

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KOREA*

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Abstract

Rural development involves a system-wide change in rural communities which naturally requires a strong commitment by government to rural development on the one hand and the positive participation of rural people in the planning and implementation of rural projects on the other. This paper considers government commitment as especially crucial to the process of project implementation. This includes the activation of local government machinery, the execution of government tasks in support of rural projects and the monitoring of project performance.

This case study analyses the critical role of political leadership in stimulating farmers, village leaders and government officials at the local level. It also demonstrates that personal concern and the human aspect of the political system made the political system quite effective and functional in allocating resources, and facilitating institutional/legal rearrangement in favor of rural development in Korea.

This case study also analyzes the specific measures and steps taken by the government as part of its political commitment. These include organizational and institutional reforms, reorientation of the local government system to integrated rural development, financial and budgetary commitment, extensive training of personnel outside and inside the government, suitable strategies in support of village enlightenment activities, and supporting policies and programs such as the high rice price policy and the agricultural research and development program.

It should be borne in mind, however, that this study is concerned only with government commitment, which could not be effective without the positive response of the people, that is, without the people's active participation in self-help development projects at the grass-root level.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent of government commitment to rural development and to review mechanisms and dynamics

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of government commitment to the promotion of rural development in Korea.

Rural development is viewed as a complex process of changes in rural sub-systems and their interaction, leading to desired improvements in rural incomes, employment opportunities, income distribution, welfare, and other aspects of rural life. The list of rural development projects and activities in Korea tends to be similar to that in other developing countries in Asia. They include, for example, the development of high-yielding varieties, irrigation projects, soil improvement, social and physical infrastructures and agro-based industries.

Rural development projects in Korea have been organized as an integral part of the Saemaul Undong (SMU). Launched in 1970, the SMU or new community movement is organized around three main activities:

- (a) Spiritual enlightenment of rural people to boost self-reliance, diligence and cooperation;
- (b) Through intensive training, the fostering of village leaders as development agents in the rural sector; and
- (c) A variety of investment projects for improving physical and social infrastructures in rural areas.

The Korean model of rural development was experimental in its nature because it was not based on academic research or theoretical references. The strategies and program contents of Saemaul Undong have been adopted to meet the Korean society and culture through the process of trial and error. Saemaul Undong was initiated and advocated by the late President Park on the basis of his own personal zeal for rural modernization. In addition, people's successful self-motivated experimentation with Saemaul projects at their own risks has provided a realistic base for the nationwide advocacy of Saemaul Undong. It seems to be assumed that the basic prerequisite for the success of Saemaul Undong is positive participation and motivation of rural people. However, the implementation of SMU was fraught with many problems and required a multi-disciplinary and, in many ways, innovative approach. It required a nationwide mobilization of relevant talent and energy, efficient large-scale management, and coordination of conflicting interests and forces among various sectors and segments of the population. Deliberate government efforts were also necessary to provide required financial, technical and organizational inputs essential for the effective implementation of SMU programs. Mobilization of the skills and resources which are relevant to SMU but are scattered among specialized ministries and agencies of the government, itself calls for a major effort.

After being implemented for a decade, the conceptual framework of Saemaul Undong can be identified as having the following features (Whang 1980):

- (a) A package program of various rural development services and activities of government;
- (b) An emphasis on both horizontal and vertical integration of the interrelated functions of government;
- (c) A close working relationship between government machineries and rural people at the grass-root level with positive participation of people;
- (d) The mobilization of wider societal support for rural development including support from urban, industrial, and intellectual elites;
- (e) The utilization of all available resources and instruments in the rural sector including institutional, manpower and technical resources; and
- (f) An integrated effort for planned change in values and attitude of people, for dynamic change in rural organization and leadership, and for improvements in village economies and infrastructures.

It is in this context that Saemaul Undong is viewed as the Korean model of integrated rural development. It has often been mentioned that the Saemaul Undong of Korea is to date one of the most successful cases of integrated rural development. Saemaul Undong has made an enormous impact upon villages in Korea, at three levels:

- (a) Changes in values and perceptions of rural farmers toward developmental values;
- (b) Modes of village organization and development of community-based leadership; and
- (c) Improvements in rural infrastructures and village economies (Whang 1980, pp. 22-32).

