

*Proceedings of
Conference of Coordinating
Agencies with Networks
in the Voluntary Sectors in
Rural Development*



PEOPLE'S ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT (INDIA)

Department of Rural Development
Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development
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Conference of Coordinating Agencies with Networks in the Voluntary Sector in Rural Development

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Conference of Coordinating Agencies with
Networks in the Voluntary Sector in Rural
Development (19-20th April, 1985)

Inaugural Session

19-4-1985

9-15 A.M.

T.C.A. Srinivasaramanujan : I have great pleasure in welcoming Secretary, Rural Development and all delegates to this Conference. We are organising this conference with very specific and precise objectives. PADI has been examining projects from voluntary organisations according to certain set procedures. These procedures sometimes result in delays which make many voluntary organisations shy away from PADI. These procedures and systems may have to be changed. The first objective of the conference is to consult voluntary organisations on the exact lines on which PADI's procedures and systems for scrutinising, sanctioning and servicing projects ought to be changed. The second objective of the conference is to forge a link between PADI and voluntary organisations which have a coordinating role to play. These coordinating organisations, which are called, for purposes of the conference, network organisations, can persuade other voluntary organisations to prepare projects and send them to PADI and even help them in formulating the projects. PADI wants to rely upon the network organisations for bringing more and more voluntary organisations within a framework of partnership in project implementation. The third objective of the conference is to draw upon the expertise of voluntary organisations in project appraisal and project monitoring. Hitherto, these functions were treated as purely administrative and internal responsibilities of PADI. True partnership between PADI and voluntary organisations can develop only if there is participation by voluntary organisations in the functioning of PADI.

It is my proud privilege to welcome all the leading voluntary organisations who have consented to participate in the conference. I hope that the two day inter-action among you would enable PADI to develop suitable systems and procedures conducive to closer relationship between PADI and voluntary organisations and greater participation by voluntary organisations in PADI's activities.

Shri D.Bandyopadhyay : I am happy to be in your midst this morning. By common consent, voluntary organisations have become key partners in the development work of the country. With their long traditions and dedicated service and grass roots level contacts, voluntary organisations have all along been playing a key role in the socio-economic development of the country. Especially, their contribution in motivation, awareness building, generating people's participation, ensuring accrual of the rights and entitlements of the weaker sections and implementing cost effective, qualitatively excellent and durable programmes of development, have earned them popular acceptability and wide recognition. Voluntary organisations have now become a key sector in development.

Recognising the role and potential of the voluntary sector, Government, through successive plans, have been involving voluntary organisations in a number of programmes. The Department of Rural Development, from the very beginning, has been associating voluntary organisations in community development and other rural development activities. Similarly, other Departments/Ministries of Government of India have also been associating voluntary organisations.

The Seventh Five Year Plan seeks to expand the role of voluntary organisations on a considerable scale. The Approach Paper to the Seventh Five Year Plan has identified every possible sector of the Plan in which voluntary organisations could be involved. In pursuance of this policy shift, the Department of Rural Development has identified PADI as a nodal and focal agency to canalise Government funds into the volun-

tary sector. The scheme of Promotion of Voluntary Schemes and Social Action Programme, commonly known as Public Cooperation Programme was being implemented directly by the Department of Rural Development from 1974-75. Now, it has been decided to transfer implementation of this scheme to PADI. Under this scheme, innovative projects capable of being replicated and involving active people's participation can be funded upto a ceiling of Rs. 5 lakhs per project. In order to adapt the scheme to suit the requirements of voluntary organisations, several important modifications have been introduced. The ceiling of assistance has been raised from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 5 lakhs. The requirement of matching contribution has been waived. The condition that the project should be routed through District Rural Development Agency has also been waived. The procedure of release of funds has also been changed from the previous system of routing it through DRDA to that of direct release from PADI to voluntary organisations. It is a matter for satisfaction that during the very first year of operation of the scheme by PADI as many as 36 projects could be sanctioned and considerable assistance could be given to voluntary organisations.

The second major initiative taken to provide Government funds to voluntary organisations through PADI is to take steps for getting funds from the Ministry of Works and Housing for rural water supply schemes. The provision under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme is being used entirely as grants to State Governments. A dent is being made in this pattern of financing. A portion of the provision is being sought to be earmarked for assisting voluntary organisations through PADI. It has been tentatively decided to start the scheme of assisting voluntary organisations in rural water supply schemes during the Seventh Five Year Plan. I am glad to inform you that PADI has taken advance action by preparing detailed guidelines and by approaching voluntary organisations to give projects. Already several network voluntary organisations like AFPRO, National Association of Water Development Agencies, YMCA, PAD (Maharashtra),

Indo-German Social Service Society, FORRAD, etc. have been approached by PADI to persuade and motivate voluntary organisations in giving projects. I hope that once the scheme to assist voluntary organisations in implementing rural water supply schemes is approved, there would be enthusiastic participation by voluntary organisations in this vital sector.

Department of Rural Development has decided to use PADI as the medium to assist voluntary organisations in three important programmes, namely, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) and Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM). In the case of DWCRA, a sum of Rs. 50 lakhs has already been provided to PADI during 1984-85 and a sum of Rs. one crore would be provided during 1985-86. The schemes have to be suitably recast to become amenable for implementation by voluntary organisations, I would advise PADI to interact with voluntary organisations before adapting the schemes for voluntary organisations. The other two schemes RLEGP and TRYSEM also offer considerable scope to voluntary organisations. It would be useful if voluntary organisations would take up projects under these two schemes.

With so much money flowing under different schemes for voluntary organisations, there is an immediate need for a change of outlook and orientation on the part of PADI. It should have close inter-action with voluntary organisations for developing suitable systems and procedures in PADI under which voluntary organisations would feel free to avail themselves of the opportunities. The real problem in development is our failure to develop a suitable format for people's participation. Organisationally, several experiments were conducted like involving Panchayati raj institutions for getting people's participation. These experiments have by and large failed. Voluntary organisations appear to be the most suitable institutional structures which are capable of generating people's participation. The other aspect of people's participation is

that there should be in built components in programmes which should rely upon people as a key factor rather than the bureaucrats for their success. Unfortunately, the Government programmes are so structured that there is more emphasis on financial aspects, technical aspects and procedural aspects than on motivation, awareness, enthusiasm, consultations and feed back. Unless the schemes are refashioned to emphasise on these aspects of social dynamics, I fear, people's participation in Government programmes would remain an unrealised dream. I, therefore, consider the conference to be a suitable platform to iron out the crucial issues in rural development with a view to developing a suitable programme format for Government schemes conducive to their being implemented by voluntary organisations.

Session on Role of Coordinating Agencies

19-4-1985

11-30 A.M.

Chairman : Sri Prem Bhai

Shri T. C. A. Srinivasaramanujan: This session should discuss the role of voluntary organisations in generating, appraising and servicing projects for the purpose of being funded by PADI. The basic objective as explained by Shri Bandyopadhyay in his inaugural address is that PADI should not function as a bureaucratic organisation. The main bureaucratic pinch is felt in the checks and controls exercised by PADI while scrutinising the projects received for assistance. It should be explored whether the voluntary organisations themselves can take up coordinating or consultancy role. They can visit other voluntary organisations and check their projects.

It should be explored as to how to make voluntary organisations themselves take up the work of project appraisal.

Shri Prem Bhai : I would suggest that the General Secretary, PADI should acquaint the participants about what and what are its functions. There are many who have come for is PADI the first time.

Shri T. C. A. Srinivasaramanujan: I would first explain the present procedures of PADI in sanctioning and administering projects. In the first place the entire initiative for seeking assistance from PADI comes from voluntary organisations. No special effort is being done by us. This, we thought, is a weakness of our present operational procedures. Only people who know about our existence come to us for assistance while many who are unaware of PADI do not benefit from us. The second aspect is that once a project comes to us we examine it in our office and we send someone from our office to visit the project and check up its feasibility. We have started feeling that we do not have adequate number of qualified people in our midst to be able to scrutinise and check up all the projects which are coming to us. I, therefore, feel that PADI should share the appraisal work with voluntary organisations. I feel that independent, impartial and competent views of voluntary organisations would be valuable in making assessment of the projects of voluntary organisations. The third aspect is about monitoring. At present, PADI designs the reporting format and analyses the reports sent by voluntary organisations. Sometimes officials are sent to see whether things are going on well. We made some experiment by using voluntary organisations for monitoring work. We wanted to know something about the poultry project being implemented by Thainad Cooperative Society in Kerala. We thought that instead of sending somebody from PADI to Trivandrum we would request some locally based voluntary organisations to contact Thainad Cooperative Society and monitor the progress of the project. We requested Shri K. Vishwanathan of Mitraniketan to do this service. He kindly

agreed to visit Thainad Cooperative Society. I am happy to report that the result was very satisfactory and that the project started gathering momentum. Based on this experience, PADI feels that other voluntary organisations could also be persuaded to visit projects of voluntary organisations and monitor the progress of such projects. Thus, I envisage three roles for coordinating voluntary organisations, namely, to persuade and motivate voluntary organisations to send projects to PADI for assistance, to appraise projects of voluntary organisations for getting assistance and to monitor the progress of projects assisted by PADI.

