

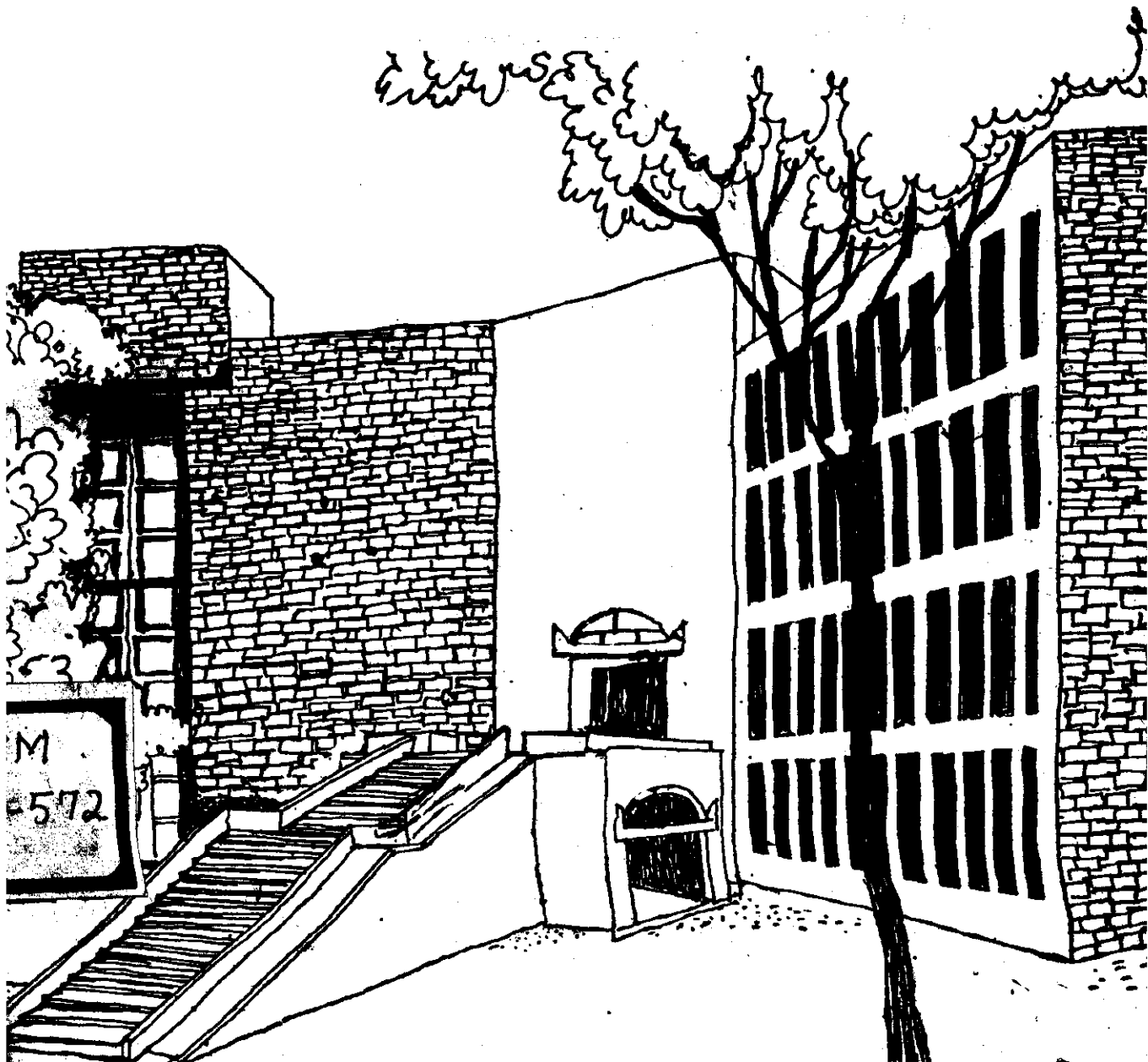


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ON ORGANIZING EQUITY: ARE 'SOLUTIONS'
REALLY THE PROBLEM?

By

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ON ORGANIZING EQUITY: ARE 'SOLUTIONS' REALLY THE PROBLEM?

ABSTRACT

Ensuring a fair distribution of public resources has remained a concern of planners and socially conscious academists for a long time. The limitation of market forces in catering to such needs of people which at current level of deprivation and scale cannot become 'reasonable' demand is well recognised. However the obstacles which come in the way of organising equity are not only the social structure, bureaucratic inertia and political will. The explicit and implicit assumptions behind various dominant paradigms legitimised by the academists and public policy analysts are a major influence on attempts of state to organise equity. The paper presents an alternative socio-ecological paradigm for public policy analysis and provides illustration of author's own encounters with planners at various levels. The difference between 'feasible politics' and 'politics of making alternatives feasible' is also attempted to be resolved with the help of this framework.

