

BASIC DEMOCRACIES AND AGRICULTURE
DEVELOPMENT IN EAST PAKISTAN

by 1264

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INTRODUCTION

How to create a nation, how to carry out the modernization process, how to uplift backward people, how to bring in the millions of illiterate, traditional people in the main stream of national life--these are some of the problems which are now baffling the scholars and the leaders of the developing world.

The countries of Africa and Asia are often characterized by a high percentage of illiteracy, a low per capita income, a lack of industrialization and a dependence on subsistence farming, with most of the population living in the villages and in the rural areas. The societies of these countries abound with superstitions and traditionalism--where loyalties to the family, group, caste, area or province are stronger than to the nation and where resistance to change is quite strong.¹ These are some of the factors which directly or indirectly slow down the modernization process in the developing world.

An important aspect of the modernization process in the developing countries is the establishment of a society in which there is identification of the people with the history, myths and territory of the national state, and in which social units like tribe, caste and village become secondary to the nation in the people's loyalty. In short, the

¹Edward Shils, Political Development in the New States (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1966) pp. 31-32.

modernization process helps to undermine traditionalism in these countries.²

Various methods and models have been used and are being used to facilitate and hasten modernization. Quite often, ideology has also been pressed into service by the national leaders to aid the modernization process. Three models of modernization in the developing countries have gained prominence.

One model is symbolized by dictatorial revolutionary regimes such as that of Nasser in Egypt or Goumedienne in Algeria--where there is only one political party which exists primarily to carry out the policies and wishes of the "Rais" or the boss. The second model often reflected in the developing world is that of mass mobilization, such as in Tanzania--in which the political party is more democratic and open for the masses to participate in, and where, in fact, every effort is made to broaden membership and active mass participation. The third model is the bureaucratic one, in which the military, after having gained power by way of a coup d'etat, combines its talents with the civilian bureaucracy to carry out the modernization process.

Pakistan under Ayub Khan, is a fair example of this last model, and this paper is a case study of that regime's effort to carry out the modernization process in the rural areas of one of Pakistan's two

²Claude Welch, ed., Political Modernization (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1967) p. 2. For discussion on modernization and political development, see: David Apter, The Politics of Modernization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965); Lucian Pye, Aspects of Political Development (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966); Lucian Pye, Communication and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); James Coleman, ed., Education and Political Development (Princeton: University Press, 1965); Joseph LaPalombara, ed., Bureaucracy and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

provinces--East Pakistan. Soon after coming to power, President Ayub Khan instituted a scheme of "Basic Democracies", which originally was designed to meet the "felt needs" of the people. The Basic Democracies later became the foundation of Pakistan's political system until March 1969, when a new Martial Law regime took over which has since raised speculation about the future of the Basic Democracies System.

In this paper, an attempt is made to examine the role of Basic Democracy Councils as modernizing agents in rural East Pakistan. Specifically, I appraise the response of Basic Democracy Councils to the problems of agricultural development in East Pakistan. Agriculture is not only a profession but a way of life for the millions of people in East Pakistan (and for that matter for the overwhelming majority of people in the developing world). This way of life is very static and traditional. In it may be found the seeds of superstition, ignorance, fatalism and opposition to change.

It follows, therefore, that by seeking a change in the old methods of agriculture, one is also seeking to change the static way of life and, consequently, to undermine the traditional way of life. By making it possible for the people to participate in the government's development programs and by bringing the masses closer to government officials, the people can be made aware of their nationhood.

East Pakistan, with its 55,000 square miles and 66 million people out of Pakistan's 120 million population--offers a fertile ground for a scholarly inquiry. East Pakistan is one thousand miles away from Pakistan's political power base. It has tremendous population and agriculture problems. Ninety percent of East Pakistan's population is in the rural areas. Unlike in West Pakistan, a rural development academy at

Comilla in East Pakistan has engaged in extensive experimentation and research, the findings of which are available to scholars. Hence, East Pakistan is eminently researchable for the purposes of this paper.

East Pakistan, is a vast alluvial plain, a delta region of Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. It receives one of the highest rates of rainfall in the world, an average of 60 inches a year. People in East Pakistan are predominantly rice eaters, and three crops of rice are raised in a year--locally known as "Amman" in winter, "Aus" in summer, and "Boro" in the spring season.³

East Pakistan is a land of extreme poverty; the per capita income per year is around \$50.⁴

For administrative purposes the province of East Pakistan is divided into four divisions, seventeen districts, fifty-four subdivisions, 411 thanas, and 4000 unions (each union is made up of 15-20 villages).⁵ Under the 1962 Constitution,⁶ the head of the province was a governor appointed

³Nafis Ahmad, An Economic Geography of East Pakistan (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 2.

⁴Nural Islam, ed., East Pakistan Annual 1966-1967 (Chittagong: Tempest Publications, 1967) p. 47.

⁵Mary Beech, Laurwin Corwin, Peter Bertocci, "Introducing the East Bengali village" in Mary Beech, Laurwin Corwin, Peter Bertocci et al., Inside the East Pakistan Village (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, reprint Series No. 2, 1965-1966, memo) p. 2.

⁶On March 25th, 1969, the Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan's army, General Yahya Khan, took over the government from President Ayub Khan who had resigned. Since then, the country has been under martial law. General Yahya Khan abrogated the Constitution of 1962, but later partially restored it. Most of the research for this paper was done in the Summer of 1968. At that time, there was little indication of the events that unfolded in the fall of 1968 and subsequently which led to the current martial law regime. The martial law government of Yahya Khan has not moved to abolish the Basic Democracy Councils in the rural areas of Pakistan at the time of this writing.

by the President; the governor was assisted by a governor's council of ministers. There was a provincial assembly, too, which had a little power; it functioned, more or less, to legitimize the actions of the government, and worked as a sounding board for the regime.

This paper is divided into six chapters, the first of which traces the historic evolution of local government in what is now East Pakistan; the second chapter discusses the agricultural conditions in East Pakistan; the third relates agricultural development to the basic democracy councils; and the fourth chapter deals with the rural works program. The fifth chapter is concerned with the new methods of agricultural development. The last chapter summarizes the findings and conclusions of this paper.

CHAPTER I

VILLAGES THROUGH THE AGES

Village councils or panchayats in some form or other have existed in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent since time immemorial. Even today the panchayats exist in India, renovated and modernized and given proper place in the Indian constitution.¹ These village panchayats and villages, however, had started to decay with the advent of Muslim rule in India, which started in the 12th century. During the long Muslim rule, villages of India were neglected and left to themselves.² But if early Muslim sultans, forgot about the Indian villages, Mughul emperors (15 A.D.-18 A.D.) did very little about the welfare of the villages. To be sure, the Mughuls had an elaborate administrative system, but that was mostly for collection of taxes and maintenance of law and order.³

By the time the British gained ascendancy in the 18th century in India and Bengal, the villages of India had become more isolated than ever before. The Indian countryside was in shambles. The few existing

¹For discussion on ancient panchayats, see: H. D. Malviya, Village Panchayats in India (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1956). For modern panchayats, see: Hugh Tinker, "The Village in the Framework of Development", in Ralph Braibanti and Joseph Spangler, eds., Administration and Economic Development in India (Durham: Duke University Press, 1963). Also, see: Norman Palmer, "Experiments in Democratic Decentralization", The Indian Political Science Review, (Oct. 1966-March 1967), pp. 55-57.

²A. B. M. Habibullah, The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India (Allah Abad: Central Book Depot., 1961), p. 316.

³Hugh Tinker, The Foundations of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma (London: The University of London, Althone Press, 1954), p. 19.

Mughul trunk roads had decayed because of lack of maintenance and care. Furthermore, law and order had broken down; thugs and robbers roamed freely looting and victimizing the village folks.⁴ Panchayats still existed, but only in name; they did not serve any useful purpose. Later on, these panchayats did not represent the villagers, but identified themselves with the government of the day.⁵ By the Act of Permanent Settlement of 1793, the British appointed the Bengal zamindars (land owners) to collect taxes, maintain law and order and administer justice in the Bengal villages.⁶

At the same time the British also created a new administrative unit, originally called the revenue district, and appointed a collector who lived in the district headquarters, and was not much in touch with the villages. The revenue district later became the "fundamental unit" of British, and now Indian and Pakistan's rural administration. Meanwhile, the Bengal Zamindars, due to lack of supervision over them, became powerful and oppressive to the villagers. They did not bother to provide any basic amenities like drinking water, and they neglected to maintain any roads. The results was that Bengal villages became restless. On the other hand, the village panchayats had decayed even further.⁷

⁴Hugh Tinker, The Foundations of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma (London: The University of London, Althone Press, 1954) p. 19.

⁵Ibid., p. 40.

⁶A.T.R. Rahman, "Basic Democracies and Rural Development In East Pakistan", in Inayatullah, ed., Bureaucracy and Development in Pakistan (Peshawar: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1962) p. 327.

⁷Quoted from a Bengal Administration Report by A.T.R. Rahman, in Inayatullah, ed., Bureaucracy and Development in Pakistan, p. 329.

Because both the Zamindari system and the panchayats had failed, need for law and order in the Bengal villages had become very urgent, British administrators realized that the old order had to be replaced with some new institutions. To meet the law and order situation, the Bengal government passed the Chowkidary Panchayat Act in 1871. The Act provided for the "union" of several villages, presided over by a five man panchayat committee. The function of this committee was to appoint village policemen (chowkidars) to look after the law and order of the villages and to tax the village people for paying the salaries of the chowkidars.⁸

The chowkidari panchayats proved effective for maintaining law and order in Bengal; they, however, did not provide any services to the villagers. Roads and bridges were in as bad a shape as ever, drinking water was not provided, nor were any health and sanitation programmes initiated by the chowkidari panchayats. Because the villagers were taxed and because they did not get the services they had hoped for from the chowkidari panchayats, they became dissatisfied with the chowkidari panchayats also.⁹

The Bengal government, sensing new unrest in the villages, passed after two years of debate, a local self government act of 1885. The act provided for a comprehensive scheme for rural development. The act of 1885 created three tiers of local bodies, namely, (1) the district board at the district level, (2) the subdivision board at the subdivisional level, and (3) the union committee for a number of villages. The district board was given the financial and executive powers. Subdivision boards were made an electoral body for the district boards, and were empowered

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

to supervise and grant funds for the union committee. The union committees had no financial or executive power of their own. The union committees were subservient to the district boards, and were expected to follow the directives of the district boards.¹⁰ The district boards, working under the district officer or the collector, performed their duties well and did provide the basic services and amenities to the villagers, but the subdivisional boards and the union committees were not effective. In fact, the first union committee was not organized until 1895, ten years after passage of the act.¹¹ By 1913 only 61 union committees had been organized in the whole province; this number grew to 156 by 1916-1917.¹²

In 1919 a new local self-government act was passed in Bengal to upgrade the working of the local bodies. The new act provided for: (1) broadening of the election base; more people now participated in the elections than before; (2) the chairman of the district board had to be elected by the district board; (3) the name of union councils was changed to union boards; the new union boards were given the executive, municipal and judicial functions, and (4) a circle officer was appointed under the subdivisional officer to guide and supervise the work of the union boards. In this new scheme, district boards and union boards were performing most of the work; hence, the subdivisional boards (also called the local boards) were abolished later on.¹³ The union boards and the district boards

¹⁰Ibid., p. 330.

¹¹Ibid., p. 332.

¹²His Majesty's Government, Moral and Material Progress and Conditions in India 1916-1917, Statement Presented to Parliament (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1918), p. 351.

¹³Rahman, op. cit., pp. 333-334.

continued to function in East Bengal (now East Pakistan) until 1960 when the new scheme of basic democracies was initiated by President Ayub Khan in 1960.

World War II and the partition of India and the province of Bengal (West Bengal going to India, and East Bengal, now called East Pakistan, going to Pakistan) affected the local bodies of East Pakistan. The provincial government had its own numerous problems to solve, and had neither the administrators nor much financial resources to care for the local bodies. The political instability which followed the defeat of the Muslim League government in East Pakistan in 1954 further worsened the situation of the local bodies in East Pakistan.

After independence, as has been mentioned above, the local bodies had become weak and rural development suffered; something needed to be done in the villages. Meanwhile, the national government was faced with the problem of raising food production in the country. Keeping these objectives in view, the government of Pakistan launched a new rural program throughout the country in 1953 with the assistance of the United States government. This new program was called Village Agriculture, Industrial development program (V-AID). This new program had no connection whatsoever with the existing union and local boards. Both had separate administrations, and separate sources of finance. The objectives of the village aid program were: (1) to increase the productive output and real income of the villagers, (2) to increase and improve the community facilities and services of the village dispensaries, schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges, etc., (3) to promote the growth of local organizations which will exist and function on their own initiative, (4) to provide extension services to the villagers, (5) to make coordinated

attempts at problem solving, and (6) to give a welfare outlook to the administration of the country.¹⁴ To achieve these objectives, the village aid program relied on:

(a) process of education, based upon frank and open discussion with the villagers and (b) planned community action designed to assist the villagers to acquire the attitudes, concepts and skills prerequisite to their democratic participation in the solution of as wide a range of development projects as possible in an order or priority determined by their increasing level of competence.¹⁵

For administration purposes, a chief village aid administrator, in the central health, labour and social welfare, was appointed to run the village aid program. On the provincial level there were (1) the administrators of the village aid program, and to assist him in his work, there were the regional directors, (2) on the development area level, a development officer; he was assisted by two supervisors, and (3) twenty men, village level workers and 5-10 women village workers, assigned to each development area.¹⁶ To carry out the village aid program, the whole country was divided into development areas, each composed of a number of villages and an estimated population of 150,000 people in East Pakistan.¹⁷ In 1959 there were 134 development areas in the whole country, covering 18,436 villages.¹⁸ It was hoped that by 1965 the majority of the villages

¹⁴Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Comilla, Basic Democracies Manual No. 1 (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development) 1959, p. 25.

¹⁵Jack Mezinow and F. A. Santopolo, "Community Development in Pakistan: The First Five Years", International Social Science Journal, Vol. XII (1960) No. 3, p. 433.

¹⁶Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Basic Democracies Manual No. 1 (Comilla 1959) p. 27.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Mezinow and Santopolo, op. cit., p. 434.

of the country would be covered by village aid programs.¹⁹ The village aid program lasted about eight years (1953-1961) and was abolished by the martial law government in 1961.

