

## A Comprehensive Approach to Block Plan Preparation

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### THE SETTING

Around third week of December 1983 the author was posted as Project Director of DRDA, Nellore, in Andhra Pradesh. The State Government had organised a one-week refresher course in IRDP for all newly posted Project Directors. After this training, the author joined Nellore DRDA on January 2, 1984. Nellore DRDA was born in 1980 from out of the SFDA.

### Author's Experience and Aspirations

The author had the opportunity of preparing a Block Plan for IRDP during his training (1982 March) as BDO in Maredumilli of East Godavari District. This was a hilly and tribal area, serviced by one Bank Branch. Thus, the group responsible for preparing a plan for this block consisted of the author, Branch Manager of the Bank Branch, regular Block Development Officer and Block Extension staff. The area to be covered was about 25 per cent of the villages in one block. The plan formulating group as well as the area of operation was small. As a result the author could give personal attention to a large number of details. In the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, a lot of emphasis had been given to IRDP and NREP. The author was also impressed by the "operational guidelines for block plan preparation" issued by Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development. Government of India had accepted the Principles of Antyodaya (of Rajasthan Government) to be adopted for selection of IRDP beneficiaries. The plan strategy, as understood by the author, had gradually evolved from "growth and trickle down" approach (National Extension

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Programmes of Second and Third Five-Year Plans, Green Revolution) through "growth and social justice" of Fourth Five-Year Plan to growth through social justice of Sixth Five Year Plan. The National Extension Programme had gradually receded to the background and the target group oriented approach of direct intervention had become the primary approach. The objective was to achieve growth by increasing the productive capacity of the poor. The objective of IRDP is to give productive capital assets in the hands of the poor, so that production goes up, people get benefit out of the incremental income and the rural economy is diversified. This was the author's understanding of the objectives of IRDP and its fit in the overall national perspective. The author had the aspiration to prepare a block plan which would translate these policies into an action plan document. As Maredumilli is a tribal and hilly area with low population density, the scope for secondary and tertiary sector schemes was very limited. The author conducted a large number of Gram Sabhas along with a general survey of land resources around each village. Schemes were formulated at the Gram Sabha itself as the variety of schemes was limited, their complexity low and the author was present in the Gram Sabhas.

The author was posted as Sub-Collector, Gudur around November 1982. The IRDP Plan preparation for 1983-84 was started by DRDA around January 1983 and the author participated in the preparation of five block plans in his division, as Chairman of BLCC. This time the Gram Sabhas had to be conducted through teams of officers as the number of villages were quite high. This provided some experience in achieving objectives through others. For example, the need for detailed scheme documents and more number of standard schemes was very much felt while trying to get the Gram Sabhas conducted through a large number of officers. Another important aspect that came out during this period is that most of the officers at field level like Extension Officers, BDO's and Bank Branch Officers have little idea or appreciation of the macro economic perspective and macro level plan priorities or having got such appreciation they gradually become more identified with the local demands.

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Sometimes the local demands are insensitive to general macro economic impulses and macro level plan priorities. On the other hand, the need for flexibility in sectoral plan given by DRDA was also felt necessary. The sectoral outlay for each block was fixed by DRDA and the author could make a few changes by discussion with the Collector and Project Director, DRDA. These were the experiences with which the author joined as Project Director, DRDA and with the aspiration of preparing ideal block plans for IRDP.

#### Key Personalities

A few personalities made significant contributions to the author's experience as Project Director, DRDA and his attempt to prepare ideal block plans. The District Collector was herself committed to proper implementation of all antipoverty programmes and believed in good plan preparation. She had worked as Executive Director of the S.C. Finance Corporation at the state level and had had the opportunity of looking at district level antipoverty programme plans from an overall state perspective. She took over as Collector, Nellore around May 1982. Prior to that, IRDP was being implemented in a scattered way without any planned location specificity. She enforced the cluster approach by allocating villages among different plan years. She ensured greater involvement of Bank Officers in plan preparation, particularly in formulation of new schemes and preparation of scheme documents.

The Lead District Manager was an amicable senior manager and commanded respect of many Bank Officers as well as Government Officers. He was responsible in bringing about a lot of coordination between Government and Bank Officers. The Lead Bank Officer was a young man sincere at his job and looked after a lot of details. He had the full confidence of the LDM and also had very good relations with many officers in different banks. The Joint Director, Animal Husbandry, was responsible for two districts with headquarters at Nellore. He was receptive and believed in keeping up technical standards while implementing any project. One functional Manager of DIC provided the technical support for the ISB sector. The General Manager, DIC and Deputy

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Director, Agriculture and other Sectoral Officers were busy in their own programmes.

The Standing Committee of Bankers was being conducted regularly and was a forum for discussion of all policy matters.

##### Decision Making Process

The District Collector is the single most important person in the decision making process of IRDP Plan Preparation. As Chairman of DRDA she had to approve the broad strategies of plan preparation. As Head of District Administration she had to instruct all field staff to implement a particular strategy and as Chairman of the Standing Committee she influenced the opinion of the bankers and could lead them to a particular decision. The Standing Committee consisted of controlling officers of major participating banks and a representative of Reserve Bank of India. This Committee also had to be convinced about the soundness of a strategy of plan preparation and only their full participation of the bankers could be expected.

##### Adoption of Author's Ideas

On January 2, 1984, the author called on the Collector. Preparation of action plan for 1984-85 was one of the eleven works discussed by the Collector. In terms of Collector's priority it ranked fifth. She also advised the author to involve certain bank officers in the plan preparation process. On January 5, a bankers meeting had been organised and the author utilised this opportunity to discuss his ideas on plan preparation. The strategy advocated by the author consisted of simultaneously:

- (a) Village Plan Preparation; and
- (b) Sectoral Plan Preparation.

Village Plan Preparation would consist of steps like household survey, basic villagewise data collection and conduct of Gram Sabhas. Household survey and villagewise data collection is done by block staff. Gram Sabha is conducted by a Joint Identification Team consisting of the

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Banker, one Extension Officer of the Block and Village Level Workers of the Block and the Revenue Department. The household survey schedules and the basic village level data are made available to the Joint Identification Team and the Gram Sabha. The Joint Identification Team studies the microeconomy of the village and forms an opinion about potential economic activity feasible in the village. With the help of this knowledge the Joint Identification Team interviews the poor families and arrives at the mix of schemes for each family. Based on this the draft Village Plan is prepared.

The Sectoral Plan preparation would consist of identification of economic self-employment opportunities in each sector, preparation of detailed scheme documents for each type of employment opportunity. Basic village level data and data on infrastructural facilities in the District and Blocks are collected. Potentiality for each scheme is assessed by applying the scheme specifications to the data on Village, Block and District level infrastructure. The schemewise and sectoral allocation is made on the basis of available potentiality and the national and regional priority attached to it. The district allocation is further devolved to block level on the basis of potentiality. The DRDA would seek the help of officers from Banks, Government Departments and any other institutions for identification of self-employment opportunities and preparation of scheme documents. Most of the bankers were convinced on the strategy suggested by the author. Detailed programme for 1984-85 action plan preparation was drawn up with the help of the Lead Bank Officer and Assistant Director, Planning and Statistics. The next day detailed instructions were issued to BDOs regarding conduct of special BLCCs. On the same day, a meeting was held with certain selected Bank Officers to prepare new schemes and area development projects.

On January 11, the author met the Collector, appraised her about the programme for action plan preparation, the details of strategy proposed to be followed and also discussed with her about a flow chart for preparation of Land Development Projects.