On Organizing Equity : Are 'Solutions' Really
the Problem ?

The problem of ensuring a fair distribution of public resources amongst unequals has attracted attention of planners and academicians for quite some time. The content of the enquiries and context of the solution may have varied but not in unrelated manner.¹ The powerful moralizing and civilizing influence of commerce was summarized as : "Let us recognize this profound truth. What is best for all of us is best for each one of us"² Allocation of resources by the market forces was best for all of us and so, it must be good for each of us.* This assumption of neo-classical economic tradition soon became a 'proven' fact.³ However in many developing countries, the scope for public policy in distribution of goods and services not only was recognized but in some case even enshrined in the constitution. Public sector, public policy and state bureaucracies became the instrumentalities through which state - a welfare one- was expected to manifest its choices.

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- 1 Hirschman, Albert O. (1982), 1, Rival Interpretations of Market Society : Civilizing Destructive, or Feeble ? Journal of Economic Literature Vol. XX 1463 - 1184
 - 2 Richard Nixon, quoted in Bartlett Randall (1978)., Economics Power, and the Myth of the "Public Interest". Research Paper No. 11, Economics Department, Williams College, MASS
 - 3 Ibid.

The contradictions were inherent in a mixed economic framework chosen by the planners. However, the state, through public services, wanted to achieve what markets could not.

But how will the state do it? The answer obviously was the bureaucracy. But the Weberian legacy of bureaucratic ideal and reality was not lost sight of. As pointed out in a seminal contribution, the problem was essentially defined as evolving a new breed of administrator for fulfilling social developmental objectives of the state. He should be "innovative, risk taking and achievement oriented.... (He should not) place organizational structures, rules and procedures above the needs of target achievement. In short, the developmental job was accepted more as a function of individual administrative behaviour or style"⁴ rather than any structural characteristic of the instrument itself, i.e. the nature of organizational design, access rules, monitoring system and accountability norms for the public systems.

4 Mathur, Kuldeep (1972), Sources of Indian Bureaucratic Behaviour: Organizational Environment and Political Pressures in Rajasthan Occasional Monograph, HCM Institute of Public Administration, Jaipur p.2. The study very interestingly demonstrates (what perhaps remains valid even after decade and a half and for the whole country) that in a society with feudalistic and colonial past, the most admired qualities of administrators by bureaucrats and technocrats were goodbehaviour, morality and honesty. The work performance and decision making qualities attracted low priority. Undoubtedly, the meaning of development compatible with such an image of goodness would be quite different from what would be the case in a result-oriented societ

Not only a new field of development administration⁵ was created but the direction of this field was also, quite paradoxically, so defined that a large number of questions organically related to the access of the poor to public bureaucracies and their inner contradictions were avoided. While we would not go into details of this unfortunate development in the public policy and administration discipline here, a comment is worth recalling here since it sums up the paradox quite aptly:

Public policy (and certainly development policy) studies and disciplines are bureaucratic institutions themselves. There are set practices for constructing the problems of development policy discussion so that they can be more easily handled and controlled. Each specialist, discipline or sectoral concern (input-output policy analysis, implementation, nutrition, risk-benefit etc.) in the study of development policies ends by arguing that things 'would be better' if a sectoral or institutional status was given to that particular body of specialists. Anyway the approach accepts the bureaucratization of public policy. It simply wants to add other bureaucrats.⁶

5 It does not have to be said that dichotomy between regulatory and developmental administration is quite false. There is nothing in the former which does not have implications for the latter and vice versa.

6 Schaffer Bernard 1984 Towards Responsibility : Public Policy, in Concept and Practice in 'Room for Manoeuvre' edited by EJClay and SS Schaffer, Heinemann Educational Book, London pp. 167.

How people become target groups⁷ and poor the "weaker sections" (though bearing the heaviest burden) then becomes the problem of description.⁸ Every description, as we know, suffers from the selective choices regarding the parts of the observed phenomena serving our predictive or prescriptive interests. Essentially, therefore, the problem of organizing equity must first be tackled at the definitional level. What are the relevant variables and how should we conceptualize relationship between them would in turn define the range of questions about the phenomena that we can address ourselves to generate possible solutions.

The paper first deals with the conceptual framework in which bureaucratic response to the problem of equity in delivery can be matched with the socio-ecological basis of inequity of demand from poor. Later we discuss the specific instances of public policies which this framework helps in understanding. Our contention finally is that neglect of certain variables in dominant western developmental theory concerning public-policy organizations and administration should not prevent emergence of a more valid and relevant analytical framework. The ultimate utility of the framework would depend upon the fact whether

7 Ibid 168

8 Sen Amaartya 1980, Description as a Choice : Oxford Economic Papers, Vol.32(3) pp. 367

9 Ibid

it builds new bridges or burns the ones existing already amongst different disciplines.

