

Managing Integrated Rural Development: Key Issues and Problems

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There is a need to reexamine and redesign present strategies to achieve faster growth and development of the rural sector, but managing the development of rural areas will be highly complex and requires adequate resources. Thus, it calls for a new strategy: an integrated rural development approach which seeks to integrate various sectoral programs, projects, and services. However, there remain some problems and issues in adopting this approach. These are the problems of definition and the managerial implications of integrated rural development; identifying the target groups and beneficiaries of rural development; coordinating the integrated rural development; and securing rural participation. The following concluding observations are offered: (1) a clear national policy specifying that the primary goal of national development is to benefit the poorest members of the rural population; (2) a comprehensive strategy of integrated rural development; (3) a coordinative framework at governmental levels; (4) definition of a manageable area for integrated area development schemes; and (5) creation of a rural organization to serve as channels of participation of rural community members.

Rural Development: The Approaches

Several issues and problems in the management of integrated rural development are paramount. Despite years of efforts to achieve accelerated rural development, serious gaps in goal attainment remain; hence, the need to reexamine once again why things did not meet expectations. Since most countries in the Asian region are predominantly agricultural and rural, strategies evolved to achieve faster growth and development of the rural sector would logically be the dominant core of the overall strategy of national development.

Two important implications flow from this assumption — first, the management of rural development will be highly complex since it will implicate an array of governmental and non-governmental institutions; and, second, that adequate resources (e.g., financial, managerial, and technical) will be devoted to achieve accelerated rural development.

The problem of resources for rural development is a critical element in the management capability system for accelerated rural development, considering that the power dynamics of a particular country could be a decisive factor in determining the allocation of scarce resources among the various competing development sectors. Thus, there is likelihood that the development of commercial, industrial, and urban sectors, actively promoted by powerful economic, political, and administrative elites, could receive more priority in resources than the

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development of agricultural and rural areas¹ despite the preeminence of the latter in the formally and publicly enunciated national development plans and policies.

Even under conditions where there may be some degree of congruence between the high priority status accorded rural development in the formal plans and policies for rural development and the actual allocation of resources, the sheer organizational and managerial complexity of coordinating the planning and implementation of the various rural development programs and projects could easily lead to shortfalls in achieving the goals of rural development.

This raises major issues and problems in the various approaches and strategies for achieving rural development. One major organizational problem stems from the need to integrate various sectoral programs, projects, and services, the so-called integrated rural development (IRD) approach, since the piecemeal and fragmented sectoral approach was blamed for failure to achieve the goals of rural development. To illustrate, a broader definition of rural development which encompasses more substantive sectoral programs and services as well as greater areal coverage would presumably achieve greater integration of rural development efforts compared to a narrower definition; for example, principally agricultural development within a more circumscribed and selected rural area in the country.

One thorny organizational issue revolves on the problem of determining the magnitude or the number of substan-

tive programs which could be efficiently integrated, given the existing capability and resources. A related issue is the problem whether integrated rural development could be best achieved by process integration — that is, by integrating planning, implementation, and evaluation processes within a single organizational framework.

An approach generally used to deal with problems of manageability of rural development integration is the creation of a multi-level organizational framework for coordinating integrated rural development — that is, a cabinet-level coordinating body at the national level, a regional development framework at the subnational level, and a public authority or public enterprise structure at the lower level, such as the integrated rural development (IRD) and the integrated area development (IAD) structures.

The viability of the multi-level approach is influenced by the degree of decentralization of authority given to the lower administrative/development levels by the higher levels of authority so that the problem of manageability is directly related to the amount of delegated authority given to the lower level coordinating structures to make decisions on rural development programs, projects, and services. Finally, the lack of specificity in defining the goals of rural development, particularly in terms of target beneficiaries, also adds to the problem of managing the integration of rural development.

Rural Development: Who Benefits?