Why did the government abolish the village aid program after spending some 30 Crores of Rupees (U.S. \$ 60 million) on the program?²⁰ Various reasons are given by various people. George Platt, gives the following reasons which seem to be logical: (1) the government worried about the low production of food and appointed a food and agriculture commission. The commission in its report, published in 1960, recommended that two agriculture development corporations, one in each province, be located and that these corporations take over the agriculture development work in the rural areas of the provinces. (2) the village aid program had not contributed significantly towards agricultural development. (3) there was consistent opposition by the agriculture departments, both at the central and provincial levels. (4) creation of basic democracies. (5) withdrawal of technical assistance by the United States from the village aid program.²¹

¹⁹Government of Pakistan, National Planning Board, The First Five Year Plan 1955-1960 (Karachi: Govt. of Pakistan Press, 1957) p. 30.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹George Platt, "Agriculture and Administration", in Guthrie Birkhead, ed., Administrative Problems in Pakistan (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966) p. 100.

The Basic-Democracy System ²²

Structure of Basic-Democracies. The Basic-Democracies have four tiers starting from the "union" of villages to the divisional level.

The Union Council is composed of 12-15 elected members representing the village population of about 10,000 to 15,000 people. The council in turn elects its own chairman. Next tier up is the Thana Council on the thana level. All the chairmen of the union councils become members of the Thana Council. The rest of the members are from the nation-building departments (i.e., health, education, various representatives of the different directorates of the agriculture department, etc.). The Chairman of the Thana Council is the subdivision officer. There are about 412 Thana Councils in East-Pakistan.

The District Council is made up of all chairmen of Thana Councils, cantonment boards, etc., and chairmen of the town committees. The rest are elected from among the chairmen of the various departments also sit on this council. The deputy commissioner is the chairman of the District Council. There are seventeen district councils in East Pakistan (one district council for each district).

The Divisional Council is made up of elected members from the district councils plus government officials at the divisional level. The administrative head of the division, the commissioner, is the chairman of the Divisional Council.

²²The whole section on Basic Democracies is based on Lawrence Ziring, "The Administration of Basic Democracies", in Guthrie Birkhead, ed., Administrative Problems in Pakistan (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966) pp. 31-62.

*Thana in East Pakistan, Tehsil in West Pakistan.

Functions. There are three different categories of functions of the basic democrats (elected every five years at the union level, 80,000* in all-- 40,000 in East Pakistan and 40,000 in West Pakistan). These are (1) Constitutional, (2) Judicial, and (3) Planning, Development and Administration of the Development Programmes. Under the 1962 Constitution of Pakistan, basic-democrats have the sole right to elect the President of Pakistan, the National Assembly, and the two provincial assemblies every five years. Also, the members of the union council are empowered to act as conciliating courts, and to decide minor civil and criminal cases. However, the planning, development, and administrative functions of the various councils are the most important. Union councils and the district councils have the power to levy taxes in the villages; in practice though most of their funds come from the central and the provincial governments.

The development schemes are planned and executed by the union councils, but a prior permission has to be obtained from the district council, if the scheme involves an expenditure up to Rs: 50,000 (\$10,000) and from the divisional council, if the scheme involves an expenditure of Rs: 100,000 (\$20,000).

The most important tier, in the Basic-Democracy structure is the District Council, which has the power to approve or to disapprove any scheme, or to finance or not to finance the scheme. The Thana Councils have no power of taxation and no administrative purpose. The Thana and the Divisional Councils are there to co-ordinate the schemes and help in

*The National Assembly passed a government bill to raise the number of Basic-Democracies to 120,000 (60,000 for each wing, to be elected in the fall of 1969). (Embassy of Pakistan, Washington D.C., Notification, December, 1967).

giving assistance and advice in preparing the schemes.

There is a special administrative organization for the basic democracies. The administration of the Basic Democracies is a provincial subject. There is only a basic democracy "cell" in the central ministry of Information and Broadcasting. At the provincial level, the minister in the governor's council of ministers, is in charge of the Department of Basic Democracies and Social Welfare. Under the minister is the Secretary of the Department of Basic Democracies and Social Welfare who actually runs the department. In the field there is a director of basic democracies (D.B.D.). He is stationed at the divisional level. He is responsible both to the commissioner of the division and to the chairman of the divisional council.

Under D.B.D. there are assistant directors (A.D.B.D.) stationed at the district level. They are responsible to D.B.D. and to the Deputy Commissioner of the district (who is also chairman of the District Council). A.D.B.D. is also the secretary of the district council. A.D.B.D. is the most important key person in the whole scheme. He is the man charged with running, assisting, and co-ordinating various plans and programmes of all the councils of the district. To assist the A.D.B.D. there are two or three development officials (D.O.) who sit on the Thana Councils and supervise and assist in the development and execution of the programmes of two to three Thanas. Next to A.D.B.D. the D.O. officer is the most important person. D.O.'s duties and responsibilities, one level down, are as important as those of his superior (A.D.B.D.). Under the D.O. are the secretaries of the union councils who are both under the D.O. and the chairman of the union councils.

CHAPTER II

AGRICULTURE

OF Pakistan's estimated population of 120 million (55% in East Pakistan), 87% live in the rural areas with 92% of East Pakistan's population living in the rural areas. And 75% to 85% of the total labor force in the country consists of cultivators and agricultural laborers.¹

Agriculture is very important to Pakistan, not only because it is the main occupation of Pakistani people, but also because of agriculture's overall contribution to the economy of Pakistan. Of the total exports of the country, 86% are based on agricultural raw materials, and 46% of the gross national product is provided by agriculture. Most of the major industries of Pakistan, like textiles, jute goods, vegetable oil, sugar, leather and woolen goods, are dependent on agricultural raw materials. Most of the transport system, roads, waterways and railroads, get freight from agricultural commodities and inputs. The widest purchasing power for local manufactures comes from rural areas.²

Because of these reasons, the importance of agriculture has not been lost on Pakistan's Planners. The Planning Commission notes:

The importance of agriculture from the point of view of its share, consumption, exports and employment makes its development, one of the critical issues in the planning. Rapid growth of agriculture would permit the unhampered expansion

¹S.A.M. Khan, "The Revolution in Agriculture" Agriculture Supplement, Dawn, Karachi. April 22nd, 1968, p. 1, col. 6.

²Ibid., p. 7.

of other sectors which depend on agriculture demands, and supplies, and will insure income gains to a large segment of the population. It is difficult to overstate the importance of agriculture growth.³

Though since 1955 Pakistan has given top priority to agriculture development, progress has been slow and painful. Pakistan, up until 1951, was self-sufficient in food, and was even a minor exporter. And perhaps because of this reason the government gave scant attention to agricultural development. The government's major attention was on industrialization. In 1952, a major drought hit the country; the government was forced to import food grains, mostly from the United States, under PL-480.

Pakistan's rising population worsened the matter further. The Planning Commission, recognizing the situation, warned the Government of the approaching food crisis,⁴ and proposed that a total of Rs. 1.2 billions (U.S. \$ 500 millions) be spent on agriculture in the country's first five year plan (1955-1960). The commission projected a 9% increase in food grains and hoped that the country thereby would become self-sufficient in food production. In actuality, the annual growth in food output was 1.3 percent per year while the population grew at the rate of 2.5 percent.⁵ And Pakistan's average annual (almost wholly from the United

³Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission, Third Five Year Plan 1965-1970 (Karachi: Manager, Government of Pakistan Press, 1965), p. 393. Hereafter referred to as Third Five Year Plan.

⁴Ibid., p. 16.

⁵These figures were quoted by West Pakistan Food and Agriculture Minister, Malik Khuda Bux, at the Rockefeller symposium held in New York, April 15, 1968, on, "Strategy for Conquest of Hunger." Reproduced in DAWN, Karachi, April, 1968, p. 7, col. 4.

States) food imports between 1955-1962 were about 1 million tons.⁶ Pakistan launched its second five year plan. Again, priority was given to agriculture and food production. The country allocated 16% of its total outlay during the second five year plan on agriculture,⁷ and projected a 2.9 percent annual growth rate and hoped for an increase of 21% in the agriculture sector at the end of the second five year plan.⁸

To everyone's pleasant surprise, the growth rate of food crops rose to 3.4 percent, and the total output of food increased by 27 percent against the planned target of 21 percent.⁹ The growth in food production was about equally shared by both East and West Pakistan.

The causes of the sudden increase in the food production were, (1) good, sound and stable political leadership, under President Ayub Khan, who as Commander-in-Chief of the Army had seized power in 1958 and undertook land reforms in West Pakistan. (2) input measures of water, fertilizer, plant protection and improved seeds. The new government heavily subsidized fertilizers. The government paid 30 to 40% of the cost of fertilizer. As a result the intake of fertilizer rose from 30,600 nutrient tons in 1958 to 192,000 nutrient tons in 1965.¹⁰ (3) a better distribution system of high yielding seeds, by the newly created agricultural development corporations in 1961. (4) price support and new

⁶Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) p. 147.

⁷Third Five Year Plan, p. 116.

⁸Malik Khuda Bux, "Strategy for Conquest of Hunger" DAWN, Karachi, p. 7, col. 4.

⁹Ibid., p. 7, col. 4.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7, col. 5.

incentives, given for the first time to the farmers of Pakistan, induced the farmers to produce those crops which would bring the most money.¹¹

During the second five year plan, food production in East Pakistan kept even pace with West Pakistan, and its value of crop output grew by 20%.¹² Of this growth, it is estimated that 5% came from the extension of the area, 5% from fertilizer, 4% from improved seeds, 2% from plant protection, and the remainder was attributed to changed rice technology and increased labour inputs.¹³

Getting these results in the agriculture sector made the government over confident, and it was freely proclaimed by the government that Pakistan finally had won the battle in its stagnant agriculture sector and that the country had achieved a breakthrough in food production.

Unfortunately, this proved to be a wrong prediction. During 1965 and 1966 the country was in the grip of two successive droughts and food production was again severely affected. Pakistan was forced to import more food grains than ever before.

During the current third plan of Pakistan (1965-1970), Pakistan proposes to spend about Rs. 5 billion (U.S. \$1 billion)¹⁴ in agriculture sector, equally shared between East and West Pakistan. It is hoped that annual growth rate in agriculture will be 5%.¹⁵ Some of the objectives of the third Five Year Plan in agriculture sector are:

¹¹Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives, p. 150.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Planning Commission, Third Five Year Plan, p. 442.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 442.

- (a) To increase the real income of farmers at least at the same rate as per capita increase in the non-agriculture sector.
- (b) To move towards self-sufficiency in food reprievements to the extent compatible with other needs of the economy, including foreign trade, aiming at the same time at improved nutritional standards in food consumption.
- (c) To promote agriculture development on a sound self-propelling basis and programmes such as the development of marketing, cooperatives, storage, credit, educational and other institutional and infrastructure facilities.¹⁶

To achieve these goals, the following strategy would be employed:

- (a) more water would be made available not only by the present existing canals, but also by tube wells (in West Pakistan) and by low lift pumps (in East Pakistan), (b) new high yielding varieties of wheat and rice would be made available to the farmers, (c) by increasing the intake of fertilizers from 162 thousand nutrient tons in 1965 to 486 thousand nutrient tons by the end of the plan in 1970, (d) incentives to farmers through assured minimum prices and subsidies on inputs, (e) try to make available all the inputs at the right place and at the right time by streamlining the distribution system, (f) projects requiring heavy investments will be postponed in favour of immediately productive programmes, and (g) major changes in the organizational, institutional and policy making establishment which would lead to improved training of agriculture development projects.¹⁷

As has been mentioned earlier, during the first two years of the Plan, the country suffered from bad weather and the growth rate fell

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 396.

¹⁷ Malik Khuda Bux, "Strategy for the Conquest of Hunger", Part II, reported in DAWN, April 9, 1968, p. 7, col. 7.

from 3.4% to 2.5%¹⁸ and Pakistan had actually to import more food than in previous years. However, the crop harvested in June, 1968, according to a Pakistani newspaper, because of good weather, was a good one and the wheat production in West Pakistan reached an all-time high level of 6 million tons. The rice production in East Pakistan was also good.

Once again the government is claiming that Pakistan has achieved a breakthrough in food production and that by 1970, Pakistan will actually export rice and wheat.

In my view this is a very premature hope. The important factor of good weather has to be kept in consideration. There seems to be a positive correlation between good crops and good weather. A breakthrough and continued progress in agriculture will not come until the farmer is awakened and motivated to accept change and produce more.

In the meantime, the growth in agriculture will have to depend heavily on fertilizers, water, improved seeds and plant protection services and, above all, on good weather.

Though Pakistan has made some progress in agricultural production there are still back-breaking problems, to which we will turn shortly. In the meanwhile, let us take a brief look at agriculture administration in East Pakistan.

To implement government's agricultural plans, there are two different organizations directly concerned with the development of agriculture in the two provinces. On the provincial level there are (1) Ministry of Food and Agriculture and (2) the Agriculture Development Corporation. There is also the Central Ministry of Food and Agriculture but that

¹⁸Ibid., p. 7, col. 5.

Ministry's work is mostly concerned with giving aid, assistance and advice to the two provinces of Pakistan.

The provincial Ministry of Food and Agriculture is headed by a minister, appointed by the governor. Under the minister, is the Secretary of Agriculture and Food who runs the Department.

The field organization is headed by the Provincial Director of Agriculture, stationed at the provincial headquarters. On the divisional level is the deputy director, on the district level is the assistant director of agriculture, on the subdivisinal level there is the subdivisinal agriculture officer in charge of about ten thanas. On the thana level, there is the thana agriculture officer and on the union level is the union assistant.¹⁹

The Agriculture Development Corporations were created in both of the provinces in 1961 on the recommendations of the Food and Agriculture Commission in 1960. It is a separate, semi-autonomous body, with its own board of directors with the chairman as chief executive.

Its main functions are to provide the input services like better seeds, fertilizers, pest control, renting of tractors and other farm machinery to the farmers.²⁰

¹⁹ Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Report of Food and Agriculture Commission (Karachi: Manager, Government Publications, 1960) p. 157.

²⁰ M. R. Sharif, Modern Economic Development of Pakistan (Dacca: Mullick Brothers, 1966) p. 107.

Agriculture Problems of East Pakistan

There are numerous factors which all hamper in agriculture development of East Pakistan.

