SPONTANEOUS SETTLEMENTS IN RURAL AREAS OF NEPAL: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Introduction

Nepal, despite its being a mountainous country with less than one-fifth of its land constituting plains, is predominantly an agricultural country. As the main source of government income was revenue from agricultural land, the government tried to reclaim the Tarai forests bordering India for agricultural purposes. However, the attempts of the government to reclaim Tarai could not be materialised, because the hill population was reluctant to migrate to the hot, humid and malarial Tarai on the one hand, on the other hand, the Indians also did not feel themselves attracted to migrate to the Tarai in an absence of provision for the foreign nationals to buy and sell land in the Tarai. With a view to reclaiming the Tarai forest forests for agriculture, the Nepalese government in the 1860s came out with the legal provisions entitling the immigrant population residing in the Tarai to make purchase and sale of agricultural land in the Tarai. However, the reluctance of the hill people to migrate to the Tarai for fear of malaria put them in great difficulty resulting from the ever-increasing population. The hill population could get respite from the growing population either through reclamation of the marginal hill slopes or through emigration to foreign countries for employment. The former aggravated
the environment problems of the hills leading to soil erosion, landslides and floods. The latter which took the form of employment of Nepalese in the Indian army, police, para-military and other civilian and household jobs led to the deprivation of the able bodied dynamic and enterprising youths in the hill and thereby constrained the development of the hills.

History of Agricultural Land Settlements in Nepal

Prior to the introduction of democracy in 1951, none of the governments in Nepal were concerned about the well-being of the people in general. In order to meet the growing expenditure of the state, the government took recourse not only to increasing rent on land exorbitantly, but also to slavery and forced labour for the state and the latter had a deleterious effect on nation's economic sector. Both these system impinged on the liberty of the common people and prevented them from attending to their regular occupations. Land went out of cultivation, revenue declined and emigration was encouraged as a result (Regmi, 1971: 123). The energies of the government were concentrated primarily on the collection of revenue to finance its growing military and administrative expenditure. Concern for the well-being of the people seldom found it a reflection through the disbursement of public fund (Regmi, 1971:14).

The manpower drain during the World War I when 200,000 Nepalese representing 20 percent of the eligible male population of
Nepal actively took part in the war (Bishop, 1952:101) led to the deterioration of agriculture and food supply in the hills as well as loss of government revenue from land (Bruce, 1928:xxvii). Of the 10,932 Gurkhas discharged after the War, only 3,838 returned home in 1919 (Mojumdar, 1971:198). A large number of Gurkhas having been to India as also having seen a great deal of foreign countries, were loath to go back to their hard-working life in the mountains, because they easily got employment in India to work either as watchmen or even in the police under the government or in many other positions available to them (Bruce, 1934:267). The realisation after the War of the need for redistributing the population of the hills in the forested areas of the Tarai through reclamation to solve the growing population of the hills and to control the emigration of surplus landless manpower to India (Collier, 1928:II:251) and the first attempt to reclaim the Tarai districts of Morang, Mahottari, Sarlahi, Chitawan, Surkhet, Kailali and Kanchanpur (Landon:1928:II:201) could not attract hill people because of the problem of ecological adaptation of the hill people in the hot, humid and malarial Tarai. It rather benefitted the forest contractors to procure the cheap sal tree (*shorea robusta*) for sleepers for the expansion of India railways and at the same time immigration of Indians from densely populated districts of the Indian states of Bengal, Bihar and United Province took place.

Prior to the introduction of democracy in 1951, a clear-cut and effective policy on population redistribution within the country
was lacking (Kansakar, 1980:7). The major concern of the government in land development in the Tarai and the Inner Tarai was primarily governed by its importance as a major source of revenue rather than alleviating the population problems of the hills. In the absence of employment opportunities outside agricultural sector in the country, overwhelming majority of migrants were destined to India and India became a safety valve for Nepal's ever increasing surplus manpower (Kansakar, 1978:56). Moreover, the existence of open border between Nepal and India, encouraged migration of Nepalese to India and Indians to Nepal.