Despite more than three decades of national and international efforts, there is still an undeniable evidence of worsening and unabated poverty, gross inequity, and stagnated lives of the bottom forty per-

¹For a forceful though controversial exposition of the impact of this bias in development, see Michael Lipton, *Why People Stay Poor: The Urban Bias of Development* (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1977).

cent of the population in poor countries.² According to the report of the Hammar-skjöld Foundation (1975), "close to half a billion people suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Other estimates mention a full billion and sometimes one and a half billion. In Africa, one child in seven dies before the age of one year; in Asia, one in ten; in South America, one in fifteen; but in Europe and North America, one in forty."³ Citing World Bank estimates, the Foundation added "that 750 million men, women and children live in absolute poverty, defined respectively by an income per capita below US\$50 a year, or below one-third the average per capita income in the nation in which they belong."⁴ Closer to home, the Asian Development Bank in its 1977 study of countries in the Asian region estimates "around 355 million people in the region (where data are available) are living below the poverty line. . . ."⁵

Mounting evidence suggests that the fruits of development in some developing countries which have experienced economic growth have not only left out the poorest sector of the population but also in the case of some countries of South and Southeast Asia, they are worse off than before.⁶

Of the 355 million people estimated to be below the poverty line by the ADB, "the large proportion of poor people in the total population and their undiminished numbers over time calls for

²See Robert S. McNamara, *Address to the Board of Governors* (Washington, D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1970).

³The 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, "Towards Another Development," *Development Dialogue*, Nos. 1 and 2 (1975), pp. 28-29.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵Asian Development Bank, *Rural Asia: Challenge and Opportunity* (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 13.

⁶"One of the most disconcerting aspects of the

a reorientation of rural development activity."⁷ This development paradox has been so eloquently depicted by Michael Lipton:

Most of these countryfolk rely, as hitherto, on agriculture lacking irrigation or fertilizers or even iron tools. Hence they are so badly fed that they cannot work efficiently, and in many cases are unable to feed their infants well enough to prevent physical stunting and perhaps even brain damage. . . . One in four dies before the age of ten. The rest live the same overworked, underfed, ignorant and disease-ridden lives as thirty, or three hundred or even three thousand years ago. . . . Yet the last thirty years have been the age of unprecedented, accelerating growth and development! . . . How can accelerated growth and development, in an era of rapidly improving communications and of 'mass politics,' produce so little for poor people?⁸

Key Issues and Problems of Integrated Rural Development

The preoccupation with rural development in general and with the management of integrated rural development in particular represented not only growing dissatisfaction over earlier strategies to achieve rural development but also over a continuing search for alternative strategies.

The Problem of Definition and Managerial Implications of Integrated Rural Development

Although success and failure in attainment development experience of non-socialist developing countries of South and Southeast Asia is the fact that the problem of rural poverty has remained as acute as ever. Indeed, it appears that in a majority of these countries the rural poor have tended to become poorer, and in some cases even the relative size of the class of rural poor has tended to increase." See Ajit K. Chose and Keith Griffin, "Rural Poverty and Development Alternatives in South and Southeast Asia: Some Policy Issues," *IFDA Dossier* 9, July 1979, p. 2.

⁷Asian Development Bank, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁸Lipton, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

ing certain desired results or changes could be attributed to a particular approach, concept, tool, or technique, a host of factors could equally affect the level of attainment of goals and objectives of rural development, such as political will, administrative capability, socio-cultural milieu, resources, and the like. It is reasonable to assume that as we expand the scope in introducing management improvement, for example, from increasing administrative capability to managing irrigation projects to managing rural development projects, there is, expectedly, a manifold increase in complexity and difficulty in improving its management, much less in attaining the goals implied in this particular change. One could imagine, therefore, the attendant difficulties and complexity posed by the problem of managing not only rural development but also of managing it to achieve integration.

