

IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE SCHEMES AND SPECIAL SCHEMES FOR RURAL AREA DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY IN TAMILNADU

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As part of eradicating poverty in rural areas of the state, the Government of Tamilnadu came up with many programmes. They aimed at upgrading the minimum wages and providing food to the poor people of the rural areas without employment. The scheme included specialized packages for the people. Hence they were called special schemes or programmes. They were schemes of national rural employment and self sufficiency. These programmes were adopted to suit the requirements of the areas in which they implemented.

Pre Service Training Scheme

Under this scheme “Gramasevikas” appointed for the development of rural society. Prior to appointment they were given proper training for about two years in rural extension training centers. They trained both in practical and theoretical aspects.¹

The Gramasevakas Schemes

The Gramasevaks have emerged as the latest functionaries in the field of rural services. In Madras State it was decided that it was no more necessary to keep the firka development and community development services separately and they were merged into the national extension service. From October 1953 the village level workers became the Gramasevak.²

The Gramasevak became the common appellation throughout India and Gramasevikas also joined them. The name Sevakan in Tamilnadu literally means one who has a heart for meritorious service and conjures before one's mind. In other words the old story of the Anklet of Silapadikaram and the recent poet namely Bharathi both were glorifying the merit of Kannan's servant, because their objectives were enunciated and programmes and plans were laid down. His duties and functions their content and meaning were all well defined. The methods and techniques were taught. He was fully subject to strict discipline and was expected to obtain the proficiency of a model farmer and an exemplary citizen. He was to be conscious of his role as an extension worker all the time.³

Besides the Gramasevak had to work himself with the people and to think and act vigorously along with them in a scientific manner and be a part in the bloodless revolution that has to come about. The degree and extent of his success in this mission would ultimately be the touch-tone of the fulfilment of his role as a Gramasevak. He was expected to ensure a permanent and lasting place for himself and his service.⁴

Those who wanted to do work as Gramasevaks were given one year intensive training in order to equip themselves and to deal with their increasing responsibilities in the field of agriculture. To facilitate them a workshop wing was attached to all the centers of the state. Generally speaking this programme was heavily oriented towards agriculture. Besides other subjects like panchayat, co-operation, Animal husbandry, public health, social education, extension, khadi and village industries were essential for discharging the duties of the Gramasevaks at the village level.

In order to equip the village level workers in the field with the latest developments in the various scientific areas related to their job, they are drafted to the training centres once after every three years of field works for refresher training programme. It served as a forum for exchanging views among workers of different districts solving field problems in which 594 Gramasevaks completed this training in 1965.⁵

Home Science Training Programme

Gramasevikas before their regular appointment underwent one year pre-service training at the home-science wings attached to rural extension training centres. The main subjects taught to them were as follows:⁶

1. Mother and child care;
2. Extension;
3. Socio-Economic Programme;
4. Agriculture and children;
5. Home Management;
6. Food and Nutrition;
7. Health and Sanitation;
8. Clothing; and
9. Women and children programme.

At the end of the campus training they underwent 1 to 12 months apprenticeship training as in the case the Gramasevikas. And with a view to build up the technical competence of the Gramasevikas in the field, they were drawn in batches of thirty at a time and training was given for duration of two months in the home science wings. This programme provided ample opportunities for the workers to catch up with the latest scientific advances and to exchange their field experience and arrive at new methods of approach.⁷

Moreover the other women workers were closely associated with women and children's programmes and they were also trained at the Home-science wing in which forty took training for a period of one month. The home science wing at Bhavanisagar conducted pre-service training to gramasevikas while two other centres at S.V.Nagaram and T.Kallupatti gave refresher training for 162 gramasevikas.⁸

Old Age Pension Scheme

The Madras Government formulated many schemes for the disabled persons of which old age pension was very important. The actual number of old people getting the benefit of this social welfare scheme was as many as 55,000. It involved an expenditure of Rs.3 crores for the state.⁹

The scheme provided for the grant of Rs.20 a month to all destitute excluding beggars over the age of sixty five. The age limit was raised to sixty in the case of disabled handicapped by loss of sight speech or limb and leprosy. A feature in the working of the scheme was that the pension was sent to the beneficiaries by money order, the state bearing the transmission charges. In determining the age of the elders no strict procedure was followed. At the same time those who looked older in appearance were getting the benefit of the scheme. The Government implemented the scheme with sympathy and generosity. It was claimed that the Madras Government was the first to initiate a social welfare measure like the old age pension, despite financial limitation in the state.¹⁰

Rural Water Supply Programme

Under this programme two schemes were executed by the State Government, such as Well Subsidy Scheme and Tube Well Programme in the state. The well subsidy scheme included sinking artesian wells and digging new wells throughout the state. Although lack of pipes was delaying the completion of the programme, the river pumping installations were set up in Chengalpet district which was satisfactorily provided and proved to be a profitable means of utilizing the spring in the Palar River. Subsequently ten other districts of the state came under the tube wells with an average capacity of irrigation of 300 acres by each well. This programme had not only got well under way, but it had also been agreed to start an exploratory program for similar venture in other areas, where tube wells were practically unknown.¹¹

Harijan Welfare Department

The hope that various ameliorative measures which tend to uplift the harijans from poverty in order to improve their conditions in all aspects and enable them to take their place on equal terms with members of other sections of the society was expressed in the administration report reviewing the work of the Harijan Welfare department for the year 1953 onwards. The measures were undertaken by the department which consisted of provision of house sites maintenance of schools grant of scholarships, stipends, etc. Besides grant to private bodies engaged in social and economic uplift of the eligible communities was given. Moreover, as many as 121 houses for harijans were constructed at a cost of Rs.12,85,331. The supply of mid-day meals to the students belonging to eligible communities studying in harijan welfare schools in the state was done by the Department.¹²