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The author was quite surprised to find that the Collector did not approve of the strategy. She was against the conduct of Gram Sabha for plan preparation. She argued that Gram Sabha would only result in a shopping list of beneficiary choices. No serious thought would even be given to desirable but difficult schemes like minor irrigation. She believed that ISB sector should be minimised and minor irrigation should form the major part of the programme. Opportunity for minor irrigation schemes cannot be identified in a Gram Sabha. The beneficiary himself may not think of the possibility. The author agreed with most of these apprehensions and wanted to assure the Collector that the quality of work in Gram Sabha could be improved by proper training and follow-up. As there are a large number of programmes having budgetary provision for minor irrigation schemes, funds are never a constraint for these schemes. The author also wanted to assure her that special investigations for land based schemes were being carried out and even if minor irrigation schemes are not properly identified in the Gram Sabha, these could be ultimately fitted in. Subsequently, when she was interviewed for this case study, her view became a little more clear. She felt that activity homogeneity among a group of poor is required for the extension departments to do a good follow-up job. But a Gram Sabha could throw up different schemes for different people and hence it would be difficult to ensure activity homogeneity. It is also difficult to decide the sectorwise model for a village in the Gram Sabha. Unless full coverage of all poor families is made, Gram Sabha could be fruitless. The contention that one can know the felt-needs of the beneficiary in the Gram Sabha is a myth. Only when there is scope for long interaction, will it be possible to know the felt-need of a beneficiary. But in many Gram Sabhas, there won't be any scope for long interaction. The Collector further felt that among the poor there is no point in selecting the poorest, because the poorest would normally have low entrepreneurial ability and their capacity to take up high investment schemes would be low. The author felt that this is only partially true and in any case cannot be a valid

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argument against Gram Sabha. But due to paucity of time it was not possible for the author to clarify these points to the Collector. The difference of opinion continued. The author went ahead to implement his own understanding of the programme, despite objections because: (i) the author did not perceive any radical difference of opinion with the Collector; (ii) programme of action had been chalked out and certain instructions had already been sent; (iii) author wanted to test his ideas in the field, instead of entering into theoretical discussions; and (iv) the Government of India guidelines tended to support the viewpoint of the author.

The author also perceived that a different factor might have been the reason for the Collector not being happy. The Collector had given him a lot of works and plan preparation was one of them. The most important work in the Collector's mind was implementation of the previous year's action plan. Within five days of joining in the post the author talked to the Collector about plan preparation but did not discuss anything about current plan implementation. This might have led her to believe that in the author's priorities plan implementation did not have a role. The fact is that the author was very much paying attention to current plan implementation, but there were no issues on that to be discussed with the Collector and hence did not raise the subject. However, as hindsight, the author feels that this was not good strategy on his part.

In the month of March, when the author was away on leave, the Collector in a review meeting of all BDOs, very emphatically asked everybody to complete the Gram Sabhas at the earliest. She directed all BDOs to follow the instructions of the author and this gave tremendous boost to the pace of implementation of plan preparation work. It was a pleasant surprise for the author. Subsequently, when the then Collector was interviewed in connection with this case study, she gave the following reasons for having done so: (i) certain instructions had already been issued; (ii) field functionaries must have consistency in instructions, irrespective of difference of opinion among senior officers at the District level; and (iii) the Project Director, in any

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case, was not committing a crime. It was only implementation of another viewpoint for a programme which is in a stage of experimentation.

This act of the Collector settled whatever little doubt some officers had in their mind. From then onwards the author had a free hand in preparation of block plans.

### Preliminary Preparations by DRDA

Before setting in motion both the processes of Village Plan preparation and Sectoral Plan preparation certain preliminary exercises had to be done by the DRDA. On January 18, a training class for Progress Assistants and others was conducted for household survey.

Special BLCC meetings were convened between January 23 and January 28 in each block by giving sufficient advance notice to bankers as well as block staff. As the year 1984-85 was the last year of the Sixth Five year plan, all uncovered villages were provisionally selected for coverage during the year 1984-85. The provisional list was circulated among the bankers as well as the Block Staff. The Block Staff were asked to collect relevant villagewise data, for example: population statistics, Green ration cards, land use pattern, available grazing and forest land, live stock census, agricultural pumpset connections by Electricity Department, irrigation sources, land holding data, cropping pattern, nearest bank, communication status, past coverage under beneficiary oriented programmes and other basic village data. The bankers were expected to collect their own data. The final list of villages to be covered in the action plan was drawn up in a special BLCC and also the bankwise allotment of villages was done there. The basic data for each village, referred to above, was of help to the BLCC for arriving at a decision. The detailed mode of conducting Gram Sabha and Village Plan Preparation was explained to all concerned including the Bank Officers and Block Extension Staff. Thus the Special BLCCs served two purposes: (a) finalisation of cluster villages and their financing bank; and (b) explaining the detailed method and every one's role in preparation of Village Plans.

In order to provide clerical assistance for Sectoral Plan



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preparation, a separate sectoral section was opened in the DRDA office. This section consisted of two clerks for agriculture and minor irrigation sectors and one clerk each for ISB sector and Animal Husbandry Sector. These clerks were responsible for keeping files and papers relating to schemes, document preparation, keeping track of correspondence with different people for preparation of sectoral plans, etc. For each economic self-employment opportunity identified, a separate file was opened for preparation of scheme documents, so that each case could be followed up. On January 7, a visit was made to Madras and a good number of books relevant to rural development were purchased, which formed the nucleus of a library that was eventually set up in the DRDA. A librarian was appointed and efforts were made to collect books, periodicals, Industrial and Commercial Directories, literature from Central Laboratories, etc., relevant to rural development.

## VILLAGE PLAN PREPARATION

The methodology for Village Plan Preparation was explained to all field staff in the special Block Level Coordination Committees (BLCCs). The Joint Identification Team was made responsible for preparation of plans for villages allotted to them. The Joint Identification Team consisted of: (a) Branch Manager or Field Officer of the concerned Bank who is the team leader; (b) Block Development Officer or his representative not below the rank of an Extension Officer; (c) Village Development Officer (i.e., Village Level Worker); and (d) Village Assistant from Revenue Department, who has the land records of the village.

In case the village had a known potentiality for schemes of a particular sector, an appropriate officer from the concerned department, would also form a part of the Joint Identification Team. The kingpin of Village Plan Preparation is the Gram Sabha. However, certain preliminary work has to be done by the Village Development Officer and other Block Extension Staff before a Gram Sabha can be convened.

Household survey is the most important preliminary work.

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Apart from other details required in the prescribed proforma, the names of other members of the family and their ages were also collected. The findings of the household survey were posted in a register called the BOP (Beneficiary Oriented Programmes) Applications Register. Its proforma is given on next page.

This register is maintained at the Block level and Villagewise. As soon as the household survey is completed the required information should immediately be posted in this register. Apart from these families, if any additional family is found to be eligible during the conduct of Gram Sabha an household survey form should be administered in the Gram Sabha itself and the case entered in this register. There will be instances of families who are neither enumerated at the time of household survey nor in the Gram Sabha and have put in a representation to either the Minister, District Collector or the Divisional Officer; such cases can also be entered in the BOP Applications Register and the relevant information posted after due enquiry. In no case shall the columns be filled without an independent verification of the information by the Samithi Staff. In practice the number of such cases would be very very low. The concerned clerk in the Samithi Office should take care to find out whether the case of a petitioner already finds place in the applications register. If the case has already been registered there is no need to register it again.

The following dicta were to be scrupulously followed by the Block Office: (a) The basic unit of entry into the BOP applications register is a family. Family includes all those persons who partake cooking either in the same vessel or in the same kitchen. (b) One family shall be entered once and no more.

