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SOME ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
IN THE CARIBBEAN



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GENERAL BACKGROUND

Four of the former English colonies^{2/} attained full independence in the recent past and the constitutional status of some of the Leeward and Windward Islands was changed, making them Associated States to the United Kingdom.^{3/} Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles are integral parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

All the Caribbean countries had been exposed to Western rule and influence for a period of over three centuries during which period certain unique relationships with the respective metropolitan countries developed. These have left their imprint on the nature of economic development, pattern of production and trade, and characteristics of social development in the Caribbean. By and large, all the countries in the Caribbean are producers of primary commodities for export to the metropolitan centres and are heavily dependent on them for imports of manufactured goods and even basic foodstuffs. The respective metropolitan country offers special preferential arrangements on the items the Caribbean countries export (mainly sugar, fresh fruit and spices) who, in turn, accord preferences to the metropolitan countries across the full gamut of imported items.

The abolition of slavery ushered in a new phase of social relations consequent mainly on the exodus of the freed slaves from the plantations and the supply of new labour force from outside the region, particularly from

^{1/} The term "Caribbean" is used here to denote the English-speaking countries in the Caribbean, Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles.

^{2/} Jamaica: August 1962; Trinidad & Tobago: August 1962; Guyana: May 1966; and Barbados: November 1966.

^{3/} The West Indies Associated States are: Antigua, Dominica, Grenada St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, and St. Lucia. The other two islands in the Leeward/Windward group viz., Montserrat and St. Vincent are yet to attain associated statehood.

India. These factors led to the evolution of a rich cultural diversity in the Caribbean countries and to a conflict between peasant and plantation systems of production.^{4/}

SOME COMMON REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING RURAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

An important factor favourable to community and rural development of the region is the prevalence of a considerably high degree of literacy, which together with prolonged exposure to Western influence has resulted in a general receptivity on the part of the rural population, to innovations and new ideas.

Secondly, the levels of aspirations of the rural people are quite high mainly due to the facilities of communication between the urban and the rural sectors. Also, as it has been said, "the integration into the Western World has produced a typical peasant mentality in which the 'community' and 'tribal' and group loyalties were minimised because of the predominantly economic orientation."^{5/}

Thirdly, Community Development^{6/} as a means of accelerating economic growth and social advance, has found acceptance by all the Governments and it generally enjoys the support of top political leadership. There are, however, certain factors of constraint which are of special concern to Community Development in the region.

Despite the need - both from the economic and the social points of

^{4/} For a fuller treatment of this theme, see Lloyd Braithwaite, Social and Political Aspects of Rural Development in the West Indies, in Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 17, No. 3, September 1968 Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies.

^{5/} Ibid, p. 265.

^{6/} By this is meant certain fundamental principles inherent in the concept of Community Development, like an integrated approach to development and the attendant provision of extension and technical services to the communities in a co-ordinated way, correspondence of local development activities to the needs of the communities, implementation of local development projects on a basis of partnership between the Government and the communities and stress on local initiative and popular participation.

view - for developing intensive and diversified peasant farming, there is, owing to historical reasons, a widespread bias against agriculture amongst rural populations. There is, thus, the phenomenon of what is termed 'agricultural communities which do not like agriculture', whose attitude has been prejudiced by the archetype of the rural proletariat of the past - the plantation worker. There is also the paradox of the simultaneous existence of two strong pulls - 'land apathy' engendered by socio-psychological factors and 'land hunger' generated by economic reasons. The situation has been worsened by outmoded systems of land tenure in many countries in the Caribbean.

Experience in different developing countries has shown that community development can be an effective means of mobilizing manpower resources for diverse productive and essential projects which would at once provide gainful employment for local manpower and result in the creation of production assets and infrastructure facilities. In the Caribbean, however, efforts in this direction tend to be impeded by the prevalence of unduly high wage rates both in the public sector and in the private sector, notably in the petroleum, sugar and bauxite industries. This results in another paradox viz., co-existence of labour shortage and massive unemployment.