Socio-ecological Paradigm: Redefining the Reality

Choices in the Description of the Problem:

How do we define the problem? Is there something basically inadequate in the dominant frameworks of analysis? Is there a pattern in the way some particular problems of development in our society are consistently described? Description requires a prior theory. However, the famous debate on 'F' twist between Samuelson and Milton Friedman underscored that a) "If the abstract model contains empirical falsities, we must jettison the models, not gloss over their inadequacies."¹⁰ For Friedman¹¹ an inverse relation existed between accuracy of assumptions and predictive success. He claimed that an "economic theory should not be criticized for containing 'unreal' assumptions: the only legitimate way to criticize an economic theory is to point out that its predictions are at variance with facts"¹² b) If the inverse relation actually existed as posited above, Friedman would be quite willing to sacrifice accuracy.¹³

10 Samuelson quoted in Sen, op cit : 356

11 Friedman, M., 1953, Essays in Positive Economics, Chicago University Press, Chicago.

12 Musgrave Alan 1981, 'Unreal assumptions' in Economic Theory: The F-Twist Untwisted, Kyklos, 34 Fasc 3, 377-387

13 Sen, op.cit: 356

While the need for adopting a paradigmatic presuppositions prior to any scientific enquiry has been quite well argued by Kuhn, he warned that such a process could "insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies."¹⁴ What Bartlett suggested about economic theory equally well applies to public policy and administration i.e. the absence of explicit discussion on power and conflicts inherent in public choices blunt the edges of enquiry. And powers not merely of individuals or institutions but even of assumptions. Thus if the problem of rural development was defined in terms of bureaucratic inertia, the solution had to be training for behavioural change and incentives for higher motivation.¹⁵ How powerful these assumptions could be is gauged by noticing the near absence of studies that describe and then analyse institutional problem with the help of variables that were either not behavioural, attitudinal and motivational or were not intra-organizational. The tendency to invariably attribute the behaviour of organizations to individuals

14 Kuhn, Thomas 1962 The Theory of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago, pp 37

15 Also see Gaikwad, VR, 1985, Analytical Study on Training of Agricultural Administrators in India, FAO study, CMA IIM, Ahmedabad.

in organizations has been decried¹⁶ and yet hardly many viable alternatives have emerged so far. Extensive review of studies in developing countries have shown that "each time the environment is involved, the theory developed for western setting does not apply, because it assumes contingencies that may not be valid for developing countries."¹⁷ A similar conclusion was reached by the author earlier.¹⁸

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- 16 McKelvey Bill and Howard Aldrich 1983 Population, Natural Selection and Applied Organizational Science, ASO 28:117. Eventhough the authors criticize the tendency to rely on the perceptions of the managers in organizations to describe the organizational actions because of obvious class bias, they tend to put a very heavy reliance on population ecology model which nearly equals the neo-classical model of economy where the most fit firm or form of firm survived or was selected. The fact that there were problems in conceptualising exit or entry of public bureaucracies in the same manner indicated in applicability of the alternative analytical framework authors provide.
- 17 Kiggundu Moses M, Jon J Jorgensen and Taieb Hafsi, 1983, Administrative Theory and Practice in Developing Countries: A Synthesis, Administrative Science Quarterly 28:81 The authors reviewed all the articles dealing with developing countries (n=36) published in ASQ during 1956-81 besides 772 article abstracts published during 1971-1981 in Management contents, Economic Abstracts and International and Sociological Abstracts.
- 18 Gupta Anil K 1982 Designing Developmental Organizations:* IIM Working Paper No. 444, This paper provides extensive review of given theories to argue in context of public organizations as to how a search for more indegenous culturally compatible framework can be made.
- * Search for an Indian theory

How do we conceptualize the environment of developmental bureaucracies such that an objective measurement can be made of its major characteristics? The essential requirements of a theory to be valid are generalizability, testability and replicability.

Need for such a framework can also be appreciated from the point of view of planners.¹⁹ They have to deal with the ecological and institutional diversity of a large country and conceive designs of delivery system that would hopefully fit the whole range of diversity. Very often only data that goes into policy making relate to either some pilot projects or some generalized evaluations of earlier programmes which, like a 'rear view mirror',²⁰ illuminate the path already travelled but provide no help in choosing direction where to go. The socio-ecological paradigm hopefully does not suffer from above inadequacy.

The Paradigm

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In rural India, despite massive investments in developing the infrastructure in the post-independence era, there remain large parts of the country where ecological conditions i.e.