Land Settlement Policies After 1951

After the introduction of democracy in 1951, the new government's increasing realisation of the need for people oriented development strategies as against ruling-class-oriented strategies of the oligarchic Rana regime was reflected in two strategies in dealing with the population problems of the country. One is the redistribution of population in the new frontier areas particularly to the forested areas of the Tarai and the Inner Tarai, and the other is the change in the land tenure system to accommodate surplus agricultural labour force within the existing land. However, the land reform upto 1959 had only modelled the land tenure system of the country to widen the land tax base of the country rather than to benefit the peasants and the landless labour (Regmi, 1976:45).
Planned Land Settlement Programme

In order to rehabilitate the monsoon flood victims of 1954, the Rapti Valley Development Programme which was launched in the Chitawan district in 1956 with the aim of relieving the pressure of population in some areas, rehabilitating the landless peasants and solving partially the food problem of the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal Government, 1956:70-71), could, however, be materialised only after the eradication (control) of malaria in 1958. Malaria eradication in the Rapti Valley marked the large scale migration of hill population and the growth of population in Chitawan between 1954-1961 was recorded 6.34 per annum (Kansakar, 1974:98). The large influx of migrant against the land set aside for resettlement led to illegal encroachments in the reserved and protected forests. As the resource base of the government was very weak to fulfil the aspiration of the people and to meet the expenditures of the state, reclamation of the frontier areas like Rapti Valley Development Project was the only immediate solution available to increase the revenue of the government. However, the project was characterised by malfeasance in the distribution of land, absence of records regarding the amount of land distributed as well as the number of persons, and the result was the cropping up of several cases of land disputes regarding ownership. In fact, the Rapti Valley Development Project heralded the large scale spontaneous migration into the Tarai and the Inner Tarai. By the time the Tarai became opened up for the hill people after the eradication of
malaria, a large part of the most fertile parts of the Tarai had already been owned, cultivated and tilled by the people of Indian origin in particular and also by the malaria immune indigenous ethnic groups. For the migrants from the hills the only alternative available was to encroach upon the government forest lands. As a result of internal migration and immigration, the Tarai districts recorded very high growth rate of population. 17 percent of the total population of the Tarai according to 1981 census was born outside the Tarai.

The Land Reform of 1964 which was introduced with a view to ensuring equitable distribution of cultivated land through a provision which seeks to impose ceiling on landownership, acquire land in excess of the ceiling and allot such land to landless and others failed to bring about a change in the agrarian structure of the country. As the land reform was implemented in the absence of records regarding land and its various aspects, and as the land reform was enforced throughout the country in stages, there was a large scale practice of anticipatory measures by the landlords, like redistribution of excess land above the ceiling among their families and relatives, and registering themselves as cultivators by evicting tenants. The government could redeem only 50,000 hectares which was insufficient to solve the problem of the landless peasants. Since the prescribed ceiling neither effected the holding system nor the size of the holdings, the reform gave rise to the tendency to resume lands by the landowners for personal
cultivation and resulted in the progressive displacement of small farmers. The lack of effective implementation of legal provisions aimed at protecting tenancy rights, the displacement of small farmers gave rise to increasing numbers of landless peasants in Nepal.

**Institutional Arrangement for Land Settlement in Nepal**

Realising the alarming devastation of forest resources and failure of the Rapti Valley Development Project, the government felt the need of creating an autonomous body under the government to run the rehabilitation programme as a joint stock company (National Planning Council, 1965:229), and accordingly Nepal Punarvas Company (Nepal Resettlement Company) was established in 1964 and the first resettlement project was launched in Nawalpur to the immediate west of Chitawan. The main objective of the programme was to resettle landless peasants as well as peasant with inadequate land in new areas, and to provide them with necessary means of livelihood (Kadem, 1963:3). It also realised the need for expanding the programme to resettle the domiciled Nepalese returning from India (North-Eastern India) and Burma, from the former as a result of hostility with the local population (increasing sentiments of the concept of the sons of the soil) and from the latter as a result of the enactment of Burmese Citizenship Act in 1964.
The provision for making land available at nominal price and also the provision for social and economic services like health post, school, drinking water, roads, agricultural extension services, postal unit, police post, cooperative services and credit facilities all within project area became an important allurement for the hill people to possess a plot of land in the resettlement project (Kansakar, 1979:283). However, the project could not keep pace with the demand for land through forest clearing. Moreover, those who could not get land under the project encroached upon the forests areas of the project and elsewhere in the Tarai and the Inner Tarai, and the one-man commissions of the concerned conservators of forest had to be constituted to organise and resettle the encroachers in the area of encroachment or elsewhere.

