a reflection of the paradoxical character of social transmission in India. Unlike West, India has not gone for a shift from feudalism to capitalism. When capitalism developed in West from spoils of feudalism, to its contrast in case of India specific pockets of capitalism developed from out of agriculture. Therefore agrarian transformation in India is driven by regional diversity, historical differences and contemporary variabilities.

Marxist sociologists find out that unlike China, Russia peasant's movement in India is not polarised. They indicate that hegemonistic domination of the upper class stands on the way of peasant mobilisation in India. It has and found out that multiple modes of production gives way to diverse class structure in different parts of the country. As a result polarised class structure has evolved in case of India. Gail Omvedt finds out the strong nexus between caste and class therefore caste conflict is a form of class conflict India. Marxist sociologist consider that Indian agriculture is purely feudal in character i.e. relationship it when land and labour is a traditional type.

Liberal sociologist look into various measures undertaken by the state accelerating scope for mobility and opportunities. As a result vertical mobilisation (from below to up) of Indian peasantry is not taking place in a big way. Andre Beteille's book "agrarian social structure" gives an analysis of these conditions in detail.

A R Desai points out that land reform system has not been successful, Benami transfers are taking place and big landlords use tenants in unofficial contracts so that the tenants can never go to the court of law and therefore they don't enjoy their rights.

Taking into consideration historical factors in contemporary context it can be seen that different modes of agriculture production is present in various parts of the country. During colonial period Indian agriculture was purely feudalistic, however after introduction of governmental initiatives, people protest, one can locate multiple modes of production in different parts of the country. In states like Orissa, Manipur, Assam the colonial land tenure policy didn't have much impact, so one can find out that landholding is small, traditional technology is used in agriculture, rural poverty is dispersed, caste and landholding relationship is weak. Thus these areas can be considered as backwards, semifeudal regions.

In states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal landlords keep a certain portion of land as reserved for commercial planning. The employer labourers on contractual basis than going for hired labourers. Most of these areas are not greatly influenced by tenancy law. Traditional form of relationship between landlords and peasant is present, caste and landholding though have strong relationship. Therefore these areas identified as semifeudal or semi-capitalist region.

*In almost all the southern states capitalist agriculture has got momentum but the benefits of this capitalism is pocketed by the dominant caste. Agriculture is not guided by intensive use of modern technology and the rich farmers are not highly unionised and mostly the tenants and agricultural labourers come from the lower castes. Therefore these areas can be identified as low intensive capitalist region.*

*In states like Punjab and Haryana, hired labour is used, production is made as a response to demands of market, tenancy practices almost absent, farmers are you highly unionised and caste and its relationship with land ownership is almost absent. Therefore class commission, class consolidation is completing the cities and due to which these reasons are capitalist intensive region.*

*Thus, it can be concluded by saying that multiple modes of production are present in agrarian India. Nevertheless 60% of the people are still landless, marginal farmers who come from Dalit community, tribal origin and other ethnic groups. 16% of the agriculturists are coming from dominant caste (both traditional and modern) including Brahmins, Rajputs, Bhumiards, Jats, Lingayats, Reddys and Yadav. The rest of the population are coming from artisan caste who are the small or medium farmers.*

*Hence all over the country despite the presence of multiple modes of production one can find out the clear-cut presence of three different classes i.e. upper-class, middle-class, lower class. Agrarian transformation India has not really taken place in socialist direction, nor it has confirmed to the demands of capitalism, thus agrarian transformation in India is typical illustration of complex nature of social change in Indian society guided by multiple forms of possibilities and contradictions.*

## **Rural Development**

*Rural Development is a composite measure undertaken by the state since India's independence to improve the quality of life of the people living in rural areas, to effectively promote economic development and delivery of health care, education and other infrastructural support.*

*The basic objective of rural development has always been the involvement of the people in the developmental programmes, technological upgradation, training and skill development, full utilisation of human resource potential and natural resources available in rural areas so as to ensure that development evolves in India from grassroot than being enforced upon the people from the top.*

*Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people are as well as greater social transformation. In order to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development, increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralisation of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and get access to credit are and why says*

***Community Development Programme** seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing these groups with the skills they need to affect change in their own communities. These skills are*

often concentrated around formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. Community developers must understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect communities' positions within the context of larger social institutions.