Another factor which causes concern is the growing migration to the metropolitan areas. There is an urgent need for a well planned composite urban community development programme for the metropolitan areas.^{7/}

Shortage of vocational skills, particularly among the younger elements of the working force, inhibits the process of making them effective participants in economic development. As in other parts of Latin America the youth population in the Caribbean is rapidly growing. Persons in the age-range 0-14 constitute 46% of the population in Guyana, 45% in Jamaica, and 42% in Trinidad & Tobago. A disturbing aspect of the youth phenomenon in the region is the very sizeable number of drop-outs from education at

^{7/} The Caribbean Regional Training Workshop on Community Development and Local Government held in March 1968 drew pointed attention to this and also suggested a programme pattern in this behalf. See the Report of the Workshop E/CN.12/L.37, pp. 15-17.

the conclusion of the primary stage. The result is that most youngsters in their "teens" who have not had an opportunity to enter secondary school and with an elementary school education geared primarily to the academic preparation for the grammar school, enter the working force bereft of skills and very often unequipped with an educational and attitudinal base conducive to acquisition of skills. The debilitating effect of prolonged non-availability of employment opportunities even in the unskilled field and the lack of equipment to get skilled jobs create in the youth unwholesome attitude towards society.

Finally, the historical fact that social welfare measures were introduced in the Caribbean based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission of 1938 as an immediate palliative to relieve social unrest then prevalent in the region without an organized and sponsored effort to bring local groups and institutions into the picture still hinder the process of popular participation and institution building.

EXISTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES^{8/} IN THE REGION: AN OVERVIEW

The Caribbean Regional Workshop on Community Development and Local Government held in March 1968 reviewed the existing position relating to Community Development in the different countries in the region based on statements presented by the delegates. The salient points noted in the review are as follows:^{9/}

- i. Community Development approach has been generally accepted by all the Governments in the region.
- ii. Except in Jamaica, where there is a geographic selectivity, in all other countries, the programme is nationwide in coverage. However, as regards sectoral emphases (in terms of fields of activity), the position differs in various countries in the region.

^{8/} This term is used to cover specifically designated community development programmes which go under that nomenclature, and other multisectoral programmes which bear the strategy and characteristics of community development.

^{9/} See Report of the Caribbean Regional Training Workshop on Community Development and Local Government, op. cit., pp 7-8.

- iii. Though the programme pattern, content and emphasis varies from country to country, there is a noticeable trend in most of the countries towards strengthening of the economic content of community development programmes.
- iv. Though an organized and set programme of urban community development is yet to evolve, there is common awareness of its need in the region; in some countries, steps have been taken to introduce schemes of a 'community development nature' in urban areas.
- v. In most countries, there is a separate field staff for community development, as distinct from "headquarters staff", with a specified geographical area to cover. In some cases, however, there is need for augmenting the complement of staff.
- vi. Supervision and guidance by the senior staff are mostly provided to the field functionaries through periodic staff conferences and a review of the diaries and itineraries of the field personnel. There is, however, a case for further strengthening and refining the reporting system.
- vii. Co-ordination - both at the central and the field levels - with ministries and agencies dealing with different sectors of development, is generally effected through informal contacts and ad hoc meetings and conferences. Two Governments are considering a proposal to set up a formal inter-ministerial co-ordination committee. Another Government has already taken a decision to establish a committee at the field level consisting of all the field officers of the ministries concerned with rural development, representatives of village community development committees in the area, select local persons interested in development to be nominated by the Government and the field level community development officer.
- viii. There are arrangements in all the countries for training community development officials and voluntary leaders, including members of community development committees, youth clubs etc., though there are variations in the content, pattern and duration of the training courses. Training arrangements require to be further intensified, streamlined and refined.
- ix. On the whole, there is no formal link between the community development agency and the local government body; but, there are trends in some countries of local government institutions and ad hoc community development committees and councils coming together for mutual consultations.