Resettlement Department and Spontaneous Migration

In order to control forest encroachment and to prevent it in future, the government initiated the task of collecting an inventory of the forest encroachers to resettle them permanently in the places of encroachment, if the encroachment was made in uneconomic forests, or elsewhere if the encroachment was made on economic or reserved or protected forests. In the meantime in the beginning of 1969, the government established the Resettlement Department with an objective to organise resettlement programme on national scale, and the Nepal Resettlement Company was put under it. The Resettlement Department which was attached to the Ministry
of Food and Agriculture in the beginning, was since 1977 been attached to the Ministry of Forestry. The Department had to get itself involved in the resettlement of the forest encroachers and at the same time also in small resettlement projects which were of political character than socio-economic one, because most of the resettlers in the Department run projects were political sufferers, Tibetan refugees, families removed from the newly established national parks, and so on. Despite the existence of the Department and the Company to run land settlement several agencies were also involved in settlement projects of their own with different objectives to appease certain sections of vested interest groups representing supporters and followers of the government as well as those groups which were opposed and vulnerable to the established political system, such ex-armymen and political workers without considering their economic status. Such a grant not only deprived the genuine landless farmers the opportunity to be resettled in the resettlement projects, but also went against the principle of land to the tillers as envisaged in Land Reform Programme. The emergence of the Resettlement Department as the sole authority in land resettlement after the formulation of plan and programme relating to resettlement and control of unauthorised settlements (Resettlement Department, 1973), however, could not solve the problem of forest encroachment in the country. It was revealed that despite formal distribution of 77,700 hectares of land for resettlement in the period between 1964-74, an additional 237,600 hectares of forests were encroached in the same period (National Planning Commission, 1975:51).
Causes of Spontaneous Migration in the Rural Areas of Nepal

As noted elsewhere, the major cause of spontaneous migration in the forest areas of the Tarai is the overwhelming dependency of the country in the agriculture sector. Agriculture remains to be the major source of employment for the overwhelming proportion of the country's manpower. The industrial composition of economically active population in agriculture was 93.2 percent of the total population in 1961 and it has come to 90.2 percent in 1981 as revealed by the censuses, and it indicates Nepal's, inability to develop non-agricultural sectors so as to absorb a surplus labour force from the rural agricultural economy (Kansakar, 1984:62-3). Thus in the absence of employment and investment opportunity outside the agricultural sector, land has emerged as a stable source of income and the most desirable and profitable form of property (Kansakar, 1979:54). The basic reason behind the migration of hill population to the Tarai has been the availability of land in abundance as the major pull factor in relation to push factors of the hills like population pressure, insufficient landholding, shortage of foodgrains, environmental stress, low productivity, transportation bottlenecks and so on (New Era, 1981:94-100). The attraction of the Tarai is associated with high fertility of soil, coupled with relatively easier provision for irrigation and the accessibility of the Tarai region and its direct link with the network of India's roads and railways provide an easy access to agricultural inputs and marketing facilities for the
surplus agricultural products as well as an easy access to other commodities and socio-economic services in India.

The large scale emigration of the dynamic and enterprising youth from the hills gave a death-blow to the artisan skills inherent among the different ethnic groups of the hill. The lack of skill outside agriculture among the hill people made them dependent on agriculture and even with increasing migration and remittances from foreign countries their sole concern was for possessing agricultural land in the Tarai. The hill migrants to the Tarai could not derive benefit from the industrial and commercial development of the Tarai owing to the lack of non-agricultural skills in them. Because of the open and unrestricted border between Nepal and India, any attempt of the Nepal government for the development of the Tarai to provide employment opportunities to its citizens has in reality benefitted the Indian immigrants who by virtue of their relatively higher level of skill, capital, entrepreneurship and adaptability, have dominated the employment and investment opportunities in the Tarai. Therefore, the only alternative available to the hill migrants in the Tarai is to encroach upon the government forest.

The failure of the government sponsored land settlement projects to accommodate the landless target group in the absence of well established selection criteria; lengthy administrative and bureaucratic hurdles deprived the landless the opportunity of
possessing land in the Tarai. The easy way of getting land was through encroachment upon the government forests.

One of the major causes for encouraging the spontaneous migrants to encroach upon government forests is the lack of well defined government policy against the forest encroachers. In all the cases of encroachment, the government has either regularised their settlement in the areas of encroachment or settled them elsewhere. This has created belief among the people that once they set on encroaching upon government forests, their settlement will be ensured ultimately either in the place of encroachment or elsewhere.