Cooperative movement, an important aspect of rural development programme was devised to provide multiple thrust to the process of rural development. It was expected that all people would come together to achieve wonders for rural development for example collective farming, credit financing etc requiring very little help from the government.

Scholars found out that rural development programme could not get momentum because of strong caste consciousness, isolation of dominant caste of the village from Labour class, manipulation of public funds, politicisation of developmental issues, inherent contradictions among villages during panchayat elections and other factors. DL Joshi indicate that rural development programme started with a big promise but it failed to alter the mindset of the people in hierarchical structure of over India thereby leading to its premature collapse. Green revolution was meant for expansion of agriculture production, though it was successful but it polarised the rural society into have and have-nots. Therefore it is said that rural development should stand for economic benefits to people instead of just depending on green revolution.

The various components of rural development programme are:

- **Wage Employment Programs-** which employment programmes have sought to achieve multiple objectives. They not only provide employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but also in times of floods, droughts and other natural calamities. They create rural infrastructure which supports for the economic activity. These programs also put an upward pressure on market wage rates by attracting people to public work programmes, thereby reducing labour supply and pushing demand for labour. It encompasses national rural employment guarantee programme and various other rural employment programs to provide productive employment to the rural workforce.
- **Employment assurance scheme:** economic assurance scheme was launched in 1993 which was primarily meant for the drought prone areas like desert, tribal and Hill area blocks. It was later extended to all blocks in 1998. This scheme was designed to provide employment in the form of manual work in the lean agricultural season. The works taken up under the programme were expected to lead to the creation of durable economic and social infrastructure and address of needs of the people.
- **Food for work programme :** the food for work programme was started in 2000 - 01 as component of employment assurance scheme in eight notified drought affected states of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttaranchal. The programme aims at food provision through wage employment. Foodgrains supplied to states free of cost. However, lifting of foodgrains for the schemes from food Corporation of India godowns are slow.

- **Rural housing** : Initiated in 1985 - 86, the Indira Awas Yojna(IAY) is the core program for providing free housing to families in rural areas, SC/ST, households and freed bonded labourers. The rural Housing program has certainly enabled many BPL families to acquire pucca houses. Provisions like save drinking water, sanitation and common drainage facilities were taken up under the program Samagra Awas Yojna (SAY). The Housing and Urban Development Corporation(HUDCO) has extended its activities to the rural areas, providing loans at concessional rate of interest to economically weaker sections and low income group households for construction of houses.
- **Social Security programs** : democratic decentralisation and centrally sponsored social assistance programs were two major initiatives of the government in 1990s. The national special assistance program launched in August 1995 marks a significant step towards fulfilment of the direct response of state policy. The three compliments of national social assistance programme (NSAP) are national old-age pension scheme, National family benefit scheme, National maternity benefit scheme. The NSAP is centrally sponsored programme that aims at ensuring a minimum national standard of social assistance over and above the assistance to states provide from their own resources.
- **Land reforms** : in Agro-based economy of, the structure of land ownership is central to the well-being of the people. The government has strived to change the ownership pattern of cultivable land, the abolition of intermediaries, the abolition of Zamindari system, ceiling laws, security of tenure to tenants, consolidation of landholdings and banning of tenancy are few measures undertaken.

A study of rural development programmes from 1960s indicate that, the regional disparities in development is a product of rural development programme. Development programme have intensified caste consolidation and caste conflict in village India. Most of the rural development programme were implemented through lower-level bureaucracy, as a result, the contractor, the petitioner and the optical axis became stronger and most of these people belonging to upper caste pocketed all the benefits and expanded the In higher caste and lower caste. Thus the modern institution instead of breaking down traditional hierarchy made had killed relationship further stronger .

Most of the SC/ST, women could not benefit from the policies due to lack of awareness and most of them did not have infrastructural support that could work as a guarantee to receive subsidised loans from banks to initiate small trade or other kinds of activities.

By the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> five year plan it was noticed that around 68 rural development programmes with different names and target groups were introduced in the country leading to confusion in resource allocation, programme implementation and evaluation. Due to these reasons all the programs were put under one banner that gave way to "Integrated Rural Development Programme" (IRDP). The major highlight of integrated rural development programme scheme was 50:50 share with regard to resource allocation between state and Centre and also spatial component programme were extended for women and

rural youth. Emphasis was given on horticulture, sericulture, cottage industries. Rural infrastructure building was also emphasised through programs like Food for Work and Employment Assurance Scheme that hunted man days in a year will be available for every person in the village. Thus indicating all this developmental programmes, rural development programme was founded on strong economic genesis.