East Pakistan, the land of many rivers, has actually more waterways than roads and railroads. Good roads are a rarity in East Pakistan.²¹ In 1961, the farmers in East Pakistan reported that they had to walk an average of at least eleven miles to reach surfaced roads, a steamer, or a railroad station.²²

To develop agriculture, it is most important that the transport system should be good, as has been pointed out by Mellor:

Readily available, efficient transportation has been shown to be important to several aspects of adequate market performance. Poor and expensive transportation increased marketing in a number of ways with some of the effects having a very substantial absolute and percentage effect.²³

Another problem in East Pakistan is land fragmentation. Land fragmentation has taken place extensively in East Pakistan. Soon after independence, a land reform bill was passed by the East Pakistan government in 1951, abolishing completely the big land holdings. Land was turned over to the farmers, and no minimum land ceilings were put on the holdings.²⁴ The result has been that land held by the farmer has been divided

²¹Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Report of Food and Agriculture Commission (Karachi: Government of Pakistan Press, 1960) p. 38. Hereafter referred to as Agriculture Commission Report.

²²Findings of Central Statistical Office quoted by Papanek in, Pakistan's Development, p. 120.

²³John W. Mellor, The Economics of Agricultural Development (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966) p. 340.

²⁴S. M. Akhter, Pakistan Development Economy (Lahore: Publishers United Ltd., 1966) p. 147.

and subdivided among his sons and their sons. The land holdings are extremely small, the average land holding is between 2.5 acres to 3 acres, and in a populated district like Dacca and Noakhali, the average is still down to 1.5 acres.²⁵

According to Akhter Hameed Khan, 15% to 25% of the villagers do not have any land in East Pakistan, and have no work for half the year. Five percent to ten percent have surplus land and money (not more than twenty acres). And a vast majority are average small farmers.²⁶

When a land holding is too small, when there is tremendous population pressure, as is the case in East Pakistan, then the condition of the farmer and land suffer. The farmer is already under pressure to produce enough to make both ends meet and he does not have much left to invest in his land to improve it.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that East Pakistan receives one of the highest rates of rainfall in the world, during monsoon period, between June and September. This rain causes vast floods, which cause extensive damage to crops.

It is estimated that if effective flood control could be provided in East Pakistan, then the damage done annually to five to six million acres of land could be averted.²⁷

²⁵Findings of Dacca University Socio-Economic Survey Board, quoted by Beech, Bertocci, Corwin, et al. Inside the East Pakistan Village, p. 8.

²⁶Obaidullah Khan and Arthur Raper, eds., Comilla-U.S. AID Conference Report, June 11-June 14, 1963 (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1963) p. 8.

²⁷Ghulam Mohammad, "Some Strategic Problems in Agriculture Development in Pakistan", The Pakistan Development Review, Vol: IV (Summer, 1964) pp. 233-234.

While too much water is available during the summer season, not much water is available during the winter months when the third crop of rice is sown. As a result winter crop only occupies 3.8% of the acres under cultivation.²⁸

This problem could be easily solved by providing water through irrigation methods.

Some progress has been made in this regard. Until 1965, 200,000 acres were irrigated by low lift water pumps. By 1970, it is hoped that 750,000 acres will be irrigated in East Pakistan.²⁹

East Pakistan has more land under rice than the combined rice average of Java, Thailand and Formosa. But its total production of 8 million tons of rice is smaller than that of Java. The yield per acre in East Pakistan is about 1,000 pounds,³⁰ as compared to Formosa (2,900), Japan (3,362) pounds.³¹

A typical farmer in East Pakistan is an illiterate person who practices agriculture on his small plot of land according to his knowledge acquired through his father who acquired from his father. That is the way he has known it; that is the way he is going to practice it. All his care and worry is to feed himself and his family. An average Pakistani farmer "is bound up in tradition and peasant fatalism and attaches low importance to economic values as compared to other social and national

²⁸Nafis Ahmad, An Economic Geography of East Pakistan, p. 129.

²⁹Third Five Year Plan, p. 401.

³⁰Nafis Ahmed, An Economic Geography of East Pakistan, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 123.

³¹Ibid., p. 131.

values of his village."³²

Problem of Agriculture Credit

The overwhelming number of small farmers in East Pakistan continually need credit to "tide them over from season to season." The farmers need credit to improve their agriculture lands, because their incomes from the lands are so low that they could hardly afford to invest the money in their lands.³³ The result of all this is that the small farmer is often forced to sell his crop at a low price, because he has no staying power, has no storage facilities and has demanding creditors to satisfy.³⁴

Since only 3% of East Pakistan's credit needs are met by the government agencies,³⁵ the farmer turns to one who is his usual source, the village money lender who usually charges 18% to 50% interest on the cash advanced. In one study conducted, in Comilla Kotwale thana it was found that 50% of the total farm produce of the farmers went to the money lender as interest alone.³⁶

Sir Malcolm Darling, writing in the twenties about the money lenders in India, observed:

³²Papanek, Pakistan's Development, p. 148.

³³Beech, Bertocci, Laurwin, et. al., Inside the East Pakistan Village, p. 14.

³⁴Akhter Hameed Khan, quoted by Obaidullah Khan and Arthur Raper, eds., U.S. AID Conference Report, June 11-June 14, 1963 (Comilla: PARD, 1963) p. 11. Hereafter referred to as Comilla-AID Conference Report.

³⁵Akhter Hameed Khan, quoted by Obaidullah and Raper, Comilla-AID Conference Report, p. 50.

³⁶Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Russain, A New Rural Cooperative System for Comilla Thana, Third Annual Report 1963 (Comilla: PARD, 1963), p. 37. Hereafter referred to as Third Annual Report.

.... and if a client defaults, he exacts compound interest which even at 18 percent will double an account in little over four years. If in addition, as often happens, an element of fraud creeps in. There is no limit to what a debtor may be called upon to pay. No where has money-lending been brought to a finer and more diabolical art than India.³⁷

A majority of the money lenders before independence were Hindus who did not have any religious injunction against usury as Muslims do, but after independence their place has been taken by "surplus" land holders who get around the religious injunction by advancing the loan in cash, and demanding the repayment in kind (i.e., food grains at the time of harvest). Thus, for example, if a loan of Rs. one hundred (\$20) is to be returned in kind, 2 maunds (about 165 pounds) of polished rice are demanded which could be valued at Rs. 60 a maund. Thereby, the farmer pays 6% interest for a period of three or four months.³⁸

The Credit Inquiry Commission, in its report to the government, published in 1959, calculated that a total of Rs. 300 crores (\$600 million) were needed for agriculture credit in the whole country, annually. Against this amount the government agencies only provided Rs. 25 crores (\$50 millions) annually for the whole country.³⁹ East Pakistan, according to Akhter Hameed Khan, needs at least Rs. 60 crores (\$120 millions) annually.⁴⁰

³⁷ Sir Malcolm Darling, The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 4th edition, 1947) Introduction, p. 20.

³⁸ Beech, Bertocci, Rahim, et al., Inside the East Pakistan Village, p. 14-15.

³⁹ The figure quoted by S. K. Islam in "Agriculture Development and Bank Loan Facilities to Cultivators." Agriculture Supplement, DAWN, Karachi, April 22, 1968, p. 9, col. 7.

⁴⁰ Akhter Hameed Khan, quoted by Obaidullah Khan and Raper, Comilla-AID Conference Report, p. 50.

Besides the traditional money lender there are three other agencies providing rural credit in Pakistan. There are: (1) the government loans, (2) the agriculture development bank loans, and (3) credit societies.

Government loans, known as "taccavi loans" are given to farmers under the Land Improvement Act of 1883 and the Agriculture Loans Act of 1884. Loans under these acts are given by the Revenue Department, for land improvement, relief of distress, and for the purchase of seed or cattle.⁴¹ Taccavi loans given out by the Revenue Department are hard to get for small farmers because there is so much red tape involved. According to one estimate, only 5.6% of the total loans given out by government agencies, are granted in taccavi loans⁴² in the whole country.

The Agriculture Development Bank of Pakistan came into existence in 1961 with the merger of the Agriculture Bank and the Agriculture Finance Corporation. The Bank gives short term 18-month loans at 7% interest, medium term five year loans at 6% interest, and long term loans over five year periods also at 6%. Loans are given up to Rs: 1000 (\$200) require personal security, and loans over Rs: 1000 require mortgages, bank guarantee or bank deposit.⁴³

According to the Bank's Chairman, S. K. Islam, the Bank had advanced a total of Rs: 18.81 crores (\$37 million) to the farmers in

⁴¹Mohammad Irshad, "The Development of Institutional Agricultural Credit in Pakistan," The Pakistan Development Review, Vol. III (Spring, 1963) p. 76.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³S. K. Islam, "Agriculture Development and Bank Facilities to Cultivators", DAWN, Karachi, p. V, col. 2.

East Pakistan between 1960 and 1965, and the bank had advanced Rs: 83 crores (U.S. \$16 million) in the whole of Pakistan by February, 1968. 34.9% of the bank's loans were for short term, 36.3% for medium term and 28.8% for long term.⁴⁴

Though the Bank came into existence to meet the credit requirements of the small land holders, the bank by 1963 had only 120 paying offices in the whole country, most of them located in cities mostly unknown and inaccessible to the small farmers.⁴⁵ The other difficulty in getting a bank loan is that bank requires guarantees which make it hard for an average farmer to get loan. The result is that the Bank mostly serves the medium and large land holders.

But, on the other hand, the Bank cannot function for long, if it can not get its money back, therefore, bank has to make sure that the money would be repaid.⁴⁶

Until the answer to loan solvency is found, the Agriculture Development Bank could not be effective in meeting the needs of the small farmers. In addition, more paying offices of the bank should be opened, which should be nearer to the farmer, to which he could easily travel and meet his credit needs. The planning commission has recommended that the bank should open at least one office in each of the thanas of East Pakistan.⁴⁷ If this recommendation could be implemented by the Bank, it

⁴⁴Ibid., p. V, col. 8.

⁴⁵Mohammad Irshad, "The Development of Institutional Credit in Pakistan," p. 77.

⁴⁶S. K. Islam, "Agriculture Development and Bank Loan Facilities to Cultivators", p. V, col. 3.

⁴⁷Planning Commission, Third Five Year Plan, p. 396.

could go a long way in meeting the needs of the farmers.

The credit cooperative movement is not a new one; the cooperatives in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent came into existence in 1904 with the passage of the Cooperative Act in that year. The Act was further amended in 1912 when central societies were added to the existing structure of credit societies.⁴⁸

The credit societies are organized into three tiers: (1) the primary credit society in the villages, (2) central banks, and (3) the provincial bank on the provincial level.⁴⁹

The primary agricultural credit society could be formed by a minimum of 10 persons (maximum of 100) by applying to the registrar of the co-operative societies of the province. The primary society is based on the village level. The primary society provides short term and long term loans for the improvement of agriculture. The liability of members is unlimited; the capital for working of the societies is derived from entrance fee and deposits. The primary society is managed by a general committee, composed of all the members. The general committee elects the managing committee, appoints the secretary for the society and amends the bylaws. The managing committee has the power to grant the loans, and admit new members.⁵⁰ Overall working of the primary credit societies is supervised by the cooperative department of the province, in the ministry of agriculture.

⁴⁸Mohammad Irshad, "The Development of Institutional Credit in Pakistan", p. 77.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰S. M. Akhter, Pakistan's Developing Economy (Lahore: Publishers, United, Ltd., 1966) p. 271.

The central co-operative banks, usually at the district headquarters of the province, provide financial help and assistance to the primary societies. These central banks not only provide loans and credit to the primary society but these banks also act as regular commercial banks in the towns.⁵¹

At the apex in East Pakistan are two provincial co-operative banks. The functions of these banks are to control, co-ordinate and finance the working of the central banks. These banks also function as commercial banks.⁵²

Though the provincial co-operative banks seem to be working all right, the working of the central banks was found to be unsatisfactory by the Credit Inquiry Commission in 1959. The Commission found: (1) that the central banks were poor in administration, (2) that the banks were engaging in commercial lending for which the banks had little experience, (3) the banks had unqualified staff, and (4) most of the loans were given to the few influential people, etc.⁵³

Considering the agriculture credit co-operative movement has been in operation since 1904, progress and expansion of the primary societies has been extremely poor in East Pakistan. In 1959, the Credit Inquiry Commission reported that there were 4,730 primary agriculture societies in East Pakistan. Of this number, 1,231 primary societies were defunct, and 3,002 societies were not working satisfactorily.⁵⁴ Thus the agriculture

⁵¹Ibid., p. 269.

⁵²Ibid., p. 267.

⁵³Findings of Inquiry Commission reproduced by S. M. Akhter, Pakistan's Developing Economy, pp. 269-270.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 278.

credit societies between 1949-1959 had not made much progress, and for all practical purposes were not performing any useful work. During the Third Five Year Plan (1960-1965) 500 new multipurpose societies (not only providing credit, but also other services to the members, like marketing, etc.) were organized, but; they have not fared much better.⁵⁵

The causes of the failure of co-operative movement in East Pakistan are several, these include: (a) the division of co-operative funds to non co-operative user, (b) political interventions in the working of the co-operatives, (c) the weakning of the co-operative movement itself, due to migration of trained staff after partition, (d) frequent transfers of registrars, poor selection of officers, and (e) lack of government's interest in the co-operative movement.⁵⁶

There are several proposals to improve the cooperative movement in East Pakistan. The Credit Inquiry Commission recommended that the government should have a clear-cut commitment towards the rural movement. Another proposal is that the government should contribute to the funds of the societies; in this way the credit cooperatives should have enough money to meet all the credit needs of the members of a society.⁵⁷ The commission also called for better training of the staff of the cooperative department. During the last five year plan, a cooperative college and four cooperative zonal institutes in each of the divisions of East Pakistan have been established to train the cooperative staff in the

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 278.

⁵⁶Planning Commission, Third Five Year Plan, p. 420.

⁵⁷Sharif, op. cit., p. 119.

agriculture department.⁵⁸

But a more imaginative proposal came from the Food and Agriculture Commission. The Commission observed:

In our view the primary purpose of credit should be to create additional production. A basic defect of rural credit systems that have so far been organized has been that they have not provided for the supervision of the use of the credit given and thus the diversion of credit to unproductive purpose has not prevented. The main reason for this lack was the non-realization of the great importance of supervision and the absence of enough personnel in the field to see that each borrower was really using his loan in the best way, for the purpose for which it was granted.⁵⁹

Except for the establishment of the cooperative college, the provincial government has not moved, in the direction suggested by the Credit Commission. Perhaps this is because the government of East Pakistan is more attracted towards the experiments carried out by the Rural Academy at Comilla, which are recounted later in this paper.

