

CHAPTER - 2

Rural Development Before and After Independence

2. Introduction

The district of Saharsa played an important part in the freedom movement. The Home rule movement of Annie Besent in - 1917 and Styagarah Movement of Mahatma Gandhi in 1921 received widespread support in the district. In Saharsa, the freedom movement was led, among others, by Sarvashri Mahtal Lal Yadava, Shivanandan Mandal, Nand Kishore Chaudhary, Rajendra Mishra, Ram Bahadur Sinha, Yadunanadan Jha and Rajendra Lal Das. Supaul and Madhepura Jails were full of Political prisoners. Thana Bihpur (in Bhagalpur district) was the scene of great activity where Dr. Rajendra Prasad was bitterly beaten by the police and the people of Saharsa were much agitated over this picketing tool place all over the district with full Vigour. The Period between

1930 and 1942 was marked by various Kishan agitations all over the district for Bakast lands.

Rural development is an obligation of the Government to raise the standard of living of the rural people. Since independence, the Government has initiated developmental planning measures and implemented through Five Year Plans. So far, though eight Five Year Plans have been implemented, the problem of rural poverty and unemployment has remained largely unsolved. Even basic infrastructure facilities also are launching in most of the Villages. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is an organized effort to evolve the possibility of developing infrastructural facilities along with inter-sectoral avenue in an integrated framework at micro-level.' It is not merely a programme of rural development but a combined effort under which all-rural development programs, which were in vogue, were integrated. It represents a significant achievement in the field of organization. The evolution of IRDP has a historical background. But before discussing it, it is essential to know what is rural development and what are the rural development efforts before and after independence.

2.1. The Concept Of Rural Development

In India, the concept of rural development was born in the context of agriculture and it remained for a long time continuous with agricultural development.

The objectives of rural development, according to the World Bank, are not restricted to any single Department but spread over several, and the resultant mix serves to raise agricultural output, create new employment, improve health and education, expand communication, provide housing etc. Thus, the World Bank defined rural development in terms of an improvement of the economic and social life of the rural poor. Rural development encompasses all sectors of rural life. In its widest sense, it implies development of every aspect of rural life.

The basic objectives of rural development is to organize, develop and utilize the available resources of land, water, and manpower in such a manner that the entire population depended on these resources have an equitable Government of India, Planning Commission, Interim Report on Integrated Agricultural Development opportunity to meet, as a minimum in its basic needs. Rural development involves:

1. Improvement in levels of weaker sections of the rural population, as indicated by income, productivity, employment, literacy rate, health and nutrition, infant mortality rate, expectation of life, exposure to mass media, housing, political participation, status of women, supply of safe drinking water and similar other minimum needs.
2. Decreasing the inequality in distribution of rural wealth and incomes,

3. Decreasing the inequality in rural-urban imbalances in incomes and economic opportunities,

4. Capacity of the rural sector to sustain and accelerate the pace of the above mentioned improvement over time.

G.R. Krishnaswamy's views on rural development involves several categories of integration such as, integration of different sectors of the rural economy with forward and backward linkages, economic development with social development, total area approach and target group approach, credit with technical services, human resource development with manpower needs and integration of income generating schemes with the minimum needs programme of education, rural health, water supply and nutrition.

2.2. Definitions of Rural Development

The Rural Development sector Policy Paper of the World Bank (1975) observes that "rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people - the rural poor. It involves the extension of the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless."

Again a World Bank publication defines rural development as "improving the living standards of the low-income population residing in rural areas and making the process of their

development self-sustaining"? It consists of development of Villages in to healthy, self-sufficient, and prosperous units of living and provides the basic requirements for a healthy and comfortable living.