19 Also see, Atal, Yogesh, 1983 Using the Social Sciences for Policy Formulation, International Social Science Journal, Vol. XXXV (2) 367-377

20 Samuel T. Coleridge said "To most men, experience is like the stern lights of a ship, which illumines only the track it has passed." quoted in Neri H Barrington Computer at Wits and leads to process pattern recognition, Ontario Dev. Corp, mimeo.

the natural resource endowments or environment defines the range of economic investments that can be made by various classes of rural producers. For instance, in almost 60-70 per cent rain-fed regions of India, seasonality predominates to define the outer limits of what could be grown on lands of varying fertility level, topography, sizes etc. There are eco-specific (i.e. region specific) pattern of the cropping system, livestock enterprise mix, craft activities, labour skill mix and mobility patterns, besides of course Kinship networks and exchange relations. How have these patterns emerged and what are the determinants of these patterns ?

Historically, in any ecological context, say hot arid tropical drought-prone region, we may find variety of combinations of crop, livestock, tree, craft and labour enterprises which different economic classes of farming households have evolved through trial and error. These combinations do not vary, however, in an infinite range. Studies²¹ have shown that ratio of livestock species say, Cattle: Buffalo: Bullock: Camel: Goat: Sheep varies within a narrow range in any given well defined watershed or regional limit.

The scale at which different classes manage these enterprises does not however depend upon ecology. The scale is a

21 Gupta Anil K 1984, Socio-Ecology of Land use Planning in Semi-Arid Regions. IIM, Working paper No. 525, 1984
 Small farmer Household Economy in Semi-Arid Regions, IIM, CMA Project Report, mimeo (henceforth SFHHE)

function of access different classes have acquired to land, labour, credit and product markets besides the non-monetised exchange system and risk bearing capacities. This access also defines the degree of risk inherent in different combinations of enterprises. One way to objectively measure the risk with which different classes have to adjust with is to use the matrix given in Figure 1.²²

Figure One

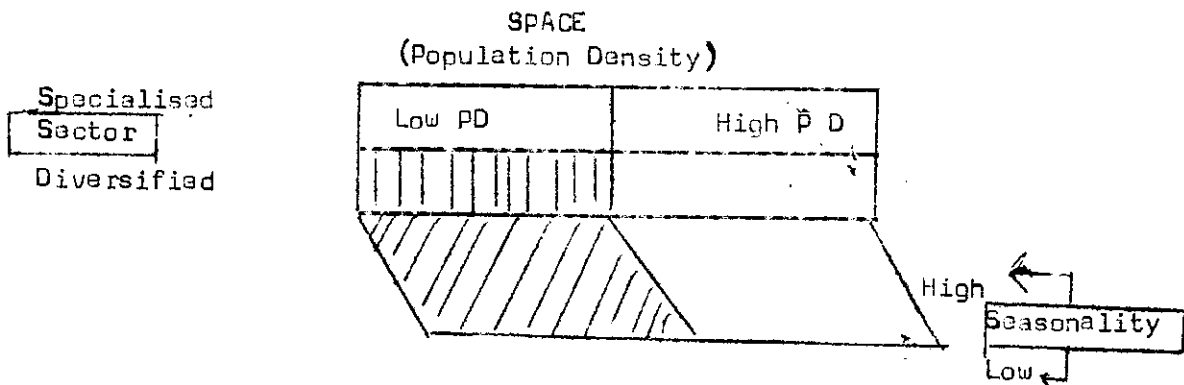
		Variance in incomes / outputs	
		Low -- variance	High
Mean level of income or outputs = Mean	Low	LMLV	LMHV
	High	HMLV	HMHV

The high mean- high variance enterprises would characterize those producers who are capable of taking high risks, have sound access to produce and factor markets and have accumulated sufficient surpluses so as to absorb risks without any crisis. They are incidentally also the so called 'progressive' farmers, 'opinion' leaders and 'contact farmers'.

22 This matrix was first developed as a part of an action-research project at IIPA on District Project Planning Coordinated by Prof. Kuldeep Mathur (1978-81). Also see Gupta Anil K, 1981 Viable Projects for Unviable Farmers, IIPA & IIM, CMA, mimeo.

In contrast, those managing an enterprise mix which generated low mean- high variance in output or income would be deficit budget households - most vulnerable to environmental risks.

