

Five Year Plan and National Progress with Special reference to Agronomical aspect*

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Introduction: The Five Year plan has been launched on a nation wide basis with the object of achieving 'Economic Freedom' after the attainment of 'Political Freedom.' No subject in recent years has come to more prominence than this Plan.

A nation can achieve real progress if every aspect is properly tackled and efforts of various operators are co-ordinated.

Targets to be achieved as a result of the Plan:

	<i>For the Indian Union.</i>	<i>For Madras State.</i>
Food grains	7.2 million tons	8.34 lakhs of tons.
Cotton	1.2 million bales	2.18 lakhs of bales.
Oil seeds	3.7 lakh tons	1.42 lakhs of tons.
Sugar	6.9 lakh tons	78,000 tons.

The agriculturists, traders, industrial population and men in services go to form the bulk of the population of a country besides a negligible number engaged in literary pursuits, arts and social services.

Rural Problems: 1. Nearly 85% of the population depend upon land in Madras State. 2/3 of the farmers possess '*uneconomic holdings*' 60% of the farmers cultivate their own lands. 15% are land owners who do not cultivate, but make use of land-less labour in the villages. Another 10% also are land owners, and they take lands of non-cultivating owners' lands for cultivation in addition to their own.

2. *Rural Indebtedness* is another bottleneck and a major obstacle to agricultural advancement. In spite of the increased prices of commodities, the chronic poverty of farmers persists resulting in a vicious circle of lower investment, lower standard of cultivation, lower income, lower standard of living and lower efficiency. As a result of this vicious circle, yields have declined or remained stagnant; land has been excessively exploited due to increasing pressure of population. Since only 28% of the cultivable land is having irrigation facilities, the profession of farming is still in the stage of gambling.

3. *Village factions*, the resultant litigation and the time wasted in pursuing the litigation to the detriment of agricultural business the

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lack of security of produce due to easy going elements who deprive the owner of his legitimate fruits of his labour are other causes retarding agricultural progress.

4. The development of unlimited number of amusements and eating houses in towns and cities has attracted the vital food of the village namely milk, milk products and vegetables to flow out of the village, (to fetch better prices) beyond reasonable limits, starving the village population and sapping their vitality. This is a slow acting silent evil that has gained momentum since two decades and the deleterious effects are very clearly seen in the rural population.

5. Modern health and medical services, education facilities and services of veterinary staff for animal husbandry improvements have not reached village population to the extent desired.

Tangible results can be had on tackling the deficiencies in a collective way since the cumulative effect of all the measures taken alone can have the desired reformation that is expected to be brought about in the villages.

The pre-requisite for this, is, tackling small units of 3 villages by providing a trained multi-purpose worker and a village committee to work in co-operation. These people will draw out a plan to produce in their unit sufficient food, clothing, fuel, pasture, cattle food and raw materials for housing.

A mobile team of workers from Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Co-operative, Industries, Health, Education and Medical Departments should be entrusted with 4 or 5 units of villages (i. e. 12 to 15 villages) for bringing about all round improvements.

Besides these, agrarian reforms suited to each tract must be formulated and implemented to offset the defects of uneconomic holdings which will pave the way for stepping up production.

In general, a better system of tax on land viz. Agricultural Income Tax, provision of easy credit through co-operative banks, modifying the existing rules in the matter of recovery of loans will be of immense help.

Water for irrigation being most essential, and for which many do not have the means to provide themselves, the irrigation engineering units of Civil and Military Departments should be set to work in rural areas, with the main purpose of tapping water for digging new wells or augmenting water supply in existing wells by the use of their machinery and immediately fitting up pumps wherever needed. The owners of lands will meet the cost of well and pumpset in one instalment or take charge through Co-operative Societies. This will greatly relieve the farmers the troubles they are now experiencing in this direction.

Next to water, good seeds, adequate manures and work cattle are essential for which credit facilities can be offered through Co-operative Banks for those who are in need.

Regarding the Agrarian reforms envisaged "Collective farms" on lands of poor quality and cultivate wastes, and "Co-operative farms" on less densely populated areas are suggested worthy of consideration. Zionist colonies of Palestine, collective farming in U. S. S. R. have met with success. The "Individual farming" in its present set up need not be meddled with. Facilities for water, seeds and manures have to be provided to these holdings in a practical way.

For the conditions existing in our state co-operative farming (complete or partial) for sparsely populated places and collective farming for less fertile lands is likely to be suitable.

Having dealt with the rural ills and the possible ameliorative measures; a few words about the 'Human Factor' on which rests the entire responsibility of success or otherwise of any scheme and especially a scheme of this magnitude and importance aimed at elevating the nation as a whole from its present level, needs mentioning.

Teams of social workers have to go about imparting moral lessons in the shape of stories, poems, posters pertaining to our glorious past which has so long been maintaining us from degeneration.

In spite of the food position being grave, the required sense of emergency has not pervaded over the country. It is probably due to inadequacy of tempo behind the appeal so far made or want of thrill on the part of the population to respond to the appeal or partly both. The height to which the enthusiasm and sense of duty should have risen has not so far been reached to meet the needs of a situation of this magnitude. Imagine a calamity in the form of fire or flood occurring in a place or the advance of an army and the reaction it involuntarily creates in the people of that region to safeguard themselves and protect their hearths and homes. In the grave danger of starvation occurring since several years the feeling of emergency has not been stirred to the desired extent to meet the danger. This has to be closely scrutinised and all impediments responsible for damping the enthusiasm should be removed.

In every zone the Plan operates, the specific items that are being tackled and the nature of help that is required from that area should be chalked out and given widest publicity. Propaganda that should be appealing to the people should be adopted. Business houses and film industries offer a lot of material worthy of copying.

The Community Projects Scheme started last year is on the lines contemplated in the Five Year Plan. In the course of executing them many important lessons may be learnt.
