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**CASE STUDY OF SELSELEH INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
IN LURISTAN, IRAN**

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**Abstract**

**This paper looks at the problems of development in rural Iran. It discusses various modes of development in light of the authors' work with an alternative project in Luristan, an underdeveloped mountain region in Iran.**

**The first part of the paper briefly discusses the processes of development and underdevelopment and looks at some of the characteristic problems of underdeveloped regions. The importance of rural development within national planning policies is stressed.**

**The second part, land reform and rural development planning in Iran is introduced, followed by a case study of the Fifth Development Plan's rural sector policies. This is the most extensive rural development plan carried out in Iran to date.**

**The third part looks at an alternative development model, presented in the Selseleh Regional Development Project, in Luristan, Iran. "Endogenous Development" utilising the creative potential of the local people to develop their own region using its indigenous resources is the motor force of this project.**

**Proposals for future action are based on the appraisal of the various case studies.**

## Part I

### Processes of Development and Underdevelopment

Rural development is so closely related to the whole development process that one first needs to consider general development issues before considering the rural sector. The term "development" refers to a global phenomena which embraces many diverse national experiences.

Different theories have been expressed about the nature of development. Early, but still influential theories regard underdevelopment as an original state of people in less developed countries, where the model of the "developed" nations is presented to them to aspire to and follow. The major inadequacy of these "orthodox" theories is their lack of historical basis, resulting in the linear models of development. Such models cannot be followed by the Third World, due to different historic conditions in which these countries have to develop, compared to the conditions in which today's industrialised nations developed. By examining the development processes of the industrialised nations, it is clear that the development of the industrial nations is directly related to the underdevelopment of the Third World.

The growth of industrialised countries required increasing amounts of raw materials and larger markets. Traditional societies, many with existing highly advanced economies, technologies and social structures, were penetrated and often disintegrated by political, economic and if necessary physical force. Their members were assigned to the production of raw materials. The destruction of the socio-economic structures of these penetrated societies left them dependant upon the industrialised nations. In short, some nations have become better off to the detriment of others.

The Third World, whilst having no colonies for supplying resources, have still attempted to follow the Western development models. Their main thrust has been to industrialise using imported technologies, resulting in vast sums being paid to the industrialised nations for machinery - mainly for import substitution industries. The industries thus formed require substantial infrastructure which is only

available in a few large urban centres in these countries. Thus the rural areas of the Third World, which contain 2,500,000,000 people, the majority of the world's population, are neglected in favour of centralisation of capital and industry in a small number of cities. Even in the cities the profits of these industries are concentrated in the hands of a few industrialists. Thus the nature of capital intensive methods leads to inequitable distribution.

Such uneven development causes a large number of the rural population to migrate to the towns in search of employment. This process increases regional disparity in underdeveloped countries by robbing the rural areas of their potentially most productive workers.

#### Towards a Definition of Development

"Development" is by nature a subjective term, almost synonymous with betterment.

The income level of the population is perhaps the most important factor of development. The level of income has to be such that food and other basic necessities can be obtained by the population. A raised income level has also the effect of increasing the market for national industries, and thus aiding economic growth. However an increase in G.N.P. is not a sufficient criterion for development if the benefits are concentrated in the hands of a few while many are poverty stricken. Equitability of distribution is a major contradiction in development processes based on the Western industrial model.

A raised income level and its equitable distribution imply increasing the level of employment. Capital intensive methods in the Third World cause little increase in job opportunities and make the level of income more unequal.

Investment in human capital through education, health, and essential services should be a major concern in development.

To achieve these objectives the underdeveloped nations, essentially, need an integrated development programme within which the rural sector must be given the greatest priority, as by far the majority of

the population live in the rural areas. This is to equitably raise the income of the population by providing employment for them in their own regions. It could, of course, be argued that the employment for the rural population could also be provided in the cities, as it is now often the case. However, such centralisation increases the regional inequalities that have already been discussed and which are a salient characteristic of the underdeveloped. Development in one region does not necessarily stimulate development in neighbouring regions, but on the contrary leads often to a backwash on these regions making them poorer than ever.