The question then arises : How does public policy deal with different classes of people variously vulnerable to the risks- environmental, market, institutional or otherwise. ? The fact that occurrence of risk and its effect in different regions is not a random phenomenon can be appreciated with help of following matrix (Figure 2). Socio-ecological framework thus provides falsifiable propositions as can be seen below.²³



23 PD implies spatial units with population density (PD) low or high. Space could be dichotomized on other parameters also such as topography, soil texture and structure etc. Sectors could include Agriculture and livestock, crafts (informal sector) industry (small medium, local resources based or otherwise) etc. Within agriculture or farming sector, we could have specialized enterprise mix or diversified enterprise mix. While location of industry is dependant upon too many other factors, we are restricting the applicability of framework to rural sectors. Seasonality implies the degree of certainty in various atmospheric parameters such as rainfall which could be uni or bimodal. The implications is that in regions with uni modal rainfall, mostly in kharif (summer) the cropping system would be characteristically different from the ones in which bi-modal rainfall was experienced. Further seasonality effects would be higher in regions of low irrigation than otherwise.

Let us for the illustrative purposes take the subsets with low population density, highly diversified enterprise mix and accompanied by high seasonality. The image that it conjures pertain to semi-arid tropics. The drought-prone areas where settlement structure is scattered, soils are shallow, light loss and have low fertility such that subsistence can not be achieved by relying on cultivation of crops alone. Simultaneous involvement in livestock, craft and labour markets is inevitable for survival.

What are the institutional implications of above framework ? How can we use the type of perspective we obtain from above in organizing equity and managing the problem of access : What are the social imperative of ecological conditions ? How do market forces emerge and is there a pattern in the allocation of resources by public and private sector institutions while dealing with such settings ? Is exclusion of poor thus a systematic outcome of public policy instead of being an implementation inefficiency ?

Several other issues could arise and providing answer to all of them would be clearly beyond the scope of the paper. However we must outline those contradictions which make us suggest that the dominant solutions to the current problems of equity evolved historically are, infact the key problems. We have to discredit the 'solutions' which prevent generation of more precise questions and thus more pertinent answers. Instead of feasible

politics, the role of social scientists in politics of making options relevant to poor feasible will thus need to be highlighted.

The Problem of Equity

The nature of surplus accumulation in the socio-ecological setting described above would be quite eco-specific. The exchange relations in different markets would reflect the consequences of differential accumulatory tendencies. For instance studies have shown that rates of interest,²⁴ pattern of land transfer,²⁵ kinship relations and norms of pooling and redistribution,²⁶ labour mobility,²⁷ etc. are highly ecology and class specific.

The browsers are mainly owned by landless and the poor farmers whereas most of the grazers (particularly high value ones like buffaloes) are predominantly owned by richer farmers. The credit market constraints affected different classes differently i.e. not only the size of loan differed but also the interest

24 Gupta 1984 op cit

25 Gupta 1981 op cit

26 Gupta Anil K 1981 Farmers' Response to Cooperative Project Implementation, IIPA and IIM-A mimeo.

_____ 1983 Why don't poor cooperate: A Study of traditional forms of cooperation with implications for modern organization, IIM Working Paper 468 revised and enlarged, 1984.

27 _____ 1982 Seasonality, Stratification and Staying on Process in Semi-Arid Regions, IIM Working Paper No. 428

28 _____ 1984, SFHHE, op cit.

rates in informal market varied essentially due to differences in collaterals and partly interlocking of markets; intra-village^L and transactions in totally dry villages were much lesser than in irrigated villages mainly because rates and size of capital accumulation at different sized land holding did not vary as much in former case as in the latter case, though the livestock transactions showed the opposite trend for obvious reasons. The eco and class specificity of nature of different economic transactions particularly in regions where market penetration, is low has been quite convincingly demonstrated in various studies by the author. The emergence of socio-ecological paradigm intersecting disciplines of public administration, management, economics, sociology, ecology and political science offers a whole range of different questions concerning public policy and equity as shown below:

The solutions that are the problems

"Equity is about rule. Rules means Institutions. The experience of equity one way or another is then experience of institutional encounters: access experience. This is more or less unavoidable."²⁹ Is it so really? Is there an inevitability of inequity, no matter what was the nature of public policy and biases inherent in it?

29 Schaffer Bernard, 1978, Official Providers, UNESCO, Paris.

The solution that institutional counters have to be broken down so that there is no difference between the people who demand and the people who supply ³⁰ is essentially an utopia in which ultimate communes will have come into existence. The state in such a case would have withered away. But the solution is not really that anarchic. The subtleties become apparent when the proposed strategy is said "to be particularly interested in the provision of market surrogates, in improved opportunities of control over institutions, in supplementary and supportive system of applicant organization and in the end an increased capacity of people to handle their access situations by understanding them and by having authority and resources to decide about them".³¹ But will market acts as monitors of equity?³²

Can market surrogates be provided for discrimination between need and demand? Who will provide opportunities of greater control to the victims-the political, bureaucratic or academic elite? Will not the social analyst recognize, "it is difficult to take account of the circumstances of vulnerable people in policy-making