A question then arises: how did the Korean government make those projects achieve such satisfactory results in terms of rural development? So far this question has been little discussed. In this respect, it should be borne in mind that rural development cannot take place simply by planning or the formal announcement of rural development programs and policies *without* continued support and real commitment from the government to rural development in the country (Adelman and Morris 1967, pp. 78-81). It is almost a truism to point out that the extent of commitment of the political leadership and government of a country to rural development is a significant determinant of its success in raising the standard of rural living. This is particularly true in contemporary developing countries in which socio-structural, cultural, and attitudinal barriers to rural change are sufficiently strong.

What indicators define the extent of government commitment to rural development in the Korean context? Government commitment means the public promise of government to undertake to make certain types of commitments to rural development. It includes the manifested interests

of government in rural development which lead to specific action programs for the realization and completion of their explicitly or implicitly announced promise, policies or programs. In Korea, the Saemaul Undong itself demonstrates the great concern of government as well as its commitment to rural development.

The extent of government commitment to rural development is determined by government strategies. Conceptually there are two distinctive strategies of government for rural development: maximum intervention vs. minimum intervention. Government can intervene in the process of economic (or rural) development by utilizing either of two major instruments, namely, government financing and state sovereignty (Whang 1970, pp. 174–176). The maximum intervention strategies are those in which the government directly invests available capital in rural areas through government-decided schemes of resource allocation, and also regulates important factors related to rural life by means of state authority. The minimum intervention strategies imply government promotion and inducement of desired measures and changes in rural areas indirectly through social education activities. However, the reality of government intervention in rural development is seen as a mixture of the two distinctive patterns.

This conceptual distinction makes it clear that the extent of government commitment to rural development is determined by the state authority as well as by the finance of government. As institutional setting for government power and authority are not behaviourally elaborated yet in most developing countries, the state authority tends to be exercised by the top political leadership. Therefore, in this paper, the extent of government commitment to rural development in Korea will be analyzed in terms of two major elements: (a) political leadership commitment made on the basis of state authority; and (b) finance-backed government support and assistance such as financial, material, technical, and institutional assistance.

The data for the analytic description of this case are collected through content analysis of presidential speeches, government documents, literatures on the subject matter and interviews with relevant personnel.

II. Commitment of the Political Leadership

To what extent did political leadership make a commitment to rural development in Korea? Political leadership commitment tended to be made by explicit expressions of the leadership's personal interests and concerns about rural development in formal or informal statements, by manifested action such as specific instructions regarding program design or resource allocation and field visits for identification of problem and/

or monitoring of program performance, and by exercising personal influence on the power elite in various sectors of society in favour of rural development.

Traditionally and institutionally the presidency of government is the major source of political power in the context of Korean politics during 1970's. Therefore, the commitment of the top political leadership to rural development will be analyzed in terms of the personal commitment to rural development by the late President Park who was incumbent during the period 1962-79.

1. Rural Background of the Personality

The late President Park was born and grew up in the rural sector. The ruling party¹ led by him was based on the popular vote of rural farmers, while the opposition party was based on the support of the urban sector. His personal as well as political background might motivate him to make a strong commitment to rural development. The rural poverty in Korea had been one of his major concerns during his presidency, as the poverty in rural villages had been little improved until his initiation of the Saemaul Undong. It was especially so during 1970's when the popular support for the presidency tended to be challenged and skeptical, partly because as a consequence of rigorous implementation of the First and Second Five-Year Plans rapid industrialization preceded rural development. The deteriorating rural situation widened the gap between industry and farm, and became a major cause of the rapid rural-to-urban migration. Regardless of the level of his motivation, his strong personal as well as institutional support and commitment to rural development were reflected in his inauguration of the Saemaul Song and the Saemaul Flag. The Song has been popular among various categories of people. During working hours the Saemaul Flag has been hung together with the National Flag at all kinds of office buildings throughout the country.

2. Personal Interests and Concerns

Already it has been pointed out that Saemaul Undong was personally initiated by the late President Park. The leadership commitment to rural development was also demonstrated by the contents of statements made on rural issues and by the frequency of these speeches.

The President often stressed the philosophy and importance of rural development in order to mobilize societal support and to encourage people's participation in Saemaul Undong. He did this on various occasions, for example, at the New Year Press Conference and National Conference of Saemaul Undong Leaders and at Seoul National University Graduation Ceremony. Through his speeches, he also elaborated on the

¹ It is worth noting that the symbol of Democratic Republic Party is a "bull."

standard of government support and promised specific assistance, as shown by the following statements:

"The decisive factor is how the farmers and fishermen respond, and how actively they participate in the program. The key factor is whether they are inspired by a desire to help themselves, whether they make a systematic effort to help themselves, and whether they are really fired by a productive spirit. Provided they have the confidence that they can achieve better living if only they strive hard enough, we can achieve rural modernization and upgrade the living standard of farmers and fishermen." (Congratulatory Message at the Second Special Competition of Farmers and Fishermen in Income-Boosting Skills, November 11, 1970)

"But the fundamental problem is the lack of voluntary effort on the part of the local inhabitants themselves to improve their environment and better their living standards. . . . The important factor is that there should be a sincere desire to improve things at the grassroots level. The village will be up and thriving in a span of two or three years.

