

“CONCEPT PAPER ON ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS”

I am afraid; India today is only a caricature of the noble democracy, which our fore fathers strove to bring to life and freedom in 1947. For the first 40 years, successive Governments imposed mindless socialism on the nation which held in thrall the people's endeavor and enterprise.

Our brand of socialism did not result in transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor but only from honest rich to dishonest rich. We built up State owned enterprises called the Public Sector in India. The sleeping richness of socialism is now universally acknowledged but not officially in India. More than 240 sector enterprises run by Union Government and more than 700 by the State Governments are the black holes, the money guzzlers and they have been extracting an exorbitant price. There was a tidal wave of privatization sweeping across the world from Bangladesh to Brazil, but it used to turn aside in its course and passed India by.

Thanks to Dr. Man Mohan Singh, economist of world fame as Finance Minister with tacit support of then Prime Minister P.V.Narsimha Rao, introduced free market economy in 1990. India Inc. has since then, seized the opportunities spawned by economic reforms to improve its managerial capability, creativity, effectiveness and responsiveness. It has smartly improved its capital asset productivity, profitability from operations and value delivered to customers and its contribution to the exchequer over a period since 1990, India Inc. and its dominant shareholders, chief executives and managerial teams have served the interests of society, suppliers of capital, customers and Government admirably well. By doing so, they have smartly transformed themselves into aggressive players in the context of market oriented reforms. Notwithstanding the above achievements made by India Inc., the overall economic development has been sluggish and the benefits of liberalization have not really improved the plight of rural India i.e. 80% population of the country. India continues to be a poor country.

Therefore, a thorough introspection of the entire planning process is required. Agriculture needs all the attention the nation can pay because; India is richly endowed by nature with best agro climatic conditions in the world and thus reap good harvest year after year. Unfortunately, we remain,

one of the countries with the lowest farm productivity ratios. We can ill afford this luxury not merely because we have more mouths to feed but because unless there is a change in the rural scene, the country will remain firmly embedded in poverty. We need therefore to review our present system of planning in the right perspective. A few observations along with suggestions listed below:-

1) Focussing our attention to Rural India, we have to study in depth our entire planning process. A detailed study of the planning documents of J&K state as one example reveals that the budget allocations of various departments are based on erroneous statistical data compiled in the census conducted from time to time. The method and rationale adopted in sectoral allocations is also not logical because priorities of different areas should be based on topography, climate and other important inputs. A comprehensive proposal (Annexure 'A' is attached on land use) which can be the yardstick in the planning process).

2) Huge allocations are made under various Central/ State schemes for upliftment of the poor from Rural India (which is 80% of the population). Unfortunately people are not getting the desired benefits, thus compelling them to migrate to Urban areas, because:-

- a) There is no comprehensive plan for total development of Rural India , in a phased manner. There is a complete mess and planning process is handled on adhoc basis without any long-term objective.
- b) States are blaming Centre for not giving them sufficient funds for development works to be taken up in hand, while the Centre is blaming State Governments for misuse of funds and in many cases the same not being utilized for the specific purpose for which these were allotted. At present there is hardly any monitoring and absolutely no accountability in the present system. The expenditure on schemes has over run many folds. There are cases of glaring misuse of funds as per CAG reports of many States. Unfortunately, most of these reports are thrown in waste paper basket and no action is taken against defaulters. Some procedure should be evolved to make CAG reports effective and defaulters punished.

3) The possibility of discrepancies between the actual areas available in the villages excluding forest land/ waste land for development ,viz a viz figures adopted for preparation of their respective plans is not ruled out. In order to

conceive a comprehensive plan for whole of Rural India, a detailed factual survey has to be done and report prepared by involving different departments, NGO's, Panchayats, Retired teachers and Village heads as per Annexure 'B' & 'C'. In this context, I may even say that Panchayats can be used as nodal agencies for compilation of census data with a broader scope. This exercise can become the basis for preparation of multipurpose national identity cards (MNIC), which is under active consideration of Govt. of India.