Marketing Management

Marketing management essentially involves three things: (1) to decide what the demand for food and fiber will be each year and in what quantities, (2) to sell what ever is produced at a time and place to get the highest return, and (3) to move the farm products from producer to the consumer at the lowest price.⁶⁰

In East Pakistan, there is no adequate system of regulated markets.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 303.

⁵⁹ Government of Pakistan, Food and Agriculture Commission Report, p. 303.

⁶⁰ Hameed Farooqi, Clyde Keaton, and Gay Miller, Agricultural Marketing in Pakistan (Karachi: Amin Book Company, 1958, p. 8.

⁶¹ Agriculture Commission Report, p. 38.

There are government storage facilities available for government stocks for about 8 million tons in East Pakistan.⁶² But no large scale facilities are provided by the government to the farmers.

The transportation systems are bad, the markets are far away, and because the farmer is so hard pressed for money, the farmer in East Pakistan sells his crop without getting his fair share and adequate compensation for his labours. It is estimated that if the farmer in East Pakistan sold his crop immediately after the harvest he will forfeit at least 30% of his income.⁶³

When it is realized that the good prices are good incentive to the farmers, which induces farmers to produce more,⁶⁴ all efforts should be made by the government to meet this particular need. If nothing else is done, at least storage facilities and market prices should be made known to the farmers, as recommended by the Agriculture Commission.⁶⁵

It has been the tradition in East Pakistan, as elsewhere in Pakistan and India over many centuries, to plough the land with two bullocks and a wooden plough, which according to one definition is a "tongue of wood fitted on iron tooth, a stilt for holding and a pole for attachment of

⁶²Third Five Year Plan, p. 426.

⁶³Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Hussain, A New Rural Co-operative System for Comilla Thana (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1953) p. 27.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Agriculture Commission Report, p. 301.

bullocks."⁶⁶ Bullocks of Bengal, unlike those of West Pakistan, tend to be smaller and not very strong and therefore, not suitable for a heavy iron plough.⁶⁷

The other problem which makes many people advocate the adoption of mechanization in East Pakistan is the fact of the competition between the bullock and the people for available food.

According to Anwaruzzaman's study of Comilla thana, carried out by him in 1961, there were 1579 persons per square mile depending on only 580 acres for their livelihood. At the same time, there were 600 bullocks in the same square mile depending on the same land for their food.⁶⁸ The result has been that the population of the bullocks has been steadily decreasing.

Taking these factors into consideration and the fact that the wooden plough, in any case, does not go deep enough into the soil to be of good use, many people have been pressing for the adoption of tractors in East Pakistan instead of ploughs now being used.

The use of tractors and other mechanical implements nevertheless have their advantages and disadvantages which we shall now examine. The advantages are: (1) the tractor harrowing is deeper than bullock ploughing. The depth of tractor harrowing varies between 4 inches to 5 inches, whereas, the usual plough used in East Pakistan does not go deeper than

⁶⁶N. G. Mukerjee, quoted by Anwaruzzaman Khan, Introduction of Tractors in a Subsistence Farm Economy (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1962) p. 4.

⁶⁷Anwaruzzaman Khan, Introduction of Tractors in a Subsistence Farm Economy, p. 7.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 7.

three inches. (2) a quality tractor is more superior to wooden ploughing by about four times. (3) the tractor could be used on hard soil much more easily than the wooden plough. (4) while two bullocks could plough only half an acre a day, a small tractor can plough six to eight acres a day. (5) five labourers are required to weed one acre of land; the small tractor can do the job of weeding equivalent to ten labourers. (6) by using the tractor, farmer could save time, and be able to prepare the rice seed bed ahead of time before the monsoon rains arrive. Thus, he can sow the first crop earlier and reap the crop earlier, which can give him time to sow the second crop earlier and thus would enable him to sow the third crop.⁶⁹ Another advantage in using the tractors is the psychological one. The tractor has more status than a pair of bullocks, especially, with a young man who goes to school and identifies with things modern. Bullocks do not appeal to him much because of the hard work involved and because it would lower his status to that of a village peasant who is uneducated and "uncivilized." Anwaruzzaman observed in his study that a village boy, "After receiving some years of schooling felt embarrassed about holding the plough which his father used, but this same boy was proud when given the chance to drive a power machine like a tractor."⁷⁰

The disadvantages of tractors are: (1) tractors demand work shops, and maintenance, there are not too many tractor maintenance workshops close to the villages to repair the tractor if such a need is felt. Farmers are too illiterate and not mechanical minded to look after the

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 27.

tractor themselves.⁷¹ (2) the ordinary tractors are not suited for wet crops like paddy. (3) the land holdings are too small in East Pakistan to enable a farmer to use the tractor economically. Since the tractor is much more expensive than a pair of bullocks. It has been shown that a farmer must earn initially on the average of Rs. 5500 (U.S.\$1500) (the average annual income of farmers in East Pakistan is around U.S. \$50), annually to meet the tractor cost alone. If the tractor breaks down afterwards, the farmer is in serious trouble. (4) spare parts are not available when needed.⁷²

An ordinary tractor with two rubber tires does not work properly on wet land, which is essential for the rice crop. An effort has been made by East Pakistan Agriculture Development Corporation to introduce Japanese style power tillers in East Pakistan. The Planning Commission has recommended that a power tiller manufacturing plant be established in East Pakistan to meet all the requirements of the province.⁷³

Arguments have also been made that large scale mechanization would produce unemployment in Pakistan where there is not too much industrial base to absorb displaced labour. But to this, a counter argument has been made by the Food Commission. The Commission argues:

The standard objection in Pakistan to mechanization of agriculture is fear of widespread unemployment and it is a very valid one. Moreover, it is important to use to the fullest extent the one resource the country has in abundance, namely human labour.

Nevertheless, there are strong reasons for examining the case for mechanization. In judging its value there is need

⁷¹Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Hussain, A New Rural Cooperative System for Comilla Thana, Third Annual Report, p. 25.

⁷²Anwaruzzaman Khan, Introduction of Tractors in Subsistence Farm Economy, pp. 59-50.

⁷³The Third Five Year Plan, p. 402.

to assess whether its use may not earn or save foreign exchange than its importation costs, and by increasing production, create far more jobs in the long run than it displaces.

It is true that in Pakistan industrialization has not reached a stage where population displaced from land can easily find employment. When individuals are displaced real human problems are created, but these individual cases of hardships have to be compared with the prospect of poverty and unemployment faced by the whole country if agriculture production is not increased.

Finally, machine power by its very effectiveness can have great value psychologically. One of the great benefits has been to reduce the general conservatism and inertia of rural areas because it can take away a great deal of the drudgery and uncertainty of farming. It can change the status of the workers in agriculture as it has in the western world from the low level associated with unskilled drudgery to the higher level of respect accorded to the technician.⁷⁴

To achieve province-wide full mechanization (besides the tractors) would require building of distinctive organization, creation of physical structures of roads to the villages to supply them economically all the materials and spare parts they need, and provisions of well-equipped workshops for the maintenance of all farm machinery. A good number of mechanics would have to be trained to man the workshops. Farmers would have to be provided with credit and training to buy and operate the machines. Above all, it would require convincing and demonstrating to the farmers that it is to their advantage to buy and use the tractors and other machines rather than go on with the old methods. This involves complex problems of planning and persuasion which will have to be taken into consideration before widespread mechanization is attempted in East Pakistan.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Agriculture Commission Report, pp. 106-107.

⁷⁵Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Hussain, op. cit., p. 24.

There are five ingredients or inputs needed by the agriculture which have been recognized to be basic and vital for agriculture yields. The "first five" are: (1) fertilizers, (2) good seeds, (3) plant protection, (4) adequate water, and (5) extension service.

The method of applying the right type of artificial fertilizer to the soil, accompanied with high yielding seed, adequate water, and adequate pest control, is one of the cheapest and quickest methods available today to raise food production and to improve the crop yields.

The consumption of fertilizer in Pakistan grew three fold by 1964, but still it covered only 10% of the sown acreage,⁷⁶ even though, the government paid 50% subsidy on the fertilizers. In Pakistan the fertilizer consumption is far below that of most of the countries of the world⁷⁷. The Third Five Year Plan's goal is to improve the intake of the fertilizers from 162 thousand plant nutrient tons in 1965 to 484 thousand plant nutrient tons by 1970.⁷⁸

The distribution of fertilizer, on the other hand, is not efficient. There seems to be administrative bottlenecks and problems of co-ordination in East Pakistan. The distribution of fertilizer in East Pakistan is handled by the Agriculture Development Corporation, the Cooperative Societies and private dealers.⁷⁹ In 1960 and 1961, three-fourths of all the farmers in East Pakistan heard about the advantages of fertilizers,

⁷⁶Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives, p. 171.

⁷⁷Third Five Year Plan, p. 405.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Gustav Papanek, op. cit., p. 171.

but only one-third had used it.⁸⁰ In many cases, the fertilizer was out of stock and distribution depots were closed when farmers wanted to have fertilizer, and stores were too far away from the villages. This condition improved later on with the help of the Agriculture Development Corporation.⁸¹ The main hope of Pakistan's planners in achieving self-sufficiency in food lies in raising the intake of fertilizers from 162 thousand nutrient tons in 1965 to 484 thousand nutrient tons in 1970, and by supplying good seeds. Intake of fertilizers will not be achieved until distribution problems are solved and the farmers get fertilizer at the right time and right place.

Like artificial fertilizer, supplying improved seeds is one of the best and economical ways to improve yields. The Second Plan suggested that at least 50% of the total sown area be supplied with improved seeds by 1965.⁸² In the West Wing of the country, supplying of improved seeds by the West Pakistan Agriculture Development Corporation (WADC), during 1962-65, was better (which is one of the main causes of West Pakistan's good production in 1967-68). But the progress of East Pakistan Agriculture Development Corporation (EADC) had not been good during the same period.⁸³ Though some progress has been made lately in East Pakistan, still during 1960-65, one-half of the farmers in East Pakistan did not

⁸⁰Finding of National Sample Survey, reproduced by Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives, p. 164.

⁸¹Papanek, Pakistan's Development, p. 164.

⁸²Recommendations of second five year plan, reproduced by Planning Commission, in Third Five Year Plan, p. 407.

⁸³Planning Commission, Third Five Year Plan, p. 407.

get good seeds when they had needed them.⁸⁴ EADC has not only the responsibility of supplying the seed but also producing improved seeds on its seed multiplication farms. In this field also the progress has not been so good, as had been hoped for. EADC has shown some progress lately, but it needs to function still more effectively if East Pakistan is to achieve its goals of extensive supply of improved seeds and timely supply of fertilizers.

The pest control service in Pakistan is provided by extension workers of the provincial agriculture department. In East Pakistan, one extension worker is attached with each of the union councils for providing pest control service to the farmers. Pest killing, done usually with hand and power sprays from the ground, is free of charge to the farmers, but still farmers fail to take much advantage of this. According to Pakistan's Agriculture Joint Secretary, the minimum loss to the crops in Pakistan from pest infection is about 735 crores (U.S. \$490 millions) annually.⁸⁵ Total expenditure on pest control during Third Plan is proposed to be around Rs. 85 crores (U.S. \$170 millions).⁸⁶

One distinct disadvantage of new improved seeds is that there is more increased weed growth with them and also new seeds bring new diseases which could prove very disastrous in the long run, if not checked in advance.⁸⁷ Therefore, it would be wise on the part of the government to

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Yamin Qureshi, "Self-sufficiency in Food," Dawn, Karachi, April 22, 1968, p. 4, col. 4.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

not only spend more on plant protection, but also to improve the quality of the extension workers. Untrained and unmotivated extension workers are one of the causes of poor results in fighting the plant diseases.⁸⁸

Extension agents residing in the "unions" of East Pakistan, besides carrying out plant protection work, have the responsibility of demonstrating new improved practices in agriculture on their demonstration farms, and are required to give advice to the farmers on various agriculture problems. In terms of numbers, extension workers are thought to be adequate in East Pakistan.⁸⁹ But in quality they are considered to be poor. Most of them are high school graduates with one year training in agriculture schools. Performance has been quite poor. If Pakistan is to introduce new methods of cultivation, new seeds, etc., then it is imperative that extension personnel should be well trained. Besides extension personnel, radio, television (limited use in East Pakistan), and basic democrats have also been employed for extension purposes in Pakistan.⁹⁰ How far these media have been effective in disseminating of agriculture knowledge in East Pakistan remains to be determined.

Continued progress in agriculture will depend, on a short range basis, on new methods of cultivation, mechanization, and improved seeds. In the long run, however, agriculture growth will have to depend on agriculture research, and an extension service capable of absorbing and transmitting continuously new techniques to the farmers.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Third Five Year Plan, p. 411.

⁹⁰Yamin Qureshi, "Self Sufficiency in Food", Dawn, Karachi, April 22, 1962, p. 2.

Continuous progress in agriculture in East Pakistan will demand that the province should have its own adequate research facilities, as well as enough supply of well trained people in agriculture to conduct research and shoulder all agriculture development work. As the matters stand now, there is only one agriculture research station in East Pakistan at Tejgaon, and whatever research is conducted there hardly reaches the thana headquarters, let alone the villages, due to the weak extension service. One research station is quite inadequate to conduct research for the whole province. What is needed is that each of the districts of East Pakistan, which are not all alike in soil and climatic conditions, should have at least one agriculture research station.⁹²

Agriculture as a profession, and the agriculture department, have traditionally enjoyed a lower social status in the society and in the government. The result has been that the people acquired as employees by the agriculture departments in the country often cannot find employment elsewhere.⁹³ In East Pakistan, there is one agriculture university at Mymensingh, one agriculture college at Tejgaon and four agriculture schools. A new agriculture college and six more agriculture schools were proposed to be set up during the third plan period,⁹⁴ which it is hoped will produce 6000 agriculture graduates (including those from the agriculture schools) by 1970.⁹⁵ It was estimated in 1963 that the East

⁹¹Third Five Year Plan, p. 414.

⁹²Benjamin Ferguson, quoted by Khan and Raper, Comilla-AID Conference Report, p. 34.

⁹³Agriculture Commission Report, p. 151.

⁹⁴Third Five Year Plan, pp. 413-414.

⁹⁵Ibid.

