

CHAPTER - XII

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter gives some concrete suggestions in order to reconceptualize the existing Rural Development programmes, removing their loopholes. It is earnestly hoped that if these suggestions, are implemented it will make these programmes serve their avowed goal of uplifting the socially and economically deprived population in the real sense. The suggestions are made here on the basis of the field survey in the selected seven villages. They reflect the objective appraisal that the research team under took of the various rural development programmes implemented in the State of Tamil Nadu. Further, the study team came across various cases as they could interface with the officials, NGOs, and beneficiaries at the time of preliminary visits made to all the 28 districts and some select blocks in the State. In the light of the experience gained and the benefit of exposure that the research team had, during the last six months, the report attempts to record a few policy suggestions / agenda for future action.

I Centrally Sponsored Schemes

1. *Swarnjayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana*: The aim of developing micro-enterprises under the programme SGSY in the State of Tamil Nadu is still receiving attention and it has to be activated and strengthened further. From the field experience gained, Research Team of this project suggests that for any action programme to take roots, the most needed input is the much inspired and highly involved participation of the very target groups. This warrants introducing the participants to successful experiments obtaining in certain regions, and it is hoped that such an exposure, shall trigger off a demonstration effect.

As per the programme guidelines, the group formation and training is assigned to the NGO's. Most of the NGO's are incapable of delivering the goods.

This is a sad spectacle witnessed in all regions of the study, since their skill, knowledge and other infrastructure required for capacity building of the group members are very poor. First all the NGO's should understand the objectives of the programme and their functional modalities, before participating / involving themselves in any developmental activity. The Government has to impart training to the top officials of the NGO's and the NGOs thus trained, in their turn have to disseminate the knowledge to their subordinates. These subordinates are those who interface with the beneficiaries directly, and thereby play a vital role in the whole work. Hence it has been suggested that the key workers in NGO's have to be trained well and they have to be retained in the same job for continuously at least for five years and attractive salary has to be offered to them. They should be trained to have the skills in-group formation, group dynamics, solving disputes among the group members, interaction with other bodies like banking etc.

SGSY proposed a number of measures for upgrading the capacity of Swarozgaris both as individuals as well as group oriented activities. The district SGSY committee should, in consultation with concerned technical personnel, determine the Minimum Skill Requirement (MSR), in terms of both technical and manageable skills. The basic orientation programme and skill development training varied from region to region and it was reported that the beneficiaries had not received any adequate training viz. book keeping, knowledge of market, identification and appraisal acquaintance with product costing and product pricing, familiarisation with project financing by banks as well as some basic skills in key activity identified. The current approaches, in respect of the context of training and its methodology have to be devised suitably to enhance their technical and managerial skills. Perhaps, periodical training for a longer duration will be helpful in this regard.

Technology absorption, transfer and introduction in the activities of micro-enterprises have to be monitored continuously and periodically, for identifying the setbacks on the programme activities. These micro-enterprise units should

concentrate not only on production but also on activities like the food processing, which will help value-addition to their products. Further in the context of globalisation, quality of products is vital for the development of micro-enterprises. Otherwise, they will be edged out by the forces of the market-system and a virtual extinction from the scene.

In each village, in the name of infrastructure, a hall alone has been constructed for the use of beneficiaries. Proper infrastructure is essential for the success of micro-enterprises. This program has to create the critical infrastructure viz. production, processing, quality testing, storage and marketing, at least in the cluster of villages. The availability of a better infrastructure alone will encourage the participants of the programme.

It is a conspicuous lacunae that no clusters among the micro-enterprises have been established and the entrepreneurs too could not trace the backward and forward linkages. These linkages have to be established to conserve the local resources in an efficient way. This will facilitate greater control of the progress of the programme, including setting up of infrastructure, raw material distribution, technology transfer as well as quality control.

2. ***Micro Financing – Revolving Fund:*** The revolving fund is provided to the groups to augment the group corpus so as to enable more number of members to access loans, enhancing in the per capita loan available to the members. Majority of the groups have already reached the second stage of grading and thereby receive revolving fund from the DRDA and make a corpus from their savings and interest. The group meets the credit requirements and loan advances from out of the corpus. These credit requirements of the members are generally used for consumption, social and medical expenses. The micro financing institutions impart credit discipline and financial management skills to the member, and make them credit worthy and bankable in the eyes of the bank. The objective of the scheme is to provide some amount of loan to the members for their urgent

requirements and to relieve them from the clutches of the moneylenders. Some of the groups lend their corpus money at the rate of interest of around 24 per cent to the members. It is obvious that this high rate of interest will be all the more oppressive causing hardships to the poverty stricken groups. This has to be taken a serious notice of and it is suggested that the Government should fix the interest rate to help the poor.

The study records the gratifying performance of the practice of micro financing. Through group activities and the back-end subsidy it has paved the way to recover the loans quickly without any defaults. Hence, it is recommended that the same policy be followed to uplift the poorer income groups.