Without such a spontaneous determination to improve, the village will not improve in five thousand years, but continue in the vicious circle of poverty and sloth. But if there is such a fervent desire, especially on the part of the village youth, and if only a little help is forthcoming from the government, then this village will make progress in two or three years. . . .

The basic lack is one of leadership at the village level. The local administrative officers at the village level should provide such leadership—should try to get the local leaders together, and try to enlighten them first. . . ." (Message to the Conference of Provincial Governors on Drought Counter Measures, April 22, 1970)

"The Government. . . is going to assign top priority to those areas or regions which demonstrate the strongest spirit of self-help, cooperation, participation, solidarity and simple hard work, so that these communities will grow faster than others and serve as a model for all the rest to emulate.

The basis of this movement is a spiritual awakening on the part of rural inhabitants, who will discard the mentality of abject dependence on external support. . . .

You (city mayors and county chiefs) must uphold the Saemaul spirit as the basic guideline of national development, and do your best for its universal dissemination. You must in particular seek out young and ambitious workers, and train them as potential leaders in the rural development program." (Message to Comparative Administration Conference of City Mayors and County Chiefs, September 17, 1971)

In this connection, the frequency of President's statements on rural issues seemed to be relevant to the analysis of the degree of his interests. Generally the New Year Press Conference with the President used to cover major issues reflecting his interests. During the last decade, 82 themes

TABLE 1 FREQUENCY OF STATEMENTS ON THEMES AND ISSUES RAISED IN PRESS CONFERENCES

		Unit: No. of Themes
Category of Policy Matters	No. of Themes	
A. Political & International Affairs:		
National Security	18	
South-North Talk	4	
International Relations	11	
Domestic Politics	13	
B. Economic Affairs:		
Economic Matters in General	6	
Agricultural and Rural Development	7	
Industrial, Trade, Resource	7	
C. Socio-cultural Affairs:		
Anti-corruption	5	
Education and Culture	4	
Labor & Social Welfare	4	
Conservation of Natural Environment	3	
Total	82	

Source: Content Analysis of New Year Press Conference with President, 1970-79.

and issues were raised throughout ten conferences. Table 1 indicates the distribution of themes and issues by 12 categories. It is interesting to find that beside the political and international affairs, one of the most frequently raised categories of issues and themes is rural and agricultural development. It scores the same as industrial development and trade.

The degree of the late president's personal interest is measured here in terms of the portion of total speech time spent for statements on rural development on a particular occasion, which assumes that the more interest in a particular subject, the more time spent for speech on the subject.

In this paper, the New Year Press Conference and the Budget Speech are chosen for content analysis since they are the most comprehensive of his speeches. As speech time tends to be proportional to the number of letters mobilized in the speech, the analysis is made on the basis of number of letters. According to Table 2, it is found that the interests of the President in issues and policies of rural development was high throughout the period of 1970's. On average, the President allocated about 9% of the total speech time for projection of the future image of rural society, government policies and support for rural development, farmers' role and village leadership, etc. In view of the numerous issues to be covered at both occasions, the time shared for rural issues seems to be quite substantial.

The president also expressed his great concern about rural development by personally visiting rural villages. His frequent field visits also

TABLE 2 DEGREE OF PRESIDENT'S INTERESTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Unit: No. of letters (%)

	New Year Press Conference (1)		Annual Budget Speech (2)		Both (1) + (2)	
	Total	Rural Development	Total	Rural Development	Total	Rural Development
1970	21,864	2,568(11.7)	7,848	216(2.8)	29,712	2,784(9.4)
1971	33,768	2,808(8.3)	9,192	552(6.0)	42,960	3,360(7.8)
1972	34,200	3,120(9.1)	6,192	264(4.3)	40,392	3,384(8.4)
1973	35,856	4,656(13.0)	9,864	768(7.8)	45,720	5,424(11.9)
1974	29,856	1,032(3.5)	14,784	1,296(8.8)	34,640	2,328(6.7)
1975	44,376	3,936(8.9)	11,256	840(7.5)	55,632	4,776(8.6)
1976	36,912	2,640 (7.2)	10,800	624(5.8)	47,712	3,265(6.8)
1977	28,320	2,232(7.9)	10,176	696(6.8)	38,496	2,928(7.6)
1978	31,080	4,848(15.6)	10,800	600(5.6)	41,880	5,448(13.0)
1979	38,304	4,584(12.0)	14,160	1,152(8.1)	52,464	5,736(11.0)
Total	334,536	32,424(9.7)	105,072	7,008(6.6)	429,608	39,433(9.2)