Desired results can be achieved to a larger extent if we associate retired officers , NGO's/ Panchayats , besides serving officers from the concerned departments in preparation of plans & fixing priorities for different types of works taken up in a village /panchayat. The schemes should be prepared for a minimum of 3 to 5 years. Pert charts should be prepared for each work depicting physical/financial aspects of the scheme. All the works should be done as per time bound programme. This way the chances of increase in the cost of schemes will be minimized.

For proper accountability, this group will also monitor the physical/financial aspects of the scheme. This will go a long way to monitor the proper utilization of funds.

4) Huge amount is spent by Regional Research Laboratories, Agriculture Universities and other organizations, all over the country for research works, for upliftment of rural areas. Unfortunately, the desired results are not visible on ground, because there is no liaison between these premier institutions and the end users. A system should be evolved to make these organizations accountable.

It has generally been observed, that lot of seminars/workshops are held around the year by various departments/organizations to deliberate on various topics of national importance. It is a pity that this ends up as a futile exercise, because observations/recommendations made during seminars are hardly followed up.

5) It is an irony that while India is shining for the corporate sector due to a boom in the economy but rural India continues to be deprived of the benefits of free market economy. There has hardly been any scheme where unemployed youth could be provided with jobs. The present scenario is lot to do with our unrealistic education system because it does not address the ground realities of rural situations. To produce graduates and postgraduates are required for research teaching institutions but the need of the hour is to

give vocational trainings at middle/matric and higher levels. In this process experts from industries, agriculture, technical fields, universities and other organizations who matter in the rural planning can be associated to design the various courses as per requirement of different areas. For example, where land /waste land is available, the vocational course for improvement in the area of agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, sericulture, herbs, mushrooms, bee keeping, animal husbandry, forestry, etc. can be beneficial for the development of the area. Likewise there can be courses for plumbers, masons, carpenters, handloom, handicraft, electric, electronics, computers and tailoring, etc. which have provided livelihood / security to the people in rural areas. To provide such type of courses ITI's (Industrial Training Institutes) should be opened at tehsil/district levels. These ITI's should preferably be run by private agencies. This way the trained personnel can go for self-employment in private sector and even in government jobs. If we see the complete land holdings in a village, then we see that most families don't have even one acre of cultivated land. These small land holdings are not viable to meet the demands of the families, particularly those areas which have got no irrigation facilities. **This is one of the main reason that people form village are migrating to cities. Some alternative has to be found out to reduce this migration.** To ascertain the total problem and their solution can be found out in a scientific way if we follow Annexures A,B,C and other suggestions made in this paper.

In my mind, in the area where villages /panchayats have got smaller holdings of land, Forest lands, Govt. lands adjoining village should be handed over to villages/panchayats of the area.

In order to improve the over all environment of the area, there should be a ban on ploughing and cutting of trees from forest area. Wherever new plantation has to be done it should be preferably fodder and horticulture trees. Herbs may also be encouraged. Water-shed approach will be ideal for these areas. This way there will be a reduction of floods and overall water table will improve in Kandi and other areas. This way all the villagers will have the share in these lands (Forest land and Government land) and thus giving feeling that these lands are our own lands and we should make best use of these. With this approach there will be tremendous improvement in the environment of the country. Forest fires will also reduce to larger extent.

After some years of this approach the green cover of the village/panchayat will improve and this way village/panchayat can get the CARBON CREDITS which will further improve the economic condition of village/panchayat.

Conclusion:

A- Efficient and scientific land use as per Annexure A,B,C and observations/suggestions made above will definitely change the economics of the rural India.

B- By use of this concept Tribal and nexalite affected areas in the country will be mitigated to a larger extent.

C-With the proposed land use management forest degradation, floods and droughts will be checked. Simultaneously water logging will also be minimized.

D-With increase in green-cover, there will be tremendous improvement in the environment in the area which will ultimately help in reducing global warming and climate change.

E-This concept/suggestions will prove useful not only for India but for Asia, Africa, and Latin American countries.

