

SDC'S PROGRAMME IN BANGLADESH*Continued from Page 9*

Achieved Results/Outlook: No progress so far in this field unless the adequate institutional support is available.

C) Rural Infrastructure

RDP-6: INFRASTRUCTURE OLD DHAKA DISTRICT 'MANIKGANJ DISTRICT' (RDPIM)

General Objectives: With the construction of durable all-weather feeder roads, the project establishes links between seven upgraded growth centres in the rural areas and upazila headquarters. Thereby, the flow of production inputs, goods and services in and out of the growth centres is facilitated which ultimately boost agricultural production.

Responsible Institutions: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives, SDC.

Location: Manikganj District.

Duration: 1989/90 to 1992/93.

Financement: GOB Tk 46.6 mio, SDC Tk 171.4 mio.

Achieved Results/Outlook: To improve and develop seven growth centres and construct about 60 km of feeder roads; to develop a rural road maintenance policy to guarantee the maintenance of the built roads on a long-term basis. The success of this objective will be crucial for the extension of the Project.

RDP-7: RURAL ROADS AND MARKET IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROJECT (RRMIMP)

General Objectives: To promote rural development through the reconstruction, upgrading and maintenance of feeder roads and markets; to implement cost effective and institutionalized maintenance strategies and policies.

Responsible Institutions: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives; World Bank, KIW, SDC.

Location: Old Bogra, Pabna, Rajshahi District.

Duration: 1988 to 1995.

Financement: GOB US \$ 10 mio, Upazilas US \$ 3.2 mio, WB US \$ 62.3, KIW US \$ 14.2, SDC US \$ 9.1 mio.

Achieved Results/Outlook: To improve and develop 65 growth centres and construct about 500 km of feeder roads; to develop a rural road maintenance policy to guarantee the maintenance of the built roads on a long-term basis.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION (SEME)

General Objectives: To develop a socio-economic monitoring and evaluation system for the above mentioned rural infrastructure projects (RDPIM and RRMIMP).

Responsible Institutions: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives; World Bank, KIW, SDC.

Location: Manikganj, Old Bogra, Pabna, Rajshahi District.

Duration: 1989 to 1995.

Financement: SDC Sfr. 1.6 mio.

Achieved Results/Outlook: The SEME will contribute to both the improvement of the monitoring and evaluation of the projects by including the software aspects and to the restructuring of the national maintenance policies for rural roads and growth centres, provided that the GOB (LGD/LGEB) will accept its institutional integration.

D) Health and Education

ICDDR,B - INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR DIARRHOEAL DISEASE RESEARCH, BANGLADESH

General Objectives: To undertake and promote studies, research and dissemination of knowledge of diarrhoeal diseases and directly related subjects of nutrition and fertility.

Responsible Institutions: International Organisation, co-operates with WHO, National Research Institutes and Ministry of Health.

Location: Dhaka, Matlab.

Duration: Since 1980.

Financement: SDC Sfr. 3.8 mio (25% of total budget).

Achieved Results/Outlook: Internationally recognized results for

low cost treatment of diarrhoea.

CHILD SURVIVAL PROGRAMME (BRAC)

General Objectives: Supplement the government health care to reduce maternal, infant and child mortality with two major projects: Oral Therapy, Immunization and Vitamin A, and Primary Health Care.

Responsible Institutions: Ministry of Health & Family Planning, BRAC.

Location: Rajshahi, Khulna, Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions.

Duration: Since 1986; 1988-1990.

Financement: SDC Tk 61.7 mio (Total Tk 185.2 mio).

Achieved Results/Outlook: Capability of the rural people to manage their own health care improved; by mid '90 taught 13 million household the preparation of ORS. Successor project Women Health and Development Programme submitted for funding.

RURAL FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE PROJECT

General Objectives: To improve the socio-economic conditions of poor rural

families through different components in the socio-economic and health sector.

Responsible Institutions: Department of Social Welfare, Enfants du Monde (EDM).

Location: 46 upazilas in the whole country.

Duration: Since 1972; 1990-1992.

Financement: SDC Sfr 4.5 mio.

Achieved Results/Outlook: Good response in all components; approved by GOB to extend cooperation and expand to another 276 villages in 46 upazilas.

UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN'S EDUCATION PROGRAMMES (UCEP)

General Objectives: To offer specially designed educational and vocational training programmes for urban working children.

Responsible Institutions: UCEP, SDC.

Location: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna.

Duration: Since 80's; 1990-1994.

Financement: SDC Sfr 3.8 mio, DANIDA, NORAD, SKIP, EDM, ODA SDC(UK).

Achieved Results/Outlook: Succeeded in extending education to street children and giving professional skills for self employment.

Direct Democracy*Continued from Page 10*

of the public with an opportunity to influence political decision-making at the highest level. Introduced in 1891, this right is especially appreciated by the various groups and organisations belonging to the traditional political scene. However it is limited to modifications in the federal constitution. The actual laws of the confederation can be challenged through a different kind of initiative, the optional referendum: when 50,000 Swiss citizens demand that a law approved by parliament be submitted to a nationwide vote. The very possibility of such a vote can have a restraining influence on the legislative process.

All constitutional changes approved by parliament are automatically submitted to the electorate. This is the fixed procedure for a compulsory referendum.

The People as the Opposition

The compulsory referendum, the optional referendum (also called a legislative referendum) and the people's initiative (also referred to as a constitutional initiative) are the main elements of what is known as "direct democracy". The cantons and communes are also subject to these

democratic instruments, sometimes in more far-reaching ways. For example, there is no federal equivalent of the financial referendum, in which all decisions relating to public expenditure above a certain amount must be put to the electorate.

Many decisions by government and parliament are not final, and have to be ratified by the people.

Switzerland's four main parties have shared governmental power since 1959, and in a way, the people have assumed the role of an opposition. They can influence matters thanks to the system of direct democracy.

But there is a question mark over the future of these deep-rooted rights in the political system of Switzerland.

Is Switzerland a Model Democracy?

There is no doubt that the Swiss public's right of participation in running the country's affairs is highly-developed. But it would be wrong to think that Swiss democracy is perfect. One of Switzerland's leading political scientists, Professor Wolf Linder, has even queried whether "the instruments of direct democracy (referendum and initiative) give the people more influence than they would have under a system of adversarial politics, with

power alternating between a majority and the opposition.

"(Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 13.2.90) A great many people do not bother to vote, which casts doubt on the true effectiveness of the exercise. Since the end of the Second World War, voter participation has been falling steadily, and the current average is below 40 per cent. The reasons for this abstentionism are many... general disinterest, hostility to the whole idea, bewilderment at the complexity of the issue involved, and apathy caused by being required to vote so often.

Another problem is that financial resources have become an important factor in some of the votes. A small committee with limited funds can find itself at a disadvantage when campaigning for an initiative if millions of francs are being spent on opposing it by, for example, an organisation representing major business or industrial interests. The opinion-makers manage to make ordinary people believe that a tax on huge amounts of money will also apply to them, and that banking secrecy is to the advantage of everyone," says the legal specialist and liberal, Jean-Francois Aubert. Other politically-minded observers have used the words "bought citizens". They speak of a democracy in which there is a conflict between free speech and the economic power of special interest groups.

SDA/Swiss News Agency

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