The second important preliminary work done by the Block Staff is collection of as much basic data on the village as is possible. Collection of data on a village consists of three distinct categories:

1. Economic resource data on the village. This is almost the same as that collected for the special

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BCP APPLICATIONS REGISTER

Sl. No. & Date	Name of the Head of the family, age & Father's Name	Names of other Members	Their Age	Total No. of Members in Family
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Sl. No.	Land operated for all members put together (Acres & Cents)	Total equivalent (Dry Acres & cents)	Annual family Income (Rupees)	Sl. No.	Extent	Classi- fication	Agri. lab- our	Agri. lab- our	Ani- mals	Others	Total
(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)

VILLAGE:

Annual per capita income	Recommendations of Gram Sabha, i.e., Schemes proposed or if re- jected reasons thereof	Decision of B L C C Schemes	Program- mes	If Rejected reasons	Initials of Chairman BLCC
(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)

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BLCC. Any fresh data received after BLCC is also included.

2. Credit Status data like borrower list and defaulter list of persons in the village financed by all banks operating in the village for example, PACs (Cooperative Central Bank), Cooperative Agriculture Development Bank and commercial banks if any. This information is collected by the BDO by addressing the Co-operative banks having jurisdiction over the village and commercial banks known to be operating there.
3. Specific Project data. This consists of details of any scheme or project which might have been already investigated or thought of either by DRDA, Sectoral Department or Block, pertaining to that village. For example, a land development project might have been formulated or may be in an advanced stage of investigation. A dairy project, an artisan complex might have already been conceived of in the village. Copies of Project Report if any, or any other write-up about the project as well as the beneficiary list are brought to the Gram Sabha. For provision of this data, the DRDA plays a major role in collecting details of specific projects being thought of by various sectoral departments as well as DRDA itself and disseminating the same to the relevant BDOs.

The third preliminary work is fixation of a programme for the Gram Sabha. This is done only after the household survey and the data collection work for a village has been completed. The programme for a Gram Sabha is fixed in a regular BLCC. The data is fixed in the presence of the BDO, Revenue Department Representative, Banker and VDO concerned. The programme can be fixed outside the BLCC provided all the three of them meet at a time and are sure of the availability of the Village Assistant. Programme for a Gram Sabha consists of: (a) fixation of a date, time and place for conduct of the Gram Sabha; (b) nomination of an Extension Officer by the BDO to the J.I. Team; and (c) decision regarding participation of Sectoral Department

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Officer if any.

While fixing a date for Gram Sabha, care is taken to ensure at least 7 days gap between the date of drawing up the programme and the date of Gram Sabha.

The last step of preliminary works are to be done during the gap between fixation of programme and date of Gram Sabha and involves: (a) notice given by BDO to villagers regarding conduct of Gram Sabha, by beat of tom tom and published by the Village Assistant of Revenue Department; (b) notice to the Gram panchayat concerned with a request to publicise the fact among the Villagers; (c) the VDO goes to the village at least two or three days prior to the Gram Sabha day and personally informs opinion leaders of all localities in the village, specifically the Harijanwadas and Girijanwadas; (d) during the same period, the banker is expected to collect as much information about the village as possible, to supplement the data collected by the Block Staff; and (e) all members of the J.I. Team are encouraged to night halt in the village, because: (i) credibility of development administration regarding conduct of Gram Sabha is established and hence attendance would be higher; (ii) the interface of the J.I. Team members and villagers is increased and hence the intensity of interaction is increased and interaction means sources of information for the members of the J.I. Team; and (iii) early morning travel strain on the members of the J.I. Team are non-existent as a result of which they can give their best for the Village Plan Preparation.

The J.I. Team are advised to talk to the people in an informal way and try to ascertain information regarding the sociopolitical process in the village. The very process of primary (face to face) interaction in the village is bound to throw up groups. An overall idea about such things helps the J.I. Team: (i) to know what value and importance will be attributed to the statement of a person or group of persons affiliated to a particular group; (ii) to determine whether grouping of certain persons either for a joint scheme (minor irrigation well, etc.) or for group guarantee documentation is potentially cohesive or factious.

The next set of information the J.I. Team is expected to

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collect in the Gram Sabha is on the state of the economy of the village. This includes the infrastructural resources, constraints and potentialities. Questions like how much grazing ground is available, ground water potentiality, how many carts and bullocks are already existing, etc., help achieve this objective. Collection of such information helps the J.I. Team to verify the correctness of the data collected by the Block Office regarding the village, and also gives additional information on the economic affairs of the village.

The next step is the interview of each family head and formulation of family projects. The three most important goals the J.I. Team seeks to achieve while identifying families and preparing family projects are: (i) openness in conducting the process of selection of a family; (ii) priority on the basis of degree of poverty; (iii) development of a mix of schemes for each family.

While interviewing individual heads of families, the J.I. Team has to ascertain the human and material resource potential. The human resources potential includes quantity (number of work force) and quality (skill level of each labourer). Material resources means land owned, ground water potentiality of the particular land, agricultural implements owned, location of a house near a road junction which can be taken advantage of to locate a shop, etc. After ascertaining the human and material resource potential, and keeping in mind the infrastructural constraints as well as the facilities of the village, the best mix of schemes is drawn up. A good mix of the schemes can be achieved by exploiting two kinds of situations. One is the number of work force and the other is time frame or seasonality of operations. If a family has three working persons, one scheme can be operated by all of them or certain schemes can be operated individually and some others jointly. Seasonality of operation or time frame can be taken advantage of to formulate more than one scheme for the same person. In the village, the agricultural operations are seasonal. There are periods of high employment, underemployment and unemployment.

Economic activities for which there will be a market

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demand in these lean periods (for example, Sprayers) or those which can be easily carried on during the lean periods (for example, Matmaking, Readymade Dress making, Notebooks making, etc.), can be administered to the same person. Thus he can do one activity during the peak agricultural season and another during the lean period. When new economic activities are proposed to be introduced to achieve multiplicity of schemes, certain members may have to be trained to acquire the skills for running the additional schemes. Hence, before deciding upon a scheme, the human resources potential has to be kept in mind. It is not necessary that the persons know an activity, but they must have the potentiality to learn.

The whole process of ascertaining the human and material resources potential of the family, comprehending the infrastructural constraints and facilities of the village, considering available schemes or new self-employment ideas, planning training opportunities and arriving at the best mix of schemes for a family is called family project formulation. Interaction with the beneficiary in Gram Sabha for family project formulation is one of the most important aspects of this work.

Apart from family project formulation the J.I. Team also identifies major infrastructural gaps and makes a record of it.

The Village Plan as prepared by the J.I. Team consists of:

- (a) descriptive chapter on infrastructural facilities, potentialities and constraints of the village;
- (b) statement of infrastructural gaps which need to be filled in for success of the Beneficiary Oriented Programme;
- (c) list of eligible families, arranged in order of priority on the basis of the degree of poverty and showing family project proposed for each family; and
- (d) statement of candidates who require training to acquire the skills required to implement the Village Plan.

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The Beneficiary Oriented Programme Applications Register is suitably updated based on the findings in the Gram Sabha.

### SECTORAL PLAN PREPARATION

The basic premise of IRDP and other antipoverty Beneficiary Oriented Programmes is that capital productive assets and training for acquiring the skills to operate such assets, wherever required, ought to be made available to the target family, so that the beneficiary can operate the asset, earn incremental income as well as contribute to the diversification of the rural economy and to growth in national production. Thus, self-employment opportunities

which are viable and feasible in the concerned rural area are vital pillars of the programme. In order to implement the programme on a large scale, involving a large administrative machinery, each self-employment opportunity necessarily has to be converted into a well laid out scheme. Schemes are the building blocks of a sectoral plan as well as a block plan. The author during his Sub-collectorship had faced the constraint of lack of variety of schemes and of good detailed scheme documents for available schemes. The sectoral heads of departments, whenever asked to prepare an IRDP Plan, came out with a document predominantly containing proposals for infrastructure development and schemes had to be shown to justify the infrastructure proposals. On the other hand, the author believed that a good sectoral plan ought to consist of:

- (a) list of self-employment opportunities in that sector which are commercially viable and feasible in at least some rural area and appropriate to at least some potential beneficiaries;
- (b) scheme documents giving self contained details of the activity so as to enable the field functionaries of bank and block to ground it as well as enable the beneficiary to operate it;
- (c) special project reports;
- (d) an assessment of the district potential moderated



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- by factors such as extension or supporting manpower constraints, state and national priorities, funds availability, etc.; and
- (e) a statement of infrastructural gaps and proposals to fill them up so as to enable the implementation of all schemes in the sector.