However, for any rural development plan to be successful, all the factors of economy, education, health and services must be tackled simultaneously. In this paper we hope to point out the need for an integrated approach to development and illustrate through the case studies two contrasting approaches to rural improvement.

## Part 2

### Land Reform and Rural Development Planning in Iran

#### Historical Background:

Traditionally, agricultural surplus from the Iranian countryside has gone to support the city dwellers, while the barest minimum investment needed to upkeep the level of production has been returned to the village. The residence of landlords in the cities and the peasants' lack of capital and incentive to raise production, along with the constant threat of pillage by alien tribes, prevented the building up of a large surplus in the countryside. Any investments were confined to the construction and maintenance of traditional irrigation systems (ghanats) which were essential for maintaining the level of production.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries agricultural production entered the international market, changing the crop and land ownership patterns. The creation of absolute property rights, registration of tribal lands in the name of the chiefs, a fall in terms of trade, and rising prices of manufactured goods compared with agricultural products, worsened the position of the peasantry.

There were large disparities in wealth, both between regions and within villages. Regional variations existed between villages in different districts according to the availability of water resources, fertility of land, etc. In the rich northern provinces, the average income of a peasant family was eleven times greater than the average peasant income for the rest of the country.<sup>1</sup>

There were also internal stratifications of the population within villages which related to the ownership of means of production, such as land or draught animals. Unlanded peasants had to win favour of the landlord in order to ensure full time employment.

#### Land Reform:

Several attempts at land reform had been made, but the most important was that begun in January 1962, which stated: landlords should sell all land in excess of one village to the government who, in turn, would sell it to certain categories of cultivators, on a fifteen year repayment basis. The peasants were to become owners of the land they were farming, but those who had provided the means of production, e.g. oxen, water, etc., received priority. Thus, between 40-50% of the peasants, who were merely labourers received no land in the villages redistributed.<sup>1</sup>

The second phase of the land reform, reported complete in 1967, reduced the allowance of the landlords to between 30 and 150 hectares. In both phases the landlord was allowed to keep any mechanised farm or plantation and land worked by wage labourers.

In the second phase, according to official figures, 10% of the population in the 60-70% of the country's villages affected, received land.<sup>1</sup> However, sufficient land was distributed to destroy the power of the feudal landlords and create a new larger class of small-holders and petty entrepreneurs. Some of the landlords shifted their interests into industry and urban property. Thus the land reform was partly responsible for replacing feudalism by capitalism in Iran.

After the reform the government was faced with the problem of finding substitutes for the organisational and physical services, some

of which were formerly the responsibility of the landlords. Consequently the government organised co-operative associations, locally elected village councils and "Houses of Justice". Their functioning was somewhat hampered by their domination by the more powerful members in a still highly stratified rural population.

To provide services, the "literacy", "health" and "extension and development" corps were mobilised from those serving their compulsory National Service. Of these the literacy corps is the largest and its activities have been much more noticeable. They have set up primary schools where they teach children and sometimes adults to read and write.

In the Fourth Plan, 1965<sup>2</sup>, rural development was, for the first time, allocated its own specific chapter. The Ministry of Rural Affairs was set up to administer this plan, which included building of rural roads, public health and sanitation, provision of potable water supply and the construction of model houses. The most important aspect of the plan was the encouragement of self-help and the subsidisation of public buildings, organised through the village councils. Nevertheless the magnitude of the problem was far greater than the attempts made to alleviate it.

#### Rural Development in the Fifth Development Plan of Iran:

Today, about 57% of the country's total population live in 66,000 villages. Although projects for rural roads, drinking water, and educational establishments for some villages have been proceeding, nevertheless, provision of other facilities such as clinics, high schools, public baths, and cultural establishments in all of the 66,000 villages was considered impractical and uneconomic.

It was decided that the fastest, most economical and practical way to provide these services to the rural population, was to be the installation of the needed facilities of several neighbouring villages, with a collective population of 8-12,000, in a central village which had the potential for expansion and development.<sup>3</sup>

Through the implementation of this Plan it was hoped that "population migration from smaller villages to larger villages and towns

will be stabilised, thus checking undesirable migration from rural to urban areas. It is envisaged that this will later lead to a favourable situation for the natural amalgamation of small villages into larger ones." By concentrating development activities in the larger villages, a larger proportion of rural population will benefit from welfare facilities.