30 Schaffer B and Geoff Lamb 1981 Can Equity be organised? UNESCO and Gower, UK, pp 108

31 Schaffer and Lamb, 109.

32 Gupta Anil K 1984 Why Don't we learn? IIM Working Paper No. 542 Paper invited for National Seminar on Community Participation and rural development, University of Delhi.

processes without either being utopian about policy or turning them into 'target groups' It is difficult (also) to escape from sectoralization of policy with all the cramping consequences..."³³

The solution to overcome these difficulties is to recognize that public policy is an outcome of chances of purposes and accidents³⁴

Is it really so ? Was bank nationalization really an accident ? Or systematic efforts in rural credit policy to discriminate against poor dry farmers and labourers also an accident ? Whether similar public distribution system and policy for essential commodities for differentially vulnerable regions also was accidental ? How do we conceptualize the logic behind public policy of establishing sedentary organizations in regions where most poor are mobile (seasonal migrants) and where, at least for half of the year, households are headed by women or old people or even infirm ? There can be equally large number of policies which might have been truly accidental. But to suggest that explanation as the dominant mode of mainstream public policy making is to considerably dilute the effect of dominant world view forming theoretical prejudices viz., growth centre, 'diffusion of innovation', 'model of bureaucratic neutrality', 'betting on the best,' target

33 Clay and Scheffer 1984: op cit. 192

34 Ibid.

group or Basic Need approach, etc. 35

While we don't believe in tempting but fragile conspiracy theories explaining consistent biases in policies, we must mention unhesitatingly that there exists enough evidence to suggest that academists legitimize, through their discourses, continued hegemony of many theories that generate anti-poor policy alternatives. To convert problems of political choices into those of administrative reform or management efficiency is one way of doing it. The translation of structural and design problems into the problem of bureaucratic behaviour, attitudes and incentives is another example. To conceptualize bureaucracy as a homogeneous mass guided by similar concerns and devoid of contradictions is still another way of reinforcing the policy-implementation dichotomy. Policies are good and implementation bad is now a worn out cliché, though still very popular. And why is it so popular?

The planners plan and the bureaucracy implements. The rest follows. The administrator turned academists add one more false dichotomy. Top bureaucrats are sincere, committed and concerned but lower level bureaucracy is irresponsible, corrupt and anti-poor. Many social scientists by concentrating their enquiries only

35 Target group approach assumed that it was possible to direct policies aimed at poverty alleviation without changing the overall policy planning context. The basic need model in effect became an apologia for State's helplessness in meeting more than basic needs of poor whereas similar apathy disappears while meeting all needs (basic & not so basic) needs of rich.

upon junior civil servants (because they are accessible and provide data easily) provide large mass of data/evidence on the inefficiencies of system at proverbial cutting edge. The top level policy planning system is given benefit of doubt or is labelled ^{as committed} (using sweeping generalizations) so that heresy becomes the truth. The dogmas become the gospel. What can not be studied easily becomes unworthy of study. Hence the problem.

There are also sometimes attempts to internalize radical rhetoric. One such case is regarding organization of the poor. In developed regions, if services work efficiently, the credit goes to bureaucratic efficiency and motivation.³⁶ In backward regions with low population density, poor living conditions, higher stress, the poor must organize and make demands on the delivery system so as to gets its genuine needs met ! Naivette knows no limits or levels. Where do we go from here ?

We summarise here some of the directions in which future research could make the task of organizing equity or participation in politics of making equity feasible more purposeful.

1. Role of Social Science Research

There is an obsession on doing studies only at micro

36 See numerous studies on Karnal, an IADP district making this point with a very few exceptions e.g., Mathur Kuldeep 1983. Bureaucracy and New Strategy of Agricultural Growth, Concept, New Delhi.

level.³⁷ The politics of institutionalizing inequity at macro level deserves urgent study. One way to do so would be for those who attend meetings at central or state ministerial level or in planning commission to share with wider publics, the games that are played. We will cite three instances to make the point more clear.

- a) As^a part of working group for seventh Five Year Plan on Cottage and Khadi village industries set up by a state government, a question was faced about fixing targets for different trades in different districts. The general tendency of providing equal numbers to maintain false equity was followed.³⁸ When academist member asked for data on tribals and non-tribals engaged in different crafts in different seasons in various districts, he drew blank. Such a data was never considered relevant.

37 Author is as much guilty of this failure as others. However, it was learned recently that "to institutionalize even a small change at microlevel, several simultaneous minor and major changes were required at middle and higher level not only in the organisation or department concerned but also in several other supporting public systems." Also a question was raised "Whether one was expected to act at the same level where the research was being done?" Mathur Kuldeep and Anil K. Gupta, 1984, Action Research for Micro-level Planning: an Self Appraisal, IRAS, L(i) 60-68.

38 National programme of Integrated Rural Development tries to achieve similar sense of false equity. All districts are supposed to have the problem of poverty in same proportion. See Point (C).