The genesis of IRD as an approach reflects this tendency to adopt a more "unified," global or total systems approach not only because of the logic of relationship among manmade systems but also on the basis of actual experience in dealing with problems of development, particularly the apparent inadequacy of the sectoral approach to rural development. While the interrelationships and interdependence of ecological and biological systems have some degree of predictability and clarity, they are less predictable and definable in manmade systems; for example, in economic, political, and social systems, particularly the manner in which these systems would affect, say, rural development. Unless there is total agreement on what is meant by rural development, one is faced with the task of identifying not only the component elements (especially the critical ones) but also specifying the inter-

relatedness and interdependence of the elements which constitute the rural development system. Since this problem of inclusion and exclusion is governed by one's definition of what is meant by rural development, one's capability to manage integrated rural development could be affected by how narrowly or how broadly rural development is defined. For example, an Asian expert group has broadly defined rural development as "a process which leads to a rise in the capacity of rural people to control their environment, accompanied by wider distribution of benefits resulting from such a control."⁹ In recent years, most definitions of rural development have included equity, redistribution of benefits, and the satisfaction of minimum basic needs to the traditional concerns for productivity and economic growth.

Certainly, an important issue that must be resolved before we can integrate, much less, manage the integration of rural development is to define with some degree of precision what we mean by rural development. An evaluation of rural development is impossible unless what rural development is supposed to achieve is precisely known. Furthermore, unless the goals of rural development can be measured and evaluated in qualitative or quantitative terms, and, in cases of multiple goals being simultaneously set, unless a statement of priority is made in regard to these goals, one cannot meaningfully design a strategy for planning, implementing, and evaluating integrated rural development.

Even the World Bank, which has consistently espoused the cause of rural

⁹Inayatullah (ed.), *Approaches to Rural Development* (Kuala Lumpur: Asian and Pacific Development Administration Centre, 1979,) p. 11.

development and of the poorest segment of the population since the 1970s has not clearly specified the priorities to be undertaken by governments in terms of attaining the multiple goals of rural development.

The objectives of rural development, therefore, extend beyond any particular sector. They encompass improved productivity, increased employment and thus higher incomes for target groups, as well as maximum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education and health.¹⁰

The use of indicators (based on a particular definition of rural development) which could be used in evaluating rural development over specified time periods has been suggested but the ex-post facto nature of this approach would tend to limit its usefulness in specifying priorities in rural development strategies.¹¹

In most developing and underdeveloped countries, limited resources — financial, technical, and managerial — impose severe constraints to development. Thus, a strategy which seeks to accomplish simultaneously or even in phases, the objectives of growth,

equity, and basic needs, for example, to implement "projects to raise agricultural output, create new employment, improve health and education, expand communication and improve training,"¹² often fails to provide a viable framework of choice in rural development strategies. As a consequence, a national process of selecting priority goals for rural development invariably stressed economic growth and development (e.g., increases in productivity of either food or export commodity through infrastructures, mechanization, extension, and other farm inputs) to the relative neglect of social development (e.g., projects in health, education, and housing). As a consequence, even if this rather "limited" and partial approach to rural development has increased productivity, it may not result in increased incomes because of increased cost of farm inputs and prices of food supply due to inflation, inadequate marketing, and low world market price for export crops, etc. The economic growth approach may have contributed to the further impoverishment of the rural poor, particularly in the non-socialist developing countries of South and Southeast Asia.¹³

The Problem of Target Groups and Beneficiaries

The failure of comprehensive and total systems approaches to rural development in specifying priorities in attaining broad objectives of rural development leads to a related issue of identifying the principal target beneficiaries of the rural development strategy.

As noted earlier, a number of international organizations, funding institutions,

¹⁰International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, "Rural Development," Sector Policy Paper (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1971), p. 3.

¹¹Inayatullah, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13. The seven indicators (based on "two significant aspects of the definition of rural changes, viz., the capacity to control the environment and changes in the access to benefits of development") are: "1) Changes in rural productivity reflected in per hectare yield; 2) Changes in the extent of rural employment, underemployment, . . . ; 3) Changes in the distribution of rural income and wealth; 4) Changes in the power structure reflected in change in the extent of influence of rural people on the local and national decision-making process; 5) Changes in the degree of mobility in the local class structure. . . ; 6) Changes in the values, beliefs and attitudes favorable to the control of the larger environment . . . ; 7) Changes in access to welfare services."