Consequences of the spontaneous Migration in the Rural Areas of Nepal

One of the important consequences of spontaneous migration from hill to the Tarai region of Nepal is the drastic redistribution of population in Nepal. The share of the Tarai in the total population of Nepal has increased from 30.7 percent in 1952/54 to 43.7 percent in 1981. If the migration trend is to continue, the Tarai which occupies less than one-fourth of the land area of Nepal will have overwhelming proportion of population living in the Tarai (Kansakar, 1983:25). This will ultimately lead to more investment by the government in the Tarai. Considering the concentration of transport facilities (three-fourths of the permanent airports and more than 70 percent of the roads) in the Tarai and the ease of movement coupled with the large size of the settlements
at close quarters as against small and dispersed settlements far apart in the hills, the government's priority area in investment will be the Tarai region, because any programme in the Tarai will have large population coverage and the cost of delivery will be low as compared to the hill region which lacks transport infrastructures and is characterised by uneven and scattered distribution of population (Kansakar, 1981:259). Moreover, the out-migration of predominantly male and dynamic age groups, has led to the depletion of this group in the hill and its adverse impact on development and encouraging further migration from hills.

Spontaneous migration and government sponsored migration have helped the country in the redistribution of population and easing of the population pressure in the hills. However, the cost benefit of the government sponsored settlement projects and that of the spontaneous settlements in terms of forest destruction have yet to be assessed.

Spontaneous migrants have become the tools for the unscrupulous individuals to achieve their economic ends or political ends. They usually exploit the encroachers by taking money with the assurance of their settlement being regularised by the government. In most of the cases they are usually deceived by such individuals. The entry of politicians in the encroached areas usually poses problems for the local administration in dealing with the encroachers. By assuring the encroachers to regularise their
settlement, the encroachers become the solid votes for the politicians in winning local elections.

Spontaneous migration to the Tarai regions of Nepal has led to tension and conflicts between the migrants and the local population, the inevitable phenomenon everywhere in the world, but in course of time the important process of gradual assimilation and national integration in a country with diversity in ethnic character and religious faiths will set in.

The concentration of overwhelming proportion of population in a small area like the Tarai with easy accessibility and that too enterprising and aspiring population will pose a serious problem if employment avenues are not made available to them. Moreover, if magnitude of immigration continue they will not be able to compete with the relatively high skilled immigrants from across the border. As attempts at generating more employment in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and at controlling immigration are not made, the Tarai will emerge as an area of political discontent on economic grounds as well as an area of conflict and tension between local and immigrant population. The trouble starts when immigrants try to interfere with the employment of the native population. The basic reason behind the immigration of the Indians into Nepal Tarai is the very high density of population in the Indian districts adjoining Tarai, which faces the most populous states of India like West Bengal,
Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and the districts of these state adjoining the Nepal Tarai are three or four times more than those of the Tarai.

Adaptation and Accommodation of Migrants in the Tarai

Considerable differences exist between the government sponsored settlers and the spontaneous settlers. The government sponsored settlers are settled in the already cleared forest plots readily available for cultivation and moreover, they are provided with timber to construct their houses. From the period of their settlement in the resettlement project areas, they are provided with free rationing under World Food Programme for the families until the new crop is harvested and provision for food rationing continues for nine months and even more. The provision for food ration with free of cost has resulted in the complete absence of voluntary labour among the resettlers even for their common benefits and the resettlement project has to provide food distribution even for the activities entailing welfare of the settlers in general. On the other hand, the spontaneous settlers have to stand on their own legs. They have to work hard to clear forest for cultivation and until the first crop is harvested they have to maintain with they had brought from their place of origin as well as by keeping themselves engaged in whatever work they find in the adjoining settlements. The collective spirit of the spontaneous settlers in activities of common benefits such as road construction, canal
construction and school for their children have made them self-reliant. In the matter of cultivation the government settlers are provided with seeds, fertilisers, implements and other credit facilities. They have to pay the nominal price of the land on installment within ten years. Their dependency on resettlement agency puts them in an awkward position when they get insufficient amount of credits and other inputs and their non-availability in time. In contrast to the government sponsored settlers, the spontaneous settlers are compelled to be self-reliant and have to find their own way to meet their requirement usually individually or collectively.