Source: Content Analysis of New Year Press Conference and Annual Budget Speech of President, 1970-79.

served as a mechanism for identification of problems, and provided opportunities to make specific instructions and guidelines for program design as well as for monitoring program performance. As a matter of fact, the frequent field visits were once dramatized by the term of "administration by identification," meaning that every important decision regarding rural development would be made mostly after his personal identification and confirmation of the factual circumstances. He also participated with farmers every year in the plantation of rice and its harvesting.

President park's personal interest in and concern for rural development tended to be institutionalized in terms of the organizational setting and reporting system. The president used to personally award prizes to the two best Saemaul leaders at the monthly meeting with economic ministers of his cabinet, where the Monthly Economic Situation Report was presented to the President. It is also interesting to note that the President himself personally made a speech at the Annual National Conference of Saemaul Undong Leaders in which he encouraged, motivated, and stimulated Saemaul Leaders from all the villages of the nation to make their best endeavor for rural betterment.

"All these outstanding results are a crystallization of the sweat and labor of all the Saemaul leaders and the rural population who have worked in unity and were inspired by the Saemaul spirit of diligence, self-help, and teamwork. In my view, the Saemaul movement. . . is the driving force behind the conquest of difficulties and the creation of a new chapter of national history. . . . The

responsibilities and missions assigned to you (Saemaul leaders) are heavy and important beyond comparison.” (Message at National Conference of Saemaul Leaders, December 18, 1974)

The personal interest and commitment of the President to rural development tended to be followed up with the assistance of a secretariat. The head of the team held a position equivalent to the rank of Vice Minister. The special Assistant for Rural and Agricultural Development, who was a scholar as well as a movement-organizer, also assisted the President.

3. Personal Influence and Public Education

Using his formal authority, the late President Park also intentionally exercised his influence to get the power elite to form favorable attitudes towards, and to give moral support and commitment to, rural prosperity. As a consequence, Saemaul Undong has also been practiced with modification in other sectors such as in urban and industrial communities, schools and the military, with a view to supporting the original version of Saemaul Undong. Due to the influence of the President, a social mood was created which was favorable to rural development, so that the ruling elite including religious leaders, business elite, jouranalists, and other intellectual elites were motivated to participate in the Saemaul Leaders' Training Course. They were trained together with village leaders from the countryside.

“The Saemaul movement is not intended for farmers alone; . . . nation-wide bases. University students and intellectuals should also voluntarily join in, and play the leading role in this movement.” (Address at Seoul National University Graduation Ceremony, February 26, 1972)

4. Reorientation of Government

The political leadership commitment tended to be reflected in the reorientation of government priority, policy direction, resource allocation and official attitude.

“Rural housing will be gradually improved to the standards prevailing in advanced countries. This will go far toward modernizing the living environment of farmers. A full-scale effort in this direction will be mounted this year, when 75 billion won will be disbursed to finance the construction of 50,000 units of modernized rural housing.” (New Year Press Conference January 18, 1978)

“You will come to realize that over 90 percent of my words are about the development of spritual resources, not about economic matters or material things. I also wish to emphasize that the real hero of a rural community is the man who devotes his sweat and blood, without words, to the task of developing his home

town or village. Our society is in need of many such community heroes. National construction or development cannot be achieved by those who make fine speeches but do not fit actions to their words." (Message to the Conference of Provincial Governors, July 30, 1971)

One of the movement's remarkable effects is the reorientation of government administrators toward inter-ministerial or inter-agency coordination which is an administrative prerequisite for the success of change-introducing development projects involved in Saemaul Undong.