The author believed that each component had its importance and could not be allowed to be overshadowed by others. Moreover, the schemes are the foundation to start a sectoral plan and not a crutch for infrastructure proposals.

On January 6, discussions were initiated with the Branch Officer, Ground Water Department regarding data on ground water potential of villages. On January 11, a meeting was held with selected Bank Officers regarding preparation of new schemes. On January 14, the Regional Joint Director, Animal Husbandry was addressed for preparation of scheme documents. On January 20, the first discussion with Manager, DIC was held for formulation of schemes in ISB Sector and on January 30, forestry oriented schemes were discussed with the Social Forestry DFO. Thus the process of Sectoral Plan preparation was set in motion. Discussions on individual schemes as well as the overall features of the sectoral plan were held frequently by the subject matter specialists of DRDA with the Officers of Sectoral Departments. Persons from different sources could also contribute to the plan. The final shape of the sectoral plan was worked out between May 26-30. Though it was a continuous process, it can be conceptually divided into the following six distinct phases: (a) identification of self-employment opportunities; (b) preparation of scheme documents; (c) special project formulation; (d) assessment of district potentiality; (e) moderation and infrastructure plan; and (f) blockwise sectoral plan.

### Identification of Self-employment Opportunities

Self-employment opportunities in rural areas can be of two types:

- (a) improvement of existing production system and

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- exploitation of available capital productive assets, for example, land; and
- (b) introduction of new production system and capital productive assets.

The sources from which such ideas could be picked up were as follows: (a) previous action plan document of same DRDA; (b) action plan documents of other DRDAs; (c) sectoral departments of Government; (d) discussions with villagers and potential beneficiaries; (e) feedback from Gram Sabhas; (f) publications containing project profiles, for example, Reserved Small, Cottage and Tiny Industries by Government of India, S.B.P. Project Profiles, SIRI's Directory of Industries, etc.; (g) KVIC publications; (h) appropriate technology for publications of research laboratories, technological institutes, etc.; (i) interaction with officers of such laboratories or institutes; (j) creative officers of Banks, Government Departments, etc.; (k) literature from machinery manufacturers, for example, Ambatur Industrial Estate Manufacturers Association; and (l) producers cartels.

While picking up specific self-employment opportunities for further probe the following general principles were kept in mind:

- (i) the average achievable skill level of the potential beneficiaries to operate the system;
- (ii) opportunities, where the unit of production can be operated by one family were preferred;
- (iii) production systems where a major part of the activity could be done by individual beneficiaries or families by sharing essential infrastructure, on cost basis, comprised the next priority. For example, a minor irrigation well with oil engine shared by 5 to 20 families for cultivation of the land allotted to them independently;
- (iv) production systems which necessitated "cooperation" for a major part of the production process were to be taken up as a last resort. Here again, systems which had activities capable of individual

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- productivity accounting were preferred;
- (v) opportunities involving introduction of electro-motive or automotive power or having a component of electromotive power, were specifically looked for with a view to introduce as many of such schemes as possible.

#### Preparation of Scheme Documents

The moment a new scheme idea was identified, a separate file was opened for preparation of the scheme documents. Table 1 gives the details of the total number of files opened for preparation of scheme documents and the number of scheme documents that were finally prepared at the time of finalisation of the 1984-85 action plan.

The scheme coordinator is also fixed up at this time. Scheme coordinator is an officer who takes the responsibility of pursuing preparation of the scheme documents. The subject matter specialist in DRDA pertaining to that sector was invariably made responsible for this.

The first step after opening a file was to collect copies of available literature on the scheme and file them. Available literature could be in the form of existing scheme documents from the same DRDA, another DRDA, sectoral departments or project profiles from any other source. Description of production process available in any publication, technical and commercial data on machinery involved, etc., was copied and put in the file. In other cases where there was possibility of getting some literature from other institutions, correspondence was initiated with them.

The third step in scheme document preparation was interview of existing operators (entrepreneurs) and study of existing production units. For example, visit to workshops of carpenters at various levels (improvement of existing production systems) or to an exercise notebook making unit (introduction of new product lines). The most important things normally learnt from such visits were: (i) information on various aspects of raw material, like varieties required, procurement sources, minimum economic ordering units, minimum packing unit, etc.; (ii) infor-

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Table 1 TURNOVER OF SCHEME DOCUMENTS FROM SCHEME IDEAS DURING IRDP 1984-85 PLAN PREPARATION IN NELLORE DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Sector	No. of Self employment opportunities identified	No. of Scheme documents prepared at the time of action plan finalisation	Balance Lost sight of	Data collection was not completed	Sent to Standing Committee but approval not received	Sub-total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5a)	(5b)	(5c)	(5d)
1.	Agriculture	20	14	5	-	1	6
2.	Animal Husbandry	10	8	-	2	-	2
3.	Industries	57	21	28	8	-	36
4.	Services	23	20	2	1	-	3
5.	Business	12	7	2	2	1	5
		122	70	37	13	2	52

mation on machinery suppliers; (iii) kind of skill required to operate the activity and normal time taken to acquire the same; (iv) high risk areas; (v) marketing channels; and (vi) possible areas amenable to electromotive, automotive or mechanical power.

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Wherever necessary, a sample survey to assess the market potential for the proposed activity as well as possible beneficiary response was done. This was done with the help of economic investigators from DRDA engaged on daily wage basis. Data on cost of machinery, equipments and raw material were collected by obtaining quotations from suppliers or by going round the shops of various suppliers.

The standard assumptions of infrastructure for each scheme were worked out based on the knowledge gained by the above exercise. This essentially means the minimum infrastructural facilities that are assumed to be existing for the scheme to be operative. Normally these things are not reduced to writing and mostly are taken for granted. However, in order to facilitate mass processing of schemes, it was felt necessary to list out each and every infrastructural facility required for operation of the scheme. Table 2 gives an idea of this.

On similar lines the standard assumptions of individual criteria were also worked out for each scheme. This meant the minimum assessable qualification, skill level and other attributes required on the part of a person to operate that scheme. This is also an effective mechanism of translating certain policies into action. For example, persons having some land have the opportunity of taking up both land based activity and a non-land based activity. But an agricultural labourer can't have access to a land based activity. Hence it is in the-fitness of things that certain schemes are either reserved for agricultural labourers or at least the small farmers are given less priority. Similarly, some schemes can be reserved for economically weaker sections, i.e., SCs and STs particularly where evaluation studies show better handling of a scheme by them.

Viability study of a proposed scheme involves arriving at the investments required for the scheme, gross return that can be reasonably expected upon operating the scheme and the net profit. Viability study was invariably done with the help of an officer drawn from a Bank. This is a detailed exercise in which all input costs and all output benefits are analysed over a time frame. The financing pattern is proposed after the viability study gives a positive result.