As regards the location of the settlement of the government sponsored settlers, the government which decides their location. The land available for such sand settlements are those which have been rejected by the local or the indigenous people as unsuitable for cultivation because of their location on higher ground with no possibility of irrigation and moreover, they are usually located considerably far away from major towns and villages without any linkage by modern means of transport and cart roads. Usually cultivation of one crop during the summer monsoon is possible and during that period the settlement areas are usually cut off from the outside world due to floods. On the other hand, the spontaneous settlers had the opportunity of choosing the best fertile land ensuring cultivation throughout the year. Moreover, with the construction of the East-West Highways (Mahendra Rajmarg), the
spontaneous migrants started encroaching upon the forests along the highways to get benefit from the transport access. Their advantageous location along the highways provided them with an easy access to markets as well as to the off-farm employment opportunity elsewhere along the highways, towns and villages. Because of the remote location, off-farm employment for the government sponsored settlers are usually non-existent.

The concept of land size to the resettlers in the government sponsored settlers has come down from 4 bighas (2.7 hectares) in the beginning to as low as 1 bigha (.67 hectare) in 1978 with the growing scarcity of land available for land settlement. On the other hand, the spontaneous migrants who encroached upon the government forest, in the course of regularising their settlement by the government, were allotted 1.5 bighas (about 1 hectare) of land only and in some cases less than 0.1 hectares. Those who had encroached along the highways have been provided with .025 hectare only for housing plot and a small kitchen garden. However, due to their advantageous location along the highways they have been able to maintain themselves by vegetable farming, or poultry farming or rearing milch cattle usually water buffalo along with the production of handicrafts and also by working as skilled and unskilled labour in and around and along the highways. Land settlement by the Resettlement Department and the Nepal Resettlement Company has been completely stopped by the Government since 1978. However, the government had to resettle the victims of the 1983
heavy downpour along the highway in Nawalparasi district and the settlers were provided with 0.25 hectare of housing plots. Moreover, they were provided with a soft loan to embark on the economic activities of their choice like carpentry, rearing buffaloes, poultry farming and so on, and have been able earn their livelihood from these activities as well as from the other employment opportunities available in the settlements along the highways.

The heterogeneity of the government sponsored settlers in terms of both ethnicity and place of origin made it difficult for them to have unity in approach in solving problems due to the socio-cultural differences and rivalry for leadership. In complete contrast to the government sponsored settlers, the spontaneous settlers are either all of homogeneous ethnicity or hailing from the same place of origin. As they are being led by a leader, they have unity in approach in solving problems.

The autonomous character of the government sponsored settlements ended with the second constitutional amendment, when they were incorporated under a village panchayat (the politico-administrative unit at local level) and the village panchayats were delegated with lot of authority on matters relating to local development and local administration. The conflict of interest between the village panchayat and that of the resettlement project authorities constrained the smooth running of the project.
activities. On the other hand, the incorporation of spontaneous settlements under the panchayat put the former in an advantageous position, because their needs and aspirations were being looked after by the panchayats.

Present Scenario of the Land Settlement
Both Planned and Spontaneous

The nation-wide political disturbances in April 1979 which resulted in the proclamation of referendum by King Birendra on 24 May 1979 regarding the choice between the existing partyless panchayat system and multi-party political system in the country was accompanied by alarming devastation of the forest wealth of the Tarai for cultivation, threatening not only the complete destruction of the forest wealth of the country but also the ecosystem of the Tarai and the country as a whole. The encroachment extended to the land set aside for government sponsored settlement projects, tea plantation, different development projects and so on. It is said that the panchayat political leaders and workers encouraged the forest encroachment in order to win the favour of the people in the referendum for panchayat system as well as to mobilise resource by selling timber for campaigning for panchayat system. The aggravation of forest encroachment in the and eastern Tarai/the commission constituted to look into those matters had to work without any records and relevant documents, and the result was that unscrupulous individuals got even graveyards, cremation grounds, common pastures and public places registered in their names.
In June 1982, the National Planning Commission constituted a task force on resettlement to suggest: (1) the ways and means of continuing resettlement programme against the background of the increasing pressure of population, high man land ratio and absence of developing non-agriculture sector in the hills, (2) necessary change to be made in the existing resettlement programme its organisational structure and working procedures in the light of the government's abandoning its resettlement programme by clearing forests, and (3) critical opinion on attempt at hill resettlement. (Report of the Task Force on Resettlement, 1982:1). As the government was overwhelmed with the forest encroachment problem it could not give serious thought to the task force report.

In the beginning of 1982, the government constituted High Power Committees on Consolidation of the Forest Area for six areas of the Tarai under the Chairmanship of retired judges.