A statement giving a comparative picture of certain aspects of community development in three principal countries in the region viz., Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago may be seen at the annex.

EMERGING TRENDS

A noteworthy feature of Community Development in all countries in the region has been the growing and more pointed attention being devoted to youth development. Jamaica has had the youth camp programme for a little over a decade and Trinidad and Tobago started these activities in 1964. In Guyana, a similar project was started last year and the Associated States are contemplating a scheme to have youth camps on a sub-regional basis to serve eight countries. In Trinidad and Tobago, an expanded scheme of National Youth Service, the broad aim of which is "the provision of basic education as well as civic and vocational training for unemployed young men and women between the ages of 17 and 21"^{10/} has been formulated.

With regard to priorities and emphases in formulating programmes, there is a growing awareness that the economic content of community development schemes should be given particular attention.

As regards programming techniques, there is an increasing recognition of the need for securing a closer blending between community development and overall national planning effort. There is a widespread realization that whilst community development aids national development programmes by a consistent and continuous generation of conditions favourable to economic and social advance at the local level and by enabling the local communities to visualize their needs and projects in the broader framework of the national plan, the different sectoral programmes of the ministries dealing with rural development provide opportunities and incentives for the communities to participate in development.^{11/}

^{10/} The Draft Third Five-Year Plan:1969-1973 of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, p.384.

^{11/} The Caribbean Regional Training Workshop on Community Development and Local Government held in March 1968 recommended that the central planning units should include a social planner besides an economist and a physical planner and that central planners should involve top Community Development Officers in the different stages of formulation of the sectoral components of the national plan. See the Report of the Workshop op. cit.

Perhaps the most significant trend is the general acceptance of the approach of building in area dimensions in community development planning. Participants in the Caribbean Regional Training Workshop on Community Development and Local Government commended this technique, stating that "in the context of the social structure in the region, the concept of a 'self sufficient' village community is not realistic."^{12/}

One of the three areas of study of the Workshop was the prerequisites for local planning. It proposed a framework of survey of the area as a preliminary to the formulation of area plans, both of the potential needs, and physical characteristics of the area and of the typology of the communities^{13/} living in it. The Workshop made a specific suggestion that in drawing up area plans, the possibility of identifying what could be called "focal points and growth" in the area and designing special measures for the development of these centres should be explored. It is interesting to note that the Draft Third Five-Year Plan 1969-1973 of Trinidad and Tobago contains in it a specific strategy for regional planning. The central planners of Trinidad and Tobago visualize regional planning as a means of "properly integrating" development activities of both national and local significance. They also propose to follow the concept of "growth poles".^{14/} The adoption of this strategy will lead to detailed research into the spatial consequences of social and economic change.^{15/}

Another important factor in the Caribbean is the intensification of efforts by the countries in the region in the past few months towards greater and closer economic co-operation among themselves. They have recently signed the Caribbean Free Trade Agreement. An important

^{12/} See the Report of the Workshop op. cit. p.10

^{13/} The scheme suggested by the Workshop was a modification of Dr. Robert Redfield's scheme of folk-urban continuum based on his anthropological research in Mexico.

^{14/} The Draft Third Five-Year Plan of Trinidad and Tobago op. cit. pp.191-192.