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Table 2 STANDARD ASSUMPTIONS OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTED SCHEMES

Scheme	Infrastructure	Individual Criteria
Nursery Raising	(a) This scheme can be taken up in places which are by the side of a road, not below the classification of a major district road or a Z.P. Road.	(a) Only SCs and STs are eligible.
	(b) Having irrigation facilities by way of bore wells or open wells.	(b) Only Marginal Farmers or Agricultural Labourers are eligible.
	(c) This scheme should not be taken up in areas where there is good demand for labour round the year, i.e., in delta areas.	(c) The beneficiaries should be between 18 to 50 years of age.
Cross Bred Heifer Calf	(a) Nearest milk chilling centre must be within a distance of 30 kms.	(d) Minimum extent of land required is Ac 0.30
	(b) Nearest Veterinary Institution having	(a) The individual should have personal knowledge in rearing livestock.
		(b) There must be a minimum of

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(1)	(2)	(3)
	the services of a Veterinary Asst. Surgeon must be within a distance of 3 kms.	36 square feet free space near the house of the beneficiary to house animals.
	(c) 80 per cent of fodder requirement is met by intensive fodder cultivation. Twenty per cent of fodder requirement is met by open grazing.	(c) The beneficiary must have and must be willing to put an extent of Ac.0.30 land under intensive fodder cultivation.
	(d) Minimum number of 10 units must be taken up in one cluster.	(d) The land for fodder must have such irrigation facility as to enable one wetting in 15 days during summer months. If such facility does not exist then the project must include a well which can benefit all beneficiaries.
		(e) Minimum 2 working members

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(1)	(2)	(3)
		must be available.
Air filling and Tube Vulcanising	<p>(a) The village must have a population of more than 1600.</p> <p>(b) It should be centrally located having hinterland of few villages where tyre bullock carts, tractors and motorcycles exist.</p> <p>(c) It must have a bus stop preferably a bus terminus.</p> <p>(d) It must have been electrified.</p>	<p>(a) Candidate must be between 1 to 35 years age.</p> <p>(b) He should be able to read and write.</p> <p>(c) He must be willing to undergo training in some Government Polytechnic or ITI.</p> <p>(d) This scheme available for Agriculture Labourers and Marginal Farmers only.</p>
Tyre Cart and Bullocks	<p>(a) The village should have a pucca road.</p> <p>(b) The units should be taken up in areas</p>	<p>(a) Only Agricultural Labourers are eligible for this activity.</p> <p>(b) Only SC/ST beneficiaries</p>



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(1)	(2)	(3)
	where the population is more than 8000.	are eligible.
	(c) In areas where additional potentiality under transport sector is required the scheme can be taken up.	
Aerated Water Shop	(a) The population of the village should be more than 1600.	(a) Candidate must be between 18 to 35 years of age.
	(b) It must have a bus stop.	
Hand Bore Set	(a) The scheme has to be taken up in villages located in Pennar Delta Swarnamukhi Valley fill and delta and other minor deltaic areas of the district.	(a) The beneficiary should have two working members in his family.
		(b) He should have worked as an Assistant with an existing unit of Hand Bore Set.

Calendar of operations were prepared for schemes having seasonal specificity, for example, Social Forestry, Animal Husbandry schemes, Agriculture sector schemes, etc. The

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calendar of operations consists of: (i) time frame of each action, and (ii) agency or officer responsible for the action. Hence, while drawing up the calendar of operations, the controlling officers of various agencies involved were consulted. Table 3 shows how a calendar of operations looks like for a selected scheme.

Table 3 SOCIAL FORESTRY EUCALYPTUS CALENDAR OF OPERATIONS

Name of Operation	Season/Period	Agency/Institution/Officers Responsible
Jungle clearance	June to August	BDO and VDO; Funds: Bank
Deep Ploughing	July to September	BDO and VDO; Funds: Bank
Anti-termite measures	July to September	Pesticides Contractor/Agrl. Officer; Funds: Bank
Planting	September	BDO and VDO; Funds: Bank
Match and Ward	Throughout the year	Periodical checks by VDO and Field Officer of Bank; Release of consumption component should be tied to survival of adequate number of plants.
Soil working and weeding to retain moisture	April to June	Field Officer of Bank/Ranger Officer of Forest Department.

The scheme coordinator prepares a draft scheme document in which the results of the above exercises are incorporated. The format of the scheme document varies

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from one sector to another and also among the schemes of the same sector. For example, a scheme document in ISB sector would consist of: (i) introduction regarding the production activity; (ii) standard assumptions of infrastructure; (iii) standard assumptions of individual criteria; (iv) training; (v) machinery and equipment (capital investment); (vi) raw materials (working capital); (vii) total investment; (viii) financing pattern; (ix) receipts; (x) economics; (xi) repayment.

In case of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry sectors calendar of operations is a standard addition at the end. Wherever required, necessary details on production process or technical instructions, etc., are added.

The draft scheme is then subjected to in house discussions by circulating the same to Project Director, District Collector and Sectoral Heads of Department. Further modifications are made, wherever required, in response to critical appreciation of the scheme document.

The scheme document is then referred to the Standing Committee for consideration by bankers. Normally the Standing Committee has subgroups for different sectors and each scheme is taken up for detailed discussions in the subgroup. Any queries, doubts, etc., raised by the subgroup are clarified by DRDA either by written reply to the Lead District Manager or by personally being present in the subgroup meeting. The DRDA representative attends the subgroup meeting only when called for otherwise this subgroup is an inner circle of the bankers.

Based on the scrutiny by the subgroup, the Standing Committee either (i) approves the scheme as such; (ii) modifies and approves it or (iii) rejects it.

Only approved schemes are taken up to constitute the Sectoral Plan.

### Special Project Formulation

In construction parlance, if scheme documents were to be considered as the building blocks or bricks, special projects could be considered as the pre-fabricated units.

Special projects constitute a project report specifically prepared for a group of beneficiaries linked to

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each other through a common thread of either area specificity or activity homogeneity. For example, there are large blocks of assigned lands in cluster villages in Nellore district. In order to integrate all the technical inputs of land development and agriculture, it was planned to formulate and execute land development projects. These land development projects were to integrate the principles of soil conservation, soil science, irrigation water management, cropping pattern and family project formulation. This work was taken up as a continuous process and at the time of finalisation of IRDP Action Plan, seven land development projects had been completed. They were incorporated into the Agricultural Sector Plan. This involved about 813 beneficiaries and had covered about 1133 acres of land with a total outlay of Rs.20.63 lakh.

Special project formulation contributed a major part of the Agricultural Sector Plan. This strategy was also adopted in a small way in other sectors wherever necessary. For example, a Special Village Development Project was prepared for one Fisherman Village under the Fisheries sector.

### **Assessment of District Potentiality**

Assessment of District Potentiality means assessment of the capacity of all cluster villages to sustain a scheme or schemes in a sector. The methods of assessment vary from one scheme to another and from sector to sector. The commonest method (we may call it the infrastructure constraint method) of assessment was to apply the standard assumptions of infrastructure to the villagewise data and find out the villages capable of sustaining that scheme. Threshold population as required in the standard assumptions of infrastructure are further applied to the population data of each village and the total sustainable units arrived at. Then a discount is made for existing units and also non-sponsored efforts for that activity. The result thus obtained are further adjusted based on predictions of beneficiary availability by comparing the standard assumptions of individual criteria with the population data of the villages. For example, in case of

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airfilling and tube vulcanising scheme, the villages having population of 1600 or more were listed out. Out of this list, villages which were not electrified and which did not have a bus stop were ticked off. An impressionistic study was made and the total number of units potentially viable was arrived at.

The physical resource constraint method was used for assessing the limitations for certain schemes. For example, the reproduction rate for sheep applied to the existing ewe population gave an idea about the maximum number of additional ewes available per year. The total number of sheep units to be taken up in the district under all programmes were to be restricted to cover this number. The ground water potentiality of the cluster villages reduced by the percentage contribution of SF and MF land to the total available area of the village would give an idea about the maximum number of wells feasible in the village.