Appraisal:

The importance of the Fifth Plan's rural development programme lies in its wide national scale, and that it has the potential of, at last, providing desperately needed investment for services and infrastructure in some of the villages in the country.

Although the regional centre will be one of the most populated settlements in the region, most people are likely to be scattered in the satellite villages with 250 people. Therefore, to achieve the greatest coverage of services, it must be assumed that a majority of people from the surrounding area will use the centre and its facilities. Careful consideration of the conflicting interests and loyalties that exist between villages, and even within one village, is essential in deciding the location and distribution of facilities.

The nature of activities taking place in the facilities provided also need consideration. For example, the schools of the Ministry of Education and the literacy corps only provide primary school education in most villages. This is the initial stage of a city based, national education programme, and serves to introduce the more comprehensive package offered in the city. As further education is not available in the village, the children have to go to the city to continue their schooling. Technical and vocational education has been organised in most regions of Iran. However, the graduates from these schools find themselves unemployed in the rural areas because there are not sufficient job opportunities for them in their village. If the present situation is to be altered and the objectives of the plan fulfilled, the rural education should be a comprehensive, self-sufficient programme and not city dependant. Furthermore, it should be directly related to the needs of the people and regions that it serves.

Due to the the large scale of the development plan and lack of skilled and professional manpower, the facilities (such as schools, baths, clinics and public buildings) are built according to nationally standard prototype designs. These standard plans are prepared by the central government and therefore cannot always suit the varied conditions of the different regions of Iran.

These designs are implemented by city based contractors who will export the profits of the investment to the city. This contradicts certain aims of the development plan such as increasing rural income and employment. The contractors also buy their building materials from the city. This too, benefits the city's materials merchants and further reduces the benefits of the investment to the villagers. Moreover, these materials and the techniques used to build with them, are alien to the environment and the built form of the villages and the peasants are unable to continue building in the same way or repair the existing building. Hence, these methods of implementation increase the dependance of the peasantry upon the city and the central government. They also ignore the recommendations of the plan to respect the existing customs and traditions, the environmental and climatic conditions and the relationship of the new to the old.

On the other hand, local builders with a little training and supervision are capable of meeting nearly all the building requirements of their region. Also, indigenous materials and techniques that have developed over centuries to suit the particular environmental characteristics of their locality, if used, would reduce the reliance upon the city and increase the benefits of the investment for the area for which it was designated.

As the reduction of rural-urban migration is one of the principal aims of the plan, these following points should have been given higher priority: a narrowing of wage gaps between the city and the country, and correction of terms of trade concerning agricultural products. Rural employment could be increased not only in the construction sector implementing the plan's projects but by direct investment in labour intensive agricultural and manufacturing plants.

## Part 3

The Selseleh Regional Development Project S.R.D.P.

S.R.D.P. has been set up as an experimental project to investigate and put into operation alternative rural development policies. The concept of "endogenous" or internalised development which the project is dedicated to, calls for the improvement of the living conditions within the regions through active participation of the community and by the use of local resources (as far as possible). For this reason only the minimum necessary decisions and activities of the project are preconceived, leaving room for decisions to be made in the field through ongoing research and discussion with the indigenous population. Without the involvement of the communities concerned, development work will become both authoritarian and ineffective.

Socio-Economic History of the Region:

Luristan, within which the Selseleh region is situated, is a mountainous and remote province of western Iran. It's population of approximately 400,000 consist mainly of tribal agriculturalists and sheep and goat herding nomads.

Until the 1930's no sedentary villages existed in Luristan. The Lurs lived off agro pastoral activities and sold their animal products in the bazaars of the major towns.(Boroujerd and Khoramabad). Each tribe had a leader (Khan) who claimed leadership through heritage from his ancestors. In the socio-economic hierarchy, the position below the Khan's family was occupied by a group who owned large herds and land. This group made up five percent of the total population. Another five percent (5%) were economically independent and owned sufficient land and sheep to ensure a satisfactory standard of living. The remaining population lacked either sufficient flocks or land or both to maintain economic independence and relied upon employment as farmers or shepherds for the upper group.