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SUMMARY

In order to eradicate poverty and hunger from rural India, a scientific methodology has to be planned, to give employment to rural masses.

For planning development process, the first and foremost requirement is to find out the realistic status of the area. For drawing the realistic status the annexure Band C have been formulated. Since the majority of rural India is farming community, to ensure bread and butter to all, a proper land use for agriculture section has to be prepared.

For giving a start to the programme Himalayan region of J&K state i. e. Jammu has been taken as a example for the implementation and testing of designed model. The total area has been divided into different zones, for each zone land use has been proposed. These proposals can be taken up in a scientific manner on the concept as detailed in Annexure A. By handing over forest and govt. land to the villagers and making them partners in the development process, the face of rural India will change.

By adopting the above model, the problem of the people of tribal and naxals affected area in the country can be resolved to a greater extent. In this way there will be overall improvement of rural masses, environment of the country; global warming and climate change will also be reduced considerably.

The concept as a whole can prove extremely beneficial in the long term development of backward and downtrodden areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

(Key words : Land Use Pattern : Rural Planning: Environmental Development: Economic Sustainability.)

Annexure – 'A'

LAND USE IN HIMALAYAS

The Himalayan mountain chain is about 2500 km long and about 240-400kms wide, rising from the low lying Indian plains to well over 8000 meters. This area falls in five states of India mainly J&K, H.P., U.P., West Bengal hills, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and parts of Nepal.

In the longitudinal plane, South to North, the Himalayas can be viewed in four zones running parallel to each other viz.

- i) The Outer Himalayas;
- ii) The Lesser Himalayas;
- iii) The Great Himalayas;
- iv) The Trans Himalayas.

The Himalayan range is backbone of the Indian economy in many ways. Apart from being a natural barrier with many countries is also greatest source of many rivers in India on which civilizations have come up. Major irrigation system is based on these rivers and is major source of Agriculture and other products in India. Moreover there are many power projects, which have come up of these rivers, and many more are also planned. If we go for Hydel projects in a big way on these rivers, then much of pressure on the forestlands will be reduced as people from these areas will be getting alternative employment. Thus apart from getting electricity for upliftment of the economy there will be a lot of saving of forest wealth which helps in reducing soil erosion and floods and improve ecology of the area. Apart from these, there are many pilgrimage centers, lakes, glaciers and many other beautiful tourist spots in Himalayas, which are of a great attraction for pilgrims and tourists alike.

Unfortunately from many years and particularly from last about thirty years the lands in the Himalayas have been misused by way of:

- i) Extensive deforestation and encroachment on forest lands reducing the forest cover from about 66% to 30%.
- ii) Ploughing the area beyond permissible slopes and thus causing lot of erosion and soil loss.
- iii) Highland pastures have been degraded considerably due to overuse, abuse and misuse.
- iv) The maximum flood discharge noted in river Tawi in Jammu region in 1957 was 2,40,000 cuses. Due to deforestation in the catchment of river Tawi for so many years, the maximum flood discharge in river Tawi in 1988 was 3,57,500 cuses which caused great loss to Jammu city and its surroundings.

If these type of floods again take place, then devastation in Jammu city and around will be enormous. Similar types of devastations due to floods have also happened in Himalayan region and other parts of the country. Thus the life of about 40 million inhabitants of the Himalayas has been endangered and also the entire Northern India has been affected through lot of soil erosion and floods.

After seeing the above factors, our main aim and objective should be to conserve, improve and utilize scientifically natural sources like land, water, plants, animals and

human resources. To make our assessment regarding the land use in Himalayas we have taken J&K state as the model. In the first instance from each zone of the Himalayas in Jammu region of J&K state, a particular block should be selected and then from each block one or two villages has to be taken as model villages. Watershed approach should be the ideal.