Pakistan requirement for trained agriculture personnel was six thousand persons.⁹⁶ If East Pakistan is to embark on an expanded research program, and on an agriculture development program, it would be necessary to train the people to shoulder these responsibilities. East Pakistan will have to expand the existing training institutions to meet these challenges. Meanwhile, care should be taken that the quality of education and training does not suffer. More people, perhaps, should be sent abroad to qualify to take over the expanded program of agriculture education and training.

One particularly difficult problem faced in the development of agriculture--is the rigid attitude of the farmers towards change. In one study, of 63 farmers in Comilla, on the adoption of new and improved practices in: (1) sowing and transplanting paddy in lines, (2) use of insecticides, (3) use of chemical fertilizer, and (4) cultivation of wheat, Rahim found, on the average, awareness to trial period (adoption stages were, awareness, information, trial period and adoption) was 2.5 years for line sowing, 2.2 years for insecticides, and 3.8 years for chemical fertilizers. The average score for adopting all the four practices was 24 (on the linear scale of 0-100). All the 63 farmers were aware of the four practices; 82.5% had passed the awareness stage and had gathered detailed information about the line sowing; 25% adopted the fertilizers; 25% had adopted insecticides, but no one had tried to cultivate wheat.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Dr. Leighton, quoted by Obaidullah and Raper in, Comilla-AID Conference Report, p. 35.

⁹⁷Syed Rahim, Diffusion and Adoption of Agricultural Practices: A Study in a Village in East Pakistan (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1962), p. 36.

Rahim further found that "impersonal sources" like radio and propaganda materials were useful at the earlier stages of adoption. "Personal sources", like an extension agent, friends, and especially relatives, were important at the later stages of adoption. Farmers having more access to both impersonal and personal sources were the earlier adopters. Earlier adopters became influential for the late adopters. And if a farmer adopted one new practice, he was willing to try all other new practices.⁹⁸ Rahim's conclusions about the factors influencing the adoption of new practice were: the size of farm (the larger the farm the easier it was for the farmers to adopt a new agriculture practice), membership in organizations and contacts with the information sources (the more the sources of information, the easier it was for the farmers to adopt a new agriculture practice), and age (older farmers were more resistant to change). Formal or college education were found to be not an important factor.⁹⁹

The traditional society, by its very nature, is not easy to change. But at the same time, it is not totally impossible to change, if right ingredients of propaganda, extension agents and evidence of new profits could be shown to the farmers.

Explaining the importance of profits as an agent of change, the West Pakistan minister of Agriculture observed:

The truth is that traditional rural society is bogged down in low income, static economy, and is held in vicious circle of cause and effect. Poverty breeds social ills like malnutrition, disease and ignorance which depresses output and income, which in turn breeds the same social evils. There is only one way to break this chain and that is to snap the link, that is to exploit the profit motive. Minor profits

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 4.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 38.

do not interest the farmer, he is accustomed to attributes such as variations to the nature of farm productivity and also high sensitivity to changes in the weather. But if he can be really convinced by practical demonstrations that change will bring substantial profits, we have found him ready to accept any new idea.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰Malik Khuda Bux, "Strategy for Conquest of Hunger", Dawn, Karachi, April 6, 1968, p. 7.

CHAPTER III

BASIC DEMOCRACIES AND AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

The executive order of 1959, which established the Basic Democracies, identified agriculture to be one of the functions of the union councils; the order partly reads, "A Union Council shall be responsible for agriculture, industrial, and community development in the unions."¹ After the introduction of the Basic Democracy scheme by President Ayub Khan, as has been mentioned above, the Village Aid program came to an end. And the Village Aid workers were attached with the Union Councils. It was hoped that various councils of the Basic Democracies, and especially the union council, would help in agriculture and village development.

When the Basic Democracy councils came into existence, there were various opinions how the union councils could best serve in the development of agriculture in East Pakistan.

The chairmen of the union councils thought that they should have the

- (a) agriculture staff, under them, and the staff should help the chairmen in the agriculture development,
- (b) that the union councils should issue the seed, the fertilizer, etc.,
- (c) union councils should organize the cooperatives in the villages and act as their chairman, etc., and
- (d) union councils should have total responsibility of total development of their respective unions and the government staff should assist them

¹Reproduced by Chayasuddin Chughtai in, Basic-Democracies Order 1959 (Lahore: Shahnawaz Brothers, 1967) p. 12.

whenever necessary and that union councils should be left on its own.²

Professor Fairchild even went one step further. He suggested that not only the union councils should plan and administer all types of development work, but also raise the taxes to carry out their development program.³ Some villagers of East Pakistan thought that union councils should meet all their, "felt needs" but the villagers also thought that this could not be done without the support and financial assistance of the government.⁴ The Agriculture Commission, as far as agriculture was concerned, recommended that "agriculture was too important a subject to be left to the whims of the union councils." The commission suggested that the union councils should provide support to the personnel of the Agriculture Department and other agencies working in the unions,⁵ in other words the councils should help in carrying out the government policies. Considering the above viewpoints, it would seem there were two main schools of thought, concerning the future role of the union councils and the thana councils in East Pakistan. One advocated a complete independent role for these councils, the other, wanted to give the councils a role of support and assistance to the governmental programs. This is not so surprising because, after all, one of the functions of the councils is to associate the people with government administrators and the government programs.

²Agriculture Commission Report, pp. 191-192.

³Henry Fairchild, "A Model for Rural Development", Journal of East Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Vol. II (April, 1961) p. 15.

⁴Results of Survey carried out by A. T. Rahman, Basic Democracies at the Grass Roots. Technical publication, No. 13 (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1962) p. 80.

⁵The Agriculture Commission Report, p. 92.

The working picture of the union councils in East Pakistan that emerged by 1962, was that of complete domination of the union councils by the provincial Basic Democracy administrators; the union councils were being treated as "government agencies." Three union councils investigated by Rahman had 85% of their agenda for meetings fixed by the government officials, and "all the activities of the union councils in the field of development, except roads and tube wells were initiated by the government."⁶

Despite the fact that the majority of the members of the union councils in East Pakistan tend to be farmers,⁷ most of the developmental work carried out by the union councils has been mostly in the field of what is generally known as "public works", building roads, bridges, etc. The union councils work for the most part, has not directly dealt with agriculture and farmers and the councils have shown great unwillingness to engage in agriculture development programs. Sometimes, councils have earmarked funds for agriculture implements, etc., but often have not utilized the money so earmarked.⁸

⁶Rahman, Basic Democracies at the Grass Roots, p. 87.

⁷In one study of 120 union councils, it was found that 90% members were farmers, 2.5% were in some profession, 5% were businessmen, 1.7% were in service, 1% day labourers, 8.3% had average land holdings of 4 acres. The largest age group was 35-39 years category with an average of 40.5 years. 85% were heads of their respective families. No one was illiterate, 45% had high school diplomas, 2 were college graduates, and one post graduate. S. M. Hafiz, L. Zaidi, W. H. Zaidi, Annual Evaluation Report 1960 (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development) pp. 11-12.

⁸The average annual income of a union council in East Pakistan is said to be around Rs. 13,500 (U.S. \$2500) derived mainly by taxing land and buildings, rate for village police, taxes on vehicles, boats, local rate share from district council and the governmental grants, Government of Pakistan, Twenty Years of Pakistan (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1967) p. 115.

The provincial government under its "grow more food" campaign in 1962 asked the union councillors that, since most of them were farmers they themselves should adopt the line sowing, prepare composite heaps and cow dung pit. The councils discussed all these topics and took formal resolutions. But the basic democrats, did little to carry out the resolutions.⁹ There are several reasons why the union councils have shown disinclination to engage more actively in agriculture development. Historically the union boards which existed in East Pakistan before the union councils did nothing more than build and repair roads, bridges, etc. It was thought that development only meant that roads were to be developed, bridges to be constructed.¹⁰ This tradition of many years is still strong in East Pakistan. Though the union councils earmarked the funds for agriculture development at the goading of the government, they did not quite know or understand how to go about drawing the plans for agriculture development and spend the money for the money for that purpose. It is not hard for them to build and maintain roads. They have been doing this for many years. The basic democrats have very little inclination and orientation towards agriculture development than for any other development.¹¹

Chairmen and the members of the union councils often did not like the pressure tactics of the government. Moreover, the proposals for agriculture development were coming from the top which the union councillors did not consider their own. The result was that union councillors

⁹Rahman, Basic Democracies at the Grass Roots, p. 3.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 54.

passed a number of resolutions to show the government that they were complying with the wishes of the government, but in actuality, did very little to implement these resolutions.¹²

President Ayub Khan, a keen observer of the Basic Democracies (credits himself for conceiving and initiating the scheme of Basic Democracies in Pakistan) realizing that the union councils were not doing much in the agriculture development, suggested in a minute, circulated among the top government officials on February 27, 1964, that union councils, could do more in the field of agriculture, particularly, "In modernization, utilization of fertilizers, production and utilization of modern implements, better crop rotation, correct use of water and farm yard manure----service cooperatives for procurement of necessities and scale of produce....credit cooperatives farming of different type of poultry....terracing, tree plantation....organized breeding and upgrading of cattle and sheep."¹³

The Expert Committee on the Problems of Local Taxation of the central government was convened to consider how the funds could be raised to implement the President's proposal. The consensus of opinion at the Expert Committee was that the Union Councils should not provide the money.¹⁴ Someone at the meeting gave the opinion that since communist China and Yugoslavia have been fairly successful in making good progress in agriculture and rural industrial development, through local institutions not unlike Pakistan's Basic Democracies, perhaps Pakistan could

¹²Ibid., pp. 87-88.

¹³Quoted by Lawrence Ziring, "The Administration of Basic Democracies", in Guthrie Birkhead, ed., Administrative Problems in Pakistan (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966) p. 54.

¹⁴Quoted by Ziring, "The Administration of Basic Democracies", p. 55.

learn from these two countries. This proposal did not go further and was opposed by central government's Deputy Secretary of Information and Broadcasting (who is in charge of the Basic Democracy cell in the Central Ministry of Information and Broadcasting). In Deputy Secretary's view, Pakistan did not have a sufficient experience of union councils taking up economic projects of the type which have been taken up by the local bodies in Yugoslavia and China, he maintained that such economic projects cannot be successful in Pakistan, because there was no strong political party in Pakistan, as was the case in China and Yugoslavia to supervise these projects.¹⁵

President Ayub Khan circulated another minute in April, 1965, suggesting that ward committees be created below union councils and based on Basic Democracies. President envisaged a ward committee of four or five, "prominent members of different groups in the ward", who were to meet as often as possible, to discuss local problems and to review results of local effort and to assist in the planning of schemes of their ward. The President also thought that the ward committees should be asked to organize the villagers and the farmers in their villages for collective community action programmes, like common ploughing, joint thrashing, etc., etc.¹⁶ The President recommended that the government should support this, what amounted to be an agricultural development program, educationally and financially. Educational support would be provided by printing the material in vernacular languages, providing

¹⁵Memorandum by M. Uhsanallah, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, April 6, 1964, quoted by Lawrence Ziring, in *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁶President Ayub quoted by Lawrence Ziring, *Ibid.*

charts and other propaganda materials and broadcasting the farm programs. Financially, the State would help build the infrastructures. Money for this can be found, the President suggested, by diverting a bulk of the funds, meant for the Works Program, to the building of infrastructure in each ward, instead of spending it on individual union schemes. This would not only ensure in President's view, a better use of funds but also help in improving the economic life of the people. The President's recommendations were accepted by the Governor's conference (highest policy making body during President Ayub's administration; consisting of President, two governors, vice chairman of the Planning Commission and key provincial and central ministers) at their meeting on June 1, 1965. Plans were made to launch "communal pilot projects" in one or two unions of each district of East Pakistan and West Pakistan through the ward committees.¹⁷ The program was to start on October 27, 1965. Meanwhile, a three man delegation made of directors of works program in East and West Pakistan, representative of East Pakistan Basic Democracy department and central deputy secretary of ministry of Information and Broadcasting, were sent to China where they spent four weeks to study the communes and to recommend to the government if the Chinese system could be adopted in some form in Pakistan.¹⁸ Apparently the work of the ward committees is still

¹⁷Lawrence Ziring, Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁸Government's announcement appeared in the Pakistan Times, June 21, 1965, reproduced by Ziring. It is interesting to note that President Ayub reorganized, his Muslim-League party into union Muslim League, Thana/Tehsil League, Divisional Muslim League, provincial Muslim League and Pakistan Muslim League. Thus correlating with basic democracy structure. The Members of the various councils who were Muslim Leaguers had to form Muslim League party and "supervise and keep close watch" on the working of the councils. Each of the upper tier of the Muslim League was supposed to supervise the functioning of lower tiers. For description of Ayub's scheme of his reorganization, see Appendix, Lawrence Ziring, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

in the experimental stages, because nothing much has been reported on their progress.

The main contribution of the union councils towards rural development in East Pakistan has been through the rural works program. Though this program was not started to benefit agriculture, the program nevertheless has contributed towards agriculture development, especially in flood protection and building up of rural road networks in East Pakistan. The Works Program has gone a long way in giving new direction and importance to the various councils of Basic Democracy scheme. As such, the rural works program in East Pakistan will be examined a bit closer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV
THE RURAL WORKS PROGRAM

On the basis of a proposal of the Planning Commission, the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development at Comilla started a pilot works program in Comilla Kotwali Thana in 1961. The objects of this pilot program were: to increase employment in the rural area of East Pakistan, and to increase the income of the villages of East Pakistan. The United States government agreed to finance the project by releasing Rupees Counterpart funds, held under PL-480. The Academy carried out the works program with the cooperation of Comilla Thana Council, and the Union Council's of the Comilla Thana. The experimental program lasted for ten months, and the Academy in its report to the Central and provincial governments suggested that it was possible to introduce and expand the works program throughout the province.¹

A province wide works program in East Pakistan was carried out in 1962-1963 at the cost of Rupees 100 million (U.S. \$20 million). Of this amount, District Councils spent \$10 million, Thana Councils \$1 million, Union Councils \$ $\frac{1}{2}$ million, and municipal and town committees \$4.5 millions.² In 1963-1964, (U.S.\$) 40 million were spent in East

¹Akhter Hamad Khan, "The Genesis of Works Programme: First Experiment in Comilla Kotwali," in K. M. Tipu Sultan, ed., The Works Programme in Comilla: A Case Study (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1966) p. 29.

²A. T. Rafiqur Rahman, An Evaluation of Works Programme in East Pakistan 1963-64 (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1964) p. 7.