¹²International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *op. cit.*, p.3.

¹³Chose and Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

and national governments have clearly identified the poorer or poorest segments of the rural population as the primary target of rural development strategies. For example, the World Bank has stressed 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 extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in rural areas: the group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless.¹⁴

In countries which are predominantly rural and where the level of development is very low, this would place the large majority of the population in the category of "poor" and below the poverty line. *In effect, any distinction between rural development and overall national development is merely conceptual.* This also introduces a difficult choice for governments of excluding from the benefits of development large numbers of erstwhile rural poor who have joined the legions of urban poor.

Even in relatively well-off developing countries, a discriminative strategy favoring the rural poor is still confronted with problems of spatial distribution; that is, identifying the poor in depressed areas and the poor in relatively developed areas. In both the underdeveloped and developing countries, there is generally a paucity of reliable data which could guide governments in determining with precision the level of rural poverty and the exact nature of deprivation by the employment of occupational or other socioeconomic indicators, such as size of landholding and their productivity, employment (migrant labor, self-employment, underemployment) and tenurial status (tenant-lessees,

lessees, share-cropping). Furthermore, there is a dearth of data on the susceptibility of low income vulnerable groups and individuals to sharp increases in food prices due to variability in food supply, thereby limiting government's ability to mitigate the food insecurity problems of the rural poor.

However, some economists and planners tend to unwittingly adopt development strategies focusing on the relatively well-off and more "modernized" segments of the rural population in order to increase chances for success of development programs and projects. The rational and logical basis of this development bias is not difficult to unravel. First, in conditions of scarce resources, this well-off sector (generally farmers with smallholdings, especially those served with irrigation facilities) is smaller compared to the poorer marginal farmers, the landless, and farm laborers and, hence, the former group is more administratively manageable.¹⁵

Second, this particular sector of the rural population are the "dependable partners" of some government agencies over the years through numerous programs.

Third, the limited resources for rural development require that the beneficiaries provide their own inputs either through sharing in costs or in donating their labor. The assets of this group serve as collaterals to government financing institutions and the private sector banks.

Fourth, this sector of the rural population is literate, more dynamic and modern

¹⁵The successful "Masagana 99" rice production program of the Philippines reflects this bias towards the relatively well-off irrigated farmers despite the fact that "marginal" and poorer farmers are also target clientele of the program. See G.U. Iglesias, *The National Rice Self-Sufficiency Programme of the Philippines* (Manila: University of the Philippines, 1976).

¹⁴ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *op. cit.*, p.4.

in outlook, a good base (according to planners) for developing more members to join the rural middle class.

Finally, the social, political, and economic links of national and local political and economic elites with the rural elites tend to reinforce the bias in developing this sector among the rural population. One writer aptly noted that "in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the majority of rich and influential people did control the management of the cooperatives, exert a preponderant influence over administration and capture its resources, mainly credit and water distribution for their own benefit."¹⁶

In the final analysis, the determination of who should be the ultimate object and beneficiaries of rural development will be assayed in the calculus of power among political and economic groups at the center and in the rural areas. There is the view that existing socioeconomic and political structures and processes tend to skew development in favor of the urban commercial and industrial sector not only in terms of the disproportionate share in this small elite group in development benefits but also in terms of the allocation of resources for development (financial, material, and human) between the urban and rural sectors. Michael Lipton argues that because of the predominant role of urban elites in the policy and decision process, governments manage development "from, by and for people in the cities; people who, acting under normal pressures, deny the fruits of development to the pressure-less village poor."¹⁷

¹⁶Ali Akhtar Khan, "Integrated Rural Development," *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXI No. 1 (January 1977), p. 28.

