

1. BACKGROUND OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH :

1.01 The British Empire, during its final decade of ruling, adopted 'Rural Reconstruction Approach' in the quest of rural development. Blaming 'ignorance' and 'inertia' as the main causes of rural backwardness, this approach attempted enlightening and mobilizing villagers by government officers which received little appreciation either from the people or from development point of view. The independent nations of the Indian subcontinent then attempted with their own ideas and philosophy of rural development.

1.02 Bangladesh, witnessed attempts of rural upliftment during 1950s under two America-sponsored programmes, Community Development and 'Agricultural Extension'. The former aimed at guiding villagers and assisting them in various kinds of self-help projects whereas the later was designed to introduce better farming. The Community Development Programme was named as V-AID (Village Agricultural and Industrial Development) in 1953.

1.03 The V-AID programme for redesigned by Dr, Akhter Hamed Khan popularly known as Comilla Approach' for rural development yielded promising remit in the pilot project within its laboratory area, the Comilla Kotwali Thana. The government quickly replicated the framework of this approach to the remaining thanas of the country by the name of IRDP (now renamed as BRDB). The euphoria, however, eroded quickly.

1.04 Side by side with such rural development models, the arena of agricultural research and development experienced models, one after another. The approaches like. the 'Green Revolution', 'Farming Systems Research' "Ecological Awareness" etc were the significant models in this regard.

1.05 When the agricultural researchers, rural development practitioners and policy makers were witnessing such events and adopting one model, discarding the old one, Japanese scientists came forward to work jointly with Bangladeshi counterparts, back in 1986, under the banner of JSARD (Joint Study on Agricultural and Rural Development). The programme aimed at finding 'key questions' and key clues' for both agricultural and rural development. After a 4-year study, the objectives were fulfilled, the formula was developed, but without any application. To evaluate the validity, feasibility and applicability of the sorted out 'key questions' and key clues', the project entered into its second phase and JSRDE (joint study on Rural Development Experiment) came in April 1992. The village institution building, infrastructure development and technological development were the key features of the programme. The follow up of the JSRDE in the ongoing participatory Rural Development Project (PRDP).

1.06 The objectives of the PRDP (current pilot project) are to develop an Alternative Rural Development Approach in which Union Parishad is envisaged as the center of development activities and will be given more emphasis on bottom-up type of local planning which was neglected previously. The over all goal of the project is to ensure and accelerate rural development through linkage of the village communities and local administration.

1.07 The current flow of privatization in the context on 'market economy' has caused re-thinking of existing rural development models in Bangladesh. For example, due to privatization of minor irrigation schemes, the prevailing group formation under TIP concept (one of the four programmes of Comilla Model) has greatly been loosened. Finally, the NGOs in Bangladesh have been testing and opting different approaches for rural development which need to be integrated to develop the philosophy of rural development of this country. PRDP is also maintaining link with such activities through its "Study Group" forum.

2.00 PRDP & Rural Development

2.01 Required information on agriculture and rural development of a specific village alongwith the different issues and constraints of development of that particular village were also identified under a project titled "Joint Study on Agricultural and Rural Development" (JSARD). The findings of this project are experimented through a follow-up project titled "Joint Study on Rural Development Experiment" (JSRDE). With the completion of these two projects a model was developed for an alternative approach to rural development which is the combination of community mobilisation, linkages of the development actions and building infrastructure.

2.02 Accordingly the pilot project called "Participatory Rural Development Project" (PRDP) was designed and formulated. The main theme of the project was to improve quality of life of the rural people through community development approach and linking the delivery services of different agencies of the Govt. and the NGOs under the financial and technical assistance of the JICA. Accordingly the TAPP was formulated and approved on 24.06.2000 with estimated cost of Tk. 1109.55 lakh (GOB 64.56 lakh + PA Tk. 1044.99 lakh). It has been proposed to review the TAPP to reduce the project area from 12 to 4 Unions. Other components in respect of manpower, Japanese experts, CDVAT allocation, transport/Vehicles etc. were rationalized.

3.00. NEED FOR MID-TERM EVALUATION.

3.01 There is provision in the approved TAPP to conduct a Mid-Term Evaluation and Final Evaluation by the GOB and JICA jointly. In the meantime JICA have completed a Mid-Term Evaluation independently. The Rural Development & Co-operative Division took initiative to conduct a joint Mid term evaluation. Accordingly a committee was constituted with following representative to conduct the Mid-term evaluation

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| a. | DG (Agriculture), IMED | - Convener |
| b. | Director (RD), IMED | - Member |
| c. | Deputy chief (RDI wing), Planning Commission | - Member |
| d. | Deputy Director, (Monitoring), BRDB | - Member |
| e. | Director (Project), BARD | - Member |
| f. | One Representative from JICA | - Member |
| g. | Senior Assistant chief from RDC Division | - Member-Secretary |

3.02 TOR of the Committee :

1. The Committee will submit the evaluation report to the Rural Development & Co-Operative Division.
2. The committee members will visit the project area and will evaluate the project activities.
3. The procedure of project implementation and possibility of extending the project programmes will be incorporated in the Mid-Term evaluation report.