Pakistan on the rural works program. Of this amount District Councils spent (U.S. \$12 million), Thana Councils spent \$11.4 million, Union Councils \$6 million, Thana and training development centers \$3 million, and the rest of the money was spent on training, research, and evaluation.³

Added emphasis was given to the Works Program in the Third Plan, when for the first time, the Works Program was recognized to be one of the major fields of national concern. Rs. 18,200 millions (U.S. \$500 million) are proposed to be spent during the Third Plan Period (1965-1970). The United States Government, instead of paying the total cost as before (through its release of PL-480 counterpart funds) would now contribute Rs. 1 billion (U.S. \$200 million), and Pakistan Government would provide the balance of \$300 million. East Pakistan's share is \$300 million of the total outlay of \$500 million.⁴

Planning, Execution and Supervision of the Works Program

Each union council is supposed to prepare its plan of development which is then submitted to the Thana Council for its approval. Similarly, the Thana Councils, District Councils and the Divisional Councils submit their schemes to District Councils, the Divisional Councils and the Provincial local government department, respectively, for approval of their plans.⁵ The schemes, which are, labour intensive, are given priority. The schemes, costing Rs. 40,000 (\$10,000) require approval

³Third Five Year Plan, p. 511.

⁴Ibid., p. 515.

⁵Ibid., p. 512.

of the district council and schemes costing over \$10,000 and up to Rs. 500,000 (\$100,000) require the approval of divisional council. Schemes costing more than \$100,000 must be sanctioned by the provincial Works Committee of the provincial government.⁶ At the union council level, to execute the schemes, project committees are formed for individual projects. Sometimes one project committee supervises more than one project. The project committee usually includes the chairman of the union council, two or three union councillors, and an equal number of non councillors. The secretary of the union council keeps the records of the project. The projects are supervised and watched over by the Basic Democracy administrative staff at the district level, namely the assistant director and development officers.

The results of the Works Program have been very encouraging. During 1962-1963, 3600 miles of earth roads were constructed, and 1300 miles of water channels were excavated. In 1963-1964, 29,500 miles were constructed, 5400 miles of choked-up channels were excavated to speed up the drainage, and 3700 miles of embankments were constructed to protect against the perennial floods in East Pakistan.⁷ An evaluation report in 1963-1964, on East Pakistan's Works Program found that the Works Program was labour intensive; 73% of the money was spent on the wages of the labourers; 23% of the money was spent on materials; 4% expenditure was on overhead costs; and Rs. 600,000 (U.S. \$150,000) were spent on 516,000

⁶Lawrence Ziring, "The Administration of Basic Democracies", in Guthrie Birkhead, ed., Administrative Problems in Pakistan (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966) pp. 48-49.

⁷Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives, pp. 160.

labour days, 3,350 cubic feet of earth was moved, and 58,000 labourers were given work.⁸

Gustav Papanek of the Harvard Advisory Group attached with Pakistan's Planning Commission for a number of years writing about the works program states:

The effect on agriculture is difficult to demonstrate in quantitative terms. Agricultural output in West Pakistan reached unprecedented levels in 1963-1964 and remained high in 1964-1965. Those close to works programme consider it a significant factor in this performance. Some of the added income was used to reduce indebtedness, and heavy debt burden is widely regarded as discouraging to increased output. They argue that the works programme added to rural purchasing power, some of which went to agricultural inputs; that the expanded rural road network reduced the price of inputs, improved the prices received by farmers and encouraged production for the market. The embankments constructed under the programme alone were significant contributions to production.⁹

There were other advantages of the Works Program, which should be mentioned now. The Works Program revitalized the union councils and gave them something purposeful to do. For the first time, the union councils were effectively enlisted in an important, massive development effort. New leadership developed; local government officials had a new sense of purpose.¹⁰ According to Rahman's evaluation report of 1963-1964, 17,456 project committees were formed,¹¹ with four to five people in each committee. Considering all these people engaged actively, in the developmental activities, this perhaps is one of the best ways to involve the people in

⁸A. T. Rahman, An Evaluation of Works Programme 1963-1964, p. 8.

⁹Papanek, op. cit., p. 161.

¹⁰Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives, p. 161.

¹¹A. T. Rahman, An Evaluation of Works Programme in East Pakistan 1963-1964, p. 80.

the development process and thus bring them nearer to the government and to the political system. An element of planning from the grassroots up has started. In a country like Pakistan, which relies on central planning, and wants its population to participate in the whole planning process, the Works Programme could be, perhaps, the best means to acquaint the people with planning, and make them aware of national policies and national goals.

Though there are many advantages of the Works Program, there are, however, some criticisms as well, which, too, should be considered. These are: the Works Program is negating the principles of self-help and self-government. It is argued that the B.D. councils should raise their own taxes to carry out development from their resources.¹² Since the union councillors are not technically trained, most of the projects constructed are of poor quality. There is a necessity to provide technical assistance in preparing the schemes, especially when more sophisticated schemes are now being considered.¹³ There is no provision of maintenance in the works program. The project once completed is left there. Arrangements should be made that either the union councils should take up the maintenance work, and be given additional funds to carry on this task, or the completed projects should be handed over to the regular departments for maintenance work.¹⁴

¹²Lawrence Ziring, "The Administration of Basic Democracies", in Guthrie Birkhead, ed., Administrative Problems in Pakistan, p. 50.

¹³Third Five Year Plan, p. 512.

¹⁴Ibid.

Some of these disadvantages are not complicated and could easily be corrected. The government instead of granting the money out-right, should match its funds with some free labour contributions from the villagers. The fact is that villagers are so poor and debt-ridden that they do not have much of a tax base. The only effective way they can help is by their willingness to pay the partial cost of the projects by contributing free labour. The major drawback, however, is non-availability of the technical personnel who could help in the preparation, execution and supervision of the projects. This could be corrected by stationing the qualified people at the thana training and development centers (described below). Disadvantages, notwithstanding, the Works Program has been a blessing for all concerned. In Papanek's view:

The success of East Pakistan Works Programme provides further evidence that a peasant society is not completely stagnant and tradition bound. In Pakistan the government was able to mobilize and organize the peasants to participate in change. The works program also showed that the government can carry out a massive program to develop the rural infrastructure by working through the existing institutions. This effort, the works programme of East Pakistan may be the major contribution to economic development techniques which Pakistan has made.¹⁵

Having considered the agricultural problems of East Pakistan, and relating them to the Basic Democracies, it is appropriate to consider some new approaches towards agriculture development in East Pakistan.

¹⁵Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development, Social Goals and Private Incentives, pp. 159-160.

CHAPTER V

APPROACHES TO AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT IN EAST PAKISTAN

Two new approaches to developing agriculture have been introduced in East Pakistan. One is called the "Mymensingh Approach" and the other is known as the "Comilla Approach."

The Mymensingh Approach

The "Mymensingh Approach" is an attempt by the East Pakistan Agriculture Department to show that it is possible to increase agriculture production by using the existing staff of the Agriculture Department at the village and thana level. Few unions of each thana in the Mymensingh district, however, have been selected for the experimentation. According to this plan, a "block farm" of about 700 acres is established in each of the unions. All the land in the block belongs to the individual farmers. The farmers consent to cooperate in carrying out the instructions and work under the union agriculture assistants and thana agriculture officers. The union assistants show the farmers how to water, sow, weed, and what kind of seeds and fertilizer to use; the farmer carries out these instructions and after the harvest, farmers are provided adequate storage facilities. They are told when and where to sell the crops. In 1968, when the crops were harvested on the block farms, the results were extremely good. The output per acre of paddy rose fourfold from 1640 pounds to 6560 pounds per acre on some block farms.¹

¹Pakistan Times (Lahore) May 13, 1968, p. 5, cols, 1-3.

The idea behind the Mymensingh experiment is to show to the farmers that if they follow the correct agriculture practices, it is possible to raise their income and yields. Moreover, while working under the agriculture assistants, they not only learn to acquire better agriculture practices, but they also do the work on their own land. When the farmer sees the results of his own work, he should have little difficulty in convincing himself and his neighbouring farmers in the villages that there are better methods which bring better results and which could improve their lot. In theory, therefore, this approach anticipates an ever-widening demonstration effect. However, the Mymensingh Approach is still at the experimental stage and has not been spread to other districts.

The Comilla Approach

The "Comilla Approach" is more comprehensive and more ambitious. Initially, this experiment was started for the benefit of agriculture, but it has proved beneficial to non-agriculturists as well.

The Comilla experiment was started in Comilla Kotwali Thana by the director of the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development at Comilla, East Pakistan, in 1961. The experiment at Comilla was started to find a solution or solutions for the decaying village cooperatives. The chief aim with respect of size and structure of the new cooperative system was to find a way out for small village agriculture cooperatives and "multi-purpose" cooperatives which, lacking in social and psychological cohesion, were gradually weakening and decaying.²

²Aziz Khan, A New Rural Co-operative System for Comilla Thana, Fifth Annual Report (Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1966) p. 3., hereafter cited as Fifth Annual Report.

The Comilla Approach is an attempt to organize small village-based cooperatives, known as primary cooperative societies. The primary society on the village level receives credit, technological, marketing, consumer, etc., support from its parent body, known as the Central Cooperative Society, which has its headquarters in the Thana Development and Training Center (described below) at the Thana headquarters.

Before we proceed further, let me explain the structure and functions of a Thana Training Development Center (hereafter referred to as a TTDC). The TTDC³ is a collection of physical facilities where all the government officials of the "National Building Departments" attached with the thana council have their offices. As mentioned above, the offices of the Central Co-operative Association Societies are also located here. A bank, workshop and a depot, agriculture implements, etc., are also situated here. In addition, classrooms and space for instructing the farmers and other

³The idea of the thana training and development center is not a new one. A center like a TTDC has existed in Taiwan for many years. It is interesting to note that while Akhter Hameed Khan and his associates were thinking of establishing the TTDC at Comilla, Professor William Boyer, then on an AID program in Lahore West Pakistan, wrote and suggested an "integrated scheme" so organized as to, "embrace the entire life and activities of the cultivators for their general economic development. Physically, a center could be located within the bullock-cart distance of each village. Where union council areas embrace too many villages to accord with the measure, they could be organized into more units so that council headquarters could be made a part of the center. The center could serve as the cooperative credit society headquarters and land revenue could be administered from there, thus replacing the village lambardar and patwari. The center could have storage facilities for seed and fertilizer, warehouses and marketing facilities, agricultural extension facilities and possibly a police substation and consolidated schools. Thus would be created a primary unit larger than the village and usually smaller than the present union council area at the locus of which would be a center comprising the headquarters of all essential services needed by the cultivator."

villagers, are also provided.⁴

The idea behind the TTDC is that all the government officials could be utilized more profitably. Instead of the government officials going into the villages, the idea is to let the villagers, or their representatives, come to the center for not only obtaining needed credit and services (this would become clear when the function of primary and central associations are explained in more detail), but also the villagers could be trained to use better and proven methods for agriculture development. At the same time with the villagers at the center, could be taught better hygienic methods, family planning methods, etc. etc. All the training at the center is provided free of cost by the trained government officials. In James Hendry's view:

The TTDC offers the government an administrative arrangement through which an extension work can be carried out and the material resources for development can be introduced into the agricultural sector. If as a policy matter, it is accepted as the basic pattern for organizing development activities in the agriculture sector, it could make significant contribution toward agricultural output in the years ahead.⁵

The TTDC's were to work under the general supervision of circle officer. It was proposed that thirty TTDCs be constructed under the works program and opened in 1964-1965 and that the whole province of East Pakistan should have a TTDC in each Thana by 1970.⁶

⁴Obaidullah Khan, "Rural Development and Administration, Re-organization", Journal of PARD, Vol. IV (April, 1964) p. 197.

⁵James Hendry, then advisor to planning commission, Dacca, "Working paper on Thana Training and Development Center", submitted to the East Pakistan government May, 1963, reproduced by Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Hussain, Fifth Annual Report, appendix c.

⁶Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Hussain, Fifth Annual Report, p. 15.

Comilla Approach to Agriculture Development or a
New Cooperative System

As has been mentioned earlier, the cooperative societies had not made much progress in East Pakistan. Indeed, their number had gone down. On the other hand, Akhter Hameed Khan and his associates at Comilla are convinced that, if the villages in East Pakistan are to progress, some sort of cooperative structure must be evolved, which would take the past mistakes of the old cooperatives in view, and try to evolve some system which would be dynamic and meet all the needs of the farmer, not just credit, as was the general practice of old cooperatives. But, above all, the Comilla groups hopes:

To overcome despair and defeats by bringing together the active, the energetic and the purposeful, taking them out of the stagnant village repeatedly and putting them into contact with each other and with experts, thus making them receptive to new ideas and aspirations.⁷

The Comilla cooperatives comprise a two tiered structure, the primary society at the village level (not at the union level). The primary agriculture society is formed in a village by the farmers. The members of the primary society who number between 50 and 100 persons, before they can be accepted by the central association, must agree to comply scrupulously with the conditions of the central association. These are: to organize the primary society and later become a registered cooperative society, to hold weekly meetings with compulsory attendance of all members, and to select a trusted man from the group and send him to a TTDC. He would act as an "Organizer" and leader of the group, keep proper and complete accounts, in order for the group to formulate a joint production plan, to agree to

⁷Ibid.

spend the credit money under supervision and advice of central society, to adopt improved agricultural practices and skills, to make regular cash and in kind saving deposits, to join the central society, to hold regular member education discussions, to agree to attend adult literary classes and agree to send their children to muktab schools (mosque schools).⁸

The primary society, as mentioned, must select an organizer or manager of the society from their own members, select a "model farmer" and nominate an "Imam" teacher to teach in the mosque schools. The manager of the primary society is the key man; the success of the primary society depends on his enthusiasm and support. His main functions are: to teach the members of his primary society new social and economic modes, to take charge of the planning and pooling of capital for crop production, to arrange for the joint market of the members, to rent farm machinery from the central cooperative association (hereafter referred to as CCA) for the joint use of the members of the primary society, and most important of all:

He is the bridge between the dynamism of the central association and the conservatism of village customs. He is the constant transmitter of new ideas. Without an able organizer a village remains an amorphous mass. We know many villagers are eager to adopt cooperation, but unable to do so as they cannot find an organizer. Again the performance of the group often, though not always, is related to the quality of the organizer.⁹

The manager is paid by CCA on a commission basis. He is given, 0.50 paisa (100 paises equal to 1 Rupee) per member attending the weekly meeting

⁸Aziz Khan, Fifth Annual Report, p. 4.

