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**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
AHMEDABAD**

**ACTION RESEARCH ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT
FOR RURAL POOR: THE DHARAMPUR AND
JAWAJA PROJECTS**

By.

T.K. Moulik

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ACTION RESEARCH ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL POOR : THE DHARAMPUR PROJECT*

I Project Background

In 1975 the Centre for Management in Agriculture at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, undertook a five-year programme of action research in rural development with particular focus on rural poor.

Accordingly, the Centre formed a core group consisting of four faculty members of the Institute.

The five-year action research programme was initiated with two broad tasks (see diagram 1):

1. To create through the programme itself a learning space to develop better understanding of the rural situation and explore whether this knowledge could be applied to evolve a replicable methodology of area planning with focus on rural development for rural poor.
2. To (a) transfer the knowledge gained through this programme to those concerned with rural development through area planning approach, (b) gain further understanding of the process of development, (c) develop institutional linkages and organizations to facilitate implementation of the action plan, and (d) act wherever necessary and possible as a lobby and influence for the rural poor.

Keeping these tasks in view, the areas for action research were broadly classified into four categories: a tribal area, a drought-prone area, an area with severe institutional handicaps, and a poverty region surrounded by a relatively prosperous areas. Within these four broad categories of core group as the unit for action planning.

* This case study summarises some of the factual details presented in a detailed report of the experiment in V.S.Vyas, T.K. Moulik, B.M.Desai and Ranjit Gupta, Rural Development for Rural Poor: Dharampur Project, Part I and II, CMA Monograph Nos. 62 and 63, (Ahmedabad, Indian Institute of Management, 1976-77).

The choice was guided by the facts that the block or a taluka has been the lowest unit of planning in the country, that it is generally an economically viable unit at the micro level, that administratively it is a well-defined unit which is neither too small nor too large or unwieldy as a district.

Given these parameters, the first project area chosen was, Dharampur taluka in Valsad district of Gujarat State as a tribal area and subsequently Deogarh tehsil in Udaipur district of Rajasthan was chosen as second project as a drought-prone area. Dharampur taluka happens to be one of the poorest tribal talukas in India.

The specific objectives of Dharampur project were:

1. To identify a package of alternative viable economic activities which can ensure a threshold income to the poorer section of the tribals of Dharampur, keeping in view the natural, institutional and human constraints within which it has to function.
2. To prioritise and suggest the content of action programme for achieving meaningful improvements in the quality of life of the tribals of Dharampur.
3. To suggest appropriate organisational framework and supportive policy measures in social and economic spheres with a view to ensure effective implementation of the action plan so that the opportunities of earning income or improving quality of life are provided to the tribal poor. The suggested organisational framework should satisfy the conditions of economy, replicability, continuity and involvement of beneficiaries.

II Local Environment

Dharampur taluka has a total rural population of about 0.2 millions and a total area of about 0.4 million acres comprising of 237 villages. The taluka is divided into two distinct natural regions: 'talat' or relatively plain low land, and 'dungar' or undulating hilly upland. About 82% of

the total area of the taluka are in the 'dungar' region comprising about 83% of the villages and about 62% of the total rural population. The only town in the taluka is Dharampur which is a taluka headquarter with a population of about 12,200. The town is the trade and administrative centre of the taluka.

Of the total taluka population, 92.5% are scheduled tribes or ad'vasis, 0.6% are scheduled castes, and 7% are caste Hindus or other advanced communities. There are three major ethnic groups in the tribal population of which Dhodias(20%) are mostly concentrated in the fertile plains of 'talat' and are relatively well-off as compared to Varlis (38%) and Koknas (32%) living in 'dungar' region.

About one-half of the 'dungar' region as against one-tenth of the 'talat' region, is covered with forest. Cultivable waste and area not available for cultivation account for another 24% of its area. Only 26% of total land in 'dungar' region, as against 77% in 'talat' region, is available for cultivation. In spite of the fact that there are 6 rivers criss-crossing the taluka, less than 1% of total net area sown is irrigated which is wholly concentrated in the 'talat' region. The main sources of irrigation are wells, rivers and tanks. No effort has yet been made to exploit the irrigation potentialities of the rivers except one big Reservoir Project under construction which is expected to irrigate about 10,000 acres of land in the taluka at the cost of submerging 7,400 acres of land.

The tribes in 'talat' region reside in clusters of houses numerous enough

to be called villages, whereas the inlanders of 'dungar' live in smaller and widely scattered hamlets. The villages are very poorly connected by roads to the extent that as many as 75% of the villages, mostly in 'dungar' region, are virtually cut-off from the rest of civilisation for about 6 months in a year. With the high rainfall average of 90 inches, whatever footpaths developed become impassable.

Barring Dharampur town and 16 villages in 'talat' region, no villages are electrified. All trading activities in the taluka are conducted either in weekly 'hats' (markets) held in 14 villages and in Dharampur town. The weekly hats are held only during fair weather season (November-June). Apart from one artificial leather factory and a few oil processing units located in Dharampur town, there are no industries in the taluka.

Most tribal households consist of a single monogamous family with husband, wife, sons and daughters. Almost all the villages are multi-ethnic in the sense that more than one ethnic group live in villages. There is however very little inter-ethnic social relationships. Even among the same ethnic group, particularly the ones living in the 'dungar' region, social interaction is extremely limited due to scattered pattern of settlement.

Traditionally the village leadership structure is represented by the panch from each clan group performing important decision making functions in the communities backed by social sanctions usually in relation to social issues including wage rates for various agricultural operations.

Leadership is however not concentrated in one single person. It is vested in a number of persons who exercise influence within their respective functional capacities. A number of modern administrative institutions have been superimposed over the traditional framework of leadership which include gram panchayats, credit cooperatives and forest labourers' cooperatives. As a result, there are a number of formal key administrative persons, such as, police patel (law and order functionary), kotwal (revenue functionary), talati (land recorder and revenue functionary), village level workers (development administration functionary). Most often these formally appointed officials use their positions of authority to further their personal power and gains. Quite a few of them have taken to the moneylending business and have joined hands with non-tribal moneylenders and contractors strengthening the vested interests.

The tribals of Dharampur are mostly subsistence farmers. About 69% of the total working population are cultivators, 25% are agricultural labourers and only 6% are employed in non-agricultural activities. Wage employment both in agriculture and forests, is another major source of income. Yet another important source of their livelihood is migratory employment for short duration during September-November and April-June, mostly in such activities as grass cutting, paddy harvesting and mango picking within and adjacent to the district. The prevalent wage rates are Rs 3 for an adult male and Rs 2 for an adult female and Rs 1 for a child. Some of them almost work as a 'bonded-labour' year after year for the same employer because of 'khauti' (consumption loan in kinds) given to them during the rainy season when their own food stock is all but exhausted. The employer not only adjusts this credit by deducting it from their wage but also enhances his profit by paying him a rate less than the prevalent wage rate.

For the tribals of Dharampur taluka slack season starts after the harvest in October/November and continues until June. Paddy and millets claim nearly an equal share in the total cropped area. The role of subsistence-production of foodgrains for family consumption in determining cropping pattern is so great that the tribals generally allocate some land to early maturing although low-yielding and drought-resistant varieties along with simultaneously growing late-maturing high-yielding varieties of the same crop. Thus, the allocation of land to alternative crops is influenced, among other factors, by subsistence, risk and uncertainty constraints. Their practice of mixed cropping can also be ascribed to these factors. Also, the cultivation practices followed by most of the tribal families are extremely traditional with marginal use of modern inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides resulting into low yields. The agricultural produce is mostly sold to private traders in weekly 'hats' characterized by high margin, exploitative weighing and other malpractices.

It is during the slack agricultural period that the tribals, particularly the poorer groups in 'dungar' region, seek alternative sources of income, mainly as labourers in forest cooperatives, road construction, and other activities such as grass cutting. It is also during this period when the larder is empty the poor tribals eat whatever is readily available from the forests. Even then as high as 45% of the poor tribal households have some of their adult members under complete starving conditions for a period of 20-30 days during this period. This severe incidence of abject poverty and other pressing basic needs force the poor tribals to perpetual indebtedness due to 'khauti' or consumption loans from exploitativ

sources. There are very limited institutional credit facilities available in the taluka and whatever facilities are there they hardly benefit the poorer sections. There are no bank credit facilities as no bank has a branch in the taluka. There are 35 cooperative credit societies with membership totalling about 15,000. In 1973-74, these societies advanced short term credit to the tune of Rs 27.20 lakhs, mostly to the well-off large farmers.

Although nearly half of the land in the taluka is under forests, the percentage of workers employed in forest-based activities is barely 0.01. All the forest land in the taluka is state-owned and is classified as reserved forest area. The forest development activities are managed and controlled by the forest department. There are 11 forest labourers' cooperatives. All logging work is contracted to these cooperatives.

The conditions of health and education of the tribals in the taluka suggest that poverty more than anything else is the cause of poor quality of life. Malaria, tuberculosis, nightblindness, dysentery, diarrhoea, worm fever, liver infection, scabies, rickets, ringworm, skin-diseases of all sorts are widely prevalent in the taluka. Leprosy is another scourge. There are only 4 primary health centres, two of them are grossly ill-equipped and understaffed to provide even limited health care services. A vast majority of villagers, especially those in the 'dungar' region, is thus more or less deprived of the existing public health programme.