I would like to explain the procedure followed by PADI in scrutinising and sanctioning projects. First it is checked up whether the project is in the prescribed format. This format seeks to elicit information, like the name of the organisation, its legal status, its historical background, its functioning, its financial position during the last three years; its management and administrative set up, the facilities available with it, the objectives of the project, the need for the project, the actual range of activities and programmes to be undertaken, the methodology and technical know-how to be adopted in implementing the project and the details of beneficiaries. When a project satisfies the basic criteria, PADI's Standing Committee for projects comprising official and non-official members, considers it. The project is also sent to the concerned State Government. Three months time is given to the concerned State Government to send its report. If no response is forthcoming within three months, the requirement to take the concurrence of State Government is waived. PADI also takes clearance of the Home Ministry about the bonafides of an organisation. When a project involves assistance from a foreign donor, we do not have to seek clearance from the Home Ministry provided the organisation gives particulars of its registration with the Home Ministry. However, clearance from the Department of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs is to be taken for foreign aided projects. By and large this is the procedure PADI is following.

Shri P. N. Tripathi: I want to make a point about the matter of coordination. We should design a system of coordination between Government and voluntary organisations. PADI should reach voluntary organisations on a large scale. I would suggest something as to how we can institutionalise this. For example, PADI should have a local committee to call meetings of voluntary organisations in the beginning of the year to know their spheres of activities, and their capacity to take up projects. Organisations which have necessary infrastructure should be permitted to work in such areas. I am glad that a wide role is being given to PADI. Some of the funds of the Ministry have been given for distribution to voluntary agencies. PADI should play a role in bringing about greater participation of voluntary organisations in Government programmes. There should be coordination between official agencies and voluntary agencies.

Shri J. B. Singh : PADI is a non-government organisation sponsored by Government. Naturally it has all the problems of a Government organisation. Programmes and policies change when there is a change in Government. The programmes and policies do change even when there is only a change in the Ministers, I have noticed that programmes and policies change even when there is a change at the level of Secretaries. Now, I would like to say that PADI has undergone many vicissitudes. This year it is going to celebrate its Silver Jubilee. In its 25 years long history, it has had a lot good and bad experiences.

PADI has been responding to requests coming from voluntary organisations and when it responds, it makes all kinds of scrutiny and all kinds of checks because of the very nature of its experiences. I am glad that PADI had moved from responding to requests to going out towards voluntary organisations and seeking out projects from them. This is a very healthy turn of events. It has been largely due to the fact that PADI is going to be in receipt of large amounts of Government funds. PADI with all the rigmarole of Governmental functioning style has to develop the

mechanism for properly and quickly utilising the funds. It has to find out some improvements and some modifications and procedures which will make it attractive to voluntary organisations without, at the same time, coming in from criticism at the hands of Government. I would strongly plead that voluntary organisations themselves should strengthen the hands of PADI and help it to utilise the funds for the purpose for which they have been given.

Some dent has been made, some progress has been made, For example, if the State Government does not give its clearance within three months, it is presumed that the State Government has no objection. Now PADI wants to decentralise some of its functions and is looking forward to organisations which would provide some kind of coordination with voluntary organisations. PADI wants that the voluntary organisations with networks should provide a linkage between PADI and grassroot level organisations.

Further, PADI seems to wish to draw upon the experiences of voluntary organisations for making experiments with projects. In Government one comes across stereotyped set patterns of some schemes with set procedures. In the voluntary sector, each one of us is free to do his best as he can think of. These different experiments and innovations of voluntary organisations can be documented to bring about changes in programme format. This is an opportunity as well as challenge for voluntary organisations.

Smt. Nalini Singh: Some effort is being made for creation of confidence. It appears that no body is against voluntary organisations. We should not, however, increase dependence of smaller voluntary organisations on PADI. We should not also make a fetish of generating projects from voluntary organisations. We cannot conceive of a situation in which there will be a drive to reach a target of Rs. 2 crores or Rs. 3 crores worth of projects. Mostly it will be like looking into the balance sheet at the end of the year as to how much

money has been spent. What we should do is to generate a spirit of voluntarism. Voluntary organisation set up in rural areas have been able to attempt during the past 10 years several important initiatives. They have had freedom in receiving funds and using the funds for implementation of various programmes. Now with Government funds the question arises whether voluntary organisations can enjoy the same freedom. The point is how far the coordinating agencies will be allowed to play an independent role. PADI must have confidence in voluntary organisations.

Shri Sharad Kulkarni: I thought that if I presented some case studies it would provide more clarity about the role that can be played by voluntary organisations. When we found that smaller farmers were suffering more than even landless labourers in our areas, we checked up and found that whereas small farmers were perpetually indebted, the landless labourers migrated to urban areas. The small farmer has no such option. He has to remain there. In the last three years we started meeting the officials of commercial banks. First they refused to help but now they have started responding. The problem is how to make people aware of the benefits admissible to the common man and how to make the implementing authorities exercise their powers for the benefit of the common man. At the grassroot levels local officials are not aware of various Government programmes. In a particular village the women went to the office of civil supplies and complained about the functioning of a shopkeeper. They pleaded that either the shopkeeper should be asked to function properly or the shop be given to them to handle. The Tehsildar would not take up the matter. But some voluntary agencies behind the women, fought for three months to get the transfer of the shop. This is one area where voluntary organisations at the grassroot level can help.

Another area of assistance is for young people to try to get into rural areas and work. If they are given timely support, their enthusiasm can be sustained. PADI should think of giving support to such young people.

Shri K. Vishwanathan: As in Maharashtra, there should be in each State a PADI organisation to coordinate the activities of voluntary organisations. In this way each State can come closer to PADI and the number of voluntary organisations taking assistance from PADI will increase. There should be district level and block level agencies to coordinate with voluntary organisations. These local level agencies should help in reducing the difficulties voluntary organisations face while dealing with State Governments.

We should work in a coordinated way for development and growth. In Government offices, there are ever-widening gaps in working. There is no coordination between two Departments. There is no inter-action. Voluntary organisations can do positive work in implementing inter disciplinary programmes. We should strengthen the voluntary organisations to be able to do so. We should stress that Government should be exposed to voluntary organisations through PADI.

I am glad that in the Seventh Five Year Plan, voluntary organisations have been assigned a very important role to play. However, it is necessary to have linkage with official agencies at State level, District level and block level, if bottlenecks are to be overcome.

Shri Prem Bhai: We should have more understanding, mutual trust and confidence. There was mention about PADI getting funds from Government sources. There has been a statement that PADI has lot of money. A figure of Rs. 4 crores was mentioned. Rs. 4 crores is nothing when we have a total allocation of Rs. 600 crores for drinking water alone.

One point has been made about the time limit given to State Governments for giving clearance, PADI should also keep its own time limit for clearing a project. It should keep its own time table, It is not correct to say that PADI has been active in most of the areas. It took PADI 3 to 4 years to come up with a good procedure. PADI suffers from changes at the

political level and at the Secretary level.

It is good for Government to involve non-governmental agencies in the clearances of projects on a single window basis. Now when Government is giving support to PADI to canalise funds to voluntary organisations, PADI would like to reach out to small groups. It has called upon voluntary organisations which have expertise to help small groups in formulation of plans.

There are some areas from where we are getting projects but there are some regions from where we are not getting projects. The problem of regional imbalance has to be faced and solved.

Shri Sanjit Bunker Roy: The reason we called this meeting was to share with network people, who have vast networks, to disseminate some policy decisions. It is an open question whether many groups would like to come to PADI. Are we ready to trust non-registered organisations? There may be experts among them also. We must change the guidelines, if they stand in the way of assisting non-registered organisations. Another issue is that if a State Government does not respond in three months, it is stated that it will be presumed that there is no objection from the Government. But what is the position if the State Government objects? Will PADI overrule?

Prof. S. Das Gupta: If we work in a village, we get people together to do something. If the money is coming from Government sources, we have to go up and get through all kinds of procedures. If money comes from foreign sources we have no obligation to report to local Government officials. Fixing cumbersome procedures will create a lot of problems. It will put obstacles in the way of genuine voluntary organisations interested in doing work. PADI is not a democratic or a representative body. It has to become helpful to voluntary organisations, it has to get to be more democratic.

Shri Sanjit Bunker Roy: PADI should develop a relationship with voluntary organisations based on trust. There are some groups which do not want to register. There should be some way of reaching non-registered bodies. If PADI wants to go to the grassroot level, it has to give up bureaucratic procedures.

Smt. Nalini Singh : It is heartening to note that PADI would be getting lot of funds and that PADI is interested in persuading more and more voluntary organisations to take assistance from it. So far so good, but the question is, is there any guarantee that assistance given will be continuous? What happens, if PADI suddenly changes its policy and discontinues its assistance? What will be the fate of the voluntary organisations which may plan their activities on the assumption of continuous flow of funds from PADI? PADI should address itself to this question of confidence and trust.

We should also guard against voluntary organisations completely swamped by flow of Government funds to them, diluting their commitments.

When we are talking about network organisations, we should not lose sight of the interest of specific groups like women. I am sorry to note that among the network agencies participating in this Conference, not many are concentrating on women's issues. PADI must encourage organisations working in the field of women.

Shri K. D. Dewan: We have to think of organising voluntary organisations in every state. They should be trained by experienced trainers who are already working in organisations of voluntary workers. These voluntary workers should go to backward pockets and develop programmes. Another point I would strongly urge is that we should not make it compulsory for small organisations to register themselves. There are many unregistered organisations in West Bengal which are working much better than registered societies. What is important is not

whether an organisation is registered but whether the organisation has dedicated workers.