Early in 1930's the government's sedentarisation policy was enforced and large numbers of nomads were made to settle on land traditionally known to be used by the tribe for grazing. This policy, however,

did not ensure an equitable division of the land between the settled population and it was the most powerful lineages that, despite fierce competition, gained control of the best irrigated and most fertile land.

In the 1950's new roads linked the most remote villages to bazaars in the towns by a two day journey. This increased the contact with the persian plateau and brought a flow of consumer goods which helped to undermine tribal values and the nomadic lifestyle. During this period many other nomads settled voluntarily. This was partly due to death of sheep stock and partly for reasons of political and economic security.

Consequently, a novel socio-economic organisation evolved which still operates today. The "Agro-pastoral combine" forms the basis of rural Luristan's economy<sup>4</sup>.

The head of the extended family, with the aid of some of his sons or brothers, farms the land which is normally sufficient to provide the families' annual consumption of wheat. At the same time, one or more of his sons, or close male relatives, are delegated to herding the sheep and carrying out the twice yearly migrations from the summer pastures in the north to winter grazing grounds in the south of Luristan. This system is flexible and well suited to the needs of the population as members can be withdrawn from the nomadic camp to help with seasonal tasks in the sedentary side, and vice versa.

During the process of Land Reform the old tribal leaders, who were now settled landowners, were not absentee landlords (as in many other parts of Iran) but were alert and prepared for the forthcoming events. The Khans divided their land between their families and those in their favour. They themselves took leading positions in most institutions set up after the land reform, such as: city council, village council, co-operative chief, etc. Thus the old hierarchies have in effect remained the same even if they have taken a different appearance.

**The Selseleh Region:**

This high basin, ringed by the Zagros mountains, is the field area for the first phase of the development project. It consists of a land area approximately 400km<sup>2</sup> and contains a population of 40,000 scattered in about 250 villages. Most of this population are settled in the plains which also contain most of the fertile land in the region. The plains settlements are therefore predominantly agricultural, while the economy of the settlements in the three major valleys in the north and east of the plains is based on animal husbandry. However, as the majority do not own sufficient land or sheep or any other means of production, there exists in the region a large labour force that seasonally migrates to major cities in search of jobs.

The villages are scattered and vary in population from settlements formed of one extended family, to major villages of about 1,000 people. The town of Alashtar is the administrative centre of the region. It houses almost 6,000 people and acts as a market town. Alashtar has the only clinic and secondary school in the region.

**Selseleh Regional Development Project (S.R.D.P.):**

Education, Health and Agriculture - The integrated approach to rural development taken by the S.R.D.P. has manifested itself in activities in the fields of education, health, agriculture and physical services. The main aim of the development project is educational and the four activities mentioned above are introduced into the region through education, so that, while the immediate needs in the four fields of activity are being met, the local population are at the same time being trained in those fields. This will enable them to carry on the development work themselves without having to rely on the members of the development project.

S.R.D.P. Training of "Front Line Workers" - Ninety volunteers from the villages in the region were chosen and given a broad training in the fields of agriculture, health and education. The period of training was set at about one year, after which the Front Line Workers had to return to their villages where they would work with the local people to improve the conditions of the area.

**Selection Procedure** - It has been proposed that the region be divided into thirty subregions each with an approximate population of 1,200. A central village within each subregion will be chosen to act as a base for the three Front Line Workers. Here the education group will hold classes, for both children and adults, in which basic reading and writing will be taught in courses that are geared to the lifestyle and culture of the people. The agricultural worker will be available for consultation when he or she is not visiting the villages in their subregion to help with veterinary matters, prevention of insect attack on crops, advising on improved farming methods or ensuring that cultivators are not deprived of their rights in transactions such as sale of crops, purchasing seed, fertiliser, etc. In addition, a 120 hectare plot of good land has been donated by a village to the agricultural group where different cultivation and animal-husbandry techniques are being researched in order to establish improved methods which are suited to the region. The health worker will also be based in the central village and will be provided with a surgery where she or he will carry out curative treatment. However, they are expected to spend at least fifty per cent of their time in carrying out preventive measures to reduce the causes of ill health in the villages of their sub region. The final part of the Front Line Workers' training consisted of a common programme in which each group was to learn the skills of the other two groups to a level enabling any one of them to carry out, in the absence of the other two members, the basic necessary actions; for example, the teacher should be able to give preliminary treatment to a sick person in the absence of the health worker.