"All problems arising within your respective areas of jurisdiction should be tackled under the joint responsibility of all government agencies concerned, with the city mayor or the county commissioner taking primary responsibility, and with the local tax office, the police station or other related agencies providing whatever assistance or cooperation may be called for. . . . It seems to me things would not have come to a head had the chiefs of responsible local government agencies cooperated with each other more closely. In the future, the local city mayor or county commissioner should take the lead in solving all local problems of importance, after sufficient prior consultation with the heads of related government agencies, and seeking the understanding and cooperation of the local inhabitants. Once the policy is set, the matter should be pushed vigorously under joint responsibility." (Message to Comparative Administration Conference of City Mayors & County Chiefs, September 17-18, 1971)

III. Government Support and Assistance

The commitment of the top political leadership and, in turn, the reorientation of the system of government to rural development would be reflected in all kinds of governmental support and assistance to rural villages. To what extent did governments, central and local, provide the necessary support and assistance to rural development? The extent could be defined in terms of the appropriateness as well as the varieties of services. The analytical discussion of both relies on kinds of indicators or variables chosen to measure these factors.

In this paper, government support and assistance to rural development will be analyzed from a general systems perspective (Perrow 1970, pp. 50-91; Katz and Kahn 1966, pp. 24-29): (a) *structure*, which includes organizational and institutional arrangement within the government system and also particularly a local government support system in terms of functional and structural innovations; (b) *resources* made available for rural development, which include budgetary and financial support and also manpower development for improving both village capacity and officials' capability; (c) *output*, which covers rural support projects, programs and policies; and (d) *process or technology*, which means strategies

adopted by the government for rural development support.

In the review and evaluation of the government support system for rural development, *responsiveness* and *creativity* of the government system beyond its *efficiency* will be applied as criteria (Selznick 1957, pp. 134–154). The significant and relevant indicators are selected and evaluated on the basis of such criteria.

1. *Organizational and Institutional Reform*

The planning and management of activities in support of rural development require organizational and institutional reform as a manifested consequence of real commitment by the government. In the central government, the Saemaul Undong Bureau, which is responsible for development of overall strategies and policies regarding the Saemaul Undong, was newly established within the ministry of Home Affairs. At the provincial level, Saemaul Planning Division was newly established within the Provincial government to support and guide the activities of local governments at the county level. A Deputy County Chief was newly appointed to every county office with the sole responsibility of managing specific support and assistance to Saemaul Undong. An administrative unit was also added within each township office to assume duties for the planning and guidance of Saemaul projects in rural villages within its jurisdictional boundary.

In addition to the setting of line organization, the government also made a special arrangement for the planning and coordination of Saemaul projects. This included (a) the Saemaul Central Consultative Council, chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs and with approximately twenty members including vice ministers of ministries and heads of national federations of cooperatives and agencies related to rural development; (b) the Saemaul Provincial Consultative Council, chaired by the governor, and whose members include university professors and heads of regional offices of the central ministries; (c) the Saemaul County Consultative Council, chaired by the county chief and members of relevant officers; (d) the Saemaul Township Promotion Committee, chaired by the Myun Chief and whose members include Saemaul leaders; and finally (e) the Village Development Committee, chaired by the Saemaul leader and 5 members selected from among the villagers. This series of councils and committees from the central level down to the village level were set up with a view to facilitating coordination among/between inter-related ministries and agencies and to providing diversified perspectives for solid planning of Saemaul projects. It is noted, in this connection, that Saemaul leaders participate as members in both county- and township-level councils, to positively represent their interests and ideas.

Another interesting point is that the responsibilities for implementa-

tion of Saemaul projects are assumed by the deputy chiefs of local government for their respective levels of administration, while the chief of local governments at any level is responsible for planning, resource commitment, and setting guidelines. It is assumed that such an arrangement will promote efficient coordination between related agencies and functions.

2. *Local Government System*

The improvement in local government support seems to be an essential requirement for the successful implementation of SMU because local governments in Korea have a certain amount of authority to screen policy guidelines of the central government and to fit them into the village situation. Historically, local governments in Korea have been instruments of the central government for the control of local resources, and had been oriented to law and order. Supporting rural development or meeting developmental needs of rural communities seemed to be new concepts to them. The functions of local government at the district level tend to be reoriented toward rural development. Local governments tend to be easily accessible to the community people. They would encourage community leaders to participate extensively in the process of governmental policy-making. They would be able to identify community needs and also deliver government services efficiently to rural villages. The organization of local governments also tend to be restructured to introduce the functional transformation from control and regulation to development support administration.