¹⁷Lipton, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

The disparity between urban and rural welfare is much greater in poor countries now than it was in rich countries during their early development. This huge welfare gap is demonstrably inefficient, as well as inequitable. It persists mainly because less than 20 percent of investment for development has gone to the agricultural sector . . . although over 65 percent of the people in less developed countries (LDCs) and over 80 percent of the really poor who live on \$1 a week or less, depend for a living on agriculture. . . . Moreover, in most LDCs, governments have taken measures with the unhappy side-effect of accentuating rural-urban disparities: their allocation of public expenditure and taxation; measures raising the price of industrial production relative to farm production, thus encouraging private rural saving to flow into industrial investment because the value of industrial output has been artificially boosted; and, educational facilities encouraging bright villagers to train cities for urban jobs.¹⁸

Structural and Institutional Arrangements: The Issue of Coordinating Integrated Rural Development

The issue of determining the most appropriate and effective form for coordinating integrated rural development appears to be one of the most intractable because in societies which are predominantly agricultural and rural, any strategy to accelerate the rural area necessarily implicates the entire governmental system, the private sector (in non-socialist states) and the community itself. These three broad sectoral groupings in society encapsulate subsectors and institutions with deep-rooted traditions and

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 16. Harry T. Oshima noted that "the contribution of the urban sector to national inequalities in Southeast Asia is also substantial, even though less than for East Asian countries and in spite of the relative smallness of the sector and the positive contribution of its mean to national equality." See "Income Inequality and Economic Growth: The Post-War Experience of Asian Countries," *Malaysian Economic Review*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (October 1970), p. 24.

practices that any change or rearrangement in structure, function, and process is bound to meet strong resistance and opposition. For purposes of the paper, the focus will be on the government and the rural community although the relationship of these two sectors with the private enterprise sector will also be explicated.

In general, governmental operations are organized along broadly specialized functional areas, such as foreign relations, defense, health, education, commerce and industry, and agriculture, and this functional specialization tends to increase as societies become more and more modern, urban and industrial. Specialization and division of work, together with bureaucratization of public (and private) organizations, is not only inevitable but also regarded as the most efficient and economical structural form in dealing with increasingly complex tasks and problems of large-scale organizations. This partly accounts for the proliferation of specialized structures, processes, disciplines, and professions in government and society as a whole.

The tendency towards increased specialization and division of work creates a greater need for coordination in order to achieve integration and synchronization partly because specialization and division of work artificially fragments and/or imposes boundaries to what is in reality interwoven and interdependent parts of a system.¹⁹ It is, therefore, apparent that while a government ministry may be assigned a specialized

role and responsibility for a particular function, for example, agriculture, the gamut of activities required to efficiently, economically and effectively perform this function would require coordinating its efforts with a raft of governmental and private sector organizations and groups.

Coordination with activities of relevant entities would also include management processes, such as planning, implementation and evaluation; coordination in terms of intergovernmental levels (center, region, local), and coordination in terms of specific geographic areas where such activities will be performed. Additionally, the activities of specialized ministries and departments are further influenced and/or controlled by external agencies concerned with overall planning and development, personnel, finance, budgeting, and auditing. If one considers that in the production, marketing and distribution of a single agricultural crop like rice, e.g., the rice self-sufficiency (Masagana 99) program of the Philippines, over thirty agencies concerned with credit, irrigation, extension, marketing are implicated,²⁰ then the task of coordinating a great number of governmental and private sector entities whose activities would directly and indirectly affect the management of integrated rural development would be extremely formidable.

A number of approaches or models have emerged which attempt to solve the organizational problems caused by the need to coordinate the integration of rural development. This paper will focus more on governmental approaches or models

¹⁹See Herbert Simon, *Administrative Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), 3rd ed. See especially Chapter II, "Some Problems of Administrative Theory."