In a seminar on Approaches to Rural Development in Asia, discussions were centered around a definition of rural development as a process which lead to a continuous rise in the capacity of the rural people to control their environment, accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such control" This definition is composed of three important elements:

1. Rural development must be viewed as a process of raising the capacity of the rural people to control their environment. Environment does not mean only agricultural or economic development. It includes all aspects of rural life - social, economic, cultural and political,
2. Rural Development as a process should continuously raise the capacity of the rural people to influence their total environment, enabling them to become initiators and controllers of change in their environment rather than being merely the passive objects of external manipulation and Control, and
3. Rural development must result in wider distribution of benefits accruing from technical developments and the

participation of weaker sections of the rural population in the process of development.

Michael Torado mews that rural development encompasses:

1. Improvement in levels of living including employment, education, health and nutrition, housing and a variety of social services,
- 2, Decreasing inequality in the distribution of rural incomes and in rural-urban balances in Incomes and economic opportunities, and
3. The capacity of the rural sector to sustain and accelerate the pace of these.

The famous sociologist, James H Crops has defined rural development as a process through collective efforts, aimed at improving the well-being and self-realization of people living outside the urbanized area. He further contends that the alternate target of rural development is people and not infrastructure and according to him, one of the objectives of rural development should be to widen people's range of choice. Mishra and Sunderam defined mal development as not merely development of rural areas but also the development of quality of life of the rural masses in to self-reliant and self-sustaining modem little communities. Rural development IS therefore development of rural areas in such a way that each component of rural life changes in a desired direction. Another scholar,

Lassey emphasizes that the focus of rural development should be on.

1. Preservation of ecological integrity with a view to provide a continuous Supply of life-supporting resources,
2. Extent and appropriate land use,
3. Healthy living conditions,
4. An aesthetically pleasing environment,
5. Effective socio-economic and Environmental institutions,
6. Improved human welfare in terms of minimum economic and social Level,
- 7 Physical structures adopted and landscape of pleasing design, and
8. Comprehensiveness, that is, the full range of physical, biological and factors in ruins.

The Ashridge Conference on Social Development defined rural development as a movement designed to promote better living for all in the whole community with the active participation and initiative of the community.' According to UN Report, "rural development has come into international usage to connote the process by which the efforts of people themselves are united to those of Governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions in the life of the nation and to relate them to contribute fully to national."

In the words of Robert Chambers, "rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women, and men to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and landless.' - Thus rural development is a multi-dimensional process which includes the development of socio-economic conditions of the people living in the rural areas and ensures their participation in the process of development for complete utilization of physical and human resources for better living conditions. It extends the benefits of development to the weaker and poorer sections of rural society. It also enhances both the capacity and capability of administrative and socio-economic development agencies and agricultural marketing units working in the rural areas.

2.3. Rural Development during the British Rule

Since time immemorial, India has been predominantly a rural country. Thus, rural development has always been in the priority concern of national development. In those days, our villages were self-sufficient and self-sustained and the respective rulers made any effort for the betterment in their conditions. But during the British rule, they were not concerned with the socio-economic development of India and thus our rural economy was severely damaged resulting in the miserable conditions of the rural. It was the famine of 1899,

which forced the British Government to think about the people of India who were dying of hunger. The recurrent famines forced the State Administrators to seize the food grains and arrange for the distribution among the famine-affected people. All was done without any apparent legal sanction, motivated as the action purely was by determination to control profiteering and alleviate rural suffering." Later, with the recommendations of Famine Commissions of 1866 and 1880 and with the initiative of Lord Curzon, Provincial Department of Agriculture with Agricultural College and Provincial Research Institute were established in 1906 the Indian Agricultural Service was constituted. A number of British officers according to their interest and inclination tried out a few experiments in rural reconstruction. The spread of such Programs were thin and only small financial outlays could be made for them. They were not pursued with any noticeable sense of urgency. The primary concern of the administrations as maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue, not development. Thus, colonial interests were the primary objectives and rural development was secondary.

2.4. Rural Development During The Pre-Independence Period

In the pre-independence period, a number of rural development programs were started by the Nationalists and Social reformers.