OUTER HIMALAYAS

These are low line hilly areas in Shivalik zone, which is upto 1000 metres. The specific objective for the improvement should be as:

- i) To adopt appropriate cropping pattern that conserve soil and water.
- ii) Management of rain water, (village tank should be set right).
- iii) To plant horticulture and fodder trees including bamboo
- iv) To treat the natural drainage lines (gully plugging)
- v) To ensure increased productivity of existing fruit plants and encourage new plantations (Kissan fruit nurseries should be provided).
- vi) To encourage sericulture
- vii) To improve livestock for more production
- viii) Wherever possible herbs plantation should be encouraged.
- ix) To promote low cost, replicable and sustainable technology (Gobar gas plant and smokeless chullah should be encouraged.
- x) Use of new instruments.
- xi) Proper management regarding marketing of produce at proper rates produced by villagers.

For more detailed study, this zone can be further divided as:

Zone form 100-300M

This is lower Kandi belt of Jammu region where land is the most degraded and problematic if we see the socio economic conditions of the people, as the existing pattern of crops and other economic upliftment schemes taken up in any area, we see that hardly any thing has been done and by and large people are living below the poverty line.

In order to improve the standard of living of the people a comprehensive plan has to be prepared keeping specific objectives in mind as already discussed above. In my mind the following Departments should be involved to make a complete management plan:

- a) Agriculture
- b) Rural Development
- c) Forest
- d) Horticulture
- e) Animal husbandry/Sheep husbandry
- f) Sericulture
- g) Science and Technology
- h) Engineering Department/Soil and Water conservation
- i) Regional Research Laboratory
- j) SKUAST.
- k) Remote Sensing

- l) Gram Panchayats
- m) Different NGOs etc.
- n) Revenue

In my submission, from each block the villages should be identified very carefully as model village for demonstration purposes. After identification, the first and foremost action should be that all lands including private land should be fenced with barbed wire. The fencing should be done only through local inhabitants so as to generate employment.

As every village has got many traditional water tanks (ponds), these should be made functional and proper water management should be drawn for its proper use.

In the first instance say in a village of 100 houses about 5-10 house holders should be selected, those who are ready to take the package for their upliftment. As the cost of production of food grains (Bajra, Mace, Wheat, etc.) is not economical to the farmers from these crops. I would rather recommend that tilling of land and growing of crops be stopped and instead go for other beneficial cash crops. There are a lot of scrub and low milk yielding animals in villages. All these animals should be sold out including bullocks and instead the villagers should be provided with high yielding cows on loan, suitable for Kandi belt (50% jersey cows should be alright).

Every house in a village has got some area for green grass (1-2 acres).so after fencing the area, it is experienced that production of grass and other fodder plants will grow by at least 10 folds. Bamboo plantation should be encouraged in such areas which will be a cash crop for the owner. Other trees like khair, sareen etc. should also be planted in these areas. The land which was used for bajra, maize and wheat etc. should be converted into horticulture fields. The variety of fruit trees to be grown should be selected by horticulture experts. Technology for bee keeping and honey production can also be extended on commercial scale in these areas.

The most important thing is that keeping goats and camels should be discouraged in these areas which is most damaging for the green cover and causes a lot of erosion in the region. As each house will be having at least one cow to look after, so a small poultry farm can also go side by side which can increase the income of a particular family. Loan should be raised for the purchase of fodder and other items to the villagers. Ultimately all villagers will be having at least one cow, hence a group of 4-5 houses can have a Gobar gas plant by which they will save firewood and kerosene oil etc. The land available near the house can be used for kitchen garden and even Mushrooms can be grown. This is again a cash crop and in turn will benefit people.

AREAS BETWEEN 300-1000M(UPPER SHIVALIK ZONE)

In this area also a detail study of land use and their proper management in consultation with experts from different departments as mentioned above should be done. In the areas where irrigation facilities are available people should go for hybrid maize, rice, wheat, pulses and vegetables etc. In other areas people should do away with plough and should go for (1) Horticulture (2) Bee keeping (3) Sericulture (4) Dairying (5) Mushrooms (6) Shift from goat grazing to goat farming.

Fodder and forest pants should be encouraged on slopes.