^{15/} A plea for such a study was made by Mr. G.E. Cumper in the Third West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference held in April 1968. See his Non-economic Factors Influencing Rural Development Planning, Social and Economic Studies, op. cit.

provision in this Agreement is the Agricultural Marketing Protocol which has been devised as a positive instrument for encouraging intra-regional trade in agricultural products. The envisaged reorientation of the Caribbean economics within the framework of a formula for regional economic co-operation will engender far-reaching 'non-economic' changes, especially in the fields of specialization of roles, community organizations, labour relations, occupational and geographical shifts and local institutional structures. Social and community development in the region would, in this process, assume greater complexity and wider dimensions. ^{16/}

There has been intensification and better systematization of training programmes in the Caribbean. Indeed, the objectives of the Caribbean Regional Training Workshop included a review of the existing training programmes in different countries and formulation of a common basic framework of orientation and job training which could be adopted by all the countries in the area. Following up the recommendations of the Workshop, training programmes at the country level are being conducted. As the next step from this Workshop there is a proposal to hold another regional workshop on integrated rural development, taking in participants from ministries concerned with rural development and with central planning. There is also a suggestion mooted by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to hold a seminar at the ministerial level from which may evolve "a co-ordinated policy in Community Development for Caribbean progress, oriented towards the improvement of the human resources of the region as a means of complementing the economic unity which is now imminent." ^{17/}

^{16/} It is noteworthy that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago visualized an onerous role for Community Development in the task of preparing the "community at large to adjust itself to the new environment and to the technological and regional changes which are taking place at break-neck speed around us". See Report of the Workshop op. cit. p.58.

^{17/} See the Report of the Workshop op.cit. p.58.

Annex

SOME ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
IN THREE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES IN THE
CARIBBEAN

Country	Programme Areas	Current emphases & Priorities	Geographic Coverage	Apex Agency Responsible	Training Arrangements
GUYANA	Self-help projects in the fields of agriculture (e.g. reconditioning of farms), education (e.g. construction of school buildings ^{1/} and teachers' quarters) Communications (e.g. construction of airstrips in the interior) water control (e.g. sea and river defence schemes) health (e.g. construction of health centres), recreation (e.g. Construction of Community Centres), Cottage industries and handicrafts; nutrition education and Youth Development.	School construction, agricultural projects and Youth Development	Countrywide coverage	Community Development Division in the Prime Minister's Office ^{2/}	Pre-service training (Orientation and generic courses) and in-service training including "refresher conferences"

^{1/} The self-help school construction programme in Guyana is implemented with assistance from the World Food Programme. An interim appraisal of the project was conducted in November 1967 by a UN/UNESCO/WFP Team.

^{2/} There is a Parliamentary Secretary in charge of Community Development.

Country	Programme Areas	Current emphases and priorities	Geographic Coverage	Apex Agency responsible	Training Arrangements
JAMAICA	Crafts, home economics, literacy, cooperatives, sports and arts and Youth Development	Crafts and Youth Development	The programme is in operation in 100 selected villages. The coverage to be expanded gradually ^{3/}	Ministry of Youth and Community Development: and within the framework of the Ministry's responsibility, the Social Development Commission, a ^{4/} statutory body	Induction training for the village officers (the front line workers) and refresher courses (including periodic staff conferences) and in-service training for village officers and the supervisory staff.
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	A broadbased adult education programme (including home economics and agricultural education in community centres constructed with self-help), the Better Village Programme, a Special Works Programme aimed at once at village improvement and provision of employment, handicrafts and Youth Development.	Adult education programme, handicrafts and Youth Development.	Countrywide coverage	Community Development Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development headed by a Minister of State responsible to the Prime Minister who is in charge of Finance and Planning ^{5/} and Development	Preservice training for frontline workers, recurrent in-service training for all categories of staff and periodic conferences, workshops and seminars.

^{3/} In addition, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Board, which was set up to utilize the funds derived from a cess on sugar exports for welfare measures and programmes for improving the living conditions of sugar workers and their families, operates a multi-sectoral programme of Community Development in the 19 sugar areas throughout the island. These areas are excluded from the purview of the "100 Village Programme".

^{4/} There are four separate agencies in the Commission - The Social Development Agency, the Youth Development Agency, the Craft Development Agency and the Sports Development Agency, each under the charge of a Director.

^{5/} There is a separate Parliamentary Secretary for Youth Affairs.