### **Moderation and Infrastructure Plan**

The number of units arrived at by district potentiality assessment as well as the details of special projects were posted on working sheets for sectoral plan preparation. The assessment was further modified on account of various factors. For example, where a veterinary centre was likely to be overloaded with a large number of units the allocation for the animal husbandry scheme had to be reduced to avoid substandard support services. Moderation had also to be done to conform to state and national priorities. For example, the number of units allocated to an Animal Husbandry scheme like sheep or milch cattle had to be scaled down from the potential level to make funds available for more desirable schemes like Tyre Cart, Airfilling and Tube Vulcanising, etc. This is because the former involved transfer of capital assets and the latter meant introduction of capital productive assets. Also the former was an existing production activity and the latter involved diversification of the rural economy. Moderation to achieve intrasectoral prioritisation was also done. For example, milch cattle in preference to sheep units, etc. Discussions were also carried out with sectoral heads of

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departments regarding the infrastructure development required to sustain the plan.

Based on these exercises the district level sectoral plan was prepared. Blockwise sectoral plans were prepared by devoluting the district level sectoral plan to the block level. Interblock allocations were decided on the same principles by which the district potentiality was assessed and the factors on which moderation was done.

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This involves: (a) preparation of bottom up plan based on village plans; (b) obtaining top down plan based on the sectoral plan prepared at the district level; (c) matching of the two in the presence of members of all Joint Identification Teams in that block supervised by a team of officers from DRDA. The information regarding each family recommended for coverage by Gram Sabha was posted in Proforma I and Proforma II. Proforma I was as follows:

Proforma I

Block Level Identifica- tion No.	Name of the Head of the Family, Age & Father's Name	Names of the other members of the Family	Land owned S.No.	Extent (4b)													
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4a)	(4b)													
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Annual Income Land A.L.</th> <th>Others</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Per Capita Income</th> <th>Schemes pro- posed (All Schemes pro- posed for any member to be shown)</th> <th>Remarks (here mention if family was covered in any Scheme before)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>(5a)</th> <th>(5b)</th> <th>(5c)</th> <th>(5d)</th> <th>(6)</th> <th>(7)</th> <th>(8)</th> </tr> </thead> </table>					Annual Income Land A.L.	Others	Total	Per Capita Income	Schemes pro- posed (All Schemes pro- posed for any member to be shown)	Remarks (here mention if family was covered in any Scheme before)	(5a)	(5b)	(5c)	(5d)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Annual Income Land A.L.	Others	Total	Per Capita Income	Schemes pro- posed (All Schemes pro- posed for any member to be shown)	Remarks (here mention if family was covered in any Scheme before)												
(5a)	(5b)	(5c)	(5d)	(6)	(7)	(8)											

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The unit of entry in Proforma I is a family. This proforma is written villagewise, i.e., all families proposed to be covered are entered in Seriatum irrespective of the scheme or the mix of schemes proposed for the family. All schemes proposed for a family are shown at one place and there would be only one entry for a family. This was the case even if some of the mix of schemes were to be operated by second or third member of the family. This is important because in all kinds of beneficiary oriented programmes the basic task is economic upliftment of a family and not an individual.

In case of Proforma II the unit of entry is a scheme unit. This was written schemewise for the block as a whole. That means there were as many Proforma II as the number of schemes. While writing the name of the beneficiary, the name of the person who is going to actually operate the unit ought to be written. For example, it had been proposed to administer three schemes to one family as follows:

Head of the Family	:	FP and EM + Plough Bullocks
Wife	:	Agarbathi Manufacture

While writing Proforma II the above information had to be written at three places, i.e., once under FP & EM Scheme, for the second time under Plough Bullocks Scheme (in both these cases name of the head of the family was mentioned as the beneficiary) and the third entry was under Agarbathi Manufacture with the wife's name being entered as the beneficiary. However, in all three places, the Block Level Identification number of the family were to be the same.

The following data were compiled from out of the consolidated Proformas I and II of all cluster villages in a block:

- (a) total number of families proposed to be covered;
- (b) total number of families proposed to be covered categorywise, i.e., SF, MF, AL and castewise;
- (c) sectoral distribution of schemes, i.e., scheme-wise total number of units;
- (d) average per family unit cost; and

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Proforma II

This proforma is to be written scheme wise covering all villages in one statement.

B.L.I. No.	Scheme No.	Name of the Candidate	Caste	Total land owned	Total Income
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

Per Capita Income	Unit Cost	Margin Money	Subsidy/ of SCA	Commercial Bank Assistance
(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)

Name of the financing Institution	Resolution of the BLCC, i.e., whether the case is recommended or rejected
(12)	(13)

(e) average number of units per family.

Apart from the above, proposed programme wise draft Proforma I and II were also prepared by the BDO and Samiti Officials on the basis of their knowledge of the peculiarity of various programmes. For example, all schemes needing large investments by way of infrastructure were to be included in non IRDP plan. All schemes having very low unit costs of say Rs.1,000 to Rs.2,000 were to be included under



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DRI direct finance plan. As far as possible coverage of the same family under IRDP for one scheme and under SC Action Plan for another was avoided.

The infrastructural requirements indicated in the village plans were compiled in Proforma III.

Proforma III

Name of the Village	Type of Infrastructural facilities	Estimated Cost	Opinion of Joint Identification Team. In what way this will improve the implementation of beneficiary oriented programmes?	Resolution of BLCC
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Thus all the village plans were processed into the following four basic documents to provide an interface for matching with the block sectoral plan prepared at the district level:

- (a) Proforma I containing familywise statement of schemes proposed for each family;
- (b) Proforma II consisting of the same village plans presented in a schemewise and sectoral perspective;
- (c) Proforma III containing the details of infrastructure needs increase projected in the village plans;
- (d) abstract data compiled out of Proformas I and II.

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The block sectoral plan prepared at the district level consisted of a sectorwise, schemewise statement, showing the number of units allotted to the particular block for each scheme. Between June 4 to 13, special BLCCs were conducted to match village plans and block sectoral plans prepared at the district level, to arrive at the final block plan for the beneficiary oriented programme.

The forum for matching of village plans and sectoral plan was a special BLCC attended by participating bankers, all block extension staff as well as a team of officers deputed by DRDA. Representatives from the lead bank and controlling officers of major participating banks were present in the BLCC. The meetings were presided over by general administrators like Sub-Collector, Jt. Collector and PD, DRDA.

Comparison of abstract data compiled out of village plans and the sectoral plan from the district level gives an idea of the gap between the two. This exercise also gives an overall understanding of the magnitude of the problem to be tackled by the matching exercise. The basis of the sectoral plan prepared at the district level and its blockwise devolution was explained to the Bank Officers as well as to the block extension staff. Then a scheme by scheme matching was done. Proforma II formed the basic working document for this. The total number of units of a scheme proposed to be taken up was compared with the allocation for that scheme in the sectoral plan. Discussion was then initiated for finalisation of the number of units for that scheme. Whenever more number of beneficiaries had been proposed in the village plans, the numbers were brought down by some intelligible and rational criteria.

Table 4 shows a sample of the results of the matching exercise for a few selected schemes in one block.

The excess beneficiaries from a scheme were either shifted to a different scheme or were rejected. Usually the shifting was for new capital intensive schemes or at least more desirable schemes. Table 5 shows a sample of the results of the shifting exercise for a few selected schemes in one block.