⁹Akhter Hameed Khan and Zakir Hussain, Third Annual Report, p. 17.

of the society and depositing the money regularly, 0.50 paisa per acre, brought under improved cultivation, one percent of the loan realization and Rs 15 per month for organizing tube well water for irrigation.¹⁰

The manager of the primary society attends the monthly meeting of the managers of the CCA headquarters. The manager calls a compulsory weekly meeting of the primary society to prepare production plans, to ask the members about their loan requirements from CCA. The loan plans are checked by field supervision section of the CCA, and if the plans are approved, the village cooperative gets the loan from the bank at TTDC.¹¹

The model farmer, selected by the primary society, goes for training to the TTDC every week until he is trained. And then monthly afterwards, during these monthly meetings at the thana development center, he is taught by the agriculture staff in new methods of cultivation, plant protection, etc. The model farmer's other functions are: to ascertain the reaction of the members and keep his teachers informed at CCA, to help the members in adopting improved methods and provide for their field guidance, to secure supplies of insecticides and sprays, to organize pest control measures, to bring soil samples to the laboratory at CCA and get recommendations on doses of fertilizers, to secure expert advice on crop diseases, etc.¹² In short, the model farmer is an extension agent of a new cooperative system. This extension agent is known to the farmers and is from the same village, and is not sent from outside and is not alien to the village people.

¹⁰Fifth Annual Report, p. 27.

¹¹Obaidullah Khan, op. cit., p. 196.

¹²Fifth Annual Report, p. 50.

Since 1965, village agriculture centers have been constructed in the villages for giving training to the farmers by the model farmers. It has thus become possible to train an increased number of farmers within their own village.¹³

It has been known to the leaders of the Comilla experiment that "general illiteracy is a great impediment to progress." Therefore, they decided in 1963 that they would require the members of the primary societies to learn to read and write simple Bengali, and agree to send their children to the school. To economize, the organizers of Comilla experiment have employed the existing village mosques and their Imam (those who lead the Muslim prayer). The Imam who have considerable social status, and weak financial support got a new boost. The members of the primary societies agreed to pay for the Imam's nominal salary. The CCA undertook to instruct 120 Imams (nominated by the primary societies) at the Thana Development Centers. The Imams went once a week for a year in 1963 to the TTDC to acquire new knowledge and to learn teaching techniques. The result of this effort has been that within one year, schools, with an enrollment of five thousand children and one thousand adults, have been started, and

"this program of universal literacy within a few years, its low cost, and enthusiasm which it evokes in the villages, holds out a great promise. The cost of training 120 Imams one day a week for a year does not exceed fifteen thousand rupees."¹⁴

¹³Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴Third Annual Report, p. 19.

Central Credit Cooperative Association - CCA

The second tier of the Comilla Approach is the Central Credit Cooperative Association. This most powerful of the two tiers is located at the thana level in the Thana Development Center (TTDC).

The Central Association has a management committee of 12 elected members from the primary societies (three of whom retire every year), and six non elected members nominated by the provincial government's registrar of the cooperative societies who also nominates the chairman of the Central Association. Though at present, the management committee has nominated members to "guide" the farmers, it is hoped later on, that the whole management committee, including the chairman, would comprise elected members from the primary societies.¹⁵ While the management committee decides the general policy matters, the day-to-day administration is carried out by the project-director and his staff appointed by the management committee.¹⁶ The Central Association maintains a field staff of accountants, supervisors, and inspectors who keep the accounts, supervise the work of managers, model farmers and the general progress of the primary societies.

To carry out the work of the Association, the CCA has various sections each with its own head, and all under one project-director. The sections of the Comilla Central Association are: Loan and rural credit, marketing and processing, field supervision, machines and maintenance, agriculture extension, water development, imports, accounts and audit,

¹⁵Fifth Annual Report, p. 20.

¹⁶Ibid.

stores, creamery and small industrial plant (cold storage and rice mills).¹⁷

There are four main functions of the central association. These are: to provide banking and credit facilities; to provide all service and training facilities to its members including storage and hiring out of agriculture implements like tractors, power pumps, thrashers, etc.; to provide marketing facilities, which include, organizing, the joint sale of the produce and purchasing of consumer goods for the members of the primary societies; and to operate and manage small industrial units like cold storage plants and rice mills, where the members can store perishable agriculture products, like potatoes and vegetables, and where paddy can be husked. And whenever possible, these industrial units engage in the business, too, the profits from which go to the members of the primary societies.¹⁸

The Working of the Central Association

I. Credit

The CCA advances to its members various types of loans, such as: production loans, in-kind grain loans, loans for the purchase of milk cows, loans for release of mortgaged land, loans for construction of houses, loans for installation of tube wells, loans against pledged paddy and rice, loans for purchase of machinery, and loans for marketing operations.¹⁹ To be eligible for obtaining credit, the member has to deposit a minimum of six paisa a week in the bank at the TTDC; the

¹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸Third Annual Report, pp. 21-27.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 57.

working principal of CCA is, "no deposit, no credit." The CCA staff scrutinizes the scheme to determine whether the loan given would enable the borrower to:

produce more, earn more, save more, deposit more, invest more, eliminate the dangers of usury, become dynamic element in the credit, investment and production pattern of rural economy.²⁰

If these criteria of lending the money are met, then the loan is given to the individual farmer. A joint loan is given to the primary society if the CCA is satisfied that primary society in question meets the criteria laid down by CCA--these Criteria are: producing the evidence that members of the society have been making deposits in cash or kind. A production plan, showing the use of the amount asked for. A proof that the primary society has an elected and TIDC trained manager, who has been performing his duties competently.²¹ The proper use of the credit is constantly stressed and checked by the field staff of CCA. If the credit is used for renting of the machinery or other supplies, the machinery and the supplies are given to the primary society, from the stores and machine shops of the CCA and the money is credited to the primary society. Money is later repaid by the primary society to the CCA.

2. Marketing

The marketing section of the CCA, studies the market prices and provides marketing information to the primary societies, finds out the best available price, arranges for the bulk purchase of consumer goods, and the supply of the same to the member cooperatives at wholesale price,

²⁰Fifth Annual Report, p. 33.

²¹Obaidullah Khan, "Rural Development and Administration Reorganization", Journal of PARD, Comilla, Vol. II (Jan.-April 1963) p. 196.

etc.²²

3. Farm Machinery

The CCA maintains a machine shop at its headquarters. The tractors are rented by the primary societies from the CCA. All the maintenance and repairs are also carried out by the engineers and mechanics of the CCA. The other supplies and services, like sinking of tube wells and providing rice thrashers and power life-pumps, are also rented out to the farmers by the machines section.²³

4. Small Industrial Units

The small industrial unit section was started at Comilla in 1964-1965, when it was realized by the marketing section that wholesale buying and supplying the consumer goods to the primary society members did not allow them to compete with the existing village shopkeepers. Instead, it was thought it would be better to process some essential goods, and then sell the goods to the members on a nominal profit basis. The chief aspects of this new approach are to process and store some essential goods, and supply and sell these goods to the members and non members. Up until 1964-65, a rice factory, a cold storage plant to store vegetables, potato seed, fruits, etc., have been constructed at Comilla to meet the needs of the members and to provide additional jobs and income opportunities for the members.²⁴

Evaluation of the Comilla Approach

There are several implications of the Comilla Approach which deserve

²²Third Annual Report, p. 73.

²³Fifth Annual Report, p. 71.

²⁴Fifth Annual Report, p. 13.

attention. The new cooperative system is completely different from the old cooperative structure existing in East Pakistan, instead of the three-tiered it is two tiered structure, with the central association being more powerful of the two. Unlike the old method, the new method not only provides the credit but it requires that the members must save and deposit regularly to be eligible for the credit. The credit so provided, is not given blindly, but the utilization of credit is watched carefully and supervised closely. Unlike the old method, where no thana development centers existed, the new approach makes it possible for the farmers to learn new methods in agriculture. Through thana development centers, the government officials become active participants. An attempt is being made to integrate marketing with the credit, and to meet all the consumer needs.

A new dimension of the Comilla approach is that it is trying to bring small-scale industry into the villages. Though still in its initial stages, this method of introducing small-scale industry has many potentialities. It could revive the dormant village cottage industry with the help of the provincial cottage industry corporation and the CCA marketing section. By bringing small-scale industries, the villages will not only get additional employment and income, but will be introduced to a "new way of life."

By pressuring the farmers to attend the adult literacy classes and to send their children to mosque schools, a cheap and easy method has been found to tackle the massive illiteracy problem in Pakistan.

The Comilla cooperative system unlike the old cooperative method has achieved remarkable success with non-agricultural and urban societies. Starting in 1963-64, non agricultural primary societies have been formed by the people with diverse occupations, like butchers, rickshaw drivers,

etc., and for the first time the poor people of small towns like Comilla, have found a new hope and meaning in life. The non agricultural cooperatives are forging ahead, their members seem to be more virile, dynamic and adventurous than agriculture societies. Within this short period of their joining in the movement, "the rickshaw pullers have become the owners of rickshaws, the motor drivers have become the owners of buses, and the press workers of presses."²⁵ The number of non agricultural societies in 1964-65 in Comilla, was 24 with 1215 members and their deposit in the bank was about Rs. 500,000 (U.S.\$100,000).²⁶

Leaving the non agricultural societies aside, how has the new cooperative method fared in providing credit, marketing facilities and other services? The major need of agriculture in East Pakistan is the availability of rural credit. During the past, it has not been possible to build a viable system of rural credit in East Pakistan for many reasons, the chief being the absence of a banking habit among the farmers. They did not make any deposits. How can there be credit without repayment? The majority of farmers, on account of their meagre savings, did not appear attractive risks to bankers. The establishment of an agriculture development bank does not solve the problem of credit repayment by the farmers; it merely evades the issue by dealing only with large-scale farmers.²⁷ In the new cooperative system, supervision is never relaxed; each society's record of deposits is watched every week; its production plans are scrutinized; its use of the loan is studied; and unrelenting

²⁵ Ibid., p. 91-92.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Third Annual Report, p. 22.

pressure is exerted for punctual repayment of the loan. The inspector of CCA keeps up-to-date information about latest agriculture techniques and discusses it in the weekly training meetings of the organizers. It is now evident that organizers (or the managers) of the society, trained by the Central Association, and acting as its agents, can easily collect savings and loans. Savings and repayments were the missing links, in the chain of rural credit.²⁸ By saving and depositing the money regularly in easily an accessible bank, the farmers had accumulated Rs. 100,000 (U.S. \$20,000) in small deposits, in a year and half time in Comilla thana.²⁹

The CCA charges 12% to 15% interest on its loans as compared to 60% to 100% interest charged by the money lenders.³⁰ CCA loan collection was "over 99% with nearly 5% collateral in cash or kind generally maintained."³¹ One interesting aspect of the credit structure of the CCA is that a commercial bank (United bank) located in the thana development center is directly involved in the CCA credit operations, in that the managers of the primary societies bring the farmers savings and deposits in the bank. The bank issues pass books to each of the members showing his weekly balance. It is hoped by the leaders of the Commilla Approach that, by bringing a commercial bank nearer the villagers, it will induce banking and saving habits in the villagers and will prove to the bank owners that it is profitable to engage in business with villagers.

The marketing section of CCA arranges for the storage of the harvested

²⁸Ibid., p. 23.

²⁹Ibid., p. 24.

³⁰Ibid., p. 33.

³¹Ibid.

rice of the villagers in the village goales (warehouses) and for the joint sale of members' crops. This section also buys the consumer goods at wholesale prices for the members. It has been found that if a small farmer adds 30% to his income as producer, by cooperative marketing, he can at least save 10% of his expenditure by cooperating as a consumer. Without cooperative marketing, "he sells fourth cheaper and buys fourth dearer."³²

The marketing section started a consumer subsection in 1962-63. The consumer goods are purchased by their subsection, on wholesale, and resold to "dealers" appointed by the primary societies who sell consumer goods to the members on credit, if need be. In the first year alone, the total transaction of the consumer subsection was Rs. 4000,000 (U.S. \$99,000).

Mechanized farming has not been successful in Comilla because, as mentioned above, the farm holdings are too small to use tractors economically. Besides, ordinary tractors are hard to use for wet cultivation. Some scope exists for the use of tractors in the winter crops, when the land is hard and the ordinary plough cannot do the job. As a result, the tractors of the machine section most of the time have remained idle, except for hauling goods and supplies to and from the market.

The extension work of CCA is led through the model farmer of the primary society who goes to the CCA office a month for training and instructions and on his return disseminates new methods and instructions with the members of his society, at the weekly meeting of the society. The model farmer in effect is a liaison agent of CCA who belongs to the

³²Ibid., p. 27.

³³Ibid.

same village and is known by the people of the village. Since the introduction of model farmers, 24 union agriculture assistants of agriculture department have been withdrawn from Comilla thana.³⁴ How effective is the model farmer? Comilla leaders claim that up until 1962 more than fifteen hundred farmers adopted new practices in agriculture and raised their farm production by 50%,³⁵ and that the average yield of paddy in the Comilla thana rose from 20 maunds to 37.6 maunds. In a survey conducted by the Comilla Academy, it was found that 60% of the members of the primary societies followed 50% of the instructions of the model farmers in one year.³⁶

Comilla experiment, promising as it is, has some drawbacks and problems. The total expenditure of the Central Association of Comilla for four years up until 1964-65 was Rs. 70 million (U.S. \$14 million), or an average expenditure of Rs. 17.5 million (\$3.5 million), and the total (fixed and current) liabilities of the Association were Rs. 85 million (\$17 million).³⁷ To initiate the work of CCA, the provincial cooperative department gave Rs. 4.5 million for a 5-year period to the Central Association to start its functions; Rs. 3 million was given as loan and the remainder as grant. The Ford Foundation up until 1963, had contributed \$135,000.³⁸ Most of this money went for buying machinery, tractors, etc. It takes at least four to five years for a central

³⁴Ibid., p. 18.

³⁵Ibid., p. 9.

³⁶Ibid., p. 51.

³⁷Fifth Annual Report, see Appendix C.