Shri Sharad Kulkarni: PADI should establish direct relationship with voluntary organisations. It should allow voluntary organisations flexibility in project preparation. It should not insist on assisting only registered bodies and organisations. It should go by the concept of organisation. Registration is only a legal formality. Even if an organisation is unregistered, if the beneficiaries are functionally organised, there should be no reservation in helping them. In voluntary organisations, functional flexibility, freedom of action, autonomous character and existence of organised beneficiary group should be the four aspects which should be considered. If an organisation satisfies these criteria, it should be encouraged.

Shri T. C. A. Srinivasaramanujan: Some of the points raised during discussions so far are very thought provoking. I would like to clarify that taking assistance from PADI will not in any way affect the flexibility of functioning of any voluntary organisation. It will not affect their autonomy. It will not influence their ideology. There is no question of PADI intervening with the decisions of any voluntary organisation or meddling in their working. The point that PADI's approach to projects is within a rigid framework is correct to some extent. There is room for improvement. It will not however be correct to dispense with yardsticks for preparing projects. Every project should have a clear statement of objectives, outline of activities and quantification of financial and physical dimensions. Any project format must yield information on the points. Flexibility does not mean that no guidelines about these aspects of projects should be given.

Basically the ultimate responsibility for taking decisions on accepting or rejecting a project does not rest with PADI's officials; but with the Standing Committee for Projects and Governing Council. My only intention is that the Standing

Committee for Projects and Governing Council should not depend on PADI's officers only but should have a parallel line of assistance from voluntary organisations. I want that the voluntary organisations should develop into pressure groups inside PADI. They should gain access to the decision making levels of PADI and help in smoothening procedural bottlenecks. That is why I want that voluntary organisations should give their own appraisal reports to PADI's decision making bodies so that decisions can be taken on sanctioning projects not on the basis of the views of PADI's bureaucracy but on the strength of the judgement and assessment of voluntary organisations themselves.

I would suggest that network organisations should identify suitable voluntary organisations which can take up projects with assistance from PADI. These identified organisations should be persuaded and helped in framing projects for PADI's consideration. PADI would refer these projects to voluntary organisations for information. If such a course is adopted, where is the question of projects being scotched on account of pettifogging procedures and technicalities? In course of time, the voluntary organisations which will make other voluntary organisations send projects to PADI and will appraise projects for PADI will become lobbies for other voluntary organisations.

Shri P. V. Rajagopal: Why has PADI to consult State Government if it is an independent organisation ?

Shri T. C. A. Srinivasaramanujan : It should be ensured that there is no duplication. It should also be ensured that a project proposal does not conflict with some established policies of Government. For instance, a project proposal in West Bengal envisaged assistance to handloom weavers on individual basis. The policy of the State Government was to bring all handloom units in the State within the cooperative umbrella. Special concessions to the handloom units in the cooperative sector have been given. These included subsidies and marketing

support. The State Government objected to the project on the ground that it wanted to develop handloom units outside the cooperative sector which would deprive the beneficiaries of concessions admissible to them from Government. Similarly a project from Maharashtra envisaged establishment of a cooperative for a dairy. The Government of Maharashtra had decided to bring all dairy farmers within one cooperative hierarchy under the apex milk marketing body. Establishment of a separate cooperative outside this organisation would be in conflict with that policy. In Gujarat a voluntary organisation made a proposal to set up a processing unit for milk products. The State Government objected to it on the ground that it was the policy in the State to develop dairy units only in the cooperative sector. In this manner, it has to be seen whether a project involves any methodology inconsistent with the policy adopted by the State Government.

Shri Sanjit Bunker Roy: What happens if the objective of a State Government is not based on reasonable grounds?

Shri T. C. A. Srinivasaramanujan: The views of State Government are not always binding. PADI's decision making bodies like Standing Committee for Projects and Governing Council have differed with the State Governments and sanctioned projects against their recommendations. It depends on the circumstances of each case. There were certain project proposals from West Bengal which the State Government considered as not sound. PADI's Governing Council sent a Central Team to take a fresh look and decided the matter in the light of the recommendations of the Central Team. The Government of Andhra Pradesh objected to a project on the ground that the State Government was in a better position to implement the project than the voluntary organisation. PADI's Governing Council did not agree with the State Government and went ahead with the processing of the matter. Thus, the procedure to consult State Governments does not put PADI in a position of complete subservience to the views of the State Governments.

Shri Prem Bhai : It is my turn now to sum up the board recommendations which emerged during discussions. The main recommendation of the session is that voluntary organisations themselves should take the initiative in getting projects from other voluntary organisations for assistance by PADI and that voluntary organisations should be associated in project appraisal and monitoring. There should be no restriction on the functional freedom and autonomy of voluntary organisations while implementing project; assisted by PADI. There should be greater inter-action between Government and voluntary organisations in order to smoothen procedural bottlenecks and in developing better understanding between them, PADI should play the role of a mediator between Government and voluntary organisations. There should be organisations like PAD Maharashtra in each State which should play the coordinating role. Such organisations at district and block levels should also be developed.

Session on Integrated Rural Development

19-4-1985

30.00 P.M. to 6.00 P.M.

Chairman : Shri J.C. Jetli

Shri J.C. Jetli : PADI has been upto now treated as a channel for foreign funds to flow into voluntary organisations for various kinds of rural development projects. The level of assistance which PADI has been able to provide has been of the order of Rs. 1 crore every year. Apart from funds PADI received from foreign donors it did not have its own resources. With the result that PADI had very little funds which seriously restricted its role in increasing the partnership

of voluntary organisations in the important area of development of rural areas. Last year, we had taken the first step to improve the situation. There was a scheme for public cooperation which was being implemented at Government level by the Department of Rural Development. We decided to transfer the implementation of the scheme to PADI. So, we gave Rs. 46 lakhs under that scheme to PADI. A number of projects which were not accepted by foreign donors were lying in PADI without funding arrangements. It was decided while transferring these funds to PADI that for a single project PADI's assistance shall not exceed Rs. 5 lakhs. The intention was that with assistance up to Rs. 5 lakhs, a large number of pending projects could be sanctioned. While giving Government funds to PADI, it is not the intention to stop flow of foreign funds to PADI. As before PADI would continue to get foreign funds.

During the Seventh Five Year Plan, our strategy, broadly, would be to assist voluntary organisations through PADI both under plan programmes and also with funds obtained from foreign organisations. The main programmes of rural development are Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Integrated Rural Development Programme, National Rural Employment Programme and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme. Regarding Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, even during last year, Government had transferred to PADI Rs. 50 lakhs. PADI has not utilised this fund so far, because the money was given at the end of the year. In this year's budget there is a provision of Rs. 1 crore to be given to PADI. Thus, a sum of Rs. 1½ crores will be available to assist voluntary organisations in implementing projects under Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas. Regarding Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, the present thinking is that during this year at least one per cent of the budget funds may be routed through PADI for voluntary organisations. One per cent will mean Rs. 4 crore because the total allocation during the current year for Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme is Rs. 400 crores.

One problem has to be faced. While PADI has been funding at the level of Rs. 70-80 lakhs every year, if suddenly, the level of project funding is to go up, certain administrative arrangements are required, proper monitoring of projects will have to be done. Only after strengthening of PADI, there can be further step up of financial support to PADI.

What has been done so far by Government is just a beginning. We are hopeful that gradually with experience gained more and more funds will flow to voluntary organisations so that they can supplement Government work in rural development. The funds provided by Government under specific schemes will have to be utilised for those schemes. For instance, the funds under Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas can be utilised by voluntary organisations to promote group efforts and group activities for the well-being of the women. Similarly, projects can be taken up with funds under Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme to promote employment-oriented programmes. There are specific guidelines for all these programmes. They are not rigid. They are quite flexible. Our intention is that voluntary organisations should be encouraged to take up specific schemes under these Plan Programmes with funds flowing through a single window.

Certain consultative groups have been organised in the States. They are making efforts to coordinate the activities of voluntary organisations. These consultative groups can be given an organisational framework and they can also have windows in addition to PADI.

We are also emphasising on PADI, the need to promote groups of voluntary organisations and individuals who have expertise. These groups and individuals can be requested to help in formulation of projects and monitoring of projects. They can use their technical expertise and help other voluntary organisations. In this way, we can proceed further, so that sound projects are prepared and presented to PADI.

This is broadly the pattern which we are considering. Our feeling is that funds will not be a constraint in the Seventh Plan. We want to use PADI as an effective instrument in mobilising voluntary organisations.

Shri P. V. Rajgopal : I want one clarification about NREP. Many noteworthy organisations are interested in taking up NREP projects. Whether they have to take up only those projects which come under the shelf of projects?

Shri J. C. Jetli : The Seventh Five Year Plan is yet to be finalised and some of the decisions will have to await its finalisation. In the case of NREP, it is a centrally sponsored scheme in which 50 per cent of the funds are provided by the Centre and the remaining 50 per cent is contributed by State Governments. Unless there is a State PAD; it will not be possible to obtain the State's share of 50 per cent. We have a similar scheme called RLEGP which is funded 100 per cent by the Central Government. Voluntary organisations can submit projects under this programme.