The forest areas consolidation committee came across 93,690 families of spontaneous migrants encroaching upon the forest, who were needed to be settled. Of the total families, 70,725 families (75.2 percent) had to settled and regularised in the place of encroachment, 21,725 families (23.2 percent) had to be evacuated and resettled elsewhere, 1,129 families (1.3 percent) had to be given land in other place in exchange and the rest 500 families (0.3 percent) were of the special case. Out of the total
recorded number of encroachers, the committees could redeem 48,567 hectares of land for settlement, of which 8,740 (17.8 percent) from the forest and 40,227 (82.2 percent) from current fallows and reclaimed river banks after the construction of dams and embankments. Additional 4,286 hectares of land were required to settle all the encroacher families and that additional land had to be acquired from the forest. However, the committees could proceed on with their activities very slowly and they could distribute only 9,477 hectares of land which amounted to 19.4 percent of the total land at their disposal and 17.8 percent of the total required land. The difference between the percentage of families settled and the percentage of land distributed is basically due to the difference in the distribution of land per family by the different committees. The committees were instructed to control forest encroachment and settle the encroachers. They were not given any hints about the amount of land to be given to a family. Therefore, the individual committees went their own way in allotting land size to the encroacher families.

The committees were to complete their work by July 1986. However, the committees were dissolved dismissed in March 1985 with an enormous amount of task still left undone. As the next general election is near at hand and the issues of spontaneous migration and their encroachment may flare up distributions and may obstruct the general election, the government has constituted the forest area consolidation committees under the Resettlement
Department in October 1985. The newly constituted committees have not been delegated with the power accorded to the committees headed by the retired judges. The newly constituted committees have, however, been assigned for particular district only. All the chairmen of the committees belong to administrative service. As the newly constituted committees have been formed for crash programme the encroachment problem may again flare up in the country.

Conclusion

The large scale migration into the Tarai for owning agricultural land has resulted in the reckless destruction of the valuable forest wealth of the Tarai. The extent of the deforestation during the half century (1927-77) was to the extent of nearly sixty percent. The increase of population during the same period was over 163 percent in the Tarai region (New Era, 1981:11). Owing to the lack of industrial development and of employment and investment opportunities in non-agricultural sectors, the craze for owning a piece of land is ever-increasing and the general impoverished nature of the hill population has been the major factor behind illegal encroachment upon the Tarai forests with the involvement of one's own labour rather than any monetary investment (Kansakar, 1983:32). Forest encroachment in the Tarai has reached such a magnitude that forest coverage in the Tarai has gone down to 19 percent of the land area in the Tarai as against the minimum requirement of 33 percent to maintain ecological
balance (UNFPA, 1980:3). The environmental stress that has resulted from the destruction of forests not only affected agriculture but also the supply of timber, fuelwood and forage. Therefore, the prospects for agricultural land settlement in the Terai is virtually bleak.

Owing to the inelastic nature of the land, accommodation of increasing population in agriculture can not be a long range prospect. Realizing this basic fact, the government constituted a task force on resettlement for the Seventh Plan (1985-90) to find ways and means of non-agricultural land settlement to solve the problems of the landless and also to provide employment to the increasing manpower in the country. The task force came out with plan and programme for the Seventh Plan with a long range perspective for the future. It emphasised the need for bringing awareness among the population about the importance of the forest resources to prevent forest encroachment in the future and for it the need for political will and commitment has been highlighted. The task force report emphasised the need of bringing about change in the existing policy and it proposed the new policies on land settlement. It emphasised the need of providing shelter and training in occupational skills to those families who have been forced to migrate as a result of natural disaster, and non-availability of employment opportunity, so that they can utilise the inherent skills and earn their livelihood in the new area. The new areas proposed for settlement has been
conceived as a rural industrial enclave located in most potential and accessible location providing both production as well as training facilities for the settlers. On the basis of geographical location and potentialities, the task force also emphasised the need for strengthening the agriculture sector by providing irrigation and other agricultural inputs along with agricultural related activities like livestock farming, horticulture, cash crops farming, etc. (Report of the Task Force, 1984).

The new approach towards land settlement is an attempt at transforming country's predominantly agricultural economy to non-agricultural economy with moderate investment. It will certainly contribute to the nation's attempt at industrialisation. Moreover, it will also pave the way for gradual replacement of immigrant labour in the country, because the settlers will be provided with different skills according to the need and requirement of the country. As the new approach has not yet taken concrete shape its implementation is a far off thing. Nonetheless, the emphasis towards the development of non-agricultural sector is a welcome approach.
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