In addition to these functions the Front Line Workers are a further link between the development project and the people. They are being involved in most of the activities of S.R.D.P. and as well as helping in the implementation of these, discuss the programmes with the communities concerned and express their views and desires to the staff of the development project.

**S.R.D.P. Administration:**

The employees of the Selseleh Development Project collectively form

the administrative body which deals with the day to day running of the development project, and co-ordinates its programme. The S.R.D.P. also works closely with locally elected village and town councils and rural co-operatives. The project assisted in organising local elections. These elections were an invaluable educational experience for the local people who have traditionally been subject to oppressive rule from the elite. Most of the day to day problems facing the people of Selseleh, from marriage disputes to complaints of overpricing in local shops, are brought to the attention of S.R.D.P. which involves itself in nearly all aspects of life in the region.

S.R.D.P. Services and Physical Infrastructure:

The provision of basic services and infrastructural installations such as roads, water supply, rural clinics, public baths, schools, etc., should be an integral part of all development projects. However, the most important aspect of this activity is not merely the creation of the physical structures, but the way they are created (i.e. the process), and the nature of the activities which these structures envelop (i.e. the function). As already mentioned, the implementation of all S.R.D.P. projects is regarded as an educational process and in the services section, already many local builders and craftsmen are being trained in working with improved traditional or appropriate techniques. Also a good proportion of the building projects will house the activities initiated by S.R.D.P. such as adult literacy classes and rural clinics. In addition, an important part of the task of the services section, is the creation of productive and employment generating small-scale industries, such as brick kilns.

**The Road Programme** - The development project has embarked on the construction of a major road which will link the Selseleh region to the city of Boroujerd, the second largest city in Luristan.

Concurrently, a small-roads programme is also being implemented which will link villages to existing roads. This is a self-help road building programme. Both the major roads and small roads are constructed using low cost and labour intensive techniques as far as possible.

**The Building Programme** - The development project's building programme is the activity with which we are most involved. From the outset a building policy for the region and how to implement it was closely integrated into practical construction activity. The policy was:

1. Research and Development of local materials and technologies.
2. Training and Education of local builders.
3. Promotion of Small-scale Building Materials Industries.
4. Building Projects that met basic needs while also acting as vehicles for the above points.

We were confronted with two types of building activity: projects financed directly by the central government and those arranged by the Selseleh Project.

**Government Building Projects** - These were mostly schools and housing for teachers. The buildings could only be built by officially recognised i.e. city-based, contractors, and their standardised designs used brick, steel and cement. Thus the construction budget would largely go to city contractors and materials' merchants.

We pressured the official organisations through S.R.D.P. to allow us to use local builders to implement these projects. We re-designed the projects to suit the local social and climatic conditions. We used local materials and technologies and in some cases improved on these. Through the construction process we trained local builders in these techniques. In these ways we also insured the majority of the government budget for the projects went to the local community.

**S.R.D.P. Building Projects** - These include public baths, water-supply projects, schools and bases for the Front Line Workers in the villages. They were built in partnership with the village. The village generally requested the facility, provided the site, the unskilled labour and some of the materials while the project provided the design, the skilled labour and other materials. Designs were developed in consultation with the users. Thus the people participated in both the decision making and implementation level. A brick and lime kiln has also been constructed as a first step to regional self-reliance in building materials. The kiln will be devolved to a local co-operative once it proves economically successful.