Some of these programs gradually disappeared or some were merged with Government sponsored schemes later. 'This is because of various reasons like lack of encouragement of the Government, lack of financial support, inadequate, inexperienced and untrained staff. The other reasons are lop-sided approach to different aspects of development, absence of needed supplies and services, inadequate co-ordination and co-operation from other departments and agencies. There are many efforts i.e. Gandhian Approach in Rural Development in Champaran, Bihar (1917), Gandhian Experiment in Rural Reconstruction (1920), Sriniketan Project (1921) of Poet Rabinder Nath Tagore, Marthamdom Project (1921)– Spencer Hatch of YMCA, Gurgaon Project (1927) – F.L.K. Bryne, Rural Reconstruction Movement (1932) – V.T. Krishnamachari, Sevagram (1936) – Mahatma Gandhi, Grow More Food Campaigns 1942 – F.L.Bryne, Indian village upliftment Scheme in 1945, were started for rural development. But, the most important rural development efforts during the pre-independence era were:

1. Rural Reconstruction programme by Mahatma Gandhi
2. The Sriniketan Experiment
- 3 The Martandam Experiment
4. The Gurgaon Experiment
5. Rural Reconstruction Programs in Baroda, and

6. The Firka Development scheme.

2.4.1 Rural Reconstruction Programme by Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi started the programs for rural reconstruction at Sevagram in Wardha In 1938. His 18-point Constructive Programme included the use of khadi, promotion of village industries, basic education, adult education, rural sanitation, removal of untouchability, upliftment of the backward classes, welfare of women, education in public health and hygiene, prohibition, propagation of mother tongue and economic equality.

The Gandhian Constructive Programme is essentially a programme of human activity in various fields that is beneficial for the economic growth of rural India. Gandhiji wished to evolve a philosophy of life, which would achieve the welfare of all (Sarvodaya).

Gandhiji was greatly disturbed by the decline of rural industries. He believed that the extinction of Village industry would complete the ruin of 7,00,000 villages He gave special attention to revive rural crafts especially spinning and weaving, traditional oil press, grain processing and leather works.

According to Gandhi, the return to traditional village industry could ensure full employment and well-being to the overwhelming population of the country. This philosophy

inspired and informed the activities of Gandhiji to the constructive workers who dedicated their lives to village development programs. Gandhian rural reconstruction activities were based on the principles of truth and non-violence. His ideas of rural reconstruction were accepted officially and resulted in the adoption of Khadi and Village Industries Programme, the principle of Village Self-sufficiency, and the faith in the Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Movement by the Government are some of the examples of the impact of Gandhian tradition.

2.4.2 Sriniketan Experiment

In 1920, Rabindra Nath Tagore laid the foundation of the Sriniketan Institute for Rural Reconstruction and formulated a programme for the all-round improvement in the Village of his Zamindari with the objective of studying rural problems and of helping the Villagers to develop agriculture, improving the livestock, formation of co-operatives. Tagore believed in self-help and mutual help and wanted the village workers to be involved in the life of rural people and work for their welfare. He started this programme in the cluster of 8 Villages but were not very successful and can only be described as rural welfare works. The absence of market facilities, professional guidance, lack of co-ordination between the implementing authority and improper incentives for workers made the task more difficult

and desired results could not be achieved. The Sriniketan experiment meant for bringing back life in its completeness into the Villages, making rural folks self-reliant and en-grading self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural traditions of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic conditions. Though this experiment was not success, it attained certain physical and notable results.

2.4.3 The Martandam Experiment

Dr. Spencer Hatch of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) set up a Project in 1921 at Martandam, 25 miles south of Thiruvananthapuram. The purpose of this experiment was to bring about a complete upward development towards a more complete and meaningful life for rural people, spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and economically. The main stress in programme was on the principle that people should not depend on Government for support because when concessions and help in any field are not given, the people develop in them a feeling of self-help and self-reliance.