Although educational facilities in the taluka look impressive, in actual practice and performance it shows a dismal picture. There are 11 'balwadis' (nursery of pre-primary schools), 248 primary schools, 8 ashramshalas, 7 secondary schools, 28 basic training schools and 2 industrial schools. Despite this impressive statistics, less than 10% of Dharampur's tribal population is literate. Most of these facilities are concentrated in 'talat' region, the homeland of the relatively well-off dhodias'. Most of the primary schools are one-teacher schools and 70% of them are located in 'dungar' region. These schools in 'dungar' region mostly do not have any building, remain unofficially closed during monsoon, most of the teachers do not stay in the village and the schools function sporadically at the whim and convenience of the teachers. Thus the schools are turned out to be dysfunctional system for education. It is only the ashramshalas which functions better and also preferred by the tribals partly because of the free facilities (boarding and lodging) provided in these schools. But the number of such ashramshalas is far too less than required.

The extreme poverty and exploitation in Dharampur is surprising considering that there is hardly any programme of national development which has not covered Dharampur. The first multi-purpose cooperative society was launched in a village in the taluka in 1949. Dharampur was covered by the National Extension Service (NES) in 1957. Between 1962 and 1964 practically all the blocks of the taluka were covered as Tribal Development Blocks. Dharampur was also within an Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) area when IADP came to Gujarat in 1961. More recently, Dharampur has been brought under the special programmes of Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and the Marginal Farmers and

Agricultural Labourers (MFAL). It is also one of the 26 talukas covered by the Tribal Development Sub-Plan. Thus, the area has not been excluded from the purview of the development programmes.

The development administration in Dharampur comprises several elements such as the Taluka Development Project, other developmental and regulatory departments of the government like department of forest and revenue and Public Works Department (PWD); local offices of autonomous agencies like the electricity board and the land development bank; and a few voluntary agencies. Most of these agencies and departments have their state-wide structures in which taluka level functionaries generally constitute a distinct layer. The structure of the developmental administration at the taluka and district levels is essentially a bureaucratic structure with all the limitations that such a structure entails, such as, lack of commitment and motivation, lack of overall coordination and direction and finally lack of effective local organization or leadership for involvement in the developmental programmes. These limitations are compounded manifold due to the basic backwardness of the area, hostile terrain and lack of infrastructural facilities.

As a result, Dharampur taluka, as in almost all parts of India but perhaps to a larger degree, has been the prey to the malady of bureaucratic developmental programmes in which backward regions and weaker sections of the society suffer most. This has been happening in Dharampur taluka for the last two/three decades in spite of the fact that annual development budget of about Rs 0.8 million are allocated every year to be utilised by the Taluka Development Project which directly or indirectly controls about 1000 development officials in the taluka. In actual

practice, however, more than half of this budgeted amount goes to meet administrative expenses (salaries, travels, administrative buildings etc.) leaving only about Rs 25 per capita per annum as development expenditure in the taluka, which again in a large measure goes to the benefit of the better-off villagers (socially-economically-politically), particularly the relatively fertile 'talat' region.

III Dynamics : Approach and Methodology to formulate Action Plan

Having selected the area, the steps to prepare action plan for development of Dharampur taluka were identified along with the methodology to be followed (see diagrams 2 and 3). The main thrust of the project was to prepare realistic blueprints for rural development projects in order to fulfill the objectives described earlier and ensuring that they are implemented by the state or other viable agencies.

Approach to Action Plan

The experimenters of IIMA perceived an action plan as one which was more than an area survey or an exercise in decentralised planning. At the very outset it was conceptualized that the action for any developmental programme in rural areas was more often than not instituted at the level of a household or an enterprise. An outside agency like IIMA could rarely organise direct action: it could only influence those who would eventually implement programmes in fields and factories, in schools and health centres, in cultural, social and political institutions. The action part of the action research was to influence the prime actors by appropriate interventions. Among the guiding factors which IIMA group had identified as important for success of such approach were the following:

1. The target group for the action plan should be mainly those villagers who are below the poverty line and the action programme should aim to bring this target group into the income earning stream and to the incomes that are above the threshold of poverty within a given period of time of 5-7 years.
2. The action plan should envisage a critical minimum decisive push to enable the poor to cross the threshold of poverty, instead of diluting and spreading the development programmes too thin over the whole taluka as a symbolic token effort.
3. Since State official agencies are perceived to be the prime actors in the implementation of the action plan, the presence and work of the IIMA group should need to be legitimised at appropriate levels of the State government administration.
4. In order to ensure active participation of people at various levels, the emphasis should be on involving official and non-official agencies, local educational institutions, including local leaders and villagers, right from the planning stage; the objective being that once workable blueprint of action plan has been evolved, these agencies and leaders will assist in the implementation of the project.
5. The action plan should not lead to: (a) further accentuation of the social and economic inequalities; (b) depletion of the natural, non-renewable resources of the area; and (c) complimentary relations of the suggested health/education/infrastructure facilities with the programme of income generation for the poor.
6. The top most priority of the action plan should be on wide distribution of economic benefits among the poorer sections of the area. If in doing so the rate of growth of the area is slowed down it will not be considered an unreasonable price.
7. No attempt should be made to prescribe for each individual households a predetermined course of action. As a matter of strategy those interventions will be preferred which influence the identified group as a whole.
8. The emphasis should be on activating existing agencies and their functionaries to maximize the benefits from the already made human and material investments rather than by passing them or creating alternative, parallel agencies. However, if the existing arrangements are found wanting or are felt inadequate in achieving the given objectives other feasible alternatives will be identified and evaluated.

Briefly, the approach to the action plan envisaged had 4 distinct operations:

1. To identify tasks;
2. To identify agencies and instruments to achieve the tasks;
3. To identify gaps in the present organisational structures and propose appropriate alternatives; and
4. To identify methods of influencing the various agencies for achieving the given tasks.

Methodology of Planning:

Following the broad guidelines of the basic approach to action plan, four successive stages of project planning, each involving a different methodology emerged:

1. Legitimization and Institutional Linkages: In order to facilitate working in the area basically as an external group, and to gain maximum cooperation from the prime actor, official agencies, a process of legitimization was initiated as a first step. At the instance of the IIMA group the State Government appointed two co-ordination committees, one at the state level and the other at the district level. The state level committee included, besides the IIMA group, the Additional Chief Secretary as Chairman and Secretaries or heads of various state departments. The district level committee included, again, besides IIMA group, the District Magistrate (Collector) as Chairman and district heads of various departments including the Tribal Development-Cum-Project Officer of Dharampur along with a couple of extension officers.

The state-level committee met twice within a couple of months from the time the programme was launched. The committee directed all government departments in the state to furnish whatever information needed for the project and also helped in establishing collaborative arrangements with various departments for specific studies needed for programme planning. To illustrate, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Gujarat helped in conducting a household survey; the Soil Survey Department, Gujarat Government conducted the soil survey and prepared technical maps revealing the land use pattern and land capability; the State Forest Department conducted a study on Dharampur forest development according to the design evolved jointly by the IIMA group and the department; and the Public Works Department, Government of Gujarat, provided all information and guidance about road construction, major irrigation work and other physical infrastructural facilities.

Apart from various government departments, the IIMA group also established collaborative arrangements with local institutions such as, a local Commerce College in the district, nearby agricultural university etc.

2. Preparing a profile of the region: In order to gain insights into the social and economic conditions in the area as well as to inject realism into the planning process and facilitate subsequent data collection, the device of area profile notes was adopted. The profile notes contained five inter-related aspects about the taluka, such as physical features and infrastructure, social structure, economic structure, health and education, and development administration. In preparing the profile notes, the methods adopted were participant observation, discussion with knowledgeable local people, readily available data from secondary sources, intensive discussions with voluntary agencies and officials, and numerous visits to villages and discussions with common villagers covering the entire taluka extensively.
3. Identifying the nature and dimensions of poverty and constraints to growth: This involved household surveys, case studies, psycho-social studies through participant observations, economic analysis of on-going and alternative income-generating activities, detailed organisational studies of the existing agencies and technical studies.
4. Evolving Action Plan: The findings of the above studies and profile notes were used for preparing an action plan for the social and economic development of the area with a bias towards the rural poor. In the action plan, the three components, such as economic opportunities, quality of life, infrastructural facilities (road, marketing facilities, service centres etc.) and organizational frame were given equal importance with discriminating emphasis in favour of those sections of the taluka population who were below poverty line (see diagram 3).

The discriminating type of strategy was adopted mainly for economic activities. The taluka population were classified into three distinct categories based on ownership of land, the main source of livelihood. The first group consisted of the landless or those having less than 1 acre of land (21% of the households in the taluka). The action plan emphasised the provision of wage-paid employment to this group through full-time non-agricultural occupations in small and household industries, particularly khadi and village industries and forest based activities.

The second group consisted of households with 1-5 acres of land (60% of the households in the taluka). Apart from agricultural development plans to increase farm productivity, the plan suggested complementary occupations for this group, such as, poultry raising for the households owning 1-2.5 acres of land, and dairying and livestock enterprises for those owning 2.5-5.0 acres of land.

Households owing 5-10 acres of land formed the third group constituting 19% of the households in the taluka. For this group the action plan suggested a strategy to enable their agriculture to develop such that they could get the threshold income from their farms alone. It was considered that any household in Dharampur with more than 10 acres of land and yet poor should be treated as a special case.

The broad outline of the 5-year action plan for Dharampur taluka is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Broad Outlay of the Action Plan for Rural Development for Rural Poor in Dharampur Taluka.

