The concept of community Development occupies a pivot position around which all the socio political thought of twentieth centre revolves. The term is so vast, in its scopes and application that, it is quite difficult to put it within the framework of a comprehensive and adequate logical definition.

Again, the changes in emphasis on different aspects of it, at various point of time have complicated it for a text book definition. Several thinkers, committees, committees, international organisation have defined it in varying ways.

Some definitions have emphasised on material progress. Some other have described it as a movement, still other as an aspect of administration, a process of development technique of bringing people and local resources together for development. The meaning of the term will become more clear as we will go an analysing its various aspects in ensuing pages. However, to start with we can consider some of the important definitions already put forth.

The conference on Colonial Administration in 1948 held at Cambridge defined Community Development, “as a movement designed to promote better living in whole community with the active participation and if possible, on the initiative of the community but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously then by use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to serve its active and enthusiastic response tot eh movement.”

According to United Nations Report, Community Development is a “process designed to create condition of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance upon community’s initiative.”

According to J.C. Jackson, “Broadly we might define the term as encouraging a community to undertake on its own initiative the various steps necessary to enrich the life of the community both materially and spiritually.”

A.R. Desai views Community Development as a “method through which Five Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of social and economic life of villages.”

Government of India defines “it is the programme of aided self help to be planned and implemented by the villagers themselves, the Government offering only technical guidance. Its objectives are to develop self reliance in the individual and initiative in the village community. Community thinking and collective actions are encouraged through people’s institutions like Panchayats, co operative Society and Mandalas.

It is clear from the above definitions and descriptions that Community Development is an endeavour to bring about an integrated development of rural life. This is a device for transformation of the socio economic structure of a traditional and underdeveloped can be brought about by using the people and local resources.

The people of a particular community plan according to their need and necessities out of their own initiative and cooperate with each other to implement such plans. It is a means of injecting social change in order to break the traditional and relatively static society into a dynamic and prosperous one.

Elements: Whatever the form and manner of the presentation of the meaning of the term some common elements are included in all the definitions. We can discuss the common elements as follows:

**i). Integrated development of Whole Community:**

Community Development refers to the welfare of the entire population not of a particular sect, group of section. Every society is divided into many groups and sub groups on the basis of caste, class, religion, profession, culture, race, creed etc; an undivided society is a myth. All such sections take up the welfare activities.

But none of such activities can be termed as Community Development. These can best be called “normal community processes. It is only, when benefits are shared by all irrespective of any distinction, the process can be termed as Community Development.

Again, community development refers to the balanced growth. The development in any one field, for example only in industry, cannot be called Community Development. It is an attempt to create a new social order. It covers almost all aspects of social life, such as industrialisation, health and sanitation, agricultural development, education, employment, growth of science and technology etc. The gradual and simultaneous development in all these fields can be termed as Community Development.

**ii). Free from outside constraint:**

No outward agency exercises constraint or force people to be involved in this developmental program. If there is any imposition from outside then the brought to water but cannot be forced to drink if improvement is imposed on people, it may at times serve the present or satisfy the interest of a particular Government, but is will run the future of the community in long run.

**iii). Spontaneous involvement:**

The people are involved in developmental activities spontaneously because they feel the need to increase their standard of living, to lead a better and comfortable life. They see the better world around them and develop a sense of “relative deprecation. This sense works as the motive force and makes them to think and Act for their own development. It is only when the people feel the want or need for something that they are urged to work.

Another aspect of this fact is that there are certain cases where the initiative expected of the people does not come spontaneously. In such cases different methods are used to arouse the need for that thing within the people. Such felt necessity stimulates their motive and urges them to work for betterment of their life.

**iv). Combination of outside and inside resources:**

Community development project aims at securing people’s participation from planning to execution. The people have to be conscious of their own need and put their resources as well as efforts together to fulfill that. All these task need a systematic mechanism. This mechanism should be structured in such a manner that it can combine the efforts of people and the assistance of Government. The Governmental help is to accelerate the process of reaching the end.

The leaders and the people should have readiness for change. They should be in a position to utilize new ideas, thoughts, inventions and discoveries in various fields for their betterment.

**v). A Process of Administration:**

Gone are the days when the only function of Government was to maintain law and order, and protect the national territory. Now-a-days, almost all the states have incorporated the idea of welfare states. The government is asked to perform various functions that come under the welfare of the people. The term welfare is used not only in material sense but also in immaterial and spiritual sense.

Viewers in this way, we can speak of community development project as a process of administration. As they governor of Uganda rightly pointed out “community development embraces all aspects of government activity in the field, the improvement of agriculture, the combating of soil erosion, the development of water supplies, the promotion of cooperation and better marketing, livestock and forestry development, education, health club, and community activities, it is in fact no more than a modern conception of administration.”

**vi). National progress as ultimate aim:**

The final aim of community development program is to bring about an all-round development of the nation as a whole. No doubt, that at the initial stage the focus is on the development of a particular community. A community is a group of families living within a particular territory and sharing a common culture, a common way of life.

The developmental acts are such that this does not hamper national interest. No community to be followed to materialize its own interest at the cost of national unity and integrity. The progress in all the communities is to be channelized in such a way as to build up a healthy prosperous nation.