- b) In a sub-group on drought-prone areas and land reform set up by planning commission, evidence was presented about the tendency for public resources to get concentrated in non-drought prone pockets of such districts. One explanation was the absence of any risk absorption mechanism in the policies. The result was low demand for public resources from the regions where need was maximum. The final document acknowledged the problem but considered the existing policy trend valid and sound. More of the same became an easy escape.
- c) Likewise, when new policy for IRDP to be followed in VII Five Year Plan was leaked to press, a rejoinder was sent to the Planning Commission. The thrust of the new policy was to provide a link between poverty and population i.e., to have more allocation under IRDP for regions with higher population density. During the first phase of IRDP in 1977-78, the backward blocks had three times the share of developed blocks. On October 2nd, 1980, it was discovered that the problem of poverty was equally important in all the districts. The districtwise allocations were made equal. Came 1984 and the incapacity of concerned ministry to exhaust budget in backward regions with even equal shares forced the pendulum to swing to the other extreme. In the regions where risks were lesser, natural resource endowment

better, growth rates high and (hence) population density also more, the targets were increased. The underlying logic of ease in budget exhaustion (a criterion of performance in the government) was not made apparent. So much so that belief in trickle down or 'modified trickle down' was not used to argue reliance on market forces in developed districts so that state could concentrate only on those districts where these forces were weak or near absent (because of absence of surpluses). The note of the academist invited to working group was circulated to all the members of the group and there ended the story. The policy bias continues. What do we learn from these illustrations? The nature of policy at macro level which militates against the interests of the poor has to be made explicit and counteracted. The risk of losing invitations and consultancies will have to be squarely faced. Data will have to be sought from top policy makers (who generally are very condescending to white skinned social scientists) and refusals will have to be publicized.

2. Hatching the Egg : Making trade-off explicit.

Even if the public policies are not the outcomes of rational, scientific process of listing alternatives and choosing the most viable or feasible one, some choices, nevertheless, indeed are made. And reasons for making these choices are seldom made public. At times an impression is given that the state wanted to incorporate public opinion in policy making. Large scale involvement of academists in consultation for VII Five Year Plan was an unprecedented

case. But participation in incubation was not same as participation in laying the eggs.

There is a need to demonstrate the following contradictions to confront policy makers with concrete alternatives :

- a) In regions with low population density, it takes more time to reach the same number of people; it costs more to set up basic infrastructure and service it because utilisation rate is low: more extension workers are required to provide effective access to any new technology etc. However, we notice the opposite. Standardization in allocation of funds, manpower and resources and absence of discrimination becomes most discriminatory. ³⁹

39 "The idea that administrative efforts must be correlated with the justness of the policies strikes at conventional assumptions about administrative neutrality. Therefore, it is most important to distinguish between a legitimate administrative neutrality, as required by the law of the land, and that administrative neutrality which is nothing more than the wish to avoid moral responsibility for anything beyond task proficiency. That latter proposition is appealing to many, since it relieves them of the need to tackle the difficult problems of right and wrong. Hart, mentioning above, questions the trend of equating, public administration with business administration and suggests bringing moral criterion in central place Hart, David, 1983, The honorable Bureaucrat Among the Philistines : A reply to "Ethical Discourses in Public Administration", Administration and Society 15(1) PP 48, what follows from this is that uniformity of allocations can no more be allowed to pass under the label of administrative neutrality.

- b) The poor people having experienced historical deprivation often don't demand resources. The repeated humiliation is not a pleasant experience for any one of us. Certainly not for the poor. The interpretation of lack of demand as lack of need and therefore still lesser provision of facilities triggers the ratchet of still lesser utilization. Sometimes to provide equity in number of services, the content is changed.

In a primary school of tribal district of Madhya Pradesh a minimum qualifications for/ person to become a school teacher was middle pass.⁴⁰ Surely none of us would like our children to be educated in such a school. Furthermore, the possibility does not arise that the primary schools located near the places where we live will ever recruit a middle pass as the teacher. If such a teacher also interprets his role in the similar vein as the policy makers do, we should not be surprised to find higher dropout rate in backward region. Why do such anomalies with regard to fairness in providing opportunity guaranteed under constitution (particularly after insertion of the word 'Socialist' through 42nd amendment) become non-issue? The solution is not to provide training in motivation to such teachers or let non-governmental organization take care of such a service but

40 Gupta Anil K and Manu Shroff 1985, Learning to Unlearn, CMA-PSG report of an action research project, IIM-A, mimeo-

to suggest that state subsidies for services utilized by better off section of society (who can afford to pay market prices) should be withdrawn. Unless somebody loses, somebody also cannot gain in a resource scarce society. The question is who will lose and how: will markets ever make those who can pay most lose? How do we visualize role of state⁴¹ and help in making the tradeoffs explicit.