The objectives of this programme was the YMCA should work in the Villages to eliminate poverty. For the Rural Demonstration Centre at

Martandam had a demonstration farm, prized animals, equipment for the honey industry and other cottage vocations

in its campus. Some industries like 27 weaving, poultry and bee keeping were started on a co-operative basis. Dr. Hatch could demonstrate the lucrative possibilities of these enterprises -

The major achievements of the programme were the change in the attitudes of the rural people, formation of a desire to improve the spirit of cooperation and self-respect. This experiment was followed by other States and its workers helped the States of Baroda, Mysore, Cochin and Hyderabad to set up Centers of Training for Rural Reconstruction.

2.4.4 The Gurgaon Experiment

In 1927, the Gurgaon experiment was started by F.L. Bryne, who was the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon District in Punjab. The programme aimed at improving agriculture, education, health and sanitation facilities, co-operation, and social development with greater vigor. Through these comprehensive efforts, he intended to remove poverty through a mass movement. He stressed on the dignity of labour, self-help and conducted propaganda through films, songs, skits and plays with a view to increase farm yields and improving health standards Under this programme, for the first time, a 'Village guide' was posted In each Village who was to work as a link to pass on new innovations to the main reason for the failure of this programme was that the reforms were imposed on the

people, rather than initiated by themselves. This widened the gap between the 'haves and have-nots'.

2.4.5 Rural Re-Construction Programme In Baroda

The Maharaja of Baroda was a progressive and enlightened man and he started the Baroda experiment in 1932. This programme aimed at developing "will to live better" and a capacity for self-help and self-reliance. The programme included the following items:

1. Improvement of communication,
2. Digging of drinking water wells,
3. Anti-malarial measures,
4. Pasture development,
5. Distribution of improved seeds,
6. Training in Cottage crafts,
7. Establishment of Panchayats and Co-operatives covering every Village,
8. Development of village schools as Centre for teach agriculture and for improving the will to live better. The programme had full legislative and financial support.

2.4.6 The Firka Development Scheme

The Firka Development scheme of Madras was a Government sponsored Scheme in 1946 this programme aimed at organizing the villagers for a Happier, more prosperous and fuller life in

which the individual villagers had the opportunity to develop both as an individual and as a unit of a well-integrated society. The short term objectives of the scheme was to develop basic amenities and an institutional framework for carrying out communication, water supply, sanitation, formation of local self-governments (i.e. panchayats) and cooperatives: 'The long term objectives were to attain self-sufficiency in food, Clothing, shelter, development of agriculture, animal husbandry, khadi and village industries.'

The administrative machinery consisted of Director of Rural Welfare at the State level, the Collector at District level, the Rural Welfare Officer at Firka level and 5 to 10 Gramasevaks under him. Besides these, staffs for Agriculture and Public Works were also provided for every Firka. Later in 1953-54, when the Community Development Programme and National Extension Service Programme were adopted by Madras State, the Firka Development Scheme was merged with it.

Pre-independent efforts of rural development programs were limited and confined to specific areas. All pre-independent efforts were isolated in nature and lacked a permanent organizational structure (Govt.). As a result, after showing some initial results, these projects withered away gradually without any tangible and permanent impact. Thus, various old programs suffered on account of the following reasons – lack

of government backing, lack of financial resources, lack of research support, lack of specialized facilities and lack of several other related factors. The failures of all the pre-independent rural development efforts have been summed up in a comprehensive way as under:

Gaikwad (1986) concluded that:

Earlier experiments were at least poor examples of rural reconstruction, considering their tall philosophical ideas, narrow and shallow base of thinking on material aspects of life, and poor and transient impact on the economy of rural people and these kept the society rural. In these experiments, there was not much that would build a technologically progressive economy. One would like to consider persons like Andrews, Empires, Miss Green, Dorothy Straight, Dr. Hatch, Brayne, Myer etc. as representatives of technologically and industrially advanced Western societies. Yet, they introduced very little of industry and technology of the west in their experiments.