Prof. S. Dasgupta : I have circulated a paper containing seven points. The points are as below :

1. NGOs should get sanction of grants through PADI for taking up schemes for execution under NREP and RLEGP instead of through State Governments/Union Territory Administrations.
2. PADI should examine and sanction schemes submitted by NGOs. Procedures for release of funds should be such that work is not stopped. Who will scrutinise the completion of works executed by the voluntary agencies, so that release of funds is not delayed?
3. NGOs would like to disburse wages at the prescribed rates in cash and not partly in foodgrains and partly in cash as envisaged in the guidelines.

4. In the tribal areas, schemes under NREP and RLEGP may be sanctioned to benefit scheduled tribe owners of land because although they are not landless labourers, they are below the poverty line.
5. Under Social Forestry, NGOs may like to take up economic plantation of trees for the purpose of tasar silk rearing which will provide, on a permanent basis, supplementary income to the villagers.
6. The maintenance of projects after their completion is very important. After completion of a project, the implementing agency would like to hand it over to a body constituted by the beneficiaries so that they may continue to take interest in its maintenance.
7. If projects are examined and sanctioned by the end of this month it will be possible to complete many works before the rains set in.

I would like to have your reactions.

Shri J. C. Jetli : Under RLEGP, we stand on firm grounds. Projects can be submitted to PADI and no clarifications of State Governments will be necessary. Under RLEGP we have not prescribed any proforma but we have indicated certain points on which information is required to be given. General Secretary, PADI should circulate these instructions. Under NREP, there is a component of State Government's contribution. How this share can be dovetailed is an issue which has to be sorted out. It will take some time to settle this. In the meantime voluntary organisations could submit schemes under RLEGP.

The second point is about procedure. The procedure has been simplified for expeditious sanctions. Earlier each project was considered first by the Project Screening Committee and then by Governing Council. Now the screening committee has been converted into Sanctioning Committee for Projects. It approves projects. Thereafter projects are put up to Governing Council for information only. This will eliminate delay.

Regarding the third point about cash and kind wages, the scheme envisages payment of one kilogram of foodgrains as wage in kind. The remaining value of the wage is paid in cash. In my opinion, voluntary organisations are better equipped to give wage in kind than Government agencies.

Shri J. B. Singh : It may be correct to say that voluntary organisations will be able to do a good job at the time of actual payment of wages in the shape of foodgrains. But the logistic and administrative problems should also be borne in mind. Payment of kind wages would involve taking delivery, storage and transportation of foodgrains and close supervision at all levels to prevent pilferage and wastage. These are difficult responsibilities.

Shri J.C. Jetli: We can examine these questions later. I would now like to turn to the fourth point raised by Prof. Dasgupta that RLEGP in tribal areas need not be restricted to landless labourer but could be extended to tribal land holders also as they are below poverty line, I agree with this suggestion. For scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, individual beneficiary works can be taken up. Houses can be built, land can be developed; such programmes can be taken up for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Regarding social forestry, we have reserved 20 per cent of our funds. Last year it was 10 per cent. Voluntary organisations can take up various kinds of social forestry schemes. Regarding maintenance of projects, at present no funds are provided. We are examining the question whether certain percentages under NREP and RLEGP can be earmarked for maintenance. The last point raised by the Prof. Dasgupta is that projects should be examined and sanctioned by the end of the month so that they can be taken up before the monsoon. Whether this time schedule can be kept depends on how quickly PADI can process the projects.

Shri Prem Bhai : Let us take up the guidelines. We are thinking of transferring funds to voluntary agencies. To

enable them to prepare suitable projects, I think, a clear format must be designed and circulated. Unless, clear guidelines are formed, voluntary organisations will be helpless. It will be impossible for them to complete the work and also pay minimum wages. In the guidelines; it has been stated that Panchayats will be entrusted with the works. Voluntary organisations have not been envisaged as implementing agencies.

As far as social forestry is concerned, in many tribal areas land records are not very clear. They are not complete. In such areas, Gram Samaj Lands have not been clearly demarcated. It is not possible to demarcate lands belonging to Forest Department and land belonging to Gram Sabha. In such a situation, how can voluntary organisations implement these programmes? These are the practical difficulties in the field.

Shri J. C. Jetli : There are two types of schemes for which PADI can give funds to voluntary organisations. The first type is of innovative schemes which voluntary organisations can formulate according to their own perceptions. The other type relates to certain programmes of Government which are already being executed through the Government machinery. We want that voluntary organisations also take up some projects under these Government schemes. In respect of these projects, voluntary organisations will have to follow the prescribed guidelines. It is true that we have emphasised in our NREP guidelines that the programmes will be implemented through Panchayati Raj institutions. But voluntary organisations can also be entrusted with NREP work. There will be no interference in the work of voluntary organisations by Panchayati Raj institutions. The voluntary organisations can send their projects directly to PADI and if the projects are approved they will get money from PADI. There is no need to submit the schemes through Panchayati Raj institutions.

Shri Prem Bhai: The machinery of Block Development Officer may interfere with the work of voluntary organisations.

Shri J. C. Jetli: It is not our intention. The money will be channelled through PADI. The project will be monitored by PADI. Voluntary organisations will have to submit their reports to PADI and not to the Block Development Officer. There should not be any interference from any organisation.

Shri Prem Bhai: The Voluntary Organisations have to get clearance from intelligence agencies. This is also creating problems. If you want participation there should be understanding between PADI and voluntary organisations.

Shri J. C. Jetli: This is a sensitive point not to be answered at this stage.

Shri Panalal Dasgupta: I went to PADI's office with some RLEGP schemes and I was told that it will take time to finalise the modality for processing RLEGP scheme of voluntary organisations.

Shri J. C. Jetli: The financial year has recently started. There is a certain procedure involved in Government's placing the funds for a scheme. In the meantime PADI could go ahead examining the schemes.

Shri T.C.A. Srinivasaramanujan: RLEGP and NREP projects are basically of a technical nature. While implemented by Government, elaborate rules of Government are followed. The preparation of estimate is to be based on schedule of rates. The estimates are checked by technical officers. They have been given powers of varying limits to accord technical sanction. Finally, designated authorities give administrative approval. When the work is taken up, measurement book is to be kept. Muster rolls of workers are to be maintained, subject to checking by officials. At the time of completion, there is final measurement. The completion certificate has to be given according to prescribed procedure. When Government is the implementing agency it is clear as to who will be responsible for each type of these activities. When voluntary organisations are

to do the same type of work, it is necessary to specify the methods by which the estimates will have to be prepared and checked, technical sanction and administrative approval will have to be given, measurement book and muster rolls will have to be maintained and checked and final measurement and completion certificate will have to be furnished.

Shri Sanjit Bunker Roy: Voluntary Organisations implement successfully many projects similar to Government projects. In term of cost and quality the performance of voluntary organisations is better than the Government. It is not necessary to extend the Government procedures to voluntary organisations.

Shri J. C. Jetli: Some officers from the Department of Rural Development have come to interact with the voluntary organisations today. I would request them to indicate the broad features of their schemes which they are dealing within the Ministry.

Shri Inderjit Khanna: I will first take up TRYSEM. This is a special scheme of Integrated Rural Development Programme. The main objective is to identify youths upto 35 years, train them to acquire better and up-to-date skills and then help them to get self-employed. Most of the financial requirements of TRYSEM is met out of IRDP funds. They are shared equally by the Central and State Governments. Some amount is given as honorarium for trainers and some amount is given for training. Assistance is also given to the training institution. For strengthening the infrastructure of training institutions, 100 per cent of the funds are provided by Central Government.

Swami Manmathan: Does infrastructure include construction?

Shri Inderjit Khanna: Infrastructure includes hostel, class room, equipment and training facilities.

Swami Manmathan : We submitted an infrastructure scheme in 1983. The scheme was for Rs. 4 lakhs. The scheme was for the hostel, training aids etc. District Magistrate is of the opinion that no money can be spent for the hostel. He has turned it down. No money has been spent in the district of Tehri Garhwal to strengthen training institutions of voluntary organisations.

Shri B.R. Bhope: Ramakrishna Seva Kendra at Ranchi trained 42 trainees. Now the district authorities refuse to extend the assistance to more trainees. Neither do they send any person for training nor do they allow voluntary organisations to select their own trainees.

Shri Shivanand Bhai: No assistance is given to voluntary organisations in Bihar under TRYSEM.

Shri Inderjit Khanna : I am sorry to hear that voluntary organisations have faced some difficulties in TRYSEM. One way of facing up to this problem is to improve communication of information. The Department of Rural Development is running a magazine called 'Kurukshetra'. It is also issuing a news letter. These two publications are useful media for communication. I would request voluntary organisations to write to the Department of Rural Development about any difficulty so that information about problems can be disseminated and redressal can also be arranged.

Shri J. C. Jetli: It is for this reason that we are thinking of earmarking funds which can be spent exclusively by voluntary organisations. The concerned voluntary organisations can select beneficiaries and prepared projects.

Smt. Nalini Singh: There are many infrastructure facilities which are unutilised or under utilised. For instance, Government has built many schools which are not running properly. There are many hospitals which are also not being run properly. Instead of creating new infrastructures, why not

assist voluntary organisations in taking over existing infrastructure facilities and running them properly?