The effect of passing of the Madras Removal of civil disabilities commandment Act of 1947 and the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act of 1947 on the minds of both the harijans and caste Hindus was discernible. The caste Hindus were realising that the harijans

had a right to move on equal terms with them and be treated as an integral part of society. Except in rural areas there were work force movements of harijans in all places of public resort. In most of the rural areas also distinctions of birth were not so much pressed now. The harijans became conscious on their part of the rights and privileges conferred on them by the two Acts.¹³

Village Development Programme

A view put forward in this connection was that resources should be mobilised not merely in financial terms but also in terms of human material. The full utilisation of the manpower in rural areas should be achieved primarily through extension of normal employment opportunities, ensuring the investment attained provided a proper balance between capital intensive and labour intensive schemes of development. The useful work for the local community needed to be productive nature. Special arrangement was made for the output of goods and services which the people needed but were not marketable in the ordinary way and for organised voluntary services in rural areas. The second method of productive character provided the largest scope for extension of employment, while there could be a variety of such programmes such as nation facilities, reclamation of lands and other objects which might add to production and income directly. Even building of roads linking a village with the nearest market town might prove useful in the state.¹⁴

Rural Manpower Programme

The various programmes were implemented by the Government of India for the benefit of the rural and provided employment opportunity to the people to improve their social status in pursuance of the objective of providing employment in rural areas, in addition to creating employment through general development programme.¹⁵

The Third Five Year Plan had several programmes for utilising manpower resources. The panchayat union has been responsible for the implementation of the programme. Many schemes were executed under the programme such as improvements to irrigation works construction of new roads in village's reclamation of panchayat waste lands, provision of community walls, raising of fuel formation forest and improvements of minor drainage works etc. With the aim of operating in the all blocks of the state the rural manpower programme was start in 1966. However only 55 blocks were selected for rural manpower programme in the state.¹⁶

These blocks were selected from the backward areas of the state- The district collectors supervised the execution of the programme and each block was permitted to spend upto Rs.1 lakh. In order to enable the Panchayat union to implement the programme effectively advance grants was sanctioned upto Rs.50000 per block. The deputy director of rural development was exclusively incharge of the programme with necessary staff. The collector assisted by personal assistant was incharge of the programme at the district level.¹⁷

The rural development divisional officers were disbursing part of the grants to the Panchayat unions. The Highway Department which executed the Government policy was

made responsible for the execution of various works under Panchayat union set up. With this end in view the development was reorganised and strengthened at various levels. Sometimes the work was entrusted to the local labour contractors. In case such works were not functioning; the work was to be entrusted to the panchayat union for the department execution. The work was executed under the condition prescribed by the Government and by the direction of rural development from time to me in the state.¹⁸

The Prosperity Brigade Scheme

The prosperity brigade scheme was launched with the objective of creating a new social awakening among the masses in order to arouse the spirit of public service which would go a long way eradicating social and other evils. The object was to kindle a fervor which would uplift the society. As a whole it evoked from everyone his contribution towards creating of a new social order.¹⁹

The brigade had become a part and parcel of developmental wing utilising the potential manpower which was all along kept idle and unutilised. The scheme had not only accelerated the development activities of the state; but had also instilled in the minds of the common man, a sense of participation in the nation's onward march a spirit of selflessness and social service. In a period one year the prosperity brigade had executed works worth about Rs.25 lakhs with a Governmental assistance of Rs.11 lakhs in the state.²⁰

The brigade as originally proposed was to have strength of 11000 volunteers only in each district. In view of large number of people who came forward with great and enthusiasm to serve the public cause, the original proposal to enrolled 1,000 members in each district had to be increased to a total number of 39,756 volunteers in the state.²¹

Moreover before extending its activities to other field, it was concentrated on the field of education agriculture, and road communication. The construction of school buildings which was quite essential in spreading education had been undertaken throughout the state. As a result of this as many as 374 school buildings had been constructed. It wanted to do a bit to improve the agricultural production, under which the existing canals and tanks were deepened to facilitate proper supply and storage of water under the programme in the rural areas in Tamilnadu. Besides these workers had been undertaken spraying work in 11500 acres and reclamation of waste lands in 500 acres. Kitchen gardening was also one of the items of work done by his scheme in various parts of the Tamilnadu state. The construction of mid-day meal centres and reading rooms was taken by the brigade.²²

In the post-independence era, Tamil Nadu witnessed a major change in its rural life. Especially in the last two decades, the Union and state Governments have undertaken various measures to promote a quality result oriented rural atmosphere. The developmental activities in rural areas were carried out through Panchayat Raj development programmes social welfare schemes and special schemes. The panchayat raj administration was unique in its functions. It motivated the rural folk to understand politics and administration. It was the instrument for the Government to implement its various welfare programmes. Therefore,

the panchayat raj now has become an essential bolt in the Government machinery of administration. Another tool in the Government's hand for rural development was the social welfare scheme. This scheme was originally intended to provide the basic infrastructure, namely health care. Apart from this, the scheme included family planning and women and child-welfare, and it covered almost all villages. Even though hilly areas were provided with health facilities through the health centres. Women's welfare was in every panchayat union combined with handicraft learning. The opening of creches for working women was laudable and it had also minimized the problem of feeding of young ones. Social welfare education created more awareness in rural areas.

End Notes

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