2.5 Rural Development Since Independence

Immediately after the attainment of independence and before the commencement of planned economic development through Five Year Plans, three important programs of rural reconstruction were introduced in India. They were

- 1 The Etawah Pillot Project
- 2 The Nilokheri Experiment

3 The Bhoodan Movement

2.5.1 The Etawah Pilot Project

In 1948, Albert Mayor started the Etawah Pilot Project for the development of the rural areas of Etawah District in Uttar Pradesh. The main objective of the project was "to see what degree of productive and social improvement as well as initiative, self-confidence and co-operation can be developed. The problem was to ascertain how quickly these results may be attained and remain permanently a part of the people's mental, spiritual, technical equipment and outlook after the special pressure is lifted."

The other important features were: production intensity, people's cooperation, development of appropriate attitudes, careful selection of Personnel, self-reliance, local resources and supply and development of Village leadership.

The effort was made to introduce the Concept of Decentralized Economy leading to Agro-Industrial Economy which in turn led to the development of agriculture, horticulture, poultry, piggery, fishery, and other forms of animal husbandry.

For intensive operation of the programme, 97 Villages of Mahadeva Block in Etawah District were selected. Various activities like agricultural Demonstrations, soil conservation, improvement in animal husbandry, village sanitation and the co-operation of various departments and non-official agencies

were carried out. In order to secure people's participation, a programme of social education was also started. The Project was successful in achieving its aim and within 3 years, it was extended to 300 Villages of the Etawah District in UP."

2.5.2 The Nilokheri Experiment

S. K. Dey, the former Minister for Community Development and Cooperation was the founder of the Nilokheri Experiment in 1948, when nearly 7000 displaced persons were rehabilitated in Nilokheri town after independence. The scheme was also known as "Mazdoor Manzil" because of its principle 'he who will not work, neither shall he eat'. Under this programme, the main activities were a Vocational Training Centre run on co-operative lines and the Colony had its own dairy, poultry, piggery, printing press, engineering workshops, tannery, and bone-meal factory. People were given vocational training of their choice to run these Co-operative Enterprises. Rights for education and medical care for the sick were also guaranteed."

The Nilokheri project, in spite of its limitations, left an imprint on the Community Development Programme in the country. It gave the idea of agro-industrial Township as the nerve-Centre of rural development. The programme found place in the First Five Year Plan and in the layout of the Financial Plan of the first 52 Community Projects. Nilokheri was seen as a symbol of progress, but the Colony developed its own hierarchical

structure and the industries started facing troubles due to lack of competitive advantages. Nilokhen is still an important Centre for the training of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Functionaries.

2.5.3 The Bhoodan Movement.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, one of the earlier social reformers of India is the profounder of Bhoodan movement. In the words of Vinoba Bhave, Bhoodan Yojana is an all-comprehensive movement directed to the reform in all walks of life. Today every one thinks of himself alone and feels for self only. But Bhoodan makes the people think and do just the opposite of what they do now. It makes the people first think of their neighbors, and if he has no land, it must be their duty to provide him with it. In Bhoodan, distribution of land is not the only question. It aims at the moral regeneration of the whole nation. Through it we hope to solve the economic difficulties, encourage Village Industries and remove the difference between the educated and the uneducated by making them both to join in common work."

The inspiration of Bhoodan came to Vinobaji in 1951 when he was touring the Telangana District of Hyderabad. The basic objective of Bhoodan campaign was to prevent the emergence of bloody revolution by solving the land problems in a peaceful way. The real intention was to create the right atmosphere so

that progressive land reforms could follow. At one stage, it was thought that Vinoba had succeeded in converting the minds of large numbers of big landholders. Acres upon acres and later Villages & Villages were shown as being given away to the landless or the tenants. However, later, it was found that, in most such cases, the Bhoodan proved to be a sham; in one manner or another, the large landholders retained the land. Except above projects, there are many other projects as : Sarvodaya Program (1948), Fifteen Pilot Extension Projects – Ford Foundation, Community Development Program (1952) – Chester Bowel, National Extension Service (NES) 1953, Panchayati Raj (1959), Intensive Agricultural District Program (IADP-1960), Intensive Agriculture Area Program (IAAP-1964), High Yielding Variety Program (HYVP-1966), Training and Visit (T&V-1974), Small Farmers' Development Agency, 1970. Marginal Farmers' Development Agency (1970), Drought Prone Area Program (1970), Integrated Tribal Development Program, Integrated Rural Development Program (1978-79), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM-1975), Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (1975) were adopted for Rural Development under Post Independence.