LESSER HIMALAYAS 1000-2500M

In these areas too all the departments should be involved as has been done in Kandi belt. In these areas at some places irrigation can be done from streams and springs. As this part of the Himalayas is very young and has got steep slopes, so for irrigation we should try to avoid pacca structures and provide irrigation through Zamindari channels on selective basis. In such area hybrid maize, rice, potatoes and mulberry should be encouraged. In other areas where slopes are not permissible and as per experience of Sh. Sona Ullah Banihali the plough should be burnt and the people should go for other items in consultation with experts of different departments as a) Nut fruit b) Apple c) Pear d) Cherry e) Anardana f) Kala zera g) Saffron h) Mushrooms i) Gucchi j) Beehive k) Sheep farming and dairying should be encouraged. People should be educated that the products like maize, rice or wheat is not viable as it can be transported from other areas and items mentioned above are more beneficial for their livelihood. Tourism should also be encouraged in these areas.

GREATER HIMALAYAS 2500-4000M

In these areas also all the departments should be consulted to make a comprehensive plan for the upliftment of the people. In these areas flora and fauna should be maintained. Great care should be taken that beyond certain slopes plough should not be used. In these areas also people should go for a) Horticulture products b) Kala zeera c) Gucchi d) Bankakri e) Saffron f) Dairing and poultry farming g) Pashmina wool should be encouraged. These areas should also be developed for trekking and tourism.

TRANS HIMALAYAS > 4000M

These areas are usually the source of several rivers and nallahs. Such areas have been traditionally grazing grounds and not for agriculture purposes. We should see that these areas are not encroached by locals for petty gains and disturb the ecology of the area. These areas should be only considered for trekking and adventure tourism.

In the end my submission is that in order to make proper land use of the area there should be frequent meetings of all the departments in order to monitor the progress of the different projects in hand. Govt. lands and village lands should be clearly marked so that there is no encroachment of forestlands, which is indirectly causing erosion and land slides in the area and thus affecting ecological balance. Hence, immediately all the encroachments of the govt. and forestlands should be removed and large scale forestation scheme should be taken up in hand. Govt. should make encroachments on these lands (government and forest land) a cognizable offence.

If we go through the CAG reports of different projects like wasteland management project, social forestry projects, watershed projects and other similar projects taken up in hand for the upliftment of the rural masses and ecology of the area, then we see money provided is not being properly used. So in order that money provided is used properly the following should be done:

- i) Right person at the right job.
- ii) There should be proper accountability of all the officers connected with the project.

- iii) There should be proper monitoring of the project with proper appraisal after every six months with involving social bodies like Paryavaran Sansthas and local people.

Last but not the least the only way rural masses can be uplifted is that the villagers should be properly educated to adopt new pattern of land use which can be achieved by extensive agriculture extension to generate awareness among the people. This can be done through contact programme. Also at these workshops and seminars villagers should be educated regarding different schemes taken up by State and Central Government for upliftment of the people. Media too can play a major role. The moment the villagers will see that 5 to 6 families taken as demonstration houses in a village have come up from below poverty line and their standard of living has been raised, then automatically other people will also follow.

In order to get the best and quick results, a village development committee should be formed so that this committee can take decisions on behalf of the village. Similarly a committee at Panchayat level should also be formed in order to achieve the best overall results of different schemes taken up by different departments, in progress in particular panchayat.

In areas where irrigation is being done and the National Water Policy (1987) has clearly laid down the need to involve farmers progressively in various aspects of management of irrigation system particularly in water distribution and collection of water charges. It is widely recognized now that through participatory of irrigation management (MIP) we can remove the present deficiencies in irrigation service and improve the agriculture production and productivity through efficient use of water and this way lot of water can be saved.