In relation to the delivery system of rural development support, local governments pay attention to coordination and integration of various kinds of development projects in respect to required development inputs (including financial and technical, human and material, public and private, organizational and institutional resources) at the level of the rural village. Although the coordination and integration at this level is a function of community leadership, the package of government support is one which is coordinated between agencies providing different types of rural development assistance and services, and also integrated into the total scheme of village development activities. In other words, various kinds of government support tend to be coordinated within the government sector to avoid confusion, unnecessary duplication and conflict in the process of actual implementation at the village level. Also, the package of such services and assistance from government agencies fits into the total scheme of SMU within a specific time framework, in order to provide supplementary or complementary services. This would naturally include the total mobilization of government-arranged field workers in the rural villages, such as extension workers, family planning workers, voluntary organization personnel, owners and managers of private agro-industries,

and so on. In the case of SMU, these functions have been performed by county-level local administrators in collaboration with township officials.

The smooth performance of change-promoting and change-protecting functions of local government in the SMU is based on the improvement in the mutual relationship between government officials and community people. Historically, the attitude of government officials toward community people tended to be one of bureaucratic and colonial rulers and regulators and, therefore, community people tended to perceive officials as exploiters. This mutual discord reduced trust between the two sides. The perceptual gap between government officials and community people regarding their respective roles and mutual relationship created a lack of government credibility which became a serious obstacle to the introduction of government-mediated innovation in rural villages in Korea during the 1950's. A perceptual change toward interdependence as well as an attitudinal change toward cooperation and collaboration between the two sides would be one of the critical indicators of improvement in the local support system and commitment to rural development with the initiation from the government side.

In this connection, it is noted that the evaluation of officials' performance in terms of an increase in rural production or an improvement in rural life in the communities for which government services have been delivered, was almost institutionalized assuming that the community performance is highly correlated with administrative inputs and support made available by government officials concerned. It seems to be meaningful especially because the administrative inputs and supportive services for SMU are predominantly under the control of local government officials.

The utmost importance of local government support to the rural community is related to the managerial capability of local governments to deliver required services and assistance to the right clients in the right way and at the right time. The managerial competence of top level administrators of local government includes a body of knowledge and management skills, which are related to information analysis and decision making, planning and desing of delivery systems. inter-agency communications and coordination, mobilization of resources and support from the political leadership as well as the central government, leadership capability, supervision, and control and monitoring of performance of rural development support programs. The managerial competence in local officials in Korea during the 1970's seemed to be improved as a result of extensive management training throughout the 1960's and 1970's.

In this respect, the remarkable discipline of local government officials in the process of their service delivery should be noted. The timely and and accurate delivery of materials and services to villages according to the

planned schedule is an indicator of outstanding performance and commitment of local administrators which, in turn, contributes to the credibility of government. The strong commitment of local government is also reflected in arrangements for special assignment of township officials. At the township-level administration, local government is arranged such that each staff member is assigned to take a responsibility for efficient implementation of Saemaul Undong in a village. Hence township officials frequently visit the assigned village in order to identify problems, to monitor work performance, to deliver proper service and assistance, and to encourage village people. This arrangement is an extended version of the "administration by identification" approach. In addition to their competence in technical subject matters with which they deal, the competence of field workers also includes certain skills and the capability to build a fresh image of "service men" to efficiently deliver required services, to easily contact and communicate with community people, to project a homophilous feeling with rural people, and to stimulate, motivate, and encourage community people. Various types of field workers who frequently contact community leaders tend to be able to understand the tasks of community leaders and their needs for assistance in their respective areas of field workers in Korea. The managerial and technical competence of the local government system tends to bring about a synergistic effect as the government officials at the county office are highly motivated and committed to the achievement of certain results in rural transformation.

3. *Budgetary Support*

Although it is claimed that Saemaul Undong has been implemented with people's strong motivation, zeal, participation and contribution in kind, one of the significant inputs is undoubtedly a package of government

TABLE 3 GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES FOR SAEMAUL UNDONG
Unit: billion Won (Current Price)

Year	Development Expenditures of Central Gov't ^a	Gov't Expenditures for Saemaul Projects ^b
1971	111.7	4.1
1972	240.2	3.6
1973	176.8	17.1
1974	301.1	45.5
1975	522.3	165.3
1976	669.5	165.1
1977	729.9	246.0
1978	873.0	338.4

Source: ^a Economic Planning Board, *Major Economic Indicators*, 1978, pp. 90-91.