Programme	Financial Outlay in		Annual Employment (in man years)
	5-year	Average a year	
	(in Rs. million)		
1. Physical and Agricultural infrastructure	58.50	11.70	11,166
2. Agriculture and Animal husbandry	15.07	3.01	975
3. Forests	22.52	4.53	3,673
4. Cottage and Forest based industries	7.60	2.09	752
5. Health and Education	21.56	4.31	592
Total	125.25	25.64	17,158

The action plan developed by the IIMA group did not involve extra financial burden on the part of the State Government. It was, in fact, within the limits of the development budget allocated by the State tribal sub-plan. The change, however, was in emphasis on rural poor and priorities envisaged in the action plan.

Apart from emphasising active cooperativisation, vigorous implementation of existing legal and regulatory measures and strengthening of the existing development administration, the main suggestion of the action plan in regard to organizational set up for the developmental tasks in Dharampur was to create a federal body of advisory committee at the taluka level. The federal body was given the name of Dharampur Gram Vikas Sangh representing officials and non-officials. The major functions of this federal body were envisaged as coordination, planning and monitoring, feedback and evaluation and liaison. It would review the progress in the implementation of the existing legislative and regulatory measures and constantly monitor the implementation. The action plan also emphasised that this advisory body should be represented mostly by the disadvantaged group, particularly from 'dungar' region.

IV. Dynamics: Project Implementation

It is more than two years since the action plan for development of Dharampur taluka was prepared by the IIMA team. The basic approach adopted by the outside intervenor, IIMA team, for implementing the action plan was to facilitate the adoption and implementation of the plan rather than directly involving themselves in the process. In operational terms, the role of IIMA group was mainly to act as a catalyst and lobbyist in order to activate and influence the existing agencies (governmental and non-governmental) and their functionaries at different levels in implementing the action plan. Given the extent of investment in manpower and financial investments already in existence in the government development administration, the IIMA considered the official agencies at the district and taluka levels as the prime actors in implementing the action plan.

Being the premiere institute of India and the high esteem attached to it, the IIMA group was in an enviable position to influence the policy-makers at the national and state levels government administration. While the state level coordination committee considerably facilitated the task of preparing the plan, it ceased to function when the Additional Chief Secretary heading the committee retired just when the action plan was finalised. This was unfortunate. More unfortunate was the fact that the committee could not be revived in spite of best efforts partly because of political atmosphere (emergency) existing at the point of time and also due to lack of interest among the state level bureaucracy. However, with constant lobbying, the state high power committee which was constituted much later was entrusted to look

into the action plan and take decisions. Unlike the earlier organised state level committee, the high power committee was purely an official one in which IIMA group was not represented and also Dharampur action plan was one of many other issues to be looked into by the high power committee. This certainly acted as a serious constraint in the IIMA group's capability to influence the government agencies.

While continuing the attempt to influence the state level policy makers through a series of meetings with the relevant officials, the IIMA group used other channels to push the objective. National and state-level seminars were held. The national press published the proceedings and recommendations of the seminars. A full account of one of the seminars was published in a book from by a commercial publisher. As a result, Dharampur project and its authors became known both nationally and internationally. But neither the central nor the state governments took any positive step to include the action plan in the state's Tribal Sub-plan, inspite of the fact that such understanding was reached through repeated discussions between the IIMA group and the authorities concerned.

The district level committee was useful for initiating the sensitization process at the local level. Every visit to Dharampur taluka, which was quite frequent, the IIMA group made it a point to stop over in the district headquarter in order to meet and discuss with the district development officials about the action plan. Subsequently, a district level seminar was organised at the district headquarters with hope that it would generate some pressure from below to get the action plan implemented. All concerned officials and non-official agencies, including the political and social leaders from the district as well as taluka levels participated in the seminar. The seminar generated intensive discussions and some new ideas, which were duly considered in the action plan. But the enthusiasm the seminar created disappeared very soon.

Some of the interventions the IIMA group made through the district level committee to push the implementation were useful. But the gains were far short of expectations. A major problem which was faced in interacting through this committee or even through individual district and taluka officials was the speed at which they got transferred. Since the start of the project there were six district collectors, 5 district development officers and three

taluka development project officers.

Another attempt to popularise and create pressure from below was undertaken by the IIMA group by bringing out a booklet in local Gujarati language summarising the profile notes and the action plan. These booklets were widely distributed to all who participated in the district level seminar and also to village leaders and workers of voluntary agencies in Dharampur Taluka. Despite these efforts, it remained a notional plan.

In Dharampur taluka itself, the IIMA group made a deliberate effort to meet as many persons as possible, such as, the common villagers, school-teachers, government development functionaries from village to taluka level, local or public leaders and workers and heads of voluntary agencies in the area. It was an intensive effort to interest them in the action plan and influence them to implement. The voluntary agencies showed keen interest in taking up some activities. Two agencies reacted quickly by initiating some suggested activities, such as, starting primary school, tree plantation and some forest-based activities. In relation to the magnitude of the problem, however, these actions by the voluntary agencies were insignificant. At the request of one of these voluntary agencies, the IIMA group took a couple of technical experts from the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad to the area to help the agency to promote some local crafts for the artisans. Nothing has yet concretised in actions.

In the whole process of facilitating implementation of the action plan, the idea which received widest support at all levels of official and non-official agencies was service centres. Given the serious constraints of basic infrastructural facilities in the taluka, particularly in 'dungar' region, the action plan suggested setting up of a cluster of service centres to provide minimal facilities in agricultural extension, primary schools/ ashramshalas, public health centres, co-operatives, fair price shop and post offices. All the functionaries responsible for these services were to be provided residential accommodations in the service centres itself. Also it was suggested that service centres should be so located that each would serve a cluster of villages within a five-mile radius, connected by all-weather pucca roads

to the state highways. The physically visible nature of the scheme attracted both the officials and non-officials for different reasons.

Be that as it may, the IIMA group went ahead to choose suitable locations for the service centres using computer programme for optimal solutions. Keeping the objectives and constraints (main constraints were, cost and coverage of the whole taluka, especially the 'dungar' region) in mind, 11 locations were selected. The whole exercise provoked very intense arguments and discussions both among the officials and non-officials.

The local power group coming mainly from the 'talat' region and some officials argued that the first set of locations should be in the 'talat' region for the simple reason that it would be easy to administer and can thus be made successful, which would have demonstration effects. On the other hand, the voluntary agencies argued in favour of the neglected 'dungar' region. In view of the conflicting demands, the IIMA group used computer programme to objectively choose the locations in order to ensure balanced coverage of the entire taluka.

The optimal solution programmed by the computer was video-displayed at the IIMA campus. It was shown to the concerned district and taluka officials, senior state officials, members of the Gujarat State Planning Board and even to the Chief Minister and other cabinet ministers of Gujarat. The video-display seemed to convince the merit and usefulness of the optimal solution. But this official acceptance has so far remained to be elusive in the sense that no action has yet been undertaken in implementing the programme.

Meanwhile, either due to pressure and influence generated by the IIMA group's effort or in a normal course, activities suggested in the action plan were introduced in bits and pieces by the taluka administration (See Annexure I).

Unfortunately these piecemeal efforts, though based on the ideas given in the action plan, cannot give the thrust to a critical minimum level as envisaged by

the IIMA group without which very precious little goes to the benefit of the tribal poor.

By this time, however, the political atmosphere in the country changed (e.g. emergence of Janata Government as a result of 1977 General Election) in which there has been renewed emphasis on rural development programmes, which has been clearly reflected in the Sixth Five Year Plan. Coincidentally, the IIMA group was represented in some major policy making bodies of the new government both in the national and state levels. One of the members of the IIMA group became the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board, Gujarat, another became member of the Working Group on Block Level Planning in the Planning Commission, Government of India² and yet another became member of the Working Group on Tribal Development Plan, Gujarat.

It was through these policy making bodies, the approach and methodology of the Dharampur project was made officially accepted both at the national and state levels. At the state level in Gujarat, it was possible to push forward the model of the Dharampur project one step further by officially initiating similar planning and implementation programme of rural development projects in 20 selected poor talukas. A separate supplementary budgetary provision was made by the state government for these 20 talukas in Gujarat as pilot projects. Dharampur taluka is one of these pilot project areas. It is hoped by the IIMA group that this would help in enhancing the implementation of the action plan in Dharampur taluka.

VI Lessons for Design and Implementation

As in any other programme of this kind, the project has succeeded in some respects and failed in many others in relation to the objectives set forth for the programme. The experience about why, how and where things have so far gone right or wrong can hopefully serve the purpose of operational utility in relation to designing and implementation of future programmes on rural development.

The following are some of the relevant lessons of the Dharampur project:

1. The project illustrates the utility of the approach and methodology adopted for planning for rural development programmes. The strength of the methodology lies in its emphasis on identifying various socio-economic and administrative constraints inhibiting the development of a region or a people. As a planning exercise it also shows the importance of the approach by giving due consideration to the existing socio-political structural imbalance in favour of the better-offs. It suggests strongly the necessity to deliberately focus and bias the development programme towards upliftment of the poor as the target group.