3. **Indira Awaas Yojana:** As a unique policy, the Government of Tamil Nadu provides RCC roofed fire proof houses, supplementing Rs.12,000 per house as additional roofing cost apart from its usual matching share of the central grant. Therefore, the unit cost including sanitary latrine under this scheme is Rs.32,000 in normal terrain and Rs. 34,000 in difficult terrain. Currently, it has been realised in all the blocks that the allotted amount is not enough to meet the material cost of the construction of dwelling units. The cost of construction varies from region to region due to the transmission of raw materials like sand, brick, and metals, cement from far away places. It involves huge amount of transport cost. Region wise cost of construction has to be identified and the allotment has to be made accordingly by the Central and State Government. The Central Government makes its allocation only on the basis of soil condition and it has not taken into account, the cost of transportation particularly in the hilly region Nilgiris district. In the hilly district, everything has to be taken from plain regions and the cost of transportation is very high. Further, the materials have to be carried as head loads to the steep hills and it involves huge amount of labour cost. Hence it is suggested that the material and labour costs have to be assessed and fixed as per the regional requirements. Assessing the region-wise cost of construction of dwelling units enables them to maintain the quality of construction.

The allotment per unit of dwelling unit has to be revised by the Governments on par with the rate of inflation. While the rate of inflation is very high, keeping the allotment as fixed for more than five years, leads to the reduction of quality of construction over the period. Also this practice will reduce considerably the life of the house.

The design of the house and the provision of windows / jolly have to be made on the basis of the requirement of the region, particularly in the High Altitude Zone and High Rainfall Zone.

The attitude of the beneficiaries shows sharp variations among different regions. In some regions the beneficiaries realise the importance of the programme and they are enthused to come forward and participate in the housing programs. In these areas, the house construction is one of the good qualities and the value of the houses is more than the Government allotted fund. They have obviously made some additional contribution in the form of labour and cement, to construct Pucca / strong houses. On the other hand, there are certain other regions where the people view the contractors quite unfavourably as unduly profiting from the programmes and officials working hand in gloves with the former. Hence they are inclined to keep a vigil over the programme implementation. They did not actively participate and contribute labour and material in the construction of houses. This naturally affected the quality. This situation prevailed in number of regions, still the beneficiaries think that the houses are the property of Government.

It is understood that the smooth and cordial way, the officials approach the public is a critical input to make the programme a success. Keeping in view of developments that emerged in the study region, it may be suggested that the government officials at the block and panchayat level, have to be actively involved and the eligible beneficiaries should be educated. It is expected that these eligible beneficiaries may participate and make some additional contribution

in terms men and material to construct the dwelling units for their use. If they contribute in the form of men and material, they will be inclined to maintain the houses continuously and treat them as their own property. The current practice of giving whole amount to the beneficiaries makes the beneficiaries expect the Government assistance for repairs too. It is strongly suggested that the beneficiary should share some proportion of expenditure and this will be a built-in check against corruption, malpractices, and pilferages, if any.

4. ***Employment Schemes:*** As per the guidelines of the programmes, contractors are not permitted to be engaged for execution of any of the works under the programme. Further, no middleman or any other intermediate agency should be employed for executing works under the programmes of EAS and JGSY. The full benefit of wages paid should reach the workers and the cost of the works should not involve any commission charges payable to such contractors, middlemen or intermediate agency. These guidelines should be followed very strictly in the execution of the programme to avoid misuse of the funds and other pilferages, if any. At the village level, the Gram Sabha members are not aware of the guidelines of the programme; hence their participation is very poor in the activities. Awareness has to be created among the electoral members of the PRIs and the village people, which will generate better benefits among the rural people. This will facilitate them to come forward and participate in the social audit, usually carried out at the level of Gram Sabha.

The Central assistance allocated to the States / UTs is decided on the basis of proportion of rural poor in a State to the total rural poor in the country, or it is done as per any other criteria to be decided by the Govt / NDC from time to time. The poverty estimates prepared by the Planning Commission is used for this purpose. All the State Governments intend to grab the maximum benefits from the Central financial resources. Hence, these State Governments are inclined to retain the poverty statistics equal to the national average, for the fear that a lower level of poverty will automatically bring down the allotment of central resources. In

this context a uniform policy has to be adopted in identifying the level of poverty, instead of employing the proxy indicators. A composite development index at the household level may be constructed to identify the poverty, and thereby help execute the programmes. The current practice of sharing the Government programme benefits among the political and communal groups in their villages in the name of Gram Sabhas may exclude some of the really deprived households. It is hoped that this index will facilitate them to identify the target groups, and thereby distribute the benefits on a priority basis.

5. **MPLAD** was launched during 1993 and earmarked rupees one crore per annum to take up developmental works in their constituency. In response to the programmes, the allocation of funds was enhanced gradually to Rs.2 crores per annum. It is observed that a significant proportion of the elected officials at the panchayat level are not aware about the programmes and the current position of available funds. The approval of the schemes and the availability of funds should be made transparent to the public. This will help motivate them to utilise the funds and create critical infrastructure in their parliamentary constituencies and avoid favouritism to a particular village or block. Further, it is observed that some of the districts registered nil performance in respect of the programme. It shows that the members have neglected some areas and paid attention to only particular regions. They have to use the fund on the basis of priority, as per the exigencies arising in their constituency.