Shri J.C. Jetli: This is a big problem which PADI cannot solve. But if any voluntary agency starts a primary school and needs any equipment, PADI can assist. Similarly, if a voluntary organisation wants to set up a health centre and for that certain infrastructure is required, a project to provide some facilities to the health centre can be considered. However, projects of this nature cannot be considered under TRYSEM provision for infrastructure. That is meant only for training institutions engaged in equipping people for self-employment. Assistance to voluntary organisations for strengthening infrastructure of institutions like schools and hospitals, as distinguished from institutions engaged in training for self-employment, can be given under PADI's general types of projects.

Shri Prem Bhai: I want to make a point relating to Government policy, under IRDP. Government is spending Rs. 1,500 crore. Under RLEGP and TRYSEM we are spending another Rs. 1,500 crores. Then there are funds provided under other programmes like construction of school buildings, roads, hospital buildings and other works programmes. But all these programmes have not solved the problem of unemployment. What is needed is to help poor people in taking up income-generating activities on a long term basis. I would suggest that subsidy provisions under IRDP should be exclusively provided for training and income generating activities and all the funds for employment generating programmes should be invested on permanent infrastructures.

Shri J.C. Jetli: The whole objective of IRDP is just what you have outlined. We try to take up the poorest of the poor and give them the means of improving their income. RLEGP and NREP have different objectives. The main aim is to provide employment. I do not think that the employment schemes can be abolished. Even if self-employment opportunities are

created, the need for providing jobs to people who want seasonal work will continue in a country of our size.

Shri Prem Bhai : I am interested in hearing more details about the scheme or beneficiary organisations. Other agencies are already working in the field. It would be useful to have some feedback.

Shri Sharad Kulkarni : Organisations of the beneficiary groups is a very good programme. In many cases, the administration itself is a bottleneck. It decides upon wrong types of programmes and wrong types of beneficiaries. If beneficiaries are organised, the administration will be alert. We are organising the beneficiaries for quite sometime.

Shri J.C. Jetli : About organisation of beneficiaries I would like to say that the main emphasis is to create awareness among the beneficiaries. This will promote better participation, greater alertness and a mechanism for feedback. It is also likely that there will be conflict and confrontation. Voluntary organisations may consider whether it will not be better if the articulation of beneficiaries interest is done within the administrative system. Anyway, organisation of beneficiaries will be one of the many programmes, under which funds can flow to voluntary organisations. The other programmes are TRYSEM, RLEGP, DWCRA etc. I appeal to the voluntary organisations to explore the scope for formulating projects under these programmes and send them to PADI for financial support.

I would like to sum up that the main hurdles in the way of taking advantage of Government's programmes are rigid guidelines governing the programmes and cumbersome procedure in PADI for sanctioning the projects. I concede that in both these areas there is considerable scope for improvement. The suggestions given by the participants are very useful and relevant. I am sure that conference would deliberate on the guidelines and procedures suitable for voluntary organisations.

Session on Drinking Water Supply and Low Cost Sanitation

20-4-1985

9.30 A.M.

Chairman : Shri J.B. Singh

Shri J.B. Singh: We are ready to start the morning session. We are glad to have two senior officers from the Ministry of Works and Housing concerning drinking water scheme. Shri V. Venugopalan is Adviser, CPHEEO. Mr. T. Nandakumar is Deputy Secretary. Both of them are dealing with drinking water supply and low cost sanitation.

For the information of the participants, I would like to give a brief background about the subject. For quite some time, voluntary organisations have been having a dialogue with the Ministry of Works and Housing about the question of earmarking funds to voluntary organisations for taking up water supply and sanitation programmes. We had several rounds of discussions. We have been able to develop a consensus that the Ministry should earmark funds for voluntary organisations and that PADI should be the nodal agency. I am glad to say that we have now reached the stage in which voluntary organisations and Government can work out the modalities for taking up these projects. I would now request Shri Nandakumar to explain the scheme and other related aspects.

Shri T. Nandakumar : The background of our interest dates back to a letter written by the late Prime Minister. It was followed by a dialogue in 1983 but no conclusions were

reached. In July, 1984, we picked up the thread and convened a meeting of a small group of NGOs and officials. This meeting identified the points of cooperation between voluntary organisations and Government. As you may be aware, Government has a very large and massive drinking water programme, but the problem is also massive. In 1980, there were 2.31 lakh villages in the country without safe drinking water. We have constraints of resources and manpower. We started with the modest target of minimum of one source of water for each village. Some people might argue that one source is nothing but the fact remains that have to make a modest beginning. We began with an outlay of Rs. 60 crores which increased to Rs. 2300 crores in the course of the Sixth Five Year Plan. Looking back we still have 37,000 villages without drinking water. In the Seventh Five Year Plan, the objective would be to provide one source of water to every habitant. This is a very huge task. Within this framework, we are thinking of involving voluntary agencies. Another point of cooperation is how to involve the community. Capital investment is one part, using it for the benefit of the people is another. At present, Panchayatiraj institutions are doing it. We thought voluntary organisations would be more suitable agencies to educate the people to use water properly, make them aware of sanitation and get them interested in the upkeep of the hydrants and sanitary fittings. Drinking water supply and sanitation are not concentrated programmes. Their areas are spread and are very widely dispersed. It is only the stakes of the local community in them which will ensure their proper upkeep. This is another point of cooperation which we want to take from voluntary organisations.

Our thinking is that we have to ascertain the State Government's views at policy planning level. For funding, PADI will be the best agency. We are yet to secure budget outlay, but we are confident of getting it in the course of the year. In the meantime, we are awaiting project requests from PADI.

This is in short the general background. I have come here with the intention of listening to you and be educated by your ideas.

Shri Raj Kumar Daw : Shri Nandakumar has given the background of participation of voluntary agencies in Government's water supply programme. Now certain things need to be remembered. There should be sources of free drinking water supply in rural areas. There should be handpumps for every 250 people. Our experience based on observation is that more work is claimed to have been done than what has been the actual work. This needs a line of thought. The second point is, can voluntary organisations participate in this programme ? The Central Government might give its blessings but at the State level things are different. PADI's procedures bristle with bureaucratic rigidities. Reactions are generally negative. Home Ministry's investigations are made. Balance Sheets and other documents are wanted. Voluntary organisations have to go through a lot of exercise in preparing documents and put in a lot of time and energy to give projects. All these would become infructuous if PADI subsequently turns round and negates the proposal. It would be better if PADI first applies its mind and indicates whether a proposal is acceptable before the expensive and time consuming formalities of project formulation and submission are gone through.

Shri J.B. Singh : It is a new thing to involve voluntary organisations. They have Rs. 300 crores and out of which Rs. 1 crore will be earmarked for voluntary organisations to be canalised through PADI. People are not clear as to how it is going to work. We should prepare the terms of reference. The ball is in our court and we have to prepare the terms and conditions on which PADI will operate this scheme. If a proposal goes to PADI, it has to get clearance from State Government and CPHEEO. That is the responsibility of PADI but so far as voluntary organisations are concerned, only PADI is involved. We can also suggest other points relevant for this programme. There may be villages without drinking water which might have been left out. We may suggest changes in their list. We

may not want to go to tender system and contractor system. We must tell Government what would be our system of working.

The first problem for voluntary organisations getting involved in water supply arises out of the comparison of the cost of the scheme of voluntary organisations with the cost in Government work. Such comparisons are invalid. The cost of the Government schemes does not include the salary of departmental staff and certain other overheads. Secondly the costs in the Government work are based on the quotations given by contractors. We all know that contractors have got their own way doing work. The actual specifications and the materials used by the contractors may not be reflected in the costs. So the comparison of cost estimates between Government work and work of voluntary agencies will be misleading. The second problem is that voluntary organisations cannot compromise with quality of work. In this respect they will have difficulty in dealing with Government.

Shri V. Venugopalan : We understand that there will be basic differences in the costing and specifications between the works of Government and of voluntary organisations. I hope that these differences will not create any problem in proceeding with the projects. Even within the Government projects, allowances have been made for the differences from area to area. There are areas like Prakasam district where we have not succeeded. We have one set of schemes for hilly areas and another set for plain areas. Depending on local conditions, schemes vary. Similarly, between agency and agency also, schemes will vary.

Shri A.P. Fernandez : I suppose that we have to take up the challenge and implement the programme. The difficulties and reservations will remain but they should not hinder us from taking up the challenge.

Shri Raj Kumar Daw : PADI should have by now received about 4-5 proposals. It would be interesting to know

how they have been handled. We have to see how these proposals are handled while supporting or rejecting. We also would like to know how PADI works and how it proceeds with project proposals in general.

Shri J.B. Singh : I think procedures and structure of PADI have already been gone into. If any change in the policies and procedures of PADI are required, voluntary organisations themselves may come forward with their suggestions. Now let us come to the subject matter. Drinking water should reach the people in our areas of operation. We will identify the problem villages. We are not concerned with the type of well, whether it is an open well or bore well. Transport of water will depend on the availability of water. Honestly speaking, if you leave it to me open well maintenance cost is minimum and people are using it for hundreds of years.

Smt Gloria Daw : Water from open well is contaminated. In Tehri Garhwal, springs are used as water sources. The water is put into a tank and then piped for distribution to the villagers. The tank is open and contaminated.