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Table 4 SAMPLE RESULTS OF MATCHING EXERCISE FOR ATMAKUR BLOCK

Scheme	No. as per District Sectoral Plan	No. as per Village Plan	No. in Block Plan
Sericulture	50	7	30
Crossbred calves	20	10	10
Tailoring	18	26	21
Hairdressing Saloon	--	3	3
Goat	--	6	6

Table 5 SAMPLE RESULTS OF SHIFTING EXERCISE IN KAVALI BLOCK

Village Recommendations	Plan	No. retained for the same Scheme in IRDP Block Plan after matching exercise	No. changed to other Scheme	Scheme to which Changed
Cattle	53	26	17	Knitted Wear - All
Sheep	71	57	14	Knitted Wear - 4 Milch Cattle - 4 Details not available - 6
Petty Trade	29	--	3	Knitted Wear - All
Cart & Bullocks	59	12	21	Graded Murrah Buffaloes - 6 Tyre Cart & Bullocks - 10 Cot frames making - 5

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Maximum efforts were made to accommodate all eligible beneficiaries in some suitable scheme. Rejection was done only on valid grounds. Some of the grounds considered valid were:

- (a) above poverty line;
- (b) land ownership and other eligibility criteria;
- (c) standard assumptions of infrastructure or individual criteria not satisfied and beneficiary (as reported by J.I. Team) unwilling to accept any other suitable scheme;
- (d) poverty of ideas, i.e., it was known that the scheme proposed in the Village Plan was not viable and neither the Block, DRDA or Bank could suggest a viable and feasible alternative; and
- (e) budgetary constraints (This was used extremely sparingly and when used, priority for degree of poverty, etc., was kept in mind).

Wherever the number of units proposed in the Village Plan was low in case of a desirable scheme, specific efforts were made to shift beneficiaries from other less desirable schemes as well as to identify a few more suitable persons.

After the first round of the matching, shifting and pruning exercise, Proforma I was updated and the resultant abstracts were recompiled. The results were examined with respect to the Sectoral Plan. Minor changes, as called for, were made.

The infrastructure proposals contained in Proforma III were also discussed and essential items were recommended.

Thus the draft Block Plan prepared in the special BLCC consisted of: (a) Proforma I, i.e., a statement of families to be covered; (b) Proforma II, i.e., schemewise statement for families proposed to be covered; (c) Infrastructure proposals.

After completion of special BLCCs in all blocks, the resultant data was again posted in working sheets at the District Level. The abstract data compiled was examined with respect to the District abstract of sectoral plan as well as funds availability. At this stage, only minor

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changes or rectification of errors in working sheets were made. Some amount of block shifting of beneficiaries and schemes from one programme to another was done. The first Block Plans were put up to the Standing Committee and state level committee for sanction.

The final plan consisted of:

- (a) Volume I: Resource Inventory, IRDP Infrastructure, TRYSEM, District Level Sectoral Plan, Abstract of Banking and Block Plans for IRDP, PASMA and LPP.
- (b) Volume II: Scheme documents under all Sectors, approved by Standing Committee.
- (c) Volume III: 15 Block Plans (one for each Block) consisting of Village Plans and Banking Plan for all programmes, i.e., IRDP, PASMA, LPP and DRI.

#### RESULTS AND IMPACT OF PLANNING EXERCISE

Measuring the contribution of a planning exercise to the development process is an extremely difficult task. The concept of assessing contribution of a planning exercise means the additional level and spread of development generated by the plan, over and above, what would have taken place in the normal process of the economic and social system. What is attempted here is an impressionistic assessment of the contribution of the planning methodology adopted by the author compared with the earlier plans.

One advantage that flowed out of this methodology is that the component of the plan needing extension support was quantifiable and realistic. Quite a good number of new schemes were introduced (Knitted Wear, Tyre Cart, Lime Mortar, etc.) and allocation under desirable old schemes were increased. All this involved shifting of beneficiaries from traditional schemes. As all this shifting was done in the presence of block extension staff and J.I. team members who had interviewed the beneficiaries in the respective villages, the beneficiary response to the change could be predicted to some extent. All those cases in which schemes other than what were proposed in the Village Plan were allotted in the Block Plan would need extension

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support. Such cases could be easily quantified on account of this planning methodology. In fact, targets were fixed for various extension staff on this principle.

Another advantage was the simultaneous preparation of IRDP Plan and credit plan. Actually the credit plan comes out of this planning methodology automatically, as the Block Plan is presented in three different forms, i.e., Villagewise, Schemewise and Branchwise. Such attempt was also made in 1983-84.

Table 6 shows the per family subsidy planned for and utilised over various action plans of Nellore DRDA. The important point to be remembered here is that the subsidy amount has been adjusted to 1979-80 price level based on the consumer price index recorded in Nellore District. This has been done to ensure comparability of the figures.

Table 6 PER FAMILY SUBSIDY PLANNED FOR AND UTILISED OVER VARIOUS PLANS OF NELLORE, DRDA

Plan Years	As per Plan Documents			As per Sanctions		
	Per Family Subsidy	Adjusted Per Family Subsidy	Percentage of adjusted Family Subsidy to 1st Annual Plan	Per Family Subsidy	Adjusted Family Subsidy	Percentage of adjusted Family Subsidy to 1st Annual Plan level
1980-81	550	467	100	1,080	918	100
1981-82	760	562	120	1,145	847	92
1982-83	1,091	687	147	935	589	64
1983-84	911	647	138	1,050	745	81
1984-85	1,367	875	187	1,357	865	94

It will be seen from this that the per family subsidy

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planned for in 1984-85 was the highest in the last five years. Per family subsidy utilisation was also the highest excepting that in 1980-81. There was also a substantial rise in the planned per family subsidy level from the previous high, taking the year 1980-81 as the base.

One of the major reasons why the District Collector did not favour Gram Sabhas was that desirable schemes like minor irrigation could not be identified in Gram Sabha. An attempt has been made to verify the validity of this contention. The analysis given here is based on data collected for 9 blocks out of 15 in the district. Data for other blocks could not be collected due to paucity of time.

Table 7 ROLE OF GRAM SABHA IN IDENTIFICATION OF MINOR IRRIGATION POTENTIAL

Name of Block	Total No. of Gram Sabhas Conducted	Total No. of Villages in which MI Scheme taken up	No. of Gram Sabhas in which MI Scheme proposed	Percentage to Total MI Villages	Additional No. of Villages in which MI Scheme was taken up	Percentage to Total MI Villages
Podalkur	33	25	25	100	-	-
Kavali	24	8	8	100	-	-
Butchi	25	14	11	79	3	21
Vinjamur	44	38	37	97	1	3
Kovur	10	9	8	89	1	11
Atmakur	25	21	16	76	5	24
Venkata-chalam	33	16	11	69	5	31
Kota	37	25	23	92	2	8
Indukur-peta	26	18	8	44	10	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>

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It is evident from Table 7 that out of all Villages in which MI Schemes were ultimately taken up, in about 84 per cent of them the potentiality for MI Scheme was reflected in Gram Sabha. Table 8 shows the amount of contribution made by Gram Sabhas in identification of MI Schemes. The data here includes both IRDP and PASMA Plans because the identification, potentiality analysis, etc., was done for MI Schemes as such and allocation between IRDP and PASMA was done only on the basis of availability of funds. It is evident from this table that only 41 per cent of the total number of MI units were contributed by Gram Sabhas. The contribution of Gram Sabha to the beneficiaries in MI Schemes was only 19 per cent.