It has been said that IRDP achieved milestone in a short period of time because of centrality in its approach. However after 8th plan period the focus of rural development once again changed with new government, new ideas, new schemes were introduced like Pradhan Mantri Gramodya Yojna, Swarnajayanti Swarajgar Yojna, Anapurna Schemes to also address issues related to women, destitutes, rural poors and landless. More recently National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme has given an acceleration to rural development.

However to recent surveys and studies it has been found out that poverty sectoral in India. Some states earlier located in poverty zones like Andhra Pradesh have achieved remarkable success whereas other states like Orissa have shown no sign of progress.

Some sociologists consider that various attributes related to poverty were not taken into consideration while formulating rural development programmes. They consider that the source, infrastructure conditions, cultural character of people, gender involvement with work are the non-economic variables that must be studied in detail while formulating rural development programmes. Thus rural development programme should be driven by localised needs, state specific and people centric in character.

In conclusion it can be advocated that massive rural development programmes in different names with divergent he throws are being introduced in India since independence. It will be premature to conclude that all of them have failed though it is a matter of fact that they have not produced a result on expected lines. One learns from experience and more so from failure therefore one can conclude by saying that success of National rural employment guarantee programme has drawn lessons from the failures of IRDP, employment assurance scheme and food for work programme in the past. Thus it can be said that it is not public policies alone but also knowledge about those policies and association of the beneficiaries those policies can translate a team of rural development into reality.

## Co-operatives

India has basically an agrarian economy with 72% of its total population residing in rural areas. The rural people need lot of services in daily life which are met by village co-operative societies. The seeds of cooperation in India were sown in 1904 when the first Cooperative Societies Act was passed since then, the cooperative movement has made significant progress. Cooperatives have extended across the entire country and there are currently an estimated 230 million members nationwide. The cooperative



credit system of India has the largest network in the world and cooperatives have advanced more credit in the Indian agricultural sector than commercial banks. The village cooperative societies provide strategic inputs for the agricultural sector, consumer societies meet their consumption requirements at concessional rates; marketing societies help the farmer to get remunerative prices and co-operative processing units help in value additions to the raw products etc. In addition, co-operative societies are helping in building up of storage go-downs including cold storages, rural roads and in providing facilities like irrigation, electricity, transport and health.

Various development activities in agriculture, small industry marketing and processing, distribution and supplies are now carried on through co-operatives. In fertiliser production and distribution the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) commands over 35 percent of the market. In the production of sugar the cooperative share of the market is over 58 percent and in the marketing and distribution of cotton they have a share of around 60 percent.

The cooperative sector accounts for 55 percent of the looms in the hand-weaving sector. Cooperatives process, market and distribute 50 percent of edible oils. Dairy cooperatives operating under the leadership of the National Dairy Development Board and through 15 state cooperative milk marketing federations has now become the largest producer of milk in the world. The groundwork for this was laid in the early 1970's when the largest dairy development programme in the world - Operation Flood - was launched. Operation Flood was a national marketing strategy linked to a dairy infrastructure development programme that created a chain of dairy processing plants, collection stations and a national milk transportation grid. With the passage of the Insurance Act, cooperatives have been allowed to entry into the insurance business. Insurance is a field where the immense potential of cooperatives still remains untapped. The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative has recently teamed up with a Japanese company and formed a joint venture for undertaking general insurance business in India. This signifies that Indian cooperatives have come of age in formulating strategic alliances.

Thus the co-operative societies in India in fact are playing multi-functional roles both in rural and urban areas. An Expert Group constituted by the Govt of India in 1990, recommended i) to facilitate building up of integrated co-operative structure; ii) to make the co-operative federation organizations responsive towards their members; iii) to minimize government interference and control in the functioning of co-operatives and iv) to eliminate politicization from the cooperative sector. Based on the recommendations, the central govt enacted the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 which provided for democratic and autonomous working of the Cooperatives, which came into force with effect from August 19, 2002. Various development activities in agriculture, small industry marketing and processing, distribution and supplies are now carried on through co-operatives. The co-operatives in India have made an all-round progress and their role in, and contribution to agricultural progress has particularly been significant.