Shri B.N. Nene : So far we have been discussing only about bore wells. Water can be brought from 2-3 kms. distance. We can pump water and bring it through pipes. This kind of programme requires to be considered. I also like to bore open wells. Voluntary organisations or even the villagers themselves can dig the wells in their own villages and make their own arrangements to draw water.

Dr. M.A. Ghare : Corruption is a reality, vested interest is a reality, red tape is a reality, ego of Government officials is a reality. If all these realities are taken into consideration, then voluntary organisations would normally like to be beware of this programme. Today a single tube well has become a centre of politics. Zila Parishads are in a position to secure a number of tubewells in particular areas. Do you think that in these circumstances, Government departments would allow voluntary agencies to work in the area ? They will not. Govern-

ment has managed to keep away all voluntary agencies from such duties. The reason is basic differences in ideology.

Mr. Joe Meredith : I have a problem in identifying problem villages. In tribal areas of Orissa, a village is considered a village when it is a revenue village. There are 43,000 such villages. If there is a single pump in a village, then it is considered that the whole area in the village has been covered. In reality, only a fraction of the population is covered. It is just the same in the case of electricity. If any where in a village, there is an electric line, the village is considered to be electrified, though, in reality, bulk of the village may remain beyond the reach of electricity. Similarly one pump cannot make the whole village free from drinking water problem. We have to see how many tubewells are needed in a village. Most of the tribal areas have no drinking water. People bring water from 4-5 kms. The answer to this is to dig more wells in villages. Our first priority is to reach every problem area. Further, in hilly areas, open dug wells can be done.

Swami Manmathan : Government is spending a lot of money for water supply. Still the problem remains unsolved. Rivers are going dry due to deforestation. Government should do something to identify new water sources. Geophysical surveys are not being conducted. Hilly areas pose their own problem. The ground is hard and rocky and drilling is difficult. Voluntary organisations do not have the plant and equipment needed to do the job. Nor do they have specialised persons. What type of technical support voluntary organisations can get for undertaking work in such difficult areas ?

Shri Tushar Kanjilal ; We have to take water to the maximum number of people through whatever source we can easily tap. In Sunderbans, open wells are preferred. Maintenance of deep tubewells would be difficult. Voluntary organisations should be left free to decide on the type of water source they will like to develop suitable to their area and suitable to their capacity.

Shri R. Ramamurthy : We have to make allowances for different areas. In Rayalaseema, we do not have water even up to 50 or 60 ft. There is water scarcity. People are not willing to bore wells. They are not accepting bored wells. Depending on the areas, we have to be flexible in determining the mode of drinking water.

Shri V. Venugopalan : In hilly areas, there are certain norms to be followed. If all the steps are taken, then there should not be any problem. Coming to the open wells, it has to be borne in mind that it is very difficult to control proper use of water from open wells. Villagers wash their clothes and utensils. Unless people are educated on health aspects of water use, it will be very difficult to control such insanitary practices. If any voluntary organisation takes up any open well programme it should also take up education of the people in water use. Type of programme depends on the requirements of the area. What is necessary is that the maintenance by way of chlorination and community investment should be ensured.

Shri T.C.A. Srinivasaramanujan : I am very glad that there has been a free exchange of views between Government and voluntary organisations. I would like to reassure that the reservations of some voluntary organisations about taking up Government programmes are not warranted. When PADI would be the media, the programme will be between PADI and the voluntary organisations. All the responsibility for obtaining clearances from State Government, CPHEEO and Home Ministry will be shouldered by PADI. Voluntary organisations would have no difficulty in respect of these requirements. So far as corruption and political factors are concerned, I do not know whether drinking water supply programme involves more of these problems than other Government programme. This conference is all about voluntary organisations taking up various Government programmes like RLEGP, TRYSEM, organisation of Rural Poor, DWCRA, Public Cooperation and Water Supply Programme. Can we say that voluntary organisations will not have any difficulty in dealing with Government

in respect of all the other programmes, but that only when it comes to drinking water supply programme, they will face special problems due to corruption or politics? I feel that if a voluntary organisation can implement irrigation projects, animal husbandry schemes, agricultural activities, family welfare, education, health programme and nutrition programmes, income generating schemes and training programmes, it can implement drinking water supply programme also without facing more or less of the problems which it may have to face while implementing the other programmes. When we are thinking of enlarging the area of involvement of voluntary organisations in development activities financed by Government, we should not exclude drinking water supply programme, merely because some problems exist. If the problems are peculiar to drinking water supply, it is a different matter. The discussion however indicates that there is no inherent difficulty for a voluntary organisation to take up drinking water programme financed by Government.

The second area of discussion centred around the structure of PADI and its procedures. Since these issues have been discussed in the opening session. I would not like to go over them again. I would only say that PADI is very anxious to simplify its procedures for sanctioning water supply schemes. The Standing Committee for Projects which will consider the schemes will include representatives from Ministry of Works and Housing. The approval of the project by the Committee consisting of representatives from Ministry of Works and Housing would preclude the necessity for making reference to Ministry of Works and Housing and CPHEEO. No problem will be involved in State Government clearance which it is the responsibility of PADI to obtain. Voluntary organisations are not required to conform to any standard specifications prescribed by Government. It has been clarified that the types of schemes will depend upon the characteristics of the area in which they will be implemented. What is only required is that the scheme should conform broadly to the objective of Government to provide safe drinking water to every problem village.

Lot of expertise is available in the voluntary sector. Ministry of Works and Housing is operating water supply programme through State Governments and it wants to supplement the efforts with another line of implementation in the voluntary sector. Now it is time for the voluntary organisation to take advantage of the new opportunities and contribute their mite in reducing the problem of drinking water supply.

Shri J.B. Singh : We are ashamed that even after so many years of Independence drinking water is not universally available. Now the question arises how to solve it. My suggestion is that voluntary organisations should prepare simple projects suited to their areas and pass them on to PADI. General Secretary PADI has assured that he will have them scrutinised and sanctioned with the least possible delay. Questions about geo-physical and geo-hydrological surveys were raised. There are non-governmental organisations doing these jobs. Ministry of Works and Housing may think of establishing relationship with such organisations.

Shri K. Vishwanathan : I am glad that there will be more rapport between Government of India and voluntary organisations through PADI. I would like to remind Government of India and PADI that voluntary organisations have deal with State departments also in one way or the other. At those levels, things are not very positive. Here at the higher level, we are making policies. These policies should be conveyed to officials at different levels. PADI and various departments should use their good offices to organise regional and State level meetings where Government officials and voluntary organisations can have dialogue and interaction. Such consultations will generate goodwill. We are working towards common goals. We are all citizens of the country. Let us consider ourselves as partners and let us work together with a positive mind.

Session on Energy Sources

20-4-1985

12.00 Noon

Chairman : Shri R. Ramamurthi

Shri R. Ramamurthi : We have a galaxy of experts on energy sources. All of us are interested in identifying and developing new sources of energy. I would request Shri B.B. Vohra to highlight on this topic.

Shri B.B. Vohra : Energy is one field where voluntary organisations can play an important role. Biogas, solar heaters and solar cookers are some of the programmes which they can take up effectively. Social forestry and waste land development are other programmes which voluntary organisations can take up. There are 13 to 15 million hectares of waste land in our country. Voluntary organisations with proper orientation can contribute in the development of these lands.

Smt. Shailaja Chandra : We have seen that voluntary organisations have been able to bring about awareness among people. Their contribution in afforestation and conservation of plantations is very good. In the field of chulhas also, achievements of voluntary organisations are significant. The Chulha recently developed by Meghalaya costs about only Rs. 30. It has come within the reach of the common people.

Shri Narender Bedi : Different methods should be utilised for development of waste land. Growing of trees is one method. But there are other means like fish ponds. We have developed marshy lands in Andhra Pradesh and reclaimed 2000 acres. Nursery development is very important in waste land

development. Only locally suited species should be reared. One of the crucial factors ensuring success of plantations is that the species should be acceptable to the farmers. They should have economic reasons to grow the trees. Installation of wind mills is another important area where voluntary organisations can contribute.

Shri. K. Vishwanathan : Mitraniketan is in the field of rural development for the last 25 years. It has rewarding experiences in the area of waste land development. Actually it is not waste land but it is wasted land. Within 25 years of planting trees, Mitraniketan found that areas which did not have water during summer started getting water throughout the year. We should plant useful trees and call it agro-forestry. It will ensure people's involvement. We should think of de-linking Forest Development and encourage people to cultivate more and more trees. People should be given ownership rights on the trees planted by them. Voluntary agencies should be encouraged to come forward. Many waste lands have been encroached upon. If they can be retrieved, lot of plantations can be done.

Swami Manmathan : I stay in an area of forests. I find that Forest Department is responsible for de-forestation. There is a very urgent need to protect the Himalayan region from destruction. If trees are destroyed in the Himalayas, the effects will be felt not only in Himalayas but throughout the country. Even Ganges will dry up if Himalayas are denuded. Protection of Himalayan trees would be possible only if people are actively involved in preservation of trees and growing more and more trees. Voluntary organisations should take up the work on a massive scale.

Shri Prem Bhai ; Our organisation is promoting afforestation. We persuaded a group of 10 families to plant 100 trees. If this group basis is encouraged, it would be possible to involve 5000 families every year to plant 5 lakh trees. In 5 years, 25 lakhs trees can be planted. Each tree will give Rs. 100

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as income per annum. This is a commercial proposition, but the problem is that neither the Forest Department nor the Gram Sabhas will allow people to plant trees in the lands belonging to them. Unless we design new procedures to create a voluntary movement or people's movement, our goal will not be achieved.