Table 8 CONTRIBUTION OF GRAM SABHA IN IDENTIFICATION OF MINOR IRRIGATION SCHEMES FOR IRDP AND PASMA 1984-85 IN NELLORE DRDA

Name of Block	Units			Beneficiaries		
	Total Units in Plan	No. Contributed by Gram Sabha	Percentage Contributed by Gram Sabha	Total No. Beneficiaries in Plan	No. Contributed by Gram Sabha	Percentage Contributed by Gram Sabha
Kavali	21	2	10	21	2	10
Podalkur	108	67	62	500	68	14
Butchi	180	68	38	616	74	12
Vinjamur	185	97	52	543	140	26
Kovur	147	52	35	149	54	36
Atmakur	121	36	30	596	141	24
Indukur	247	80	32	263	96	36
peta Venkata-chalam	54	3	6	656	12	2
Kota	124	87	70	323	107	33
	1,187	492	41	3,667	694	19



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The following general conclusions can be drawn from this data:

- (a) Gram Sabhas' contribution in identification of MI Schemes is low;
- (b) Gram Sabhas' contribution to identification of group MI Schemes is particularly low;
- (c) Gram Sabhas' have fair amount of contribution in identification of single beneficiary MI Schemes;
- (d) Gram Sabhas' contribution in identifying the general potentiality of a village for MI Schemes is good and acceptable (84%); and
- (e) Special project formulation as well as a special survey of ground water potentiality of all SF and MF lands in each village are the only effective means of ensuring substantial component of MI Schemes in a Block Plan.

This substantiates the view of the Collector regarding the role of the Gram Sabha for MI Schemes. It also corroborates the author's view that both village plan preparation and sectoral plan preparation are essential for a good Block Plan. For the Sectoral Plan preparation the contribution of special project formulation is as important as the scheme document preparation. The misunderstanding with the Collector was there because unfortunately, the author's ideas about Block Plan preparation got identified with conduct of Gram Sabha.

In order to assess the perception of various field and district functionaries, certain persons at each level were interviewed based on a stratified sample. Five of the seven Village Development Officers interviewed for this purpose were of the opinion that: (a) plan done with the help of Gram Sabha is easier to implement; (b) people are more satisfied with the Gram Sabha system. However, all of them thought that Block Plan preparation involved conduct of Gram Sabha. Only one person perceived that quality of schemes had been improved. Only two of them had some understanding of the method of Village Plan preparation. One person said he did not have any idea about plan preparation at all. The VDOs

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were more aware about procedural things like writing up BOP Applications Register, Household Survey documentation etc. This is quite understandable.

All three BDOs who were interviewed agreed that Gram Sabhas were useful. But two out of the three opined that Gram Sabha should be conducted after plan preparation and not before. That means Gram Sabha was perceived as a tool of identification of beneficiaries only and not plan preparation. One BDO reported that by means of Gram Sabha all below poverty line families could not be covered due to non-availability of appropriate schemes. All reported that the author's method of plan preparation enabled maximum participation of all concerned in the implementation of the programme. Two out of the three BDOs reported that the preparation of a large number of schemes did contribute to plan preparation.

Only two of the four selected Bank Managers could be interviewed. One person recognised the contribution of schemes and sectoral plan in block plan preparation. The other banker felt that Gram Sabhas should only be tools of planning. When Gram Sabha is used as a tool of planning certain families for whom the schemes are changed or dropped feel alienated. Block Plan should be prepared by devolution of sectoral plan coupled with a discussion with Block Officials and Bankers. Definite criteria for selection of villages for each plan year must be developed.

Three officers were interviewed at the District Level, i.e., the Credit Planning Officer, Lead Bank Officer and Lead District Manager.

One of the officers reported that the concept of preparation of a Block Plan for all Beneficiary Oriented Programmes in an integrated manner is better. Apart from giving a better plan, this also positively influences the perception of all field functionaries to be beneficiary oriented rather than programme oriented. All the three officers recognised the role of Gram Sabha and scheme document preparation towards Block Plan preparation. However, Gram Sabha occupied the predominant place in everybody's mind. All of them felt that preparation of scheme documents did contribute to diversification of

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activities taken up. One officer reported that Gram Sabhas are not conducted uniformly. Sincere and studious officers do a good job of it, otherwise Gram Sabha just becomes a forum to identify, sponsor and sanction some loan to the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries had a tendency to prefer conventional schemes only.

### SUMMARY

The commonly accepted strategy by DRDAs is to distribute the physical, financial and sectoral parameters given to it by the State Government down to the Blocks and ask the Block Development Officer to prepare a plan. The Block Development Officer sits with Village Level Workers and Extension Staff and in consultation with them distributes the parameters further down to the village level. This village level data is recompiled into the Block Plan of IRDP. Attempts to improve this method are also frequently made. Wherever the State Government/Central Government are silent about certain parameters, the DRDA tries to evolve its own parameters either in consultation with Sectoral Heads of Departments or otherwise. The perceived priorities, commitments of District Collector or Project Director does have an impact on the plan. Such impact is normally by way of higher importance to a particular sector and the weaker sections, i.e., SCs and STs or by inclusion of certain specific and very viable projects for weaker sections in the plan. Some times a Roving Survey of the resource potential of each village likely to be covered in the plan is made.

The common criticism against a plan prepared mostly at the District level or at best at Block Office level is that it does not take into account the actual needs and resource position of each village. On the other hand, a plan prepared on the basis of household survey or a passively conducted Gram Sabha, is merely the arithmetic sum or the "Shopping List" of each beneficiary and lacks any direction. That means while the top heavy planning method does not take into account felt needs of beneficiaries and the reality in the village, the bottom up plan does not take advantage of the wisdom which can only occur at a macro level. The plan

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based on household survey may not give emphasis to very valuable schemes like Minor Irrigation and Industry Sector Schemes and on the other hand, may give more preference to less desirable schemes.

The author during his training as Block Development Officer had addressed himself to this problem. As a Block Development Officer he conducted a large number of Gram Sabhas and tried to convince the villagers about desirable schemes. The author pursued the same problem during his term as a Sub-Collector. At this stage, the Gram Sabhas had to be conducted through other officers. In January 1984 the author was posted as Project Director, DRDA where he worked out a comprehensive strategy for Block Plan preparation and was able to implement it. The strategy is nothing new but a development of the broad guidelines given by the Government of India and Planning Commission. The strategy consisted of simultaneously: (a) Village Plan preparation; and (b) Sectoral Plan preparation.

Village Plan preparation consisted of Household Survey, Villagewise data collection, conduct of Gram Sabha and related exercises. The Village Plan prepared by this method comprised of: (a) descriptive chapter on infrastructural facilities, potentialities and constraints of the Village; (b) statement of infrastructural gaps which need to be filled for success of beneficiary oriented programmes; (c) list of eligible families arranged in priority on the basis of degree of poverty and showing family project proposed for each family; and (d) statement of candidates who require training to acquire the skills required to implement the Village Plan.

The Sectoral Plans were prepared at the District level with the help of heads of concerned departments and other subject matter specialists drawn from DRDA and Banks. Individual scheme documents for various activities under each sector were first prepared. While preparing the scheme documents the standard assumptions of infrastructure and individual criteria for each scheme were arrived at. General statistical data on each village being covered under the plan was collected from secondary sources. Based on this data and the standard assumptions of infrastructure and

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individual criteria, the potentialities of the cluster of villages to sustain each scheme was arrived at. Based on this the District Potentiality and Block Potentiality for each scheme and sector was determined. This was further modified by constraints of administrative machinery, budgetary restrictions, etc. Thus the tentative District and Block Sectoral Plans were prepared. The Block Plan based on the District Sectoral Plan and that based on the Village Plans were matched in a special Block Level Consultative Committee meeting and the final Block Plan was prepared.

It is difficult to measure the impact of such a planning exercise. However, available data shows that a higher level of per family subsidy input was achieved by this method. The contention that schemes like minor irrigation are not adequately identified in Gram Sabhas was found to be correct. The methodology advocated by the author provides for special project formulation as a part of the sectoral plan preparation. Difficult schemes needing high level of investigation support can be formulated with the help of special project formulation. Opinions of various field functionaries, officers at the Village, Block and District level, show that the Gram Sabhas were generally well accepted. Contribution of the Sectoral Plan preparation process to the ultimate Block Plan was not adequately perceived by the Village, Block and Branch level officers. At the District level, however, there was some awareness about the value of Sectoral Plan preparation for the creation of more effective Block Plans.