6. **Training Programmes:** Continuous improvement of the skill and knowledge of Panchayat Raj functionaries and elected representatives is of paramount importance to improve the efficiency of rural development machinery. As the elected representatives continue in the office only for a particular tenure, they are contributed to acquire the knowledge and skills in as to the ongoing Rural Development programmes immediately after assuming the office. Since the training institutes are very small in number, they could not train all the elected representatives of PRIs within the stipulated period. One cycle of training will be

completed to all the elected people during the tenure, and there is no possibility of further upgradation in knowledge and skill in delivering the goods as per the guidelines evolved /amended by the Central and State Government. Some of them will get training during the initial period of their tenure and others may receive the same only at the end of their tenure. It is seriously viewed that the State Government has to train all the elected officials within a year, seeking the co-operation / assistance of the Universities, Research institutes, NGOs, etc. in order to complete the training schedule. Appropriate training modules should be prepared to suit the existing social, economic and cultural conditions of the rural areas of Tamil Nadu. They should be put to use to enhance the capacity of the elected representatives, officials of RD and line departments through interactive, informal, experience sharing and interface methodologies. A continuous assessment has to be done about the impact of training programmes at various level officials. This will help restructure the training modules periodically and their adoption then and there.

7. ***Smokeless Chulahs:*** The aim of provision of smokeless Chulahs for conservation of fuel energy, eliminate indoor air pollution, prevent deforestation and drudging of rural women. These Chulahs were provided to all the IAY beneficiaries and to some other eligible households. Most of the beneficiary households possessed single room houses and there is a possibility of indoor air pollution. Traditionally, these people used fire wood stoves, and kept the stoves in front of their houses, to avoid indoor air pollution. The beneficiaries told that they had not used the chulahs, as they were small in size, causing indoor air pollution. Hence, it is suggested to construct a small kitchen outside of the house, and to make provision of strong stoves, which will accommodate locally available firewood.

8. ***Biogas:*** The aim of Biogas project is one of preventing deforestation and to promote the use of environment friendly non-conventional energy sources for lighting, cooking, pumping-water, etc. Of late, the practice of rearing cattle has

been reduced due to the reduction in the size of CPRs and the high feeding cost of animals. In order to conserve the local energy and producing enriched natural manure, the Government has to encourage them further by way of disseminating the use of biogas among the rural mass and through continuing the subsidy for the new unit as well as for units under repair to make them sustainable. The role of turnkey agents has to be encouraged and the responsibility should be assigned to them for periodical maintenance of these units.

9. ***Credit Cum Subsidy for Housing:*** Under this scheme, the rural families, which had annual income up to Rs 32,000 are eligible to enjoy the benefits. The subsidy is restricted to Rs. 10,000, the maximum loan amount that can be availed of is Rs. 40,000. Due to this relaxation in the eligibility of households to avail these benefits, the government received good response from the people and implemented the scheme. It is noticed that houses constructed under this scheme is more than Rs. 2 lakhs worth. It reveals that the households are not eligible to enjoy these benefits, however, the banking institutions come forward and lend to these households keeping in view, the norm of easy recovery. It is suggested that the programme has to be implemented as per the guidelines of the Government, hence the benefits will reach to the target groups.

10. ***Household Latrines:*** The objective of Rural Sanitation and constructing household latrines is to improve the quality of life of the rural people and to provide privacy and dignity to the women folk. Recently, the Government reduced the subsidy around four times and fixed it at Rs.500 for sanitary latrine without the super structure. The rural people are not yet habituated to use household latrines. Of late, it is gaining some popularity among the semi urban village for the open stall available is getting shrunk. This signifies incidentally the reduction of CPRs in the rural areas. Further, the officials at the block level struggle hard to implement the programme. They are forced to find out, who is constructing toilet, using their own resources. The officials sanction money to them, record it as construction under the programme, implemented in the

concerned block. Practically, the supply of sanitary household latrine has not evoked much response among the rural people. It is observed that the current situation does not warrant the construction of household latrine. It is strongly suggested that to make use of the programme fund in an effective way, a demand driven approach has to be followed to construct household latrines. The use of latrine and the need for hygiene have to be disseminated among the rural people, in the context of emerging environmental problems.

11. ***Rural Sanitation***: This programme emphasises safe disposal of solid and liquid waste including human excrete and environmental hygiene. The rural people are habituated to go for open defecation, even though modern facilities like household and communal toilets are being provided to them at subsidised rate or free of cost. They feel that the toilets should not be kept adjacent to the houses, for it may affect the hygiene of the ambience. The current practice of providing toilets in the group houses is not in use. Further, it was observed that the toilets were not constructed as per the technical guidelines and hence there is a possibility of further deterioration in the household environment.