2. Thus, the Dharampur project suggests the imperative need for identifying the target groups and assessment of their basic needs for designing rural development programmes. The use of elaborate socio-economic survey for this purpose is, however, doubtful. In the Dharampur project, for example, massive data were collected through an elaborate household survey which was of little use for planning purposes because it did not add to the insights already gained by the experimenters in preparing the profile notes.* The poverty in rural India is so widespread and conspicuous that it becomes dysfunctional to determine the level of poverty through survey research, which might have some academic value but no operational value for action programmes. This does not mean that socio-economic survey does not serve any useful purpose. It is through such survey work, the outside group can come in close contact with the villagers, familiarise themselves with the area and the people, understand the problems and constraints, and develop rapport and communication with relevant groups of people in the area. For outside intervenors, this process of understanding and interacting with the people in the area is a must as a strategy. What is of dubious utility is collection of survey data following a rigorous research methodology. Intensive interactions of the outside intervenors with the people in the area supplemented by readily available secondary-source data seem to be adequate for planning for action programme.

*Having become wise the IIMA group took care not to repeat this mistake in the second action project in drought-prone area of Deogarh taluka, Rajasthan.

3. The action plan of the Dharampur project was deficient in detailed technical aspect of some specific rural development projects. This was mainly caused by the lack of technical know-how of the IIMA group who were basically social scientists. Being conscious of the deficiency the IIMA group did make attempts to obtain technical inputs from various technical institutions and experts which did not materialize to the extent required. The action plan was therefore explicitly kept open for further technical revision by the IIMA group, which to the implementing agencies later became an easy plea for not initiating the projects. This experience simply suggests that it is necessary to make the project plan for action technically sound blueprints, which can be achieved either incorporating technologists within the planning group or by establishing active linkages and collaboration with the relevant technical institutions.
4. After much deliberations, the IIMA group decided to act as a catalyst/lobbyist and influencing/facilitating force rather than directly involving themselves in implementing the action plan. The Dharampur experience suggests that the role of outside intervenors like IIMA group as influencing/facilitating force is most effective at the state and national levels of policymakers rather than at the field level of functionaries, particularly the government functionaries who, the IIMA group assumed, should play the role of prime actor in implementing the action plan. The hierarchical structure, line of command, accountability, rigid rules and procedures, physical target-orientedness, too much concern about promotion and self-career development rather than development of the poor, security-orientedness leading to collusion with the existing exploitative power structure and above all, lack of dedication and attitude, make it extremely difficult for a group of outside intervenors to influence the field level functionaries in implementation of an action plan of the kind suggested by the IIMA group. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that at the implementation level there are a vast number of functionaries and agencies in vast variety of fields with varying interests and qualities.

5. The Dharampur project rightly identifies the serious limitations and inadequacies of the existing government development administration and non-official agencies in implementing an action plan for uplifting the rural poor. The project clearly suggests that apart from the pressure from the top policy-makers and administrators, a critical minimum pressure needs to be generated from below without which action plan will remain merely as a planning exercise. The pressure from below to ensure proper implementation of rural development programmes for rural poor can be achieved only through organising the poor. The Dharampur project suggests the process of organising the poor around economic activities which will bring immediate benefits to them. It also suggests involvement of the poor in decentralised planning, execution and monitoring as a process of organising the beneficiaries. However, the Dharampur experience is a clear indication that for the existing official development administration this time-consuming process work for organising the rural poor is difficult to perform; at best it can play a supportive role. This suggests the necessity of outside intervenors to take up the most critical function of organising the poor at the local level using development administration as a supportive mechanism as and when necessary.

Annexure 1Activities In Progress in Dharampur
Taluka (1977-78)

Sr. No.	Executing Agency	Activity	Details of Activity
1.	Zilla Panchayat & Project Administration	Service Centres	The following 10 villages have been selected for the purpose of developing service centres: Kaprada, Bilpudi, Bopi, Gundiya, Vadoli, Sutharpada, Pindwal, Balchondi, Jangabhan and Ganveri.
2.	Zilla Panchayat & Executive Engineer	Roads	a) The following approach roads to growth and market centres are being constructed Vardha-Mandwa-Rohiyal - 3.20 Km Girnara-Malghar - 2.00 km Umarpada-Gadvi-Tukwada - 2.00 km Rs. 3 lakhs b) Missing links, culverts, earthen work on the following road is in progress: Dharampur-Bildha Rs. 50,000 Umarpada-Wadi Rs. 50,000 Dharampur-Pangarbari Rs. 50,000 Dharampur-Nasik Rs. 50,000 Awadha-Hanmatmal-Sildha Rs. 150,000
	Taluka Panchayat School Bldg.		a) Primary school buildings at the following villages were completed:

Sildha, Khidki, Sadadvera, Maduri, Bildha, Asalkanti, Ambossi Bharwadi, Mamma Bhatta, Pandhav Khedi, Sonder, Murdal, Moti Palsan.

b) Balwadi buildings at the following villages were completed:

Managmal, Rajpuri Talat, Khattana, Panas, Moti Vahiyal, Sukhala, and Kangri.

c) Sanctions for 13 more Balwadi buildings have been received and work is to be completed by the end of the financial year.

4. Dept of Agri & Taluka Panchayat Kyari Land

190 acres of land was converted into kyari land.

Taluka Panchayat granted subsidy of Rs.400 per acre to the cultivators undertaking such activity.

5. Taluka Panchayat Dairy

a) Cooperative milk societies at the following villages have started functioning and the milk is collected by SUMUL.

Virval, Bhansadara, Dharampur.

b) Cooperative milk societies at the following villages have also been registered:

Bilbudi, Baroliya, Motaponda and Nav Bhamba.

c) Marginal and small farmers were sanctioned a subsidy of Rs.1200 per buffalo. Under SEDDA & MFAL Dena Bank, Dharampur, provided financial assistance.

6. Project Administrator Adult Education
Adult education classes in 19 villages have been organised with the help of local educated youth, who are paid a stipend of Rs.100 per month. Of these 19, 15 are managed by voluntary organisations and 4 by Taluka Panchayat. Target is for 100 places.
7. -do- Education for most backward tribe
At Village Ozer special attempts have been made to enroll children of school going age belonging to Kolcha tribe. The parents of the child are awarded Rs.5 per week. Fifteen children have been enrolled so far.
8. Taluka Panchayat & Project Administrator Cooperative Society
a) Farmers' Cooperative Service Society at Kaprada and Large Agricultural Multi-Purpose Society (LAMP) at Sukhala have started functioning.
b) About 1000 qtls of paddy was purchased by District Marketing Federation against the target of 3000 qtls. Cooperative Bank, Valsad financed.
9. Project Administrator Poultry
Billimora Poultry Cooperative Society would be opening a centre at Dharampur for providing veterinary services, feed and purchase of product. Tribal Development cooperation would finance for 2 poultry units (one unit consisting of 50 birds) to the persons in the interior i.e. 15 kms.

aw

away from Dharampur. The transport cost from place of units to Dharampur would be borne by TDC. About 100 units would be financed.

10. Forest Department

Plantation and Protection

a) Agave plantation along 100 kms and Eucalyptus plantation in about 15 hectares were completed.

b) Soil moisture conservation activity was completed in about 250 hectares.

c) Work towards social forestry has also been initiated.

d) Vanrakshak Dal (forest protection group) utilising the services of local youth in proposed to be organised with the objectives of protection, conservation and plantation of forests. Each such volunteers would be paid an amount of Rs.6 per day while on duty. About 100 such volunteers would be selected.

e) Department proposes to provide seeds to private individuals who agrees to raise nurseries and purchase the same at ten paise per seedling. A person thus raising about 2000 seedling would be able to earn Rs.200 per annum.

11. Bank of Baroda

Opening of the Branch

Village Sutharpada has been selected for opening of Bank of Baroda Branch. Forest Labour Cooperative Society would rent out its building.

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1. Ranjit Gupta (ed.) Planning for Tribal Development, (New Delhi: Ankur Publishing House, 1976)
2. Report of the Working Group on Block Level Planning (Delhi: Planning Commission, Government of India, 1978)



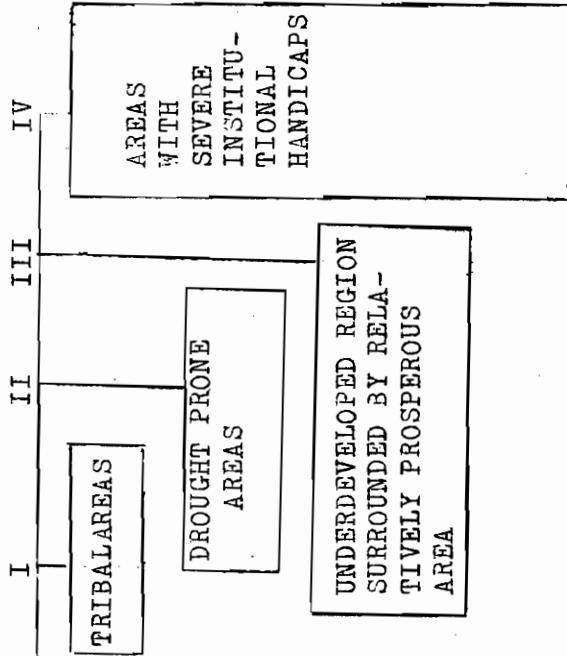
- 1 Evolving a methodology of area planning
- 2 Preparing action plan with focus on 'rural development for rural poor'
- 3 Facilitating implementation of action plan by influencing prime actors through appropriate institutional linkages and intervention