²⁰See G.U. Iglesias, *op. cit.*, and by the same author, "The Philippine Rice Self-Sufficiency Program," Case Study No. 5 (Honolulu: Technology and Development Institute, East-West Center, 1977).

which may or may not incorporate non-governmental entities (private sector; rural organization, or rural community). It may be added that these approaches or models need not be mutually exclusive and may be used by governments in combination.

The coordinating committee/council structure. This particular organizational form is a ubiquitous instrument for ensuring vertical and horizontal coordination of various specialized and interrelated activities of government and appears to be a well-tested traditional approach applied to the management of integrated rural development. Several variations of this model exist in various countries, each one reflecting the degree of power and authority invested in the committee/council (or its chairman) in discharging its policy-making functions and for coordinating, planning and implementation of various developmental activities and projects of sectoral ministries, regional authorities, and local government.

These coordinative bodies are often replicated at various inter-governmental levels with the cabinet committees at the apex and village committees at the grassroots levels.²¹ Composition of these coordinative bodies also vary depending on how narrowly or broadly rural development is defined although generally, they include representatives of functional ministries and specialized agencies directly or indirectly engaged in rural development projects or services; for example, agriculture, public works, land reform, finance, and central planning bodies. In general, actual implementation

of programs and projects are left to sectoral ministries with the coordinative bodies providing simply the mechanism for coordinating, planning, and implementing activities for the integrated function — in this case, of rural development.

In countries with subnational (regional or district) and local government levels, the composition of the coordinating bodies would include representation from the administrative and political regional/district and local governments. In cases where rural community organizations exist (farmers association, cooperatives, irrigation association, and so on) they are also coopted as members of the coordinating bodies.

Integrated area development approach. This approach focuses on the spatial dimension for coordinating the planning and implementation of rural development programs and projects within a specific geographic area, which vary in size from a village to a state, region, country/district and islands, as in the case of archipelagos like the Philippines. In this set-up, the coordination of implementation of programs and projects of sectoral ministries, public authorities, and local governments for the particular geographic area is placed under a coordinative structure — either single-headed (district officer, governor) or collegial (committee/council).²²

In countries where community organizations are organized — as in the *Panchayat Raj* in India — the central government functionaries at the various levels (e.g., in India, Development Com-

²¹See Carlos P. Ramos, "Institutional Mechanisms for Managing Integrated Rural Development: The Philippine Experience," *APEX Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (April-June 1978).

²²See Jose P. Leviste, "Organization and Management of Integrated Rural Development in the Philippines," in Dionisia Rola (ed.), *Integrated Rural Development: Problems and Issues* (Manila: Management Education Council, 1981), pp. 31-39

missioner at state level and the Collector or Deputy Commissioner at the district) serve as the coordinator for sectoral and departmental programs and projects, in collaboration with the Panchayat Raj whose council members are elected by the rural community.²³

Three nagging problems beset this particular approach to the management of integrated rural development. First, the problem of determining the most appropriate geographic size which could be effectively managed. Second, the choice of which poor, "depressed" and lagging areas are to be developed in an integrated manner ahead of the others. And third, the problem of determining the most appropriate coordinating framework.

Some of the criteria used in determining size, such as growth potential, presence of natural resources (rivers, forests, minerals, and so on), physical infrastructure (irrigation systems, farm-to-market roads, power), and financing institutions, could unwittingly serve to discriminate against relatively well-off areas but with higher concentration of the poor and more disadvantaged members of the rural population. Moreover, if the IAD scheme is used to serve as a "pilot" project before nationwide implementation, their increase in numbers could siphon off scarce national resources (financial, managerial, and technical) because of the tendency to concentrate inputs in the pilot areas to ensure success. As a result, equally poor but deserving areas are denied of resources for their development.