**Builders' Workshop** - A two month intensive workshop has been organ-

ised through the winter when building construction ceases, to further develop the on-the-job builders' training and the local technologies. The workshop includes practical work on the best ways to use mud and timber, the use of appropriate traditional technologies better developed in other parts of Iran (such as vault and dome construction), experiments into improving local technologies, plan reading, work organisation and builders' co-operatives. A literacy programme run concurrently links literacy to the builders' vocation. Hence the services programme, like the other S.R.D.P. activities, fulfils two objectives simultaneously. It provides needed facilities while setting up the mechanisms that will enable people to provide these facilities self-reliantly.

Conclusions and Proposals:

The aim of the Selseleh Regional Development Project is to create the motivation and impetus in people to develop their region. Through the process of participation in satisfying basic needs, the population gain the skills, both technical and organisational, to fulfil needs which grow out of new and changing local conditions. Once these mechanisms are established the project can withdraw and the process will continue.

The Barriers to Development:

Yet, there are obstacles that retard and often prevent the upward mobility of the peasantry. The problems are at the local level, internal difficulties that are a heritage of a hierarchic, unstable and an oppressed society. Land, the basic resource in rural areas, is, despite the effectiveness of the Land Reform, still unevenly distributed. The oppressive relationship between those in positions of ownership and influence to those without, still persists. Thus increased production and surplus from the land benefits the few, destroying the incentive of the majority of the rural population for raising the level of production.

There are other hindrances. Tribal, kinship, and compound family loyalties create conflicting interest groups within a village or between villages in close proximity. As a result of this, community projects have hardly ever begun by the people themselves and poten-

tials of co-operation, collective effort, and the pooling of resources are diminished. The instability of the recent history, together with their state of poverty, have given rise to mass insecurity. This causes an "each man for himself" situation, strengthening individuality and competition while further hampering collective activity.

Can a development project, operating in a small area, within an international socio-economic system that perpetuates these contradictions, combat them?

On Agriculture:

Reaching a higher economic level is a common need and therefore one of the strongest motivating forces. Agriculture is still the major productive activity in rural areas, as in Luristan, and the agricultural programme of S.R.D.P. can have a substantial influence. The people's interest in diversifying their crops and investing in more long term ventures, such as fruit gardening and production of honey, is a sign of this influence. Yet without significant change in patterns of ownership and methods of production, these improvements will benefit mainly the more privileged land owners who are in a position to invest in new techniques and different varieties of production. The small, very scattered, individual plots of land which were mostly distributed through the Land Reform, are individually uneconomic. These can be collectivised into a number of larger, economically viable units and their owners aided to operate them as a co-operative venture.

The land in Selseleh, though fertile and possessing abundant water, is not used efficiently and its productive potential is not utilised. This is due to lack of expertise in farming, irrigation techniques, and crop diversification which results in large areas being dry farmed. Also wheat and soya beans which are the only two major crops grown in this region, have a relatively low market value. Therefore, the income of the large landowners from their land which is usually farmed by landless share-croppers, is much lower than the land could provide. This allows the formation of a co-operative

which guarantees the landowner's present level of income as his share in the co-operative for donating the land. The land can then be farmed using improved techniques and more profitable crops and the increased income is distributed amongst the other members of the co-operative - the people who farm the land.

Small-scale Industries:

All the landless peasants cannot be absorbed in agriculture. Alternative sources of employment have to be sought. Small-scale, labour intensive industries dispersed throughout the rural areas can be a source of employment and increased income for this section of the population. In this field the Selseleh Development Project has begun the construction of small brick and lime kilns, to be organised as co-operatives. The handicraft programme as well has great potential for increasing the income, particularly of village women.

Education:

Yet another way of raising the economic level of the rural population is through investment in human capital by means of facilitating education.

Increased investment in education should be simultaneously accompanied by increased productivity and employment opportunities in the villages so that the school leavers can be employed in their own regions.

In this field the Selseleh Development Project has been most active. Education is the central theme within its policies and the training of Front Line health, education and agricultural workers, illustrates the need to approach development as an integrated, homogenous process.