OBJECTIVES
OF
ACTION PLAN

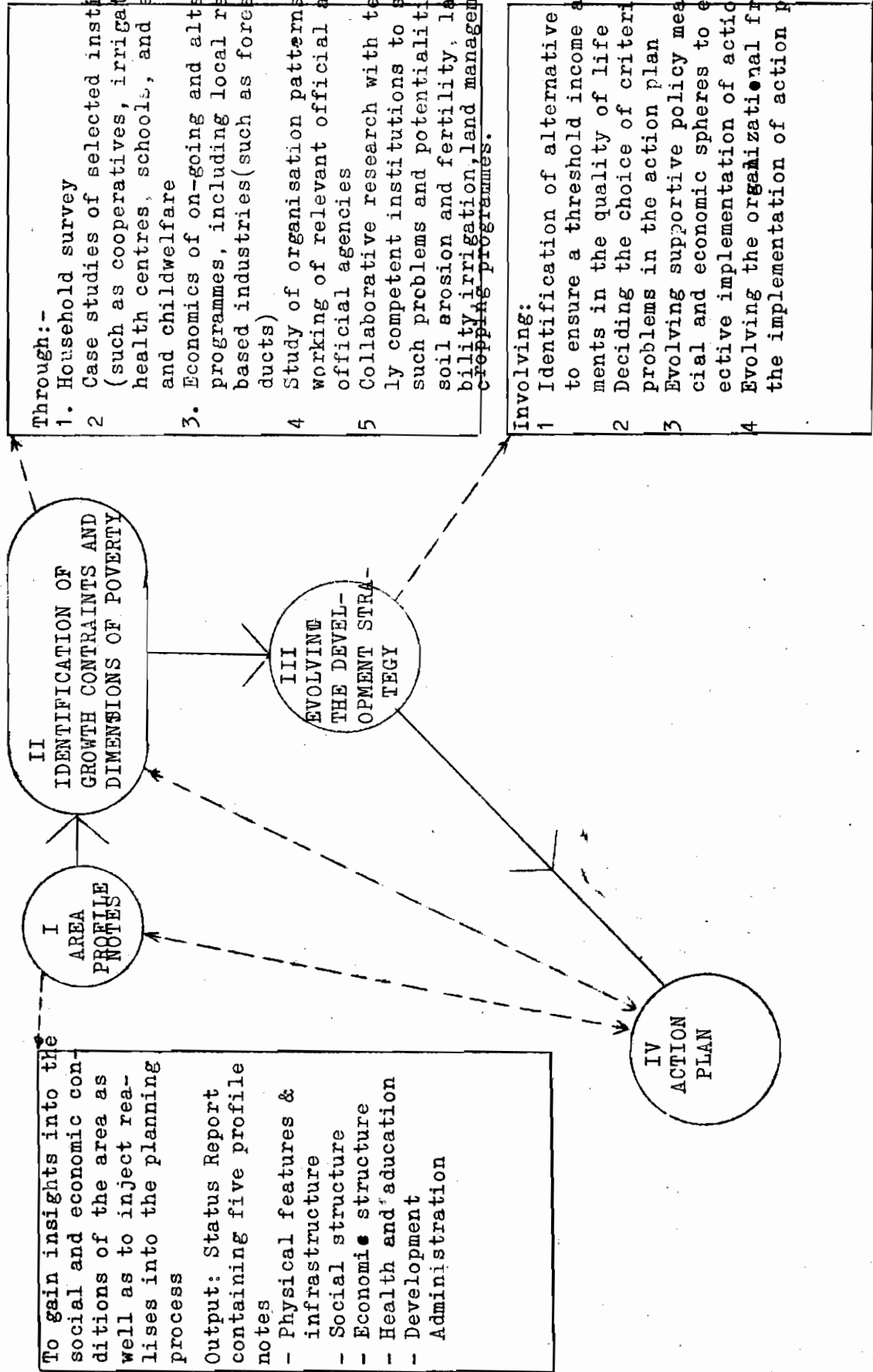
1. Ensuring a threshold income to the rural poor
- 2 Ensuring improvements in the quality of life of the rural poor
- 3 Suggesting appropriate organizational patterns capable of achieving the above objectives through involvement of beneficiaries

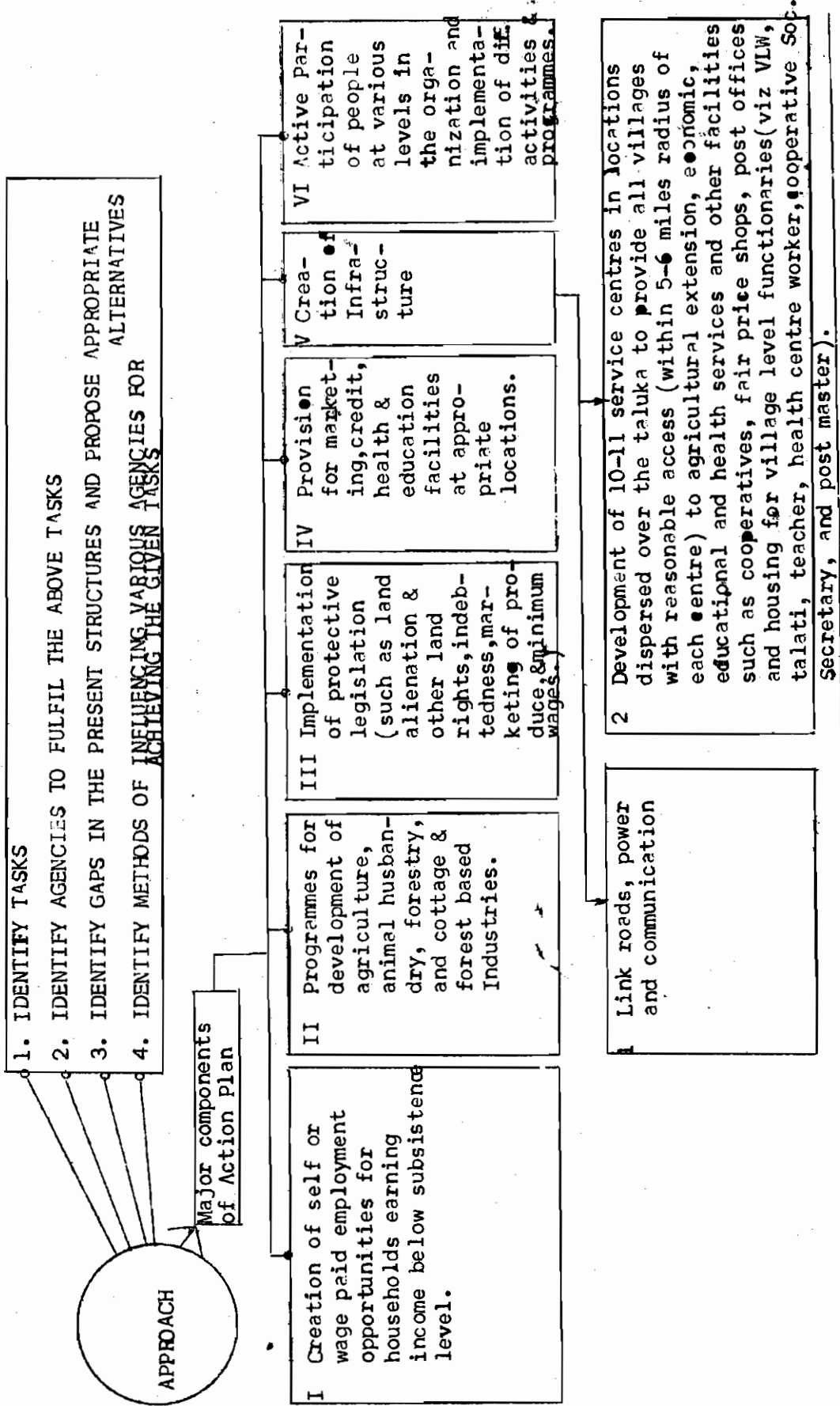
FOUR PHASES OF THE ACTION PLAN

TYPOLGY OF
POVERTY-STRIKEN RURAL REGIONS



METHODOLOGY OF AREA PLANNING:





THE RURAL UNIVERSITY : JAWAJA PROJECT

I Project Background

Jawaja Project was sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, which sanctioned a grant of Rs 50,000 in April 1975. Professor Ravi J Matthai of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) happened to be the Chairman of the two groups set up by ICSSR, on "Education" and "Rural Development" in order to suggest guidelines for the development of research in these two fields of national priority. Both the groups emphasized the need for field experimentation with change in action. It was also felt by these ICSSR groups that the experiments in change should have additional emphasis on the process of change in education rather than content, structure and timing of change.

Professor Ravi J Matthai, the initiator of Jawaja Project, first conceived the experiment in terms of change in a State educational system.

Since rural school system was the largest part of the educational system most in need of change, the experiment was planned to be concentrated in this part of the system. The change in rural school system was assumed to mean the school's relevance to the process of rural development in the sense that the experiment would attempt to influence the school system directly to become involved with rural development and simultaneously influence the elements involved in rural development to make demands on the rural educational system. In order to create such synergic relationship between the school system and rural development, it was decided to start new economic activities or new aspects of existing economic activities

in the project area. These economic activities would be the nucleus on and around which the individuals and community learning was hoped to be built, which in turn would be linked to the formal school system by the involvement of the school teachers.

With the basic idea about the experiment in view, three professors of IIMA including Professor Ravi J Matthai chose Jawaja Panchayat Samiti (Block) of Ajmer district of Rajasthan as the first of a series of experimental project areas. Jawaja block appeared to be the most backward block that could be found in the district. The field work for the experiment started in August, 1975 and the first activity commenced in December, 1975. Broadly the experiment started with the aim to work towards influencing change in the school system through economic activities with the emphasis on the development of people, particularly disadvantaged weaker sections, to manage their own affairs and to organise and guard themselves against exploitation. The experiment was called, "The Rural University" not in the formal sense, but to emphasise the circumstances and possibilities of universal learning. The specific objectives and assumptions of the experiment were:

1. All activities as far as possible should be based on local physical resources.
2. The ideas should be generated by the villagers themselves with the experimenters acting as catalysts.
3. The activities will be decentralised as far as possible in order to involve as many people as possible.