The organizational structure for coordinating integration of various sectoral development projects would vary from "weak" (the coordinating committee or the coordinator possesses no authority to affect decisions on resource allocation, choice of projects, location, and so on) to "strong" (the majority or all sectoral agencies are organizationally and authoritatively placed under the coordinative umbrella).²⁴ Sometimes, the ability of the coordinative mechanism to affect planning and implementation decisions would also depend on its role and authority vis-a-vis the particular management "phase" (e.g., planning) of the coordinated function. This ranges from simply coordinating the preparation of plans, programs and projects of various sectoral development and specialized agencies, in monitoring their implementation, to complete responsibility for developing the overall plans (as submitted to it by the sectoral ministries) and in supervising the implementation of the programs and projects contained in the plan.

The sectorally focused but integrated area approach. This approach focuses on a particular development sector (e.g., agriculture, rural infrastructure, agricultural export crops) as a leading component or sector in achieving integrated rural development in a particular target area.²⁵ One variant of this is the integrated agricultural development approach; for example, the Cagayan Integrated

²³Diane K. Mauzy, "Two Rural Development Strategies: Organization, Administrative Performance and Political Priorities in India and Malaysia," *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 1 and 2 (January-April 1975).

²⁴International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *The Design of Organizations for Rural Development Projects*, Staff Working Paper No. 375, March 1980, p. iii.

²⁵Chi-Wen-Ching, *A Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development in Asian Countries* (Manila: Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, 1974).

Agricultural Development Project in the Philippines. Agriculture serves as the main focus of development activities. Social development projects and services (health, education, family planning, etc.) are included with the main focus (agriculture) to achieve integration. Another example of this is the social laboratory approach towards integrated agricultural development.

A final, not the least, example is the Lead Implementing Agency (LIA) approach used in the Bicol River Basin Development Program (BRBDP) and the Mindoro Integrated Rural Development Project (MIRDP) in the Philippines. This approach gives responsibility to a specific sectoral agency — in both BRBDP and MIRDP it is the National Irrigation Administration — in undertaking the main brunt of developmental activities in a given Integrated Rural Development area in performing the “coordinator” role vis-a-vis the activities of both the sectoral agricultural, economic, and social development agencies in the area and local governments, the role of leadership is vital in ensuring coordinated action. There had been cases where the “lead” agency performs most of two tasks, while the cooperating agencies merely give minimal support.

The Problem of Rural Participation

Although there is an apparent consensus on the value of participation in the management of integrated rural development, there could be sharp differences and misunderstanding in strategies and approaches for achieving rural community participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of rural development programs, projects, and ser-

vices.²⁶

The Comilla and Taiwan experiences stress the importance of participation through corporate structure and actions; that is, through farmers cooperatives, associations and local organizations.²⁷ Since rural community participation is most effective when channelled through organizations, the capacity of local and rural organizations to decisively influence governmental action would largely depend on their relative strength vis-a-vis other competing organized interest groups in the country as well as their political strength and linkages with the political and administrative elites.²⁸ The problems of creating viable rural organizations in some Asian countries have been exacerbated by the highly centralized structure of public bureaucracy which has a built-in bias for centrally formulated and implemented rural development programs and projects.²⁹ Historically, the often uncoordinated efforts of various sectoral ministries in organizing the rural community into single or multi-purpose organizations to support their programs and projects have resulted in the proliferation of rural organizations with overlapping functions. This has created a tendency for the perpetuation both of central influence in rural organizations

²⁶See John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff, *Rural Development Participation: Concepts and Measures for Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation* (Ithaca, New York: Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1977).

²⁷Ali Akhtar-Khan, *op. cit.*

²⁸See G.U. Iglesias, “Mobilizing Local Groups for Rural Development: Approaches and Problems,” in Amara Raksasataya and I.J. Fredericks (eds.), *Rural Development Training to Meet New Challenges*, Vol. 4 (Kuala Lumpur: APDAC, 1978).