12. ***Monitoring of Rural Development Programmes***: The research team faced several problems in obtaining data from the Directorate of Rural Development and DRDAs in the State Tamil Nadu. It is understood that the State Government is gradually building infrastructure at the district level as well as at the State headquarters in storing data for further analysis. At the district level, the computers are used merely as typewriting machines. Most of the computers remain under utilised due to the lack of awareness in need and purpose of data, lack of skill in computer operations and network facilities. The State Government is engaged in developing software for monitoring of Rural Development Programmes. Currently, the data were stored only physical achievements of some selective programmes. Such software has to be developed all the more to accommodate the new programmes and its features and make them user friendly.

The officials of the Directorate of Rural Development aim at maintaining the consistency in records, which had been submitted earlier to the Central Government in the form of progress reports. These reports did not match the present records available at the State level and the District level. However, there is a mismatch in their records of financial and physical achievements. The State officials could not obtain the relevant information for further planning and approval in time from the district and the block offices. At this juncture, the State officials have been forced to project / manipulate the figures and submit then to the Central Government, in order to make them release the programme fund. This practice has become very common in all the States / Union Territories of the country. The Central Government has to take up earnest measures to build e-governance in all the States of the country and thereby execute the programmes in time with perfection. This system will facilitate to update and maintain the relevant programme information. This will avoid the duplication of submission of hard copies to the parental organisations and make it transparent.

Sometimes, the study team could not identify or segregate whether the data is provisional or not. The question arises, how long a data can be retained as provisional. Due to the lack of skilled manpower in these organisations, they could not understand and develop the monitoring system. Once the audit is over, the data has to be finalised and treated as final. Still there is a lack of coordination in keeping the records at the State level. The audited reports seem to be not updated / incorporated suitably in the records of financial and physical achievements.

As per the programme guidelines, the performance of the programme has to be monitored monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annually. The State government carries out periodical meeting to appraise the on going programmes in the State. The hurdles have to be identified and have to be solved to help the completion of project in time. A time series data has to be built up in comparing

the performance periodically. This will make the officials to be alert and thereby expedite the programme activities.

13. **Identification of Below Poverty Line Families:** The current approach for identifying the BPL families gives a lot of scope for manipulation. At the block level, the officials employ a one page structured schedule and gather social and economic information about the families that live in. Assessing the income is a very difficult task and the records manipulate the figures conveniently to make the families enjoy the benefits. The field workers are really facing a tough task in removing the families from the BPL list. If any one adheres to the Government guidelines, in this regard he / she will have to earn the wrath of politicians and face the consequences. Hence no one even ventures into revising the existing list. In this approach, the Government is using PCI as one of the proxy indicators for assessing their standard of living. The proxy indicator does not reveal the actual level of living, since the BPL families enjoy the maximum benefit of the social goods viz., education, health, basic needs, etc. either free of cost or subsidised provisions. In this context, an alternative approach, Household Development Index comprising various development indicators is being contemplated. To introduce this, a strong political will is needed to change the policy of the Government. These changes may affect some beneficiary groups and naturally the party in power to accommodate the vested interest, last the latter will turn into powerful lobbies, which may even topple the Government in future.

14. **Public Distribution System (PDS):** PDS has been functioning in the country to assist the population living below poverty line. Of the surveyed households, 99 per cent of them possessed the ration card and enjoyed the benefits of the services. As per the poverty analysis, it revealed that around 29 per cent of the households are living below the poverty line. It shows that a significant proportion of non-entitled population is enjoying the benefits of the scheme PDS. The system has to be streamlined further, so as to detect the non-eligible

households, and make the scheme to deliver the goods exclusively to the BPL category of population.

15. ***Common Property Resources (CPRs):*** The CPRs were created under various employment generation and area development programmes viz., JRY, JGSY, DPAP, etc. made some positive and negative externalities. The following CPRs were created under various Rural development schemes in the study villages viz., Water Harvesting Structures, Roads, Public Schools, Culverts / Small Bridges, Community Hall, Public Toilet, Television, Post Office, PDS, Cremation Ground, Library, Groups Houses, Street light and PHC. All the CPRs created / renovated under the Rural Development Schemes generated significant positive externalities rather than the negative externalities among the rural people. Hence it is recommended to build the infrastructure in the rural areas, and follow the guidelines strictly in favour of the local rural poor.

The CPRs created have to be managed properly. In this context, the suggestion is to strengthen the traditional institutions for managing these resources. Besides, the role of SHGs has to be encouraged by way of granting more powers and providing financial assistance to them, to enable their Collective Action, wherever the Property Rights are not clearly defined.

