Attempt any One of the following:

1. What do you mean by planning? Discuss important planning methodologies for rural development.

Ans: Planning is the process of thinking about the activities required to achieve a desired goal. It is the first and foremost activity to achieve desired results. It involves the creation and maintenance of a plan, such as psychological aspects that require conceptual skills. There are even a couple of tests to measure someone’s capability of planning well. As such, planning is a fundamental property of intelligent behavior. An important further meaning, often just called "planning" is the legal context of permitted building developments.

Also, planning has a specific process and is necessary for multiple occupations (particularly in fields such as management, business, etc.). In each field there are different types of plans that help companies achieve efficiency and effectiveness. An important, albeit often ignored aspect of planning, is the relationship it holds to forecasting. Forecasting can be described as predicting what the future will look like, whereas planning predicts what the future should look like for multiple scenarios. Planning combines forecasting with preparation of scenarios and how to react to them. Planning is one of the most important project management and time management techniques. Planning is preparing a sequence of action steps to achieve some specific goal. If a person does it effectively, they can reduce much the necessary time and effort of achieving the goal. A plan is like a map. When following a plan, a person can see how much they have progressed towards their project goal and how far they are from their destination.

Among the priorities listed in the Third Plan, it was generally recognized that agriculture had the first place. Thus, in its initial formulation at least, the Third Plan differed from the Second Plan. It is generally recognized that there was a general de-emphasis of agriculture in the Second Plan. The Third Plan attempted to reverse this. Indian planning suffered two major shocks caused by exogenous factors in the 1960s. The first came in the shape of the war with China in 1962 and the second in the form of successive harvest failures in 1965 and 1967. The first shock caused a sharp increase in India’s defence outlays and a severe curtailment in public investment of the government. Consequently, the capital goods sector was badly hit. The crises on the food front was met with wheat import from the USA. This situation, for the first time, seriously exposed India’s dependence on international aid. However, Indian planners woke up to the need to build food self-sufficiency as a result of these crises. The response of the government to the crises came in the shape of the abandonment of the Five Year Plans. As a result, the period between 1966 and 1969 – the Annual Plans Phase – is often labelled as the ‘Plan Holiday’ period. The Annual Plans were notable for the formulation of a clear-cut strategy of agricultural development. This strategy carried over into the Fourth Plan and was notable for its shift in perception of the binding constraints on Indian agriculture. It had hitherto been maintained that a conservative rural social and economic structure, coupled with inefficient agricultural practices, acted as major constraints on the agricultural sector. Further, land reform had largely been avoided; in practice, however, their need was felt as vital. On the other hand, the new strategy made a perceptible shift from this perception of the problem of the agricultural sector. Instead, technological modernization was felt to be the main problem. In other words, it called for a strategy that would make it possible to “bet on the strong”.

Planning and Agricultural Transformation

The new strategy came to be implemented during the course of the Fourth Plan and was more popularly known as the “Green Revolution” in agriculture. Even as the “Green Revolution” in agriculture was ushered, it was realized that “distributive justice” still remained a distant dream. Thus arrived the popular slogan of Garibi Hatao (Remove Poverty) and with it came the emphasis on poverty alleviation as a distinct planning objective in its own right. In fact, a document prepared by the Planning Commission, though never officially published, for the first time put the problem of poverty eradication in the forefront of political and public discussion. The Approach Paper to the Fifth Plan followed the recommendation of Working Group in its definition of poverty in terms of nutritional inadequacy and ventured to put the explicit redistribution of incomes towards the lowest three deciles as an objective in itself. Thus, the basic approach of the Fifth Plan was growth with redistribution. However, on account of the serious harvest failure of 1972-73 and the oil crises of 1973, inflationary pressure forced Indian planners to seriously curtail the ambitious programmes they had envisaged. Public investment continued to be under strain and, as a result, many of the programmes had to be postponed to the next Five Year Plan. The 1970s are significant because of the Minimum Needs Programme, IRDP, Rural Employment Programmes and some area development programmes about which you have read in the previous courses.

Poverty Alleviation and Indian Planning

The Sixth Plan, (1980-85) again undertook eradication of poverty as its primary aim. Consequently, the programmes to eradicate poverty – NREP, RLEG P (later merged into Jawahar Rozgar Yojana), TRYSEM, DWCRA Integrated Rural Development Programme – were strongly emphasized. The IRDP, coupled with rural employment programmes, the Minimum Needs Programme and the area development programmes, meant that the Sixth Plan had a strong emphasis on the rural sector. Poverty alleviation continued to be a central concern in the Seventh Plan. Growth of employment opportunities, human resource and infrastructure development, removal of inequalities, an expanded system of food security, increase in productivity in agriculture and industry, participation of people in development and substantial improvement in agricultural and rural development administration, were identified as priority areas. In the course of the Seventh Plan, the emphasis had shifted towards the concept of modernization again – this time in industry. With this came the relative de-emphasis on the public sector as an engine of growth. Modernization and diversification of industry, adoption of new technology, a generally satisfactory level of industrial performance (more so in some sectors), broad based entrepreneurship development and growth of new industries like petro-chemicals have also been considered as positive developments.

2. Discuss in detail the planning process at the block level.