Health:

Health, for example, is directly related to the economic situation of a community as well as to its level of education. Malnutrition and deficiencies of protein and essential vitamins, one of the major causes of poor health in the less developed areas, is precisely the result of the poverty that reigns in these areas. Unsanitary

houses, w.c.'s, stables and polluted drinking water sources are all caused by a lack of relevant education and subsistence incomes. The peasant needs to know the sources of diseases and have the capability to combat them.

Clearly, a combination of curative medicine and disease prevention work is required. The medical doctor and the public health engineer, though not specifically trained to combat rural health problems, are nevertheless the only professionals available in this field. Most villages however, are deprived of the services of these professionals and need to seek them in the nearest city. The training of Front Line Health Workers in both curative and preventive medicine, undertaken by the Selseleh Development Project is a major step towards better rural health. This training should equip the trainees to seek out problems independently from their teachers and to take actions towards solving these problems, rather than teaching them certain set prescriptions to simple, common diseases.

#### Physical Services and Infrastructure:

Services and physical infrastructure encourage investment in productive fields, both industrial and agricultural, thus playing a crucial role in raising the level of income that would not be possible without the existence of infrastructure such as roads, drainage, water supply, electricity, etc. The creation of such services and infrastructure however, needs capital investment which the present level of economy of most peasant communities does not allow. An initial government investment is required, which, if correctly utilised will provide the needed services and infrastructure and trigger off economic growth.

Our task in the Selseleh region is to use the limited funds available, not only to build the maximum number of needed service installations but while building them, provide the local population with a methodology, technical and organisational skill which enables them to perpetuate the process and build for themselves. This is done through research and development in the improved use of local materials and techniques which leads to prototype building projects. In the process of building these, local builders are trained in im-

proved traditional techniques of construction and better use of locally available materials. As a result of the practical training programme, a group of knowledgeable builders emerge, who then undertake a period of theoretical training. In this period they are taught certain design principles, how to read plans and architectural drawings and methods of work organisation, especially ways of forming building co-operatives.

When the training programme is complete and the builders have formed themselves into viable groups or construction teams, greater responsibility will gradually be devolved to them. Each unit will then take charge of a certain building project and, under supervision, carry it to completion. Every project will be allocated a certain budget, which will be given to the construction units during the process of building, and they will divide this sum through their co-operative organisation. Thus the region will possess organised teams of builders who are capable of directly undertaking government contracts, and by using materials that are available locally, making the region self-reliant in building terms.

#### Conclusions

The establishment of a methodology with which the S.R.D.P. approach can be applied to other regions would be an invaluable result of this project. To provide this methodology, the members of the Luristan Project need to carefully assess their past achievements and propose a plan of action for the future based on this appraisal. This planning process would also be extremely useful to the Selseleh Development Project itself. So far the activities of this project have been pragmatic and little has been done to bring decision making and implementations within a coherent framework. Yet lack of long term planning can lead to piece-meal activities and make co-ordination between different tasks extremely difficult. Also, the project's activities may concentrate unduly on a particular area and give rise to inequality and poor distribution.

Such a planning process needs extensive research but is essential in perpetuating an internalised development process. The field area could be divided into sub regions of a suitable magnitude.

The institutions responsible for economic activity (agriculture and industry, education, health, and physical services) could be based in each sub region. The Front Line Workers trained by S.R.D.P. in agriculture, education, health and building can already form the core of these bodies. What is lacking, however, is an administrative section which would deal with legal and institutional matters not covered by the Front Line Workers.

The members of the economic, educational, health services and administrative organisations could form a council, which would have the collective responsibility of distributing development funds in areas of greatest need and organising the implementation of projects to meet those needs; organising and assisting co-operative agricultural, industrial and commercial ventures and facilitating the sale of their produce. In short, these councils will gain increasing responsibility until they can carry out all the activities of the development project and finally replace it.

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#### Appendix

The Development Workshop is a group of architects, planners and researchers who work collectively carrying out research and development and projects on indigenous building methods in Third World Countries. They have worked in Egypt, Oman, Turkey, India and var-

ious other countries. Education is a primary aim and workshops have been carried out with both village builders and university level students. The Development Workshop is presently working as architects and planners for the Selseleh Regional Development Project in Luristan, Iran.