^b Ministry of Home Affairs, *Saemaul Undong*, 1978.

support and assistance. The extent of actual commitment of government in terms of support and assistance is explicitly manifested in the allocation of budgetary resources. According to Table 3, the development expenditure out of the General Government Sector Budget has increased by 7.8 times in terms of current prices during the period of 1971–78. During the same period, budgetary expenditures of both central and local governments in support of rural Saemaul projects has increased about 82 times. Thus the ratio of government expenditure in support of Saemaul projects has been increased over the period. During 1978, government support to Saemaul Undong reached the scale of ₩338 billion which was equivalent to 38% of development expenditures of the General Government Sector Budget (Whang 1980, pp. 41–43).

4. Manpower Development and Training

Another significant input supporting Saemaul Undong in Korea is the consistent and extensive arrangements for training both private and government manpower resources. The government has organized a Saemaul Leaders' Training Center at the central level and similar institutes in each province. According to a recent study (Whang 1980, pp. 118–120), 54 Saemaul leaders out of 63 leaders interviewed had been trained once or more, the nine exceptions were newly-recruited leaders who had not had a chance to join the training course. The majority of them (85%) considered the training course a relevance to their role and performance. Another study (Chae 1978, p. 120) also indicates a similar finding.

The Saemaul training course was designed especially for changing values and the world outlook of Saemaul leaders. For this purpose it adopted special training methods. The special arrangement of government to get social elites to voluntarily participate in the training program also represent the special consensus as well as the total commitment of government to the program, since encouraging such participation is politically risky.

In addition to the training program for Saemaul leaders, similar programs were organized for government officials. There are, for example, Saemaul training courses at the Central Officials' Training Institute and the Local Administration Training Institute. The consistent conduct of training courses during the past ten years has not only influenced the attitudinal change of administrators to some extent but has also motivated administrators to work closely with village farmers. The courses also helped them to understand the philosophy and strategy of rural development in the Korean context and to develop close perceptual ties with rural villagers. According to one study (Shin 1979, p. 331), it is found that approximately 15 thousand middle-high level officials of central government were trained in the Saemaul course conducted by the Central Officials

Training Institute alone during the period of 1972-79.

5. *Operational Strategies*

Strategies for efficient support toward self-reliant development of rural villages could be analyzed in terms of standards of operation in rural support administration, methods and criteria for the allocation of available resources, and technology related to stimulation and inducement.

At the initial stage of Saemaul Undong, the government classified rural villages into three categories on the basis of the degree of development: underdeveloped, developing and developed villages. The classification provided a psychological basis for competition between villages in promoting their village improvement. It also provided a criterion by which government could apply different packages of support and assistance to villages depending on their level of development. In this respect it should be noted that the priority of government support is given to more developed villages rather than less-developed ones. This principle of "the better village the first support" became an effective stimulator of people's motivation to better achievement in Saemaul projects. Although the psychology of excess competition tends to be an obstacle to implementation of inter-village Saemaul projects which have recently developed as a new thrust of Saemaul Undong, the competition mood between neighboring villages substantially contributed to the success of Saemaul Undong at the early stages.

Another point to be made is the strategic shift of priority in supporting projects. During the period of 1970-73 the priority of government commitment was given to the area of improvement in rural infrastructures, namely to environmental improvement projects such as the construction of small bridges, a village entrance road, farm roads, electrification, sanitary water supply, etc. However, since 1974 the priority was shifted to the income-boosting projects of farmers including special crops, livestock, and marketing facilities (Whang 1980, pp. 48-62). The priority of government support to improvements in rural infrastructure had a strategic implication in view of the fact that people's participations in cooperative action for rural infrastructures would bring about tangible and visible results immediately after their contribution. This serves as a mechanism of learning by doing so as to reinforce their developmental values.

Such experimentation especially at the initial stage had enhanced a sense of participation and confidence. It also made rural people recognize the values of self-help, diligence, cooperation and participation (Whang 1980, pp. 200-201).

Specific commitment of government is also reflected in the incentive system to make rural people participate. Since an enforcement scheme

was believed to have limited value in motivating people, a variety of incentives were provided both for villages and individual leaders. The initial incentive, at the village level was to provide government support in kind, for example, cement and steel. The government donation of materials to villages, for example the donation of 335 bags of cement to each village, tended to induce a positive response from the village people in the form of their participation in decision-making with regard to what to do with cement and also their positive cooperation to achieve the results. This is a process of induced change in rural villages in which the village people tended to face problems related to identity crisis, leadership capability, organizational and managerial competence and other issues related to dynamic changes in rural villages (Park 1977, pp. 24-35).

The incentive at the individual level was the award system which has been utilized frequently to encourage village leaders and outstanding farmers. This includes medals and special presidential awards (in cash) given to Saemaul leaders for demonstration of excellent Saemaul spirit.