4. The capital intensity in each activity should be as low as possible so that the main constraints on the production in the area will be the number of trained people. If the educational system can be encouraged to take on this role then it becomes the supply of skills and hence a direct integral link with the overall development of the area.
5. The activities aim at adding value as far as possible and feasible to the basic local resources which added value will be retained by the villager.
6. The villagers must learn to become self-reliant and manage these activities themselves. This is part of the educational process through which they go.
7. The project aims not so much as replicability as extensibility. The pattern in one block will not be reproduced as such in another block. The aim is for the villagers themselves to act as catalysts in spreading the activity to a wider area.
8. Two aspects of education are involved. Firstly, in the course of developing new activities the villagers will learn the technical, managerial and social aspects of that activity. Secondly, the link between the developmental activities and the formal educational system will be the school teacher and attempts are made to organise the teacher to take an active role in the developments.
9. A part of the overall endeavour is also to get the villagers, teachers, local government officials and the political system working together and for this attempts are made to establish new relationships within and between these groups.
10. It is the intention of the experimenters to avoid the use of State Government funds. Activities are therefore to be developed from autonomous resources and financial institutions.
11. In order to work effectively in the State, it is necessary for the experimenters to legitimise their presence in the area. This legitimisation, both political and administrative should be obtained at the State level, the district level, at the tehsil and the block.

II Local Environment

Jawaja Panchayat Samiti has its panchayat headquarters at Jawaja village located in the middle of the block on the national highway No. 8. The largest and only town Beawar is situated within Jawaja block about 30 kms.

away from Jawaja village on the national highway no. 8. Beawar is connected by meter gauge train line on the Ahmedabad-Delhi route. It is about 70 kms. south of Ajmer and just under 500 kms. north of Ahmedabad. Beawar is the tehsil headquarters and administratively or politically come under the Jawaja Panchayat Samiti.

The Jawaja block consists of 34 panchayats, each covering 2 to 13 villages depending on the size of the villages. The land in many parts of the block is so arid that cultivable areas are scattered resulting growth of scattered settlements around the arable land. The block consists of 192 villages and hamlets with a total population of 85000.

The southern half of Jawaja has very little arable land. Most agriculture is concentrated in the northern half of the block towards and around Beawar town. The available arable land in the block is about 1/3rd of the block's total acreage, the rest being rocky and uncultivable. About 1/7th of the area of the block is irrigated by tanks and open wells.

The bulk of the population would claim to be farmers though amongst the smallest farmers there is likely to be a majority which are multi-occupational. They are often artisans such as weavers, kumhars (potters); stone cutters, leather workers, etc. The land holdings of such people are usually less than $\frac{1}{2}$ acre. The average landholding for the whole block would be in the region of less than an acre. There is a sizeable livestock population of doubtful quality concentrated mainly in the central and northern part of the block. There are approximately 38,000 sheep, 12,000 goats, 30,000 cattle, 6,500 buffaloes and 300 camels. The main grain crops grown are bajra, maize, jowar and wheat. The main vegetables grown in the area, again in the northern region, are tomatoes and chillies.

Of the total 192 villages, only 28 are electrified. Only 18 of these have electrical pumpsets and out of these only 4 have more than 10 pumps. The use of electricity is highly concentrated in a few hands and in some cases where there are no pumps it's only use is in the Sarpanch's house and in the most prosperous shops. The cultivable area is mostly irrigated from tanks and open wells of which, 70 to 80% become dry when the rains fail, which, again, is more often than not. The few good wells are invariably owned by the large farmers.

Because of the topology of the land the entire area is either drought or flood prone. Until 1975, there had been 5 years of drought consecutively and in 1975 and 1976, the entire area flooded by heavy rainfall. To the poorer section of the villagers, however, it did not really matter whether it rained or not, because they starved anyway.

Each village panchayat has a Sarpanch. By far the largest majority of Sarpanches are Rawats by caste, whether they be Hindu or Muslim Rawats. The few remaining non-Rawat Sarpanches are Mahajans/Jains. Elections are last held eleven years ago. Most caste have caste panchayat, which, in terms of the control over individual or group behaviour, seems far stronger than the formal political panchayats. The Raigars (leather workers caste), for example, have their own caste panchayat as a part of the larger social movement for the social upliftment of the Raigars, outside the formal Panchayati Raj System.

In the area, the Rawats are the largest farming community. In some cases Rawats also trades and lends money apart from Mahajans/Jains. All the

Sarpanches are relatively large land owners. The political leaders of the area therefore, are, in the main, large farmers, large farmers-cum-moneylenders-cum-traders or banias-cum-moneylenders. The economic and political foci of power are all but consonant and directly or indirectly control, or have substantial control over three major factors, finances, marketing and the ownership and distribution of capital. They and their closest supporters will own or control most of the arable land and the water. These foci of economic and political power control the disposal of the various village products and produce of artisans and small farmers in an extremely exploitative manner either through crop-sharing system, or indebtedness directly to the moneylenders or through the co-operatives forcing the sale of products in advance or after harvest.

The word 'co-operative' is a dirty word in the area, particularly to the poorer sections due to extremely unhappy experiences in the past. There is a Co-operative Marketing Society at Beawar which is the Tehsil Apex Society and acts as a village input distribution agency only, i.e. distribution of essential and controlled commodities such as, fertilizers, kerosene, etc. Most of the societies are input co-operatives and credit co-operatives. The political and economic power systems dominate the management of these co-operatives benefitting themselves and their supporters at the cost of the poorer members of the society. There are persistent complaints against the co-operatives by the poorer sections about misuse, mis-allocations and artificial shortages.

There was one production cooperative in the handloom sector. The President of this cooperative, who is a major local bania-cum-moneylender, used the loom-shed and the looms, which were given free by the government about ten years ago, as his private property. This cooperative is now non-functional for all practical purposes. Similarly, twelve years ago there was an attempt by the Government to stimulate a leather cooperative and a tannery was built by the Government. Apart from the fact that the training arranged at the time by the Government was technical disaster according to the villagers, everyone's tanned leather began disappearing from the cooperative overnight. In a very shortwhile tannery collapsed and all the members, except a couple, lost a considerable amount of money.

Socially and economically Beawar town plays a very significant and entrenched role in the total environment of the Jawaja block. Beawar is the main town in the area with a population of about 60,000. It is a growing prosperous commercial centre for village inputs and outputs covering an area far beyond Jawaja block. The social and economic links of the surrounding rural areas with Beawar town are very strong. On frequent festival days the town is overrun with villagers from over 40 kms. away.

Beawar also attracts the job seekers from the villages. There are 3 cotton mills and one woollen spinning mill, numerous small scale industries, a couple of quartzite and feldspar processing plants, a private dairy etc. It is a major loading and resting place for road transport on the Delhi-Bombay run via. Ahmedabad. Apart from this there are the very large number of shops and mandis. The fact that Beawar is the tehsil headquarter

makes it a seat of government administration with headquarters of various state and central government departments.

The helpless dependence of the villagers on Beawar town is made absolute by the strong link between the traders of the town and the villages. The bania-cum-moneylenders in the village and the larger farmers maintain a very close relationship with the traders in town, which is reinforced by the agent-intermediaries of the town merchants. As a result, the rural poor, - small farmers, craftsmen and labourers, - are used by these exploitative town - merchants as the captive resources for the commodity-businesses and cheap labour.

The administrative system of the Jawaja block is the same as in most parts of India. It was clarified as an animal husbandry area until the recent World Bank scheme came in which resulted in re-classifying it as an agricultural area. There are 10 Village Level Workers and 5 Extension Officers working under the Block Development Officer. There are 95 primary schools supervised by the Education Extension Officers loaned by the State Education Department to the Panchayat Samiti. There are 18 middle schools and 5 secondary schools administered directly by the Education Department with its headquarters in Beawar. All the governmental development programmes are implemented through the block administration. The block administration is generally given targets by the higher authority in hierarchy in relation to all the government programmes and it is the responsibility of the block officials to see the targets fulfilled. In the process, the easiest and satisfactory way to achieve

the target is most often to ensure help and collusion with the existing economic-cum-political structure of the village which defeats the government policy objectives directed towards changes in the economic and social structure. On the other hand, the bureaucratic process of implementation strengthens the existing socio-economic structure preventing the flow of benefits to the disadvantaged weaker sections, for whom the developmental programme is initiated.

III Dynamics: Approach and Methodology

Approach: This is an experiment in learning. Several guiding principles continue to influence the approach that has been adopted in the experiment.

1. Keeping the aim of distributive justice in favour of the rural poor, and taking time as a variable not a constraint, it is assumed that the poor people can be capable of attaining a new balance in the power structure within the existing system without violent disruption or revolution. For this it is necessary that the poor need to be capable of organising themselves, which will enable them retain more of the value they add and will have more effective access to resources in order to get a 'fairer deal' from the existing power structure.
2. It is assumed that sustained rural development is feasible only if it is based on people learning to be self-reliant and to generate their own resources and opportunities. Learning in the experiment involves their own types of organisations, developing group norms of group functioning and many other aspects relating to the processes of group dynamics. The emphasis is not merely technical learning of a trade or craft or a mere achieving a measurable physical target, but a more wider and intangible one focussing on the process of people's development through learning.
3. The experiment is a locator, enabler, provider and organiser of learning spaces wherever the opportunities for learning might exist or be created.
4. The process of learning to be initiated is deliberate rather than inadvertant. Such deliberate learning process at a level that will initiate and sustain rural development is likely to

occur only when the villagers find usefulness in it. The start of such process should be centred upon new and more gainful economic activities, activities which attract the immediate attention and direct interest of the villagers.