16. ***Property Rights and Trees:*** Varieties of trees reflect the possession of trees and their nature of yield. The periodicity of returns varied from trees to trees and the pay back period goes up to 25 years in the case of Teak Wood. A sizeable number of households from the four study villages viz. High Altitude Zone (98%), Western zone (66%), North Eastern Zone (61%) and North Western Zone (49 %), did not possess any trees either to meet their consumption needs or for sale. Since these households live in small pieces of encroached household land, there was no security of land rights. Although the Government distributed patta land they were not inclined to growing any trees. It is warranted to make them realise that they are the owners of the property. With secure property rights, they may be educated

to value high the future benefits through planting trees. In particular in the context of afforestation and sustainable development, the practice of growing trees has to be encouraged in all the households, wherever possible, including the High Altitude Zone. The practice of offering Teak wood saplings to the households by the Government in Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu, with a view to arresting the female infanticide can be emulated in other regions to control the social evil. The concept of the novel scheme is that when the child attains the age of their marriage after twenty-five years the teak planted would pay its dividend reducing the burden of the parents. This scheme is a commendable one, for it serves both the social and environmental ends.

17. **Livestock:** The composition of livestock varied among the zonal villages. It reflected the extent of their need for agricultural and other activities. In some regions, the topography does not permit to rear particular variety of livestock. It gives an opportunity to agricultural families to use their by-products as feed to the cattle. Besides, the residuals and wastages too were used as cattle feed. Non-agricultural families have to depend upon the CPRs and also they enjoy the secondary rights to graze and collect the residuals and wastages in the harvested field of the private landholders. They can enjoy the secondary rights only during the season and it will not give a sustainable feed to their cattle.

In the light of the facts above, it is suggested that the people should be educated to rear livestock and make use of the available feed throughout the year by way of creating some storage facilities. It is also suggested that some food processing industries have to be developed at the local level, enable to supply the feed continuously to the cattle. This will encourage the population to rear some livestock and get some additional returns to manage their families.

18. **Roads:** Under AMT, the State Government dovetailed various programme funds and made the selected village as self sufficient one. In the rural areas, they provided end-to-end cover concrete maintenance free road. These concrete roads

are very much useful to the people who live in the rural areas around for their day-to-day use. Most of the people appreciated the facility, which helped their vehicle movement, drying and thrashing food grains and other by-products. This protected them against foot skin disease, etc. In the light of the above discussions, it is recommended to provide maintenance free concrete roads in the rural areas. The authorities should make a perspective plan and provide all possible connections in future before laying of roads and this will avoid further digging of roads. Further, the quality has to be ensured by way of strengthening local institutions to take collective action, if they violate any guidelines.

II State Sponsored Rural Development Programmes

19. *Samathuvapuram*: The Periyar Memorial Samathuvapuram was unique in the country that aimed at creating a congenial atmosphere and establishing harmony among various communal and religious groups. These Samathuvapurams consist of 100 households of various communities each. Adequate infrastructure facilities viz., drinking water, public distribution, primary schools, noon meal centres, parks, roads and streets have to be created on priority basis to live happily and comfortably without any communal and religious discrimination. But the real picture is somewhat different among the occupants. Some of these occupants rented out / leased out / locked their houses. It is observed that the occupants owned some houses at still better locations and lived among their own community members. All of a sudden, they could not break their social traditions as to live among different caste groups. Further, lack of employment opportunities in proximity to the settlement clusters, discouraged them from occupying the houses.

This was implemented in the state Tamil Nadu, with the noble intention of removing social and economic inequalities. To remove social inequality, the Government allotted the houses for persons belonging different strata in the caste hierarchy who have expected to live adjacent to one another. In the context of removing economic inequalities, the government insisted on organising SHG

among the different communities. The guidelines are good enough, but the real picture, which obtains is different. It is expected that it will take some more years to achieve the goal of establishing egalitarian settlement clusters.

20. ***Anna Marumalarchi Thittam:*** This enables the preparation of the village development plan through a participatory process. The conduct of a Rapid Appraisal of Resource Endowments (RARE) at the village level enables the Government to identify the basic problems viz., drinking water, primary education, health, nutrition, housing, roads and streets, PDS, etc. Besides, they will seek the opinions / receive petition from the public. These opinions are incorporated in the village development plan. The research team came across various inadequacies / errors in the village development plan documents. Further, in the guidelines of the scheme, it has been clearly mentioned that the document RARE survey would be used as a base line study, to compare the position in the post Anna Marumalarchi Thittam period, enabling a development impact analysis. Hence, it is recommended that the plan should be prepared with meticulous care, totally free of errors. This will help assessing the impact of the programme in future.

It is observed that some of the town panchayats of minister's constituencies has been low graded as village panchayat, enabling them to enjoy the benefits of the programme Anna Marumalarchi Thittam. These town panchayats had maximum infrastructure facilities, and they grabbed some additional programme benefits from this scheme. These types of practices have to be avoided and the programmes have to be implemented as per the guidelines, facilitate them to deliver the goods to the poor infrastructural villages.

As per the guidelines, the size of the population is one of the criteria for identification and implementation of the programme Anna Marumalarchi Thittam. It is observed that the current criteria for assessing the financial requirements may not reveal the actual requirements; hence, in some of the villages, the selected

works could not be completed. It shows that the guidelines are not adequate to serve the intended purpose of the scheme making the village self-sufficient. The size of population, number of hamlets, and area coverage varied from village to village. It is observed that in some of the villages, due to the wide coverage of the area, some of the works viz., roads could not be completed within the allotted fund. Hence, the works were incomplete. It is recommended that the required funds have to be assessed fully instead of distributing funds to the selected Panchayat villages. This will help them complete the targeted works and make the village as self-sufficient one.