Responsibility avoidance in public policy is the key game.⁴² And social scientists and policy analysis are not immune to the temptations that game leaders provide.

There are several other aspects of public policy and given state-of-art with regard to its analysis that need questioning- Socio-econolgical framework presented here hopefully facilitates the tasks of making underlying choices in public policy explicit. Let us not subserve our responsibility behind attractive cliches like organization of poor or a state-less state. Existence of coercion is integral element of survival of a state. Question really is to ensure that this coercion does not work against poor always. Also those who can make sacrifices least should not be

41 Gupta Anil K 1984, Role of Public Enterprises in Backward Regions : Generating Peasants' perspectives, IIM Working Paper No.

42 Clay and Schaffer, 1984 op.cit. Also see, Gupta Anil K, 1981 Monitoring of Rural Projects through Peoples' participation, EKISTICS 291-441 and Abonyig, 1992 SIAM: Strategic Impact and Assumptions - Identification Method for Project, Program and Policy Planning, Technological forecasting and Social Change 22: 31-52.

forced to make these today so that they could be better off tomorrow. Politics of making iniquitous policy choices feasible in the name of a better tomorrow gets legitimacy by those of us who labour hard to demonstrate the insurmountable difficulties that characterize institutional redesign. Those who want to wait till the total structural change in society has taken place also confuse patience with responsibility. Irresponsibility of this patience and ethical dilemma ingrained in generating false dichotomies in public policy and ethical analysis pose serious challenge to concerned social scientists.

Solid- ecological paradigm helps us in the following key ways

- a) Precise interface between three coordinates of rural developmental problem- Space, sector, seasons- and different sections of classes of society can be anticipated. Once the zone of uncertainty is reduced, the responsibility for discriminatory public policy cannot be easily shirked.
- b) Once bureaucracies are conceptualised as conflict ridden and the morality of their neutrality is questioned, the recent fads like 'Bureaucratic Reorientation', 'empowerment'⁴³ etc. become redundant and meaningless. The issue essentially

43 Shields Elizabeth, 1982, Social Development Management: An annotated bibliography, NASPAA, USAID, Washington. There is a growing attempt by several international aid agencies to perpetuate policy-implementation dichotomy by investing huge resources on training. It is hoped by protagonist of such a policy that bureaucracy, once motivated, will transform its role, character and structure.

is to relate macro-developmental policy with micro-allocative policy. The transformation of sectoral outlays into access spaces⁴⁴ is a political process. Bureaucracies manifest, what planners profess.

The paradigm provides the degree of eco-specificity that would be required in allocating bureaucratic resources and getting them utilized. If there are large number of positions that remain vacant in backward region, answer would not be training and exhortations. The price for getting people to work in such contexts would have to be paid. Paradigm even provides the scope for identifying the scope for levying costs to generate these resources.

c) The organization of equity is compatible with ecologically sound and socially balanced policies. The three fulcra of risk, resources and skills⁴⁴ on which relationship between space, sector and season rests, are measurable and thus framework is operational

d) The intermingling of theory and practice becomes inevitable in this paradigm because the reserve of knowledge about logic of traditional risk adjustment devices lies with poor. It is assumed

43 See Gupta Anil K 1980, Transformation of Sector into 'Access' Space, IIPA, mimeo.

44 Gupta Anil K, 1984, Role of Public Enterprises in Backward Regions, op.cit.

that valid meanings to various concepts can emerge only through conflictive, interactive and iterative learning. These meanings are vital to build bridges between the knowledge of poor and ignorance of social analyst. It is through such bridges that communication can take place and realm of public choice can really be widened.

e) The theory of designing organizations that will be amenable to control by poor cannot be developed unless proper conceptualization of environment in which these organizations or bureaucracies have to work has been attempted. This paradigm provides scope of defining environmental parameters in an objective manner.

f) Finally, the issues raised in this paper, hopefully, will broaden the area of intersection amongst different disciplines so that multi-sectoral and multi-level trade-offs in public policy could be properly revealed. Let us not make the poor, who are victims, also the culprit for not making demands on the institutions designed to exclude. Trickle-up of responsibility and trickle-down of accountability will hopefully help in resolving the irony of equity (through uniform treatment of basically different problems), which in turn masks the contradiction between feasible politics⁴⁵ and politics of making choices of poor feasible.

45 The 'feasible politics' i.e. "Politics of waiting and patiently explaining" is strongly disputed here. Abdulaa while arguing for land reform in Bangladesh's context suggests this as a viable alternative social scientists. See Abdullah Abu, 1979, formulating a viable land use, Policy for Bangladesh- What do we need to know, BIDS, Dacca.

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