5. The Rural University should be concerned with people of all ages, all castes, professions, vocations, but its main initial thrust is directed towards the disadvantaged poor for whom learning can be the base from which they might extricate themselves from the vicious circle of exploitation.
6. In order to make the outside intervenors dispensable, the growth of the project depends on extensibility and mutuality of learning. It is assumed that the number of villagers involved will grow through their teaching each other and that this multiplicative effort will be the most sustained and effective extension of the outside intervenors' original inputs.
7. Since the risk taking ability is extremely low among the poor villagers, it is essential that the adopters of the new economic activities should be given reassurance by the outside intervenors until the villagers gain a reasonable level of confidence. However, in order to avoid creation of dependency, it is necessary that from the earliest stages a balance needs to be maintained between re-assurance and the tensions of problems so that there is incentive to learn.
8. The participation of the governmental system is very important particularly those government servants directly concerned with development activities. The Rural University should try to develop learning situations in which the government servant and school teacher can see or experiment for himself new roles, attitudes, forms of behaviour and in which villager can experience a higher level of autonomy, initiative, self and mutual help.
9. The Rural University as outside intervenors should be flat organization without a hierarchy, a predetermined structure and plan. It has no campus, no office bearers, and no budget. It requires no rules, procedures, sanctions or controls except the self-discipline of the individual that comes with a real desire to learn. It should have maximum flexibility to adapt and experiment continuously as and when felt necessary by its members.
10. The villagers working in groups should be left to build their own organizations and norms rather than institutionalizing the framework of roles and functions by imposing it from outside.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in the project has been a continuous and intensive dialogue between all shades of villagers and officials on the one hand, and the experimenters on the other. From the very start the project is aimed at initiating action projects of new economic activities. No formal statistical survey was done, neither data from secondary sources were systematically collected and analysed. The identification of the poor group, their basic needs and the potential economic activities have all been generated through continuous dialogical process between a large number of villagers and the experimenters. It is through this process of dialogue and continued presence of the experimenters among the villagers, and the action projects, which established the credibility of the Rural University.

Legitimation

Since the experiment of the Rural University has been initiated by the outside intervenors, it was thought that their presence needed to be accepted in the area. Legitimation of the presence of the outside intervenors was considered to be only an enabling process to facilitate working relationships. The process of legitimation was thought of in relation to the government bureaucracy, the political system to a limited extent, and to a number of external institutions concerned with finance (the lead bank in the area), design (National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad), production technology (The Weavers' Service Centre, Bombay and the Central Leather Research Institute, Madras), and marketing (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd., Delhi).

In relation to the bureaucracy the process of legitimisation started even before selection of Jawaja block as the project area. It started with the sponsorship of the project by the ICSSR, Delhi and in organising the initial group to discuss the basis of the experiment. The group consisted of the Member-Secretary of the ICSSR, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Delhi, Education Commissioner, Government of Rajasthan, Director of Education, Government of Rajasthan, and three IIMA faculty-members. A series of meetings of the group were held at Jaipur (capital city of Rajasthan) in which other members of the State education department also participated. The next series of meetings were held at the district level under the auspices of the Board of Secondary Education and the District Education Officer in which headmasters of the schools and block development officers of the district participated. Visits were arranged by the district education officials to some of the blocks in the district for meeting with the Pradhans (Panchayat Block Presidents), some of the Sarpanches (head of the village panchayats) and the Block officers. It was in one of such visits Jawaja block was selected as the project area.

The first written legitimisation of the presence of the experimenters was a communication from the Directorate of Education, Government of Rajasthan, describing the three faculty members of IIMA as a 'high-powered-committee'. Jawaja block was chosen by the IIMA group after a meeting with the Executive Committee of the Jawaja Panchayat Samiti. The legitimate presence of the experimenters was initially regarded with considerable cynicism by the local officials and non-officials mainly because of their past experience of such visits by the government-appointed 'high-powered-committee' which in most occasions had been an exercise in futility so far.

With this burden of cynicism, however, the IIMA group started visiting the villages in Jawaja block. These visits were organised by the tehsil education office, through the block development office. On these visits the experimenters were accompanied by the tehsil education officials, the Pradhan, sometimes the Block Development Officer and the Block Education Extension Officer. Thus, as far as the educational system was concerned, the presence of the experimenters was legitimised from Central, though State, through district and through block headquarters, to the village schools.

As regards political endorsement, it was felt necessary to ensure passive non-interference from the local politicians so that the entry of the experimenters into the villages and using the block bureaucracy were not obstructed. At no stage of the experiment the active collaboration of the local politicians was sought, rather a deliberate attempt was made to avoid any active linkage with the local political system. In order to obtain the tacit consent for non-interference from the local politicians, a meeting was held with all the 34 Sarpanches under the Chairmanship of the Pradhan along with the local M.L.A. and M.P. However, this mode of obtaining political legitimisation was skillfully made use of by the politicians towards their own political end.

At a later stage in the project, the experimenters ensured collaboration with the district and tehsil officials by approaching the Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, who instructed all officials concerned to provide needed assistance to the experimenters. This was required in order to link the project activities with various government schemes controlled at various levels.

As far as the specialised functional institutions were concerned, legitimisation for collaboration with the project was obtained individually in a similar manner. The process of legitimisation starting at the top of these institutions' organisations was followed through to the people at the point of action.

Entry Strategy

Apart from fatalistic apathy and distrustful cynicism about the outsiders that existed amongst the villagers, the problems of entry were compounded by the villagers' sense of utter dependence on the government schemes, the opposition of the vested interests and general lack of motivations amongst the government officials. It was extremely difficult to establish meaningful communication with the villagers and to get them express their ideas.

All these problems of entry, however, became conspicuous while following the steps envisaged by the experimenters as a strategy for entry. The steps were:

1. Visit villages and organise meetings with the help of the 'establishment'.
2. Get the villagers to generate their own ideas of what they would like to do in order to improve their economic condition.
3. Determine the target groups with which the experiment would like to work.
4. Establish a basis for communication with them meaning the villagers expressing themselves instead of telling what they think either the experimenters wanted to hear or the existing power structure wanted them to tell.
5. Locate the 'early starters' amongst the target group.
6. Build up sufficient re-assurance and a sense of confidence in them to start the new activity.
7. Use the experience of the early starters to demonstrate to other villagers the advantages of participation and so draw them into the project.
8. Establish norms of extensibility among the target group involved in the new activity.

The success of the whole entry strategy was largely dependent on generating ideas about the new activities through the participation, motivation and commitment of the target group. The modus operandi employed in establishing the initial contacts with the target group was village meetings organised with the help of the 'establishment'. As a result, these meetings were dominated by the vocal power group and the officials which most often led to grossly inaccurate or misleading or deliberate fabrication of information.

Perceiving the experimenters as one of the government agencies, the first reaction of the villagers, particularly the power group dominating the village meetings, was to use the experimenters as intermediaries between them and the government for large scale infrastructural inputs (e.g. a canal costing anything between Rs 5 to 7 million, roads, industries) or for easy unqualified loans. In fact, after three rounds of discussions both at the block and village levels, a list of 26 new economic activities were generated. There was nothing wrong in the list given the physical and human resources of the area. What was wrong was the fact that these ideas about new economic activities came mainly from people who would not be involved in the action.

Because of the basic weaknesses in the entry strategy it took a much intensive interaction between the experimenters and the villagers over a long period of 6 months in order to identify the target groups and new economic activities. In the process three new economic activities, weaving, leather work, and tomatoe growing and marketing were identified. Through the establishment of these new economic activities with small groups of villagers, the Rural University achieved the entry with credibility and trust.

IV Dynamics: Project Implementation

In implementing the project, the Rural University has not yet institutionalized a formal organisational set up in order to maintain flexibility, creativity and a spirit of experimentation amongst its members. There are 4 equal partners in the flat, non-hierarchical and non-institutionalized set up as depicted in the figure 1.

One of the key members in the whole set up has been the independent volunteers, - a group of fresh and young graduates of Indian Universities who volunteer to participate in the experiment for certain period of time (usually 1 to 2 years). These young volunteers are neither formally appointed nor do they get any salary. They get a stipend to cover their essential expenditure (Rs 600 per month). The number of independent volunteers is not fixed; it varies at different points of time. At the initial stage, for example, the project started with only one independent volunteer (an ex-student of IIMA) who was joined later by three more young students for some period of time. Presently the project is left with only one independent volunteer. These volunteers are the key functionaries in the sense that they live in the villages and work both as catalyst and activist as a whole timer in the project, while other members of the Rural University are not whole timers.

Given the organisational framework of the Rural University, implementation of the project started with weaving activity followed by leather work, tomato growing and marketing, forestry, dairy and non-formal education.