In order to plan policies for overall land use in the Himalayas in J&K on sound footing there is need to:

1. Prepare a status paper on the available natural resources viz. land, area under different crops, forests and water availability of each block/district & waste land.
2. New emerging problems like injudicious use of pesticides, fungicides, weedicides, fertilizers, degradation of cultivable land and soil erosion etc. needs to be taken up on priority. At the block level, laboratories to be established and on spot diagnosis report right from soil testing to post checking degradation, soil erosion and various hazards.
3. Vocationalisation of education at 10th and 12th standards and opening up of vocational farm training centers is needed to link technology, education, training and skills with development. At the same time a review of Planning Department is needed to make financial resources available for vocationalisation. Privatisation can also be considered.
4. The commercialization of agriculture and other related products for economic development and nutritional improvement requires range of policies like:
 - a) The traditional and prevalent village technologies need to be screened and improved to yield more dividends.
 - b) The crop insurance will help farmers to switch over to commercialization and cultivation of each crop with less market risks.

- c) Transformation of villages is needed. The traditional go to farmer approach is to be replaced with farmers come and learn to grow. The subject matter specialists could be involved in the training of agricultural pursuits at basic levels through weekly Saturday or Sunday Agro-Clinical camps, Farmers Training Camps, Charcha Mandals, Seminars/workshops.
- d) Study of Macro and Micro trade practices related to Agriculture and other commodities.
- e) The transition of existing subsistence farming to commercialization farming must be phased to the tune with development of marketing and product canning, bottling and preservation facilities.
- f) Specialists have to innovate low cost or no cost technology to promote gradually subsistence agriculture to commercialized agriculture without much use of inorganic fertilizers and pesticides. Use of bio-fertiliser should be encouraged. By using neem cake with urea can reduce the degradation of soil and reduce consumption of urea to larger extent. By using neem cake consumption of pesticides will also be reduced. This will encourage plantation of neem trees which will ultimately improve the environment of the area. This is one of the ways to preserve our environment and keep balance with increased need of food grains.
- g) Growing of Herbal/Aromatic plants should be encouraged.
- h) Agriculture advisory Service interaction with farmers is to be intensified through diagnostic team visits on trial farms, demonstration etc.

5. As at present there is no Grazing Policy in the state but are going to have a new forest policy. The new forest policy so framed will not give any substantial results unless these two policies are thoroughly discussed and finalized in time bound programme by the experts. As of now any amount spent on forests by state are through World bank etc. will be sheer wastage of time and time money. For this I would recommend setting up of technical park in each panchayat, so that the benefit trickles down to each and every house of the village.
6. Interlinking of rivers can be one of the best solution. This work should be taken up as a top priority.
7. Good quality of seed, fertilizer and pesticide should be made available at proper time to the farmer. To supply these items Govt. interference should be discouraged and private party should be encouraged to overcome this problem.

In the end I will again emphasise that in order to achieve best results, to reduce the effect of global warming and floods, the govt. has to think a fresh on the whole issue regarding the saving of Himalayas and other areas. I feel that unless above suggestions are not taken up in a time bound programme and proper accountability induced in the system, things will go from bad to worse and valuable time lost will never come back. Then there will be another seminar to find out the cause of this ruin.

ANNEXURE 'B' YEAR _____

Name of Village _____ Code No _____ Panchayat _____ Block _____ Tehsil _____

Constituency _____ District _____ State _____

1 S.NO	2 Name of family members with parentage		3 Age	4 Qualification	5 Occupation	6 SC/ST/ OBC Handicapped	7 Revenue pass book			
							Yes	No		
8 Election I-Card		9 House			10 Land	11 Animals	12 Families (BPL)	13 Births/Deaths	14 Land details	15 Average Family Income
Yes	No	Pac ca	S Pacc a	Kac cha						

i) Village common land

ii) Forest Land

iii) State Land

iv) Kha- charai

Land _____

v) Land taken over by

different

Departments

23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
Panchayat Ghar	Types of crops grown	Types of trees grown	Village common land waste land Forest Land	Total length of lanes Already const_____	Total length of drains Already const._____ Balance _____	Total no of latrines Already const_____ Balance _____	Total No of wells and bowalies & their position	Total No of ponds their dimensions & Position	Special problem of the area	Remarks