*Cooperation in a vast country like India is of great significance because :*

- It is an organization for the poor , illiterate and unskilled people*
- It is an institution of mutual help and sharing*
- It softens the class conflicts and reduces the social cleavages*
- It reduces the bureaucratic evils and follies of political factions*
- It overcomes the constraints of agricultural development*
- It creates conducive environment for small and cottage industries*

### *Causes Of Slow Progress Of Cooperatives*

*Despite rapid growth the overall progress of cooperative movement during 100 years of its existence is not very impressive. It is therefore necessary to know the causes of poor performance of the movement and on that basis take such steps as would promote a faster growth of cooperative movement in India.*

*There are several reasons for the slow progress of cooperatives such as:*

- **Government Interference :** The cooperative movement in India was initiated in 1904 under the auspices of British government. Right from the beginning the govt has adopted an attitude of patronizing the movement. Cooperative institutions were treated as if these were part and parcel of the administrative set up of the government. The govt interference thus became an essential elements in the working of these institutions. As a result people's enthusiasm for the movement did not grow. The movement's independence and self-reliance existed only on paper and files. After attainment of independence in particular after beginning of the planning, some healthy changes in the attitude of the govt did take place. It was not given proper importance that it deserves in any plan. But even the cooperative movement has not become full-fledged people movement. Even today quite often cooperative societies are imposed upon the people. This does bring about an increase in the membership of the societies. But the spirit of cooperation cannot flower fully in these circumstances. Neither its growth took place according to any plan nor did it become a people's movement. It just grew very slowly and that too haphazardly. It was a state driven institution.*
- **Mismanagement and Manipulation:** Over the years, this truly democratic idea got corrupted and farmers with larger holdings grew more powerful. In practice, this altered the power structure of the cooperatives. In the elections to the governing bodies money became such a powerful tool that*

*the top posts of chairman and vice-chairman usually went to the richest farmers even though the majority of members were farmers with small- or medium-sized holdings.*

- **Lack of awareness :** *People are not well informed about the objectives of the movement, the contributions it can make in rebuilding the society and the rules and regulations of cooperative institutions. Unfortunately, no special efforts have been made in this direction. People look upon these institutions as means for obtaining facilities and concessions from the govt. So long as people expect to get something from the govt, they see to it that societies somehow continue to function. Lack of education, dirty politics of the village, caste ridden elections to the offices of cooperative societies, bureaucratic attitudes of the govt officers at the lower rank are some of the hurdles in spreading the correct information about the cooperative movement and in educating the people about its true character and vital role in the society.*
- **Restricted coverage:** *The cooperative movement has also suffered on account of two important limitations on its working. One is that the size of these societies has been very small. Most of these societies are confined to a few members and their operations extended to only one or two villages. As a result their resources remain limited, which I make it impossible for them to expand their means and extend their area of operations to, the most of the societies have been single purpose societies. For this reason these societies are unable to take a total view of the persons seeking help, nor can they analyze and solve problems from different angles. the help these societies render thus can not be adequate. By assessing the persons and the problems only from one angle , these societies neither help properly the person nor make optimal use of their resources. Under these circumstances it has not been possible for these societies to make much progress.*
- **Functional weakness:** *The cooperative movement has suffered from inadequacy of trained personnel right from its inception. Lack of trained personnel has been caused by two major factors. In the first place, there has been a lack of institutions for the purpose of training personnel. Secondly because of it unsatisfactory working of cooperative institutions, efficient personnel did not feel attracted or motivated towards them. The functioning of the cooperative societies ,too suffer from several weakness .Some of these are, taking no care of the need of credit seekers or their repaying capacity at the time of granting loans, making no adequate provision for the return of loans, unsatisfactory keeping of accounts, factional politics in it management, lack of coordination among various divisions of the cooperative structure, too much dependence on outside sources of finance ,lack of adequate auditing. Such weakness have prevented them from progressing on healthy lines.*

*Thus there are several pitfalls. Poor infrastructure, lack of quality management, overdependence on government, dormant membership, non-conduct of elections, lack of strong human resources policy, neglect of professionalism, etc. are the limiting factors. Indian cooperatives are also unable to evolve strong communication and public relations strategies which can promote the concept of cooperation among the masses.*