³⁸Ibid., p. 9.

cooperative association to become self-supporting. Thus, initially, funds from outside will have to be made available, if the Comilla Approach is to be adopted in the province. A second problem, faced by the Comilla leaders, is that the farmers join the primary societies and pledge to conform to the rules and regulations; out of sheer necessity, because they are in deep debt and have no other way to go. Once their pressing debt requirements are met, their loyalty to the Association decreases. They deposit only a bare minimum in the bank. They don't attend the weekly meetings regularly; they accept the joint production plans but rarely participate in them. In some cases, the members, after solving their debt problems and earning enough money drop out altogether, and become money lenders themselves.³⁹

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the Pakistan Government, encouraged by the Comilla experiment, sanctioned in 1965 a sum of Rs. 49.61 (U.S. \$9.6 million) for the expansion of the Comilla program in the remaining thanas of the Comilla district by 1970.⁴⁰ At time of this writing, eight thanas of Comilla district, have the Comilla type cooperatives.⁴¹

Besides the Comilla district, Comilla type cooperatives have been working since 1963, in the thanas of Govipore, Baibandha and Thakourgaon subdivision of the Mymensingh district, Rangpur district, and Rajshahi district respectively. The Kashimpor agricultural development estate of EPADC (East Pakistan Agriculture Development Corporation) also has a

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

⁴⁰ Third Five Year Plan, p. 443.

⁴¹ Information given to author by Akhter Hameed Khan, in a letter from Comilla, dated August 7, 1968 (see Appendix A).

Comilla type cooperative.⁴²

The government of East Pakistan evidently has decided to expand the Comilla type cooperatives in the whole of East Pakistan as soon as possible.⁴³ However, progress so far has been slow.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Fifth Annual Report, p. 101.

CONCLUSION

Food problem in East Pakistan is urgent and serious. There are far too many people and too little land. The average land holdings do not exceed more than three acres. The output of rice per acre is four times lower than that of Formosa and Japan.

Ninety-five percent of East Pakistan's population is rural, depending on agriculture for their livelihood. Should Pakistan fail to solve the hunger problems of these millions of people there would always be danger to the peace, political stability and therefore danger to the whole country.¹ The problems of East Pakistan's poverty will not improve until the condition of agriculture improves.

Land reform is usually given a top priority by governments of the developing countries. Somehow, it is assumed by new national leaders that land reform is a natural corollary to independence, as if land reform in itself will solve all inequities. The reasoning is thus: concentration of ownership of most of the land in a few people's hands is bad. Therefore, there should be land distribution with land given to the tillers. But must there be a land reform which does not provide for credit, marketing and other facilities and capital formation and leads to further uneconomical land holdings? How is the ignorant farmer going to feed himself and his Asian style family of five to six children, and

¹Akhter Hameed Khan, quoted by Obaidullah Khan and Arthur Raper, Comilla-AID Conference Report, p. 6.

save enough to reinvest in the land, for the increased productivity? And what happens when he dies? Will his three acres be divided further among his sons and their sons? Will not children be even more worse off than was he?

Land reform in East Pakistan was not counter productive in itself. What was negative about it was the fact that land reform did not provide for credit to buy bullocks, fertilizer, etc. It did not provide for minimum ceilings as did West Pakistan's land reform; and it did not provide for personnel to aid and help illiterate farmers.

Up until 1953-54, when a major drought hit the country, the government of Pakistan and East Pakistan completely neglected agriculture and did not have any policy for agriculture development except an empty slogan of "grow more food" which was plastered all over in the villages. How to "grow more food" was not the government's concern.

To meet the food emergency in 1953-54, the government received American aid under PL-480. After that, like a person living on dope, the government forgot about its food plan, and introduced without much thinking, a procurement policy which left farmers with very few if any incentives. The government fixed prices, below market prices and ordered the deputy commissioners of the districts to procure the grain which was stored at the government warehouses and brought out in the market according to the need when the prices rose.

Meanwhile, East Pakistan, after the 1954 elections, was completely caught up in political chaos and had three different governments (until Ayub's October revolution) and one governor's rule for a year. Political stability at the national level was equally lacking (five governments between 1955-1958). The planning board recognized in its first five

year plan (not published until 1958) the dangers of deteriorating conditions in agriculture and for the first time gave top priority to the agricultural development. Because of the unstable political situation in East Pakistan and in the central government, the first five year plan program of development received scant attention of the provincial and central governments. The overall rate of growth in agriculture during the first plan was 1.3%, and the growth rate in food grains was barely 1% while the population grew at 2.6% in the country.²

The new military regime of Ayub Khan, which came to power in October 1958, launched the second five year plan in 1960. This plan again emphasized the importance of agriculture. During the second plan, the government of Pakistan, under its dynamic head, President Ayub Khan, gave serious attention to the development of agriculture in Pakistan--by subsidizing fertilizer and improving the distribution of fertilizer, by providing better seeds, and because of the fortune for time of good weather, the production in agriculture rose considerably in both wings of the country. The value of crop output in East Pakistan grew by about 20% in the five year period of the plan.³ And by the end of the plan period in 1965, Pakistan did achieve self-sufficiency in food, and the government proclaimed that Pakistan had achieved a breakthrough in the agriculture. The fact of the matter was that Pakistan got a breathing spell in 1965 because of the good weather. Though fertilizer helped in the agriculture yields, the total area, however, under fertilizer was not more than 10%.

²Malik Khuda Bux, "Strategy for the Conquest of Hunger", p. 7.

³Third Five Year Plan, p. 396.

In June 1965 the third plan was launched with much fanfare, with great enthusiasm and hope. But the very first year of the plan found Pakistan in many difficulties. Because of the September war in 1965 with India, Pakistan had to divert considerable development funds to defense. Consortium aid to Pakistan did not provide any funds to Pakistan in 1965 for development. But worst of all drought hit the country and continued until the end of 1966. The result was that agriculture production fell considerably, and Pakistan had to import as never before, Rs. 100 crores (U.S. \$200 million) worth of food grains.

Because of falling agriculture output the industrial sector of the economy also suffered--the overall economic growth declined from 6% in 1965 to 4.6% in 1965-1966. The planners in Pakistan had hoped that by the end of the third plan, Pakistan would make an entrance in the "Steel and Heavy Industry Age" and make a start in the production of capital goods. But because of defense and agriculture requirements, the whole strategy of the third plan had to be revised. Defense was given the first priority and agriculture the second. The government of Pakistan vowed that Pakistan would achieve self-sufficiency in food by 1970.

By the summer of 1968, because of good weather for two years, increasing use of fertilizers and tube wells, and utilization of good and improved varieties of rice and wheat seeds and increased use of tube wells in West Pakistan, the food position in Pakistan seemed to be comfortable. And in 1968, West Pakistan for the first time in fifteen years was not required to import any wheat.⁴ But East Pakistan was

⁴Sarfraz Aziz, head of the International Section of the Pakistan Planning Commission, quoted in Pakistan News Digest, Sept. 1, 1968, p. 1.

still short of self-sufficiency by 1.5 million tons of rice. The government hopes that East Pakistan would also attain self-sufficiency in 1970-1971. Meanwhile, the government of Pakistan is again beating the drums of an imposing "breakthrough" in agriculture. As past experience shows, there seems to be a strong correlation of increased food production to good weather. The real breakthrough will not come until Pakistan finds that it can withstand adverse weather--and that Pakistan's farmers continue to adopt new methods and techniques--and Pakistan's agriculture scientists, among other things, provide the country with more improved seeds.

Given the above picture of agriculture in East Pakistan, what role have Basic Democracy Councils played in the development of agriculture in East Pakistan? The Basic Democracy Councils, have as it should be apparent by now, played very little direct role in the development of agriculture in East Pakistan, the major reason being that historically these local councils (union boards) had never engaged in agriculture development. Rural development was thought to be synonymous with the public works--building of roads, dikes, etc. The Village AID Program, which was supposed to have concentrated on agriculture, did not perform well. At any rate, the Village AID Program, was never integrated with the existing union boards in East Pakistan. The union boards never received any orientation towards agriculture. Consequently, the public works tradition of the Union Boards was carried into the Union Councils.

Though the Union Councils have not engaged directly in agriculture development, but by carrying out massive works program in East Pakistan--such as building dikes on a large scale, clearing up numerous choked-up water ways and water channels of East Pakistan, and by improving and

building new roads, the Basic Democracy Councils through the works program have nevertheless aided the agriculture development. Indeed, it can be said that the works program has given a meaning and purpose to these Councils.

Many observers have criticized the works program on the grounds that the works program is negation of the concept of self help and self government in that the money for the works program comes from the top and is not raised through taxation by the union councils. This may be true, but the fact remains that the villagers with meager income cannot be taxed high enough to carry out any meaningful development work. Otherwise, the Basic Democracy Councils would have no meaningful development work to perform.

In a country like Pakistan, where "aids and grants" are given yearly and regularly to the two provinces by the central government, and where the Central Government aids the cities by building directly giant utility plants, like nuclear power plant for Karachi, why then should not the Central Government also provide aid and assistance for its majority of people living in the rural side? If the State cannot or should not help 80% of its citizens living in the countryside, what then, if may be asked, is the proper function of such a state and what is the use and meaning of being independent and a developing country? The western theories of self help and self rule are almost non-applicable in the developing countries of today. In Pakistan and many developing countries, where there is central planning, and where there is an accent in modernization and development, it is incomprehensible to think that villages will develop on their own meager resources. And why should the national government build industries, build roads, etc. in or near the cities and leave

majority of the people in misery in the villages?

The results of such a policy will be an increasing gulf between the cities and villages, creation of an educated and politically articulate elite in the cities and the persistence of an ignorant mass of people in the villages, bifurcation of the political culture, participant political culture in the cities, and a subjective political culture in the rural areas. If the works program were to be withdrawn, another advantage would be lost, that of bringing the individual illiterate farmer closer to the national political system. In a traditional society such as in Pakistan, where the loyalties are stronger to the village, caste and province, and where the villager is hardly aware of the government, state or the nation--the works program by mobilizing thousands of villagers and farmers not only provides development and economic compensations, but also brings the village people closer to the governmental process and gives them a sense of awareness and belonging to a nation.

Also an indirect assistance of the Basic Democracy Councils to agriculture in East Pakistan has been through the Thana Councils. The headquarters, and the government personnel of the Thana Councils, have now become the nucleus of a new effort of organizing a new comprehensive system of cooperatives in East Pakistan. Given the average size of the farms, the lack of capital among farmers to improve and adopt new technology, lack of a good marketing system, etc., the Comilla Approach appears a realistic way and perhaps the main hope of developing agriculture, undermining traditionalism and initiating change among the farmers of East Pakistan. It is with respect to The Comilla Approach that I feel the Union Councils could do more. They, for instance, could utilize the works program funds to build agriculture warehouses and agriculture and

village training centers, where the staff from TTDC's could come from time to time to teach the farmers not only new methods in agriculture, but also in health, birth control practices, education, handicrafts, etc. At any rate, the problems of agriculture development in East Pakistan are serious and critical that its development cannot and should not be left to the Union Councils alone. By the time the 1968 report of the Agriculture Commission was published, the government under President Ayub Khan, whatever hopes it had in Basic Democracies, realized that agriculture development was too serious a problem to be left with the Basic Democracies. The government decided wisely to create Agriculture Development Corporations, and initiated new agriculture policies, which bore fruit by the end of the second five year plan in 1965.

Even though the Basic Democracy councils have given indirect and marginal support in agriculture development, and probably would continue to do so in the foreseeable future, they still perform other vital functions, which should not go unnoticed by a student of political science. In a country like Pakistan, where the political parties are not well organized and hardly reach the rural areas; the hierarchical structure of the Basic Democracies, from the village to Division, with peoples and government's representatives sitting side by side, form a good two-way communication channel, where interest articulation can take place. Further, Basic Democracy Councils help bring governmental and political processes closer to the villagers and enable them to participate in them. These functions, alone, would appear to justify the continuing existence of some form of the Basic Democracies system in the country.

APPENDIX A

(Letter of Akhter Hameed Khan to Author)

PAKISTAN ACADEMY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
Kotbari, Comilla, East Pakistan,

Phone--2102

No. 448

August 7, 1968.

Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Jatoi
Department of Political Science
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas 66502
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Jatoi:

Here are the answers to your questions:

1. The Comilla type co-operatives have been reproduced in 7 more thanas of Comilla district since 1965. From October 1968 the remaining 13 thanas of the Comilla district will be covered.

Besides, the thanas of Gouripore in Mymensingh district, Gaibandha in Rangpur district and Natore in Rajshahi district have similar co-operatives since 1963. The Sub-Division of Thakurgaon in Dinajpur district has Comilla type village co-operatives and central associations in several thanas where tubewells have been sunk by EPWAPDA.

A central association and village co-operatives have also been introduced in Kashimpur Agricultural Development Estate of the East Pakistan Agricultural Development Corporation.

2. As regards your question about the role of Union Councils:

The Union Councils have very definite functions of their own in respect of roads, drainage and many welfare activities. The co-operative system begins with a village organisation which is supported by a Thana Central Co-operative Association. The Union Councils are not directly involved in the credit, mechanization and marketing programmes of the co-operatives. Indirectly they render great help through the development of the roads, drainage and irrigation.

Yours Sincerely,

(Akhter Hameed Khan)
Director

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BASIC DEMOCRACIES AND AGRICULTURE
DEVELOPMENT IN EAST PAKISTAN

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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One of the difficult problems faced by the developing countries is the question of "building" and "modernizing" a nation, out of diverse caste, regional and provincial groups.

Three models of nation building have gained prominence in the developing countries. These models are: dictatorial revolutionary regime such as that of Nasser in Egypt, mass mobilizing model, such as in Tanzania and bureaucratic model, such as in Pakistan under Ayub Khan. This paper is a case study of Ayub regime's effort to carry out modernization process in the rural areas of one of the two provinces of Pakistan-- East Pakistan.

In this paper, an attempt is made to find out how far Basic Democracy Councils, have helped in changing the traditional methods of agriculture in East Pakistan. In this paper, it is maintained that agriculture is not only a profession but also a way of life for millions of people. Therefore, by seeking a change in agricultural methods, one is also attempting to create a change orientated society.

It was found that East Pakistan was facing tremendous agricultural problems, which required massive and realistic response from the government. The Government of East Pakistan is trying to meet the challenge of agricultural development by various methods and means. A new comprehensive cooperative scheme, known as "Comilla Approach" has been initiated in East Pakistan, which if carried through properly can be of a great help to agriculture in East Pakistan.

Though Basic Democracies, through the Works Program have, indirectly contributed towards agricultural development their overall and direct aid to agricultural development has been little. Because the problems of agricultural development in East Pakistan are so massive and critical

that Basic Democracy Councils have not and should not be expected to take full burden of agricultural development in East Pakistan. Their contribution to agricultural development would probably continue to be a marginal one.