It is a welcome step that the Government allotted free houses to the houseless families under the housing scheme. However it is noticed that some family members had the benefits of the houses and possessed two or three houses in the names of their sons. They reserved such houses for the unmarried sons of their families. Hence, the purpose of the scheme was defeated. It reveals that the allotment has not been made as per the guidelines, for it has given room for favouritism. It is viewed that the allotment has to be done genuinely in the Gram Sabha, instead of sharing the benefits among the politically and communally dominant group members.

The scheme, Anna Marumalarchi Thittam is one of the successful Rural Development programmes going on in the State of Tamil Nadu. Earlier programmes faced the problems of resource crunch and thereby the works could not be completed or made as self-sufficient. Under this programme, the State Government would sanction special grant under the scheme every year besides convergence of other ongoing programmes including rural water supply programmes implemented by TWAD board. After exhausting funds converged under dovetailing with State and Central schemes like EAS / JRY / MLACD / MPLAD / DPAP / Tenth Finance Commission Grant etc, the gap alone has to be filled up from the public grant sanctioned by the State Government under Anna Marumalarchi Thittam. This procedure largely solves the problem of resource

crunch and financial dose inefficiency. This passes for a model scheme, worthy of emulation in other regions of the country which to create critical infrastructure in the rural areas.

21. ***Namakku Naame Thittam:*** Tamil Nadu has a unique practice of 'Kudimaramathu' where in the members of the village community organise themselves to put in their collective labour to desilt, renovate and improve the irrigation channels, tanks, ooranies (drinking water ponds) every year, just before the cultivation season. Such collective efforts have benefited the people immensely to conserve and use water judiciously to get maximum benefit from the land and water resources and sustained such benefits. The reflection of this wisdom of our society and their successes resulted in launching of NNT an innovative, participatory scheme during 1997-98 in this State. Participatory development process is an attempt to overcome the limitation of top-down development approach and taking into account the needs and aspiration of the local people who are the highest stakeholder in the development process. It is cost effective, quick and quality of assets created will be much more than the top-down approach. This approach has to be followed and strengthened further in terms allotting grants without any delay to fulfil their urgent needs.

The aim is to educate people to plan their requirement and to accomplish the same with their total involvement. People often identify their requirement through Gram Sabha chalk out plans and fulfil their needs by implementing the schemes, with their contribution making 25 per cent of the outlay from their end in the form of cash or material or labour, while the government releases the balance of 75 per cent under the NNT, extending all necessary technical assistance through the department concerned. This approach makes them look upon the property thus created as a social good, which should be managed collectively. The State need not bother about managing the resources created under the programme NNT. Hence, it is recommended that a larger number of

social infrastructures be brought under this scheme, which will incidentally solve the problems of corruption, poor quality of construction, etc.

It is observed that in some of the villages, the elected panchayat presidents took this opportunity to create critical assets and contributed 25% share from their personal funds to get the matching grant 75% from the government. Later, they took away their personal shares and created assets equivalent to the government share or well below the value of the grant. It is unfortunate that this bad practice has demonstration effect in other areas as well. If we encourage these practices, the very objective of the programme will fail. Hence it is suggested that the bottom up approach (Trickle-up) be followed to implement the scheme. The elected officials in the local bodies have to play a vital role in educating the rural mass and get their support in creating/ maintaining / renovating the assets in their villages. If these people collectively contribute in the form of material / labour /cash, it would make them look upon them as their own collective assets.

The opinion of the people too varied among the regions. If we ask, why the village president alone takes much effort in creating the social assets, without seeking the co-operation of the public, they attribute it to their selfish goal of grabbing the maximum out of the Government money contributing 75 per cent of the outlay. The local people entertain the view that the President would corner for himself certain percentage of the programme fund. Further, the elected officials have spent a huge amount of money, violating election guidelines to win the election. Hence, they expect that the invested money have to be recovered within a short span of time. These issues should be viewed seriously and all efforts should be made to strengthen the political institution further with the full co-operation of the public, avoiding all types of corruption in executing the programmes. The elected officials generate the co-operation of the public and get the maximum contribution from the public to make the programme a success. This programme should justify the well-avowed goal of development. The

development at grass-root level has to be self-generated, self-organised and self sustained on a community participation basis.