Lastly it is noted that the government deliberately prepared a plan for the sequential arrangement of various types of support and assistance over time build a certain momentum which enabled the rural community to become capable of self-reliant development. Indeed, government support for SMU has been consistent between different activities and between goals and instruments over a period of time from the beginning of its support until the stage of strategic withdrawal of the support. Constant evaluation of the capacity of a particular rural village (or community) for self-reliant development has been built into the process of government mobilization of support and assistance.

6. Supporting Policies and Programs

In connection with firm commitment of government to rural development, specific policies and programs should be mentioned. One of the significant policies is the high-rice-price policy which has been predominant during the 1970's. The policy has boosted farmers' incomes substantially. While the policy is currently being criticized because of the accumulation of a deficit and because the government purchase of rice tends to create inflationary pressure the high price policy nevertheless encouraged farmers to work harder and to participate in rural development activities.

The government commitment was also manifested in the heavy investment in research and development in the agricultural sector, particularly the development of High-Yielding Varieties (HYV). Indeed, the development as well as nation-wide dissemination of HYV of rice eventually made Korea self-sufficient in rice. The dissemination of new rice seeds and the intensification of Saemaul Undong seemed to be a mutually rein-

forcing process of change in the rural economy.

The government also provided some follow-up measures to the innovation process. For example, the Saemaul Technical Service Corps was organized with participation by scientists in various fields, such as agriculture, food processing, cottage factories, engineering, health, etc.

IV. Developmental Implications of Commitment: Conclusions

It is interesting to note that the Saemaul Undong has brought about significant changes in the rural sector of Korea, through its rigorous implementation during the past decade (Whang 1980, pp. 65-183). The Saemaul Undong has introduced changes in values and perceptions of rural people towards change-orientation, future-orientation and achievement motivation. Rural people tend to be more confident about their work performance and are becoming planning-minded in their rural life. Their self-help and the cooperative attitudes of village members are also seen as a product of the Saemaul Undong.

Another achievement of the Saemaul Undong is the formation of change agents in rural villages who are identified and fostered through the rigorous implementation of the Saemaul Leaders' Training Program. Lastly, the Saemaul Undong has contributed to the improvements in rural infrastructures, in the physical environment of villages, and in the rural economy as a whole. The level of farm household income has improved so as to keep up with the increase in urban wage earners' income. The increase in rural savings and various forms of capital investment were also stimulated by the Saemaul Undong.

Change-introducing projects require the commitment of the top political leadership. Actual commitment of the top political leadership tends to affect resource allocation as well as the legal/administrative framework in favor of the rural sector. The support and commitment of top political leadership influences the ruling elite to form favorable attitudes toward rural development and to commit themselves to SMU. The societal support tends to reinforce the values and ideas of rural development. The active involvement of elites in SMU and their understanding of its philosophies and strategies tend to be conducive to the mobilization of adequate support from the government as well as other social sectors. The strong commitment of the top political leadership to the success of SMU tends to remove bureaucratic inertia which could be obstacles to efficient coordination and to administrative innovations at the local level.

In the Korean experience, the Saemaul Leaders' Training Course addressed to village leaders as well as ruling elites has served as a mechanism for the reinforcement of support to SMU at the grass-root level, for social recognition of rural leaders as development agents, and

for social control over local government services.

Another aspect of commitment is naturally reflected in the package of government support. Under present circumstances in most Asian countries including Korea, rural development cannot take place without financial and technical support of governments (Chee and Khong 1977). Government support for rural development in Korea covers not only financial and technical assistance delivered directly to rural villages but also a series of supporting policies and programmes. The integrity of government commitment was also recognized by consistent training programmes for officials as well as village leaders, organizational rearrangement and by the mode of operational strategies.

It is found that government commitment has a synergetic effect on rural development. The deliberate, consistent and solid package of government support and commitment tends to have multiple impacts on rural innovation. An adequate level of government assistance and support to villages tends to stimulate a positive response from rural people, in view of their greater contributions and their extensive participation. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the universal application of government support and stimulation tends to be accompanied by undesirable consequences because of the lack of flexibility to fit into the village-specific situations.

Government commitment is essential to the success of SMU in view of the mobilization and allocation of all types of resources in favor of the rural sector. It is nevertheless felt that, without the positive participation of people in the decision-making process and their active cooperation in the project implementation, the government support alone would not bring about effective results in rural development (Park 1977). The mutual stimulation between government machinery and rural people is the key to the Saemaul Undong's success.

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