²⁹See Inayatullah (ed.), *Rural Organizations and Rural Development: Some Asian Experiences* (Kuala Lumpur: APDAC, 1978), particularly the country studies on Malaysia, India, and the Philippines.

and the dependence of these local organizations on central ministries for their continued survival, thus serving to perpetuate dependence on the center of the continued existence and viability of these local organizations.³⁰

Here, the issue is less the desirability of community participation but the real problem of leadership and control of rural organizations. In government-sponsored organizations, the government functionary either directly leads and controls the local organizations or manipulates the organization behind the scenes, thereby depriving members of the rural community from effectively articulating their needs and to assume leadership roles. There is also the problem of whether to exclude the rural elites from active and direct participation in rural organizations and in projects designed to benefit the poorest members of the rural community. As noted earlier, the rural elites tend to benefit most from rural development programs and projects because of their access to, and linkages with political and bureaucratic elites. They are not only better organized but they are also capable of subverting the rural development programs by their ability to occupy leadership and other key position in local organizations.

Innumerable studies confirm the observation that a strong and viable rural organization provides the best channel for effective participation and mobilization of the rural community in attaining rural development goals.³¹ The continuing involvement and commitment of the rural

folks depends, in large measure, on their ability to meaningfully participate in decisions affecting their interests and welfare. Participation in the identification, appraisal, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of rural projects is a *sine qua non* in the creation of rural organizations for, by, and of the rural community.

Concluding Observations

The main objective of this paper is to underline selected key issues and problems in the management of integrated rural development. In some instances, suggestions were made towards resolving them. The subject of rural development is so important and, in most countries, involves the entire governmental system and society that it cannot—and should not—be amenable to simplistic solutions. In concluding this paper, the following observations are offered to improve the management of rural development:

- (1) A clear national policy specifying that the primary goal for national development is to benefit the poorest members of the rural population by increasing their productivity and income, and by the provision of social and welfare services to meet their basic needs.
- (2) A comprehensive but selective strategy of integrated rural development should provide not only a coherent framework for the overall development strategy but also specify priorities in terms of goals or objectives.
- (3) A coordinative framework at various governmental levels (center, region, field) must be invested with appropriate authority to coordinate the implementation and evaluation of rural development programs and proj-

³⁰See Ali Akhtar Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

³¹See J. Waddimba, *Some Participative Aspects of Programmes to Involve the Poor in Development* (Geneva: U.N. Research Institute for Social Development, 1979) for a direct correlation between projects' success and people's participation.

- ects of sectoral ministries and agencies.
- (4) Definition of a manageable area for integrated area development schemes and creation of a strong coordinating framework (e.g., public authority) to coordinate planning and implementation of rural development projects and services.
- (5) The creation of viable and effective rural organizations to serve as channels of participation and mobilization for rural development programs and projects. These organizations should be led and controlled by the poorer and more disadvantaged members of the rural communities.

PHILIPPINE SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The *Philippine Society for Public Administration* (PSPA) is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to the improvement of public service. Its two-fold objectives are to achieve and maintain a high degree of professionalism in the study and practice of public administration, and to provide a forum for the discussion of issues, problems and trends in public administration, and the publication of research findings in the field.

The PSPA governing body is a Board of Directors, including the Dean of the College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines (CPAUP) and the President of the CPAUP Alumni Association, who are ex-officio members.

The society was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on 4 July 1981.

Professional Network

Affiliation of PSPA with other professional organizations, like the Association of Schools of Public Administration in

the Philippines, and the Philippine Social Science Council has provided it the opportunity to build a strong professional network with other social scientists, policy makers, and school administrators involved in education and training in public management.

Philippine Journal of Public Administration

With an annual support of P20,000 from the National Science Development Board (NSDB), the PSPA is co-publishing with the CPAUP the *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* (*PJPA*). PSPA members receive a free yearly subscription of the *PJPA*.

Professional Development

In line with its program for professional development, PSPA sponsors conferences, lectures, seminars, and public forums to improve the professional skills of its members and foster professionalism in the conduct of governmental and related public service activities.

For further details, contact the PSPA Secretariat, Room 111, Rizal Hall, Padre Faura, Manila or call Tel. No. 59-34-00.