Shri Joe Meredith : One of the constraints in the plantation work is that there is no uniformity of policy. At different levels, different policies are pursued. For instance, in Orissa, people in a village planted cashew trees but since it was against the policy of Forest Department, it plucked the plants after one year. If certain decisions are made at the national level it is better that the State Government is taken into confidence. Chulha is an ambitious programme. Lot of changes are needed in the training programme. At present 20 people are trained for 10 days and during this period, 60 to 100 Chulhas are constructed. The teething problems start only after the training period is over. These problems are not however attended with the result that only 30% of the Chulhas are in working condition. If this sort of things goes on it will give a bad name to the Chulha programme. We in Orissa completed 5000 Chulhas. It is because we attended not only to the technique of construction but also to the technique of attending to the post construction problems. Voluntary agencies are involved in a big way in installation of biogas plants. There are some problems which should be attended to. Cement is the biggest constraint in the construction of the biogas plants. Efforts should be made to ensure that control cement is made available in each block headquarters so that there is no delay in supply of cement to agencies constructing biogas plants. If there is delay in supply of control cement, the agencies constructing bio-gas plants may be given subsidy to make up for the difference in price.

The second problem is that appliances for biogas plants are not available in sufficient quantities in most places. Shopkeepers are prone to over charge. State Governments should see that biogas appliances are available in each block. They

should also ensure that the appliances are sold at prescribed Government rates and that excessive charges are not collected by shopkeepers. It is also necessary that cheap appliances are developed. Obtaining subsidy is also another major problem. Banks should be given subsidies in advance.

At present no data are available on the actual number of biogas plants. Whatever information is available is based on sample survey only. It will not be too much for the Energy Board to conduct an actual survey of all the biogas plants existing today in the country.

Another problem is that sand is collected at the bottom of biogas plant within 2-3 years. The storage capacity of the biogas plant decreases as a result. Unless the sand is cleaned the appliances will become defective. Mobile maintenance units with sludge pumps should be made available in each district.

Another suggestion which I would like to make is that there should be an insurance scheme. At present the turnkey agency gives only guarantee for two years. This is totally insufficient. Minimum guarantee of five years is necessary. About Rs. 100/- should be kept per unit to meet the maintenance charges. Every six months, the plant should be serviced and the pipeline should be checked up.

Shri K.D. Dewan : I am working in the biogas field in Bihar. Loans sanctioned by the banks are received very late and lot of time is wasted. There is a considerable delay in obtaining cement which also affects the progress of the project. Subsidies are also released very irregularly. Due to administrative problems like these, the objectives of this good programme are defeated.

Swami Manmathan : Afforestation suffers because of the lack of interest of the Forest Department. In Tehri Garhwal, there is an allotment of Rs. 40 lakhs for plantation but even

the work has not started. If such be the interest of the Forest Department, there is no hope of afforestation picking up. Solar energy programme is also important. I suggest that solar driers should be encouraged. We should take energy from waste leaves.

Smt. Lepmonie Sangma : We have heard a lot about smokeless chulhas. But in our north eastern tribal areas we want smoke. We need smoke to heat our fish and also keep our houses warm. We use bamboos and bamboo leaves to make fire. Without smoke we cannot survive. Smokeless chulhas are not suitable for our area. Unless chulhas which will emit smoke are designed, the programme cannot pick up in the north east.

Smt. Shailaja Chandra : The suggestion made by Smt. Sangma is very important. We are aware that smokeless chulhas are not suitable for the conditions in the north east. Special chulhas which emit smoke have been designed for the north eastern areas.

Shri Shivanand Bhai : I am glad that greater awareness has come about plantation and energy. I am working in a tribal area where people's lives are interwoven with trees. They eat the leaves, fruits and even roots in times of distress. They sell the by-products of trees like kendu leaves, teeth twigs (datoons) fruits and firewood to earn their livelihood. The destruction of trees has completely upset the economy of the tribals. Afforestation is, therefore, a very important solution for the problems of the tribals. Two incentives should be built into the afforestation programme. One is that unemployed tribals should be given wages in plantation work. Another is that they should be given usufructury rights over the trees. If the trees are going to belong to Forest Department or to Panchayats, the poor villagers will have no proprietary stake in preserving them.

Shri Sharad Kulkarni : There are many difficulties in

planting on common lands. Getting permission to plant and sharing of the benefits of the plantations would not be easy. Voluntary organisations will find it difficult to get access to common lands. Another point I would like to stress is that more experiments are needed to propagate plantation programmes. Take for instance bamboo. Very little has been done to propagate bamboo plantations. Considerable work is required to be done to expand bamboo plantations. I am glad that Waste Land Board has been constituted. It is necessary for organisations set up in the national capital to study grassroot village situations and work out suitable methodologies to spread their programmes.

Shri B.B. Vohra : I have taken note of the points and will keep them in mind when the terms of reference for the Waste Land Development Board are drawn up. Legal changes are required to be made in the rules and regulations for protecting trees. As a matter of fact, this question has never been looked into. It has never cropped up earlier but the matter will have to be taken up sooner or later. There is no reason why we are not able to say that irrespective of the ownership, lands which are lying vacant should be used for producing something.

I quite agree with you that no common property is safe in India. Many of the lands are supposed to be waste lands but in fact are encroached upon and are under illegal occupation. It requires strong political will to get the encroachers moved out so that the waste lands can be made more productive once again.

I am very happy to share with all of you your experiences. I am certain that they will help various Government departments and agencies to reformulate their policies and programmes.

Shri R. Ramamurthi : We are thankful to Shri B.B. Vohra for his valuable contribution to the session.

Shri Maheshwar Dayal : We called a meeting of various voluntary agencies and after that we have been having regular meetings with them. A large number of programmes in several areas of the country are handled by voluntary agencies. The general picture which is emerging in the last few years is that there has been quite a big expansion of smokeless chulhas and biogas plants. There has been a very major thrust in the programmes. 5 lakh smokeless chulhas have been sold. The chulhas have been installed in a big way. I have personally been to many villages in Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra and Orissa. The programme has gained a great deal of popularity. In biogas, during 1984-85, we put a rough target of 1.15 lakh biogas plants in the country. We have more than achieved the target. In Tamil Nadu, 17000 plants have been installed against the target of 10,000 plants. Similarly in other places also, there has been a good performance. So far as non-functioning of plants is concerned, it has been found that the number of non-functional plants is very limited. You might be knowing that we have introduced a scheme of rectification of the non-functional plants.

We have to have in every State some Department dealing with biogas plants at the nodal level. A nodal organisation can carry out the programme through voluntary agencies or even individuals. The purpose of nominating a nodal Department is to provide a State Government linkage. Last year we called the representatives of the State Governments because part of the problem is lack of interaction between State Government machinery and voluntary organisations.

Mr. Joe Meredith : The biggest constraint in biogas development is cement. The problem can be solved by subsidising the open market cement. It will be a question of Rs. 8-9 in the form of subsidy. In Orissa, not more than Rs. 4-5 lakhs a year is required.

Shri Maheshwar Dayal : I think the possibility will be examined. We will look into the question.

Shri Joe Meredith : It is not cement alone. There are other constraints too. Biogas designs are big constraints. We should try to improve the designs. Banks are reluctant to finance biogas.

Shri Maheshwar Dayal : We had separate meetings with bankers. We had got instructions sent to the bankers. These instructions have been sent to every district in the country. The banks have been instructed to clear biogas loan applications with 15 days.

Shri Joe Meredith : There should be a complete survey of all existing biogas plants in India.

Shri Maheshwar Dayal : This is not possible.

Shri Joe Meredith : If the work is given to us it will be finished before October.

Shri Maheshwar Dayal : If there is a survey, we can really plan strategy, but by the time one survey is completed based on the situation at one point, there will be a gap of at least 2 years and the data will become obsolete. Designing a suitable questionnaire is also a problem.

Shri Joe Meredith : There should be 5 years guarantee instead of 2 years at present.

Shri K.D. Dewan : Implementation of biogas programme is beset with a lot of difficulties. Sanctions are given very late. Block Development Officers delay sanctions. Banks put lot of difficulties in disbursement of loans. Biogas loan is considered as consumption loan. Banks consider it a bad debt. Cement is another big problem. VASFA set up 20 plants last year. We deposited the money for the cement. In spite of lot of efforts, we did not ultimately get the cement. Finally we wanted refund of our money which was also delayed. There is great difficulty in getting subsidy also. The Deputy Collector did not accept

the papers saying that only Khadi and Village Industries Commission is the implementing agency and not voluntary organisations. In spite of intervention from the higher level, subsidy was not released. The Gandak Command Area Authority was prepared to get the subsidy for us but on condition that the biogas plants installed are treated as part of the Command Area Authority's programme and not as part of the voluntary organisation's programme.

In my opinion just as there is a District Development Agency in every district to push up the programme of Department of Rural Development, a non-conventional energy cell should be set up in every district and all the programmes of the Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources should be handled by this cell.