The different rural development attempts during the pre-planning period, no doubt, did something really good in spite

of many hurdles. But some of the schemes gradually disappeared from the scene and some were merged later with Government sponsored schemes. These earlier attempts could not last long or attain the desired goals for various reasons such as lack of encouragement from the Government, lack of necessary financial support, inadequate and untrained staff, lop-sided approach to different aspects of development and absence of necessary infrastructure facilities. As noted in the First Five Year Plan, the experience of early rural reconstruction schemes reveals that different schemes were forced on the villagers and as such there was no enthusiasm among them and there was lack of initiative for the people, which is very essential for the success of the schemes.

The following problems were encountered in implementing the Sriniketan Project of 1921 such as lack of Pilot Survey or Research, lack of University research on technical, social and economic aspects was a great handicap, pre-planning survey was not completed, sound professional guidance was not available from any corner, there was absence of intimate contact between project workers, government officials and between officials and the villagers, there was dearth of men and means to take up the work at large scale, government officials had little understanding of village problems and had no experience in sitting down with village people.

2.6 Post-Independence Rural Development Efforts

After independence, the government of India launched Community Development Program (CDP) on 2nd October, 1952 and National Extension Service (NES) in 1953 for the development and upliftment of rural people in general and of weaker sections in particular. Since independence, rural development programs have been an integral part of India's Five Year Plans. The CDP aimed at the development of the rural areas with the participation of local population through the framework of over 5000 C.D. blocks.

2.7. Politics Behind The Initiation Of Cdp In India

Chester Bowel the then U.S. Ambassador in India convinced Nehru about the urgency of CDP for Indian Villages and offered to spend 54 million U.S. dollars as economic assistance to assist some such village campaigns and other programs.

Chester Bowel's theory:

Chester Bowel observed that communism gained strength in china because Yen's (Dr. James Y.C. Yen a graduate of Yale University) approach was not supported by the general Issimo in China. Bowel thought that a similar situation would develop in India if development programs were not undertaken urgently on the line suggested by Yen. To him, the CDP was a defense mechanism against his perceived threat of communism to India. It could be said that Bowl's influence at a crucial and

psychologically important moments pushed India to opt for the Etawah model of CDP in India. The four basic elements of community development program (CDP) were: Focus on individual cultivator, restructuring of district administration, provision of facilities through cooperatives and block and provision of Welfare at Block and at village levels.

The focus of this design, as in case of all early efforts was on individual cultivator. There was no emphasis on collective, communal action for community welfare and on building community assets for common economic development. In later years, a number of other programs for rural development were also adopted.

2.8 Critical Evaluation Of Rural Development Policies & Programs

A critical appraisal of various welfare programs and projects have revealed various types of limitations and constraints in the implementation process. Jain, L.S. (1985) after conducting a comprehensive study of various programs in various blocks across the country have found out various constraints in relation to IRDP (1980-81 to 1983) which need improvement such as proper identification of beneficiaries need to be there, removal of deficiency in administrative infrastructure, involvement of peoples' representatives, initiation of activities

in support of the IRDP beneficiaries and required detailed evaluation.

2.9 Impact and Review

A number of authors, researchers and reviewers have come to the conclusion that various projects and programs designed for rural development programs have not succeeded to the desired extent. The review and analysis of various studies revealed that the lack of interest in problems connected with rural community followed by lack of community feelings and welfare, lack of coordination among village schools, village panchayats and village cooperatives, caste, region and religion based factionalism, lack of village plans, lack of coordination from the center to the block level, multiplicity of responsibilities of development functionaries cornering of poor people's money, paying of low wages to the rural poor and frequent transfers of specialists and other officers adversely affected the rural development programs.