22. ***MLACDS:*** MLACDS has been receiving a good momentum in the state of Tamil Nadu. Hence the financial allocation was gradually enhanced under this scheme from Rs.25 lakhs during 1997-98 to Rs.77 lakhs during 2000-01. Through this scheme, they could create black topping, bituminous roads, concrete roads, school building for computer education, school latrines and some other works depend on the need of the area. Since the scheme is delivering the good as per the need of the legislative constituency, it is recommended that the scheme be continued in the state and strictly following the guidelines without any misuse of funds.
23. ***School Sanitation:*** Under the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), school latrines were constructed in selected Districts. The provision of school latrines has to be extended to all Primary, Middle and High Schools functioning in the State. The practice of using toilets in the Schools, make the pupil to use the toilets in their houses. If we encourage these practices at the school level, it will prompt them to make use of toilets in future at their houses.
24. ***Conversion of Unserviceable Houses into Pucca/ Semi-Pucca houses:*** An innovative scheme has been introduced by the government to convert unserviceable houses into Pucca / Semi-Pucca houses. As the need for upgradation is acutely felt, the government earmarked 20% of IAY allocation for this scheme. This scheme may be continued further to all categories of eligible families.
25. ***Sustainable Rural Development:*** There are eight small Sago industries functioning in the North Western Zone study village B. Pallipatti in Dharmapuri district. These industries make use of the locally available agricultural product Tapioca and they employ around 30 labourers per shift and offer two shifts of

work during the season. On average male labourers get Rs.100 per day and female labourers get Rs.35 per day. The production of sago in this village generates a lot of water and air pollutions. Those who are living in close proximity to the industries complain that they face the problems of ground water pollution and they articulate strongly the need for strong action against water pollution. In view of emerging problems in this region, a detailed study is warranted to quantify the externalities of the sago industries. These industries are giving opportunity to cultivate the crop tapioca and also providing seasonal employment to the local people providing both in the field as well as in the factory. Hence it is recommended to continue these activities and trace suitable alternative to purify the water effluents of these industries. This village typically represents the problems of all those villages located in remote areas. It is imperative to concentrate on such villages, from the angle of achieving sustainable development.

26. **Occupational Diversification:** The rural development schemes aim at developing micro enterprises in the rural areas and thereby they expect that the occupational diversification will take place among the people. In the total surveyed sample population, around 62 per cent are agricultural labourers. It shows that the impact has not been significant to benefit the hitherto unreached in the country. There is a rich scope to strengthen further in terms of occupational diversification and make these groups get sustainable income and employment by way of diversifying their activities, slightly towards industrialisation and services. In this context, adequate training has to be given to them through various rural development programmes to enhance their skill and knowledge.
27. **Schools:** The study team noticed that there is no lighting, ventilation and furniture in the primary schools functioning at the village level. It is strongly suggested that these facilities have to be provided to the primary schools. The availability of school infrastructure including furniture and good teaching, alone will encourage the parents to admit their kids in the local schools. There are a few private schools

functioning in certain areas with good facilities that attract the parents. This was evident in the study villages of High Rainfall Zone and North Western Zone. In the HRZ village, only three students are studying in a Government primary school manned by three teachers. The functioning of government school is not viable in this area. It is recommended that the government school infrastructure including good quality of teaching alone will help deliver the educational goods to the rural mass in a sustainable way.

28. **Library** : Provision of Rural Library is an important and innovative step to disseminate information on the current scientific, technological and political developments around the World. This facility makes them keep abreast of the knowledge and enables them to succeed in their life. The infrastructure and availability of books are not adequately available due to resource crunch. The success of any development programme depends upon the local participation, whatever the initiative the Government took. As for mobilising local participation in regard to library service, it is suggested that some minimum contribution from the users may be collected. This will ensure their responsibility in managing the library. Also the scope for additional collection of books and periodicals will improve beyond the use of Newspapers.

29. **Televisions**: The State Government provided Colour Television to the Panchayat Villages and the number of television sets distributed was decided on the basis of population size and hamlets. It was reported that some of the televisions were under repair/stolen away. The responsibility of maintenance has been given to the panchayats. The panchayat does not have skilled manpower to look after this work. Hence, it is suggested that some specific employee appointed at the Block level may look after all the televisions functioning in the villages. Further it is recommended that the responsibility of the property should be borne by the village president and he should reimburse the cost of television in the case of any theft.

In the context of making provision of TV halls, the State Government put up a very small structure to install TV and the space could accommodate hardly a few persons. Hence the viewers were made to sit outside the TV hall. This caused hardships to the viewers during rainy days particularly in the High Altitude Zone area. During night hours, people could not sit outside the hall due to heavy wind blows and chillness. Some of the youngsters, viewing the TV within the small structure, run the risk of their eyesight being affected in future. The structure can be widened particularly in the Hill Area Zone and High Rainfall Zone areas of the State.