Shri Hariballabh Parikh : Shri Dewan has given very valuable suggestions. I agree with him that there are many problems in implementing the biogas programme. The question of submission of certificates for taking loans for biogas plants should be dispensed with. Anand Niketan planned to set up 1000 plants and wrote to 5-7 banks. There was a lot of correspondence. All the banks insisted on the certificates. We wasted one year. Then the Land Development Bank agreed to help us. They helped us in 200 to 250 plants. Anand Niketan plants were given exemption from the requirement of submission of certificates but for other plants no such exemption was given. It is necessary that the certificates should be dispensed with for all plants. We contacted Khadi Commission and requested them to give us the subsidy direct or to deposit it in the banks. They also took a lot of time. Easy procedures to grant subsidies should be developed.

Shri J.B. Singh : AFPRO has set up 20 plants in Aligarh. These will be based on new designs. In Orissa, 6 plants have been put up and another 70 plants are in the process of being put up. In Gujarat and Maharashtra also many plants are coming up. In the next six months AFPRO will be able to reduce

the cost of biogas plants by about 20%. We have already conducted 90 training programmes. The progress is very exciting. There is delay in payment of commission to the agencies installing biogas plants. The bottlenecks should be removed. Corruption in the payment of subsidy should also be removed.

Shri S.R. Faruqui : Training is one of the major programmes. Extension of the chulha programme is another activity. Voluntary organisations can play a very important role. They can provide outlets to the local communities.

Concluding Session

29-4-1985

4 P.M.

Chairman : Prof. S. Dasgupta

Shri D. Bandyopadhyay : I hope that the various issues of rural development involving voluntary organisations have been thrashed out during the discussions in the past two days. For the last few years, I have been monitoring rural development. One point which strikes is that there is a need to develop a suitable technology. People are putting their money. They ought to be guarded against failure of their investment due to faulty technology. The second most crucial point impinging on rural development is sanitation. It is due to lack of sanitation that most diseases occur. We should really free the countryside of squalor, dirt, filth and human and animal waste. These will bring about tremendous improvement in the quality of rural life. Human and animal waste should be utilised as substitutes for fertilizers. This will bring down the dependence of the farmers on fertilizers, which are not only costly but which may be detrimental to the soil also. These

and many fields require to be tackled on high priority. Voluntary organisations can develop strategies, methodologies and technologies for solving rural development problems. Apart from these general issues, the specific issues before the Conference relate to taking up projects by voluntary organisations with the assistance of PADI. I am sure that you would have come up with suitable suggestions for increasing the role of voluntary organisations in the field of rural development with assistance from PADI.

Shri Sharad Kulkarni : There is lot of corruption in implementation of Government programmes. When it comes to individual beneficiaries, the problem of implementation becomes much more difficult. Individuals as isolated entities can be easily exploited by giving them wrong information about the rate of wages, subsidy, price of assets etc. which are the types of assistance which they get. The people also do not question the mal-practices as they feel that assistance from Government is a form of charity.

Shri D. Bandyopadhyay : That is why we are interested in organising the beneficiaries. If they are welded into disciplined organisations there could be a check on mal-practices. Qualitative changes in rural development can be brought about with greater awareness of the people of their rights, entitlements and responsibilities. We are contemplating a scheme of organising beneficiary groups in the voluntary sector. PADI can take up this, any voluntary organisation can take up this, even individuals with commitment can also take up this. Certain basic ingredients should be there. First the beneficiaries should be fully convinced that there is a need for organisation. That is the first step in the thought process. There should be group action by the beneficiaries, thinking together and perceiving the situation together. Actual beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries should see a common interest in seeking common solutions. The beneficiaries themselves should reflect upon their problems. Nobody is a teacher. Discussions and solutions have to be generated as part of a learning process. Thus the chief

motivator organising the rural poor will only sow the seeds for the organisation to germinate.

Shri Harballabh Parikh : People who have faced difficulties from Government or from banks should be called. Their problems should be understood in their correct perspective. Organisation of beneficiaries should mainly work for solving the problems of the rural poor.

Shri J.B. Singh : I am very happy that the Seventh Five Year Plan will give importance to organisations of beneficiaries. This work was taken up by PADI from the 1970s. Development cannot take place unless beneficiaries are organised. Voluntary organisations involved in organisational work should be consulted while formulating the scheme.

Shri Sharad Kulkarni : One of the concerns of this Conference is about restructuring of PADI. There are also suggestions that PADI should invite more and more voluntary organisations to take up various schemes under one umbrella. The success of those schemes will depend on whether PADI would allow the voluntary organisations to frame the scheme in a flexible manner. If there has to be people's action for development, only broad guidelines should be given. There should not be do's and don'ts for every minor detail of a scheme. When the Ministry of Works and Housing gives funds to PADI for drinking water scheme, it has to be made clear that dealings should be between voluntary organisations and PADI. Works and Housing Ministry should not insist on particular types of drinking water sources. Conditions differ from place to place. In some places, open wells are suitable, in some cases tubewells and in some cases it may be flow of water.

Shri B.N. Nene : There are thousands of voluntary organisations spread all over the country. It will not be possible for central funding agencies like PADI to deal with each one of them on individual basis. Unless there are intermediate organisations to coordinate the activities of voluntary organisations,

it will not be possible to bring a large number of voluntary organisations within the framework of PADI's assistance. In Maharashtra, People's Action For Development (Maharashtra) has been set up as a nodal agency for voluntary organisations. PAD (Maharashtra) has not only assisted many voluntary organisations from its own resources, but has also been successful in bringing them into contact with PADI. Thanks to the efforts of PAD (Maharashtra), many voluntary organisations in the State were able to avail themselves of PADI's assistance. I, therefore, strongly urge that the Conference recommends that in every State an organisation like PAD (Maharashtra) may be constituted as a nodal State level organisation.

Shri K. Vishwanathan : The consensus seems to be that each State should have a State level body to be formed by the State Government. Let such organisations come up. Why cannot voluntary organisations themselves form a forum of their own ? We can influence grassroot agencies and activate them. They can interact with State PADs. Government is there to support voluntary organisations. It wants participation of voluntary organisations in the realm of development. This is certainly a positive aspect of Government's functioning. But there is a negative aspect also. The same Government is persecuting voluntary organisations. This is a paradox. This is something about which voluntary organisations should do and formulate a course of action. Some organisations like ourselves are capable of coping with these persecutions. But there are hundreds of small organisations. Persecution by Government will have a devastating effect on their minds. Voluntary organisations should see that small organisations are not persecuted.

Prof. S. Dasgupta : I would now sum up broadly the discussions which took place during the Conference. It was noted that PADI will be operating large amount of funds from Government to assist voluntary organisations. To cope with this new role, PADI has toned up its procedures for scrutiny and sanction of projects. First there will be direct dealing between PADI and voluntary organisations. Projects need not be

sent through State Governments or Government agencies. It is PADI's job to obtain concurrence and clearances from various quarters. Secondly, it was indicated that delays in getting concurrence of State Governments would not be allowed to hold up sanction of projects indefinitely. State Governments will be given only three months within which they have to make up their minds whether to support a project or not. If no reply is received, State Government's concurrence will be dispensed with. We were also told that even if State Government gives an adverse report, it will not be binding on PADI and an independent view can be taken. Third and the most important point which came up was that PADI wants to use voluntary organisations themselves in canvassing projects for PADI, in assisting other organisations in formulation of projects, in appraising projects and even in monitoring projects. Hitherto, these tasks were considered purely official functions of PADI's secretariat. Now PADI will share with voluntary organisations these responsibilities. I am certain that this experiment will help in bringing a breath of fresh air in the whole system of project formulation and appraisal. Now it is for voluntary organisations to find out how far they can go in motivating organisations in their contact to seek project assistance, to help them in preparing projects and to undertake pre-funding project appraisal work on behalf of PADI. If we are able to take up these tasks, we will justify our being called coordinating agencies with networks in the voluntary sector. Lastly, the Conference discussed various Government schemes which are available for voluntary sector. In this respect, the main point which emerged was that the guidelines applicable to the schemes as implemented by Government will have to be suitably modified to enable voluntary organisations to implement them. There should not be any rigidities in the guidelines. I would now request General Secretary, PADI to make some concluding remarks.

Shri T.C.A. Srinivasaramanujan : This Conference has been a very interesting experience for PADI. Many useful points have been made about Government, PADI and voluntary organisations and I am sure that, based on the discussions,

constructive steps will be initiated. PADI is restructuring itself and is always conscious that there is a considerable leeway to be made up. One objective of the Conference is to shake off the legacy of looking at projects from a purely official angle. We want that voluntary organisations should advise PADI in formulation of projects and should recommend acceptance or rejection of projects. I would like each one of you to play the role of a network agency, contact other voluntary organisations, prepare their projects for PADI's support and also indicate the geographical area and field of interest in which you can accept the responsibility for project appraisal for PADI. This will be a good follow up of this Conference.

Shri Manoranjan Mandal : Friends, it is my pleasant duty to propose a vote of thanks. I take this opportunity to thank all the representatives of voluntary organisations who have travelled long distances and spared their valuable time in participating in this Conference. I also thank the Government officials who came to this conference and enriched its proceedings. I trust that this will be the first of a series of such meetings among voluntary organisations to redefine our role and demarcate the lines of cooperation among ourselves and with Government agencies. We are leaving this Conference with a sense of satisfaction and with stirrings of hope that the promise of a greater role of voluntary organisations in rural development held out in the Conference would be fulfilled.