Muley (1987) pointed out that rural development has remained one of the constant and increasingly conscious goals of our five year plans from their inception, but unfortunately this goal has eluded us all the time. Devashyam (1988) rightly observed that:

“As we became a free country, we vowed to banish poverty from the face of this nation. We heaped many plans including

20 points programs. Now after 63 years and many development programs, vast population still lives below the poverty line – a number equal to the combined population of Europe and USA. Today, rural areas are being sought to be developed and poverty removed by dishing out doles through loan meals organized in feudal style. Development programs in reality have only helped a microscopic minority to reap all benefits in the name of concessions and reservations for the majority of the condemned it is an endless life of misery and squalor.” The noted Indian Jurist Palkivala (1986:5) observed that : “The dangers of the mass loaning programs meant for needy people including rural youth should be clear even to the purblind, in a country where the family comes first, the caste second the party third, and the nation is hardly relevant at all”. Similarly, the Public Accounts Committee of the Indian Parliament in its 90th report (1980-81) has drawn attention to the fact that in implementing the National Rural Employment Program meant for rural people and rural youth, there were serious irregularities on the part of almost all state governments – corruption, misappropriation, false debits in accounts and diversion of food grains – and it listed shortcomings of the program in appendix-III to the report.

International Institute of Transparency has identified India as one of the leading corrupt countries in the world. Former

Director of Central Bureau of Investigation, Mr. K. Madhavan has estimated that annually, an amount of rupees 10,000 crores is siphoned off through corrupt means out of the welfare programs meant for the poor people (Warghare, Suresh Chand). The crores of rupees have been spent on celebrating the completion of half a century of Indian self-rule. For example, the government will provide the mostly hungry and want driven people of Delhi with a laser show costing the taxpayer Rs. 10 crores. People have experienced 63 distressing years of sterile politics, stagnant economy and a diminishing cultural identity. That India is rated low among even the developing countries in terms of skills and manpower quality. The India's trade is reported to have decreased by over a third of even the one per cent of world trade it enjoyed sixty years ago. Indecision, vacillation, timidity, corruption, and red-tapism have characterized and continue to characterize India's governance (Puri, 1997).

The money-squandering syndrome can be gauged from the fact that since 1951, 246 big surface irrigation projects have been initiated. Only 65 out of these have been completed. Almost no benefit has come to the people from these projects. Investments in major irrigation projects rose from around Rupees 7,500 crores in the sixth plan to over Rupees 11,000 crores in the seventh plan and are expected to touch Rupees. 25,000 crores

in the eighth plan and may touch Rupees 50,000 crores in the 9th plan (Vohra, 1996:13).

2.10. Conclusion

The district of Saharsa played an important part in the freedom movement. The Home rule movement of Annie Besent in - 1917 and Styagarah Movement of Mahatma Gandhi in 1921 received widespread support in the district. In Saharsa, the freedom movement was led, among others, by Sarvashri Mahtal Lal Yadava, Shivanandan Mandal, Nand Kishore Chaudhary, Rajendra Mishra, Ram Bahadur Sinha, Yadunanadan Jha and Rajendra Lal Das. Supaul and Madhepura Jails were full of Political prisoners. Thana Bihpur (in Bhagalpur district) was the scene of great activity where Dr. Rajendra Prasad was bitterly beaten by the police and the people of Saharsa were much agitated over this. Picketing took place all over the district with full Vigour. The Period between 1930 and 1942 was marked by various Kishan agitations all over the district for Bakast lands.

The August revolution of 1942 formed a land mark in the history of the freedom movement in Saharsa district too. On the 29th of August, there was police firing at Saharsa and a number of persons were killed. After his escape from the Hazaribag Jail in 1942 Sri Jay Prakash Narayan visited Saharsa district on his way to Nepal. Sri Siyaram Singh of Bhagalpur

formed Siyaramdal, which had its branches in different parts of the district of Saharsa in December 1942. Sri Siyaram Singh met Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan in Nepal where a conference on the works of Bihar was held under the Presidentship of Shri Shivanandan Mandal. The district played a prominent role in the subsequent events which continued till the country's independence.