30. **Community Hall** : The State Government created community hall in the villages to perform the family functions, entertainment, storing of food grains, etc. The cost of construction and the size of the hall are varied among the regions. The externalities created under this infrastructure are very meagre. Hence, it has been suggested to construct the community halls with more space inside and outside of the hall, and make it more convenient to perform the functions.
31. **Cremation Shed**: The successive State Governments in Tamil Nadu made provision in the budget and created approach roads to the burial ground and cremation sheds. Creation of Cremation Shed is one of the identities of the area and prevents from the encroachment. Further, the aim of creating the shed is to burn the dead bodies during rainy days. The Sheds put up in the rural areas could not be protected against the rain and wind blows. Hence it has been recommended to restructure the design. It is understood that the scheme has been withheld due to certain charges of irregularities that cause up. This scheme may be revived in order to ensure the provision of approach road and Cremation Shed to all the rural areas of the country. In future, electric crematorium may be introduced at the block level to control the pollution and energy.
32. **Street Lights**: Street Lights in the rural areas produced significant positive externalities rather than negative externalities. It is realised and recommended

that the services may be continued still better through Panchayat Raj bodies without any interruption in favour of poor population.

33. ***Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries:*** The functioning of Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries in most of the Panchayat Villages are delivering the goods and fulfilled the needs of the local population. The availability of Doctors and Medicine has to be ensured in all the Dispensaries for the livestock to get treatment in right time, avoiding their deaths. A Collective Action among the public is required to control the practices of misappropriation, bribe, etc. This type of collective institution has to be strengthened and empowered to take action immediately.
34. ***Primary Health Centres:*** It is encouraging to note that the Primary Health Centres were found to be properly functioning in the villages and there is a rich scope for further development in delivering the health goods. Some of the households were the victims of some problems such as bribery, lack of hygiene and non-availability of medicine, etc. In order to curb some irregularities, the Government has to take necessary action against those officials immediately, besides the Collective Action warranted.
35. ***Function of Schools:*** Employees and Teachers working under the purview of the panchayats are not employees of panchayats and they are employees of Government. Hence, these employees are not accountable to local bodies, as a result of which the schools are not properly managed. However, it is expected that the presidents of the panchayat to look after the functioning of primary schools. It is suggested that the Presidents can report to the concerned authorities to ensure proper functioning of the schools.
36. ***Repair Works:*** The work force is inadequate to attend to the repair and maintenance works of rural amenities. Hence the streetlights are seldom replaced and the motors fixed in overhead tanks were not repaired in time for the

technicians cause inordinate delay. Further the rates fixed for repairing work is very low and hence nobody turns towards these works. For the purchase of materials for the repairing work or replacement, Presidents have no option but to give more money than the prescribed as well as the market rate. It is suggested that a few skilled labourers with the provision of some spares for replacement at the block level, may be appointed to take care of the maintenance and repairs in all the panchayat villages.

37. ***Powers for Managing CPRs:*** Currently the powers for managing CPRs are not under the control of local bodies. These powers can be given to these local bodies for better utilisation of these resources and managing for the same.
38. ***Powers of the Union Engineer*** is unlimited and it is unfortunate that the Union Engineer is invariably corrupt. He is more powerful than the BDO. He is the person responsible for clearing the bills and the proposals. Hence, he makes the Gram Panchayat President act as per his wish. Most of the Union Engineers demand 15 per cent commission for every work. It results in the poor quality of construction. To control corruption, awareness and a collective action are required among the public, and the erring officials should be punished. For this, the existing laws may be amended suitably.
39. ***Panchayat President and Vice President:*** The people elect Panchayat Presidents and Vice-President of Gram Panchayats are elected by ward members. The cheque signing power has also been given to Vice-President. In most of the panchayat villages, the president and vice-president belong to different communities, and there is no socialisation and mutual understanding among these people. It disturbs the entire atmosphere and administration. In some villages, Dalit Presidents are controlled through the caste Hindu Vice-Presidents. The aim of this cheque signing power is to reduce the corruption. But, these presidents and vice-presidents use this opportunity to grab the maximum benefits of the works carried out in their respective panchayats. It has been realised that the works

carried out at the panchayat level should be made transparent in the Gram Sabha to reduce the corruption, if any.

40. ***Gram Sabha Meetings:*** Generally the local people do not come forward voluntarily to attend the Gram Sabha meetings. The response is generally very poor in most of the villages, even when the meetings are held during the National Holidays. Different political parties are actively involved in the election process. When the victor assumes office, those defeated in the election are not actively involved in the developmental activities of the villages and some times they prefer to be mute spectators. This practice cuts at the very root of democracy and the people should be encouraged to voluntarily participate in all the activities of the village. This will go a long way in reducing corruption in managing and developing CPRs. To make full participation in the Gram Sabha meetings, some economic instruments can be used like entitlement to ration facilities. If any one does not attend the meeting, the benefits of PDS may be withdrawn for another three months. For this, the powers have to be assigned to the Gram Sabha. For those not entitled to the benefits of PDS, the other privileges like bank credit / co-operative credit, etc. may be denied for one year or so.
41. ***Panchayat Assistant:*** Currently, a panchayat assistant is being appointed by the President in every panchayat village. They are not regular employees of the institution. Their salary is around Rs.750 per month. Responsibility and duties of the panchayat assistant are very high; hence they are tempted to accept some money from the people as bribe for discharging their duties at the village level. As he is the official working at the grass root level any one has to approach him first, for any information or for clinching any village related task. Given his importance, he should be regularised in service and fixed with salary suitably.