1. Introduction of weaving

Livestock (sheep and goat) is one of the important local resources in the area. For many poor villagers, sheep rearing and raw wool production are crucial economic activities for livelihood. Over a period of time, Beawar town has grown into one of the major raw-wool marketing centres in the whole country. As a result, weaving has developed as one of the important occupations for many people in the area, both in the organised and unorganised sectors. Traditionally, weaving has been the occupation of a particular caste group in the villages. Economic pressure, however, forced many villagers outside the weaver caste group to move to weaving occupation, mainly as wage-labourer in the organised sector. On the other hand, the decentralised weaving activities in the villages are characterized by extreme exploitative system. Even in their own looms, most of the weaver-villagers are practically wage-labourers for the moneylender merchants who control the essential functions of finance, raw material supply, technology and marketing. The average wage of such weavers is Rs 3-4 per day for a certain period of the year depending upon the convenience of the moneylender-merchants. Most part of the value addition in the process of production and marketing of the woven materials are consumed by this intermediary moneylender-merchant group rather than by the unorganised village producers. These observations weighed heavily on the experimenters in choosing weaving as one of the economic activities for the poor villagers.

Having decided about weaving as the potential economic activity, the experimenters went about locating the villagers who would volunteer to start the activity and thus become the 'early adopters'. The first

village selected for introducing the activity was the one which had a defunct production-co-operative of weavers under the exploitative control of a moneylender-merchant. This moneylender-merchant had obstructed the entry of the experimenters by threatening to terminate all economic relationships with the local villagers who would work in the project. After a repeated and long dialogue stretched over a period of time and with the help of the local village-level worker (VLW) in his individual capacity, (not officially), two young villagers were identified who volunteered to give a try to the new economic venture in spite of the threat of the money-lender-merchant. The project was initiated with these two 'early adopters'. One of these two young villagers was then employed as a temporary daily-wage labourer in a mill at the rate of Rs 5 per day.

To start with, bank loan was organised for these two 'early adopters' "by bringing the bank to them rather than taking them to the bank". The forms were filled for working capital and fixed capital loans. The modernised type of looms were ordered and were made ready and assembled in a couple of weeks with the help of a local carpenter. Two master weavers from the 'Weavers' Service Centre, Bombay came to train them about assembling and working on the new looms. The NID experts spent days working out the designs for the new products. The independent volunteers spent long hours with them on questions of raw materials, costing, accounting, marketing and on the basic objectives of the project.

During the whole process the experimenters established their credibility, in the village which increasingly attracted attention and interests of many other villagers who initially were opposed to the project. Slowly, people from surrounding villages came to know about the weaving project of the Rural University and began to show keenness to join the group. The members of the Rural University kept on visiting villages in the area and discuss with the villagers about the project. Out of keenness to involve the school system in rural development work, - one of the basic objectives of the project to start with - a seminar was organised for teachers to discuss about their possible roles in the project. It was the same keenness to involve school teachers in the project, weaving was introduced in a village when local village teacher showed definite interest to organise the activity in collaboration with equally interested Sarpanch, the exploitative power foci. In the process, Sarpanch's three sons also joined the project. This initial recognition and collaboration with the village power foci created serious problems for the project when Sarpanch's position was threatened by the hardworking school teacher. The problem is still continuing. On the other hand, this was the only instance of active involvement of school teacher in the project in spite of deliberate and continuous attempts made by the experimenters so far.

In the course of a year, 40 villagers covering three villages joined the weaving project. These villagers were not only from the traditional weaving-caste group, but also cut across traditional different occupation-based caste groups. The spread of the weaving activities were achieved

through the principle of mutuality and extensibility in the sense that the early adopters voluntarily helped latecomers in learning all about weaving starting from assembling the new looms. However, given the objective of peoples' development through group evolution and also the constraints of marketing of the woven products, the expansion of the project has been deliberately maintained at a slow rate.

One of the significant aspects of the weaving project was the choice of product lines. Again it was a deliberate choice by the experimenters to produce for certain segments of the urban market in order to bypass the stronghold of the moneylender-merchant intermediaries. It was conceived that due to lack of knowledge about the market of these urban-oriented product-lines, there would be least obstruction and interference from this vested interest group. On the other hand, the choice of urban-oriented product lines has made it absolutely necessary for the members of the Rural University to carry the responsibility of performing the most crucial function of marketing by themselves with minimal involvement of the villagers so far. Serious attempts are now being made to involve the villagers fully in marketing their products.

It took some time for the weavers involved in the project to organise themselves formally into the Jawaja Weavers' Association (JWA). Knowing that the word 'co-operative' entailed bitter past experience and therefore hostile negative attitudes of these villagers, the project deliberately avoided the idea. Instead, the project group and the project itself created certain circumstances which helped the weavers to evolve their own form of organisation.

The possibility of a substantial increase in income-earning capacity of the individual weavers had motivated the weaver group initially to come together. There was, in fact, a quantum jump in the earnings of the weavers, - from Rs 5 to Rs 20 per day. The project group organised fortnightly meetings for buying the products brought in by the weavers in these meetings after thorough inspection of the quality and also to determine the norms for functional problems of finance, costing, pricing, production schedule, quality control and marketing. With the prospect of cash earning right at these fortnightly meetings, the weavers readily responded to the suggestion of group meetings leading to almost 100 per cent attendance.

It was this forum of fortnightly group meetings which eventually led to the formalising the group into an unregistered organisation named as Jawaja Weavers' Association. Some of the important circumstantial factors which necessitated the formation of JWA were: joint procurement of raw materials, joint bank account in relation to working capital loans, production schedule, quality control of the products, group norms about the individual members behaviour in relation to use of working capital, entry of new members, technical and other training, mutual help in times of individual difficulties, joint stock keeping of both raw materials and finished products, joint marketing, and development of product diversification.

In the process of evolution of the weavers' association, there has been considerable amount of hesitations, apprehensions, and distrusts between individuals, between caste-groups, between village groups and between those whose primary occupation was weaving and those for whom weaving was secondary

supplementary occupations. All these problems became sharper particularly in relation to expenditure (e.g. purchase of raw materials) rather than income earning. The problems are still continuing.

On the other hand, the JWA survived the repeated onslaughts of the vested interest group of moneylender-merchants to wreck the organisation. It had also dealt with income earning at an individual level, common problem solving, quality control, mutual helping relationships and training. However, the JWA has yet to become an effective organisation of the poor in two crucial aspects: self-reliance and providing supporting services to the members beyond the economic activities of weaving. In both the cases, the weakness of the JWA originated from the uncertain and weak development of marketing functions of the finished products in the sense that marketing has remained the responsibility of the project group with marginal involvement of the weavers. As a result of ultimate dependence of the weavers on the project group in relation to marketing their products, the JWA has so far been perceived to be an organisational mechanism of the project group rather than their own. Also, due to uncertain nature of the marketing functions, the JWA could, by and large, focus on the day-to-day problems relating to weaving activities and rarely could extend its services to fulfill other basic socio-political needs of the group. A serious attempt to overcome these organisational weaknesses are presently under operation in which the weavers are deliberately involved in marketing their products in all its phases.

2. Introduction of leather work

Leather work is the traditional occupation of the scheduled caste, Raigars. The Raigars in Jawaja block are one of the most depressed communities, both economically and socially. Socially the Raigars are just above the level of Harijans (untouchables) By and large, the Raigars are landless. The traditional income earning activities of the Raigars are flaying dead animals, tanning the raw hides, making and repairing 'jootas' (farmers' shoes), charas (water bucket to draw water from open wells) and bullock-cart harnesses.

As a part of historical movement for upliftment of the social status of the Raigars, the leaders of the Raigar Caste Panchayat banned the perceived socially undesirable activities of flaying and repairing shoes. The ban has been enforced and reinforced among the Raigar community with severest social sanctions. On the other hand, with the increase in the prices of leather goods, the villagers, particularly the landowning farming community, resented the Raigar Caste Panchayat's ban on traditional activities of flaying and repairing shoes. The farming community, who owned the land and water resources, forced the Raigars to do tanning outside the village on the plea that the process produced foul smell. Thus, on the one hand the Raigars were kept out of one of the most paying activities of flaying which provided them free raw hides, shortage of water outside the village made it impossible for tanning operations on the other. The net result was a desperate situation in which the Raigars became extremely dependent on fabrication of village products with the hides bought from the open market, which made the products costly given the limited purchasing capacity of the village consumers in a virtually closed market situation.

The enforced social sanctions of the Caste Panchayat could not enhance the social status of the Raigars even at the cost of foregoing economically paying activities. In the process, however, a few self-styled Caste Panchayat leaders became rich and developed vested interest just as the moneylender-merchant group, while a large majority of the Raigars have been reduced to near starvation situation with a pitiable earning of Rs 1.50 to Rs 2.00 per day. As a result, increasing numbers of the Raigar community were giving up their traditional leather work and joining the swelling force of daily labourers.

The leather work as economic activity was introduced by the project group specifically for the poor Raigar community. With almost identical objective there has been a government scheme about ten years ago. Under this scheme, some of the Raigar members of a village were trained in new methods of tanning which had apparently ruined a great deal of their leather. Also, as in the case of the weavers, the experience of the Raigars in this and surrounding villages about co-operatives had been bitter. The Cooperative Tannery organised in this village had been swindled. Given the past experiences, leather work as economic activity for the Raigars was introduced by the Project group by organising a series of training camps in the area with the help of CLRI experts.

The project group used the Pradhan's position to get introduced to the Raigar community and to ensure attendance of sufficient number of Raigar members from different villages in the training camps. Being in the pitiable conditions, as they had been, the Raigars attended the training camps with extreme caution, apprehension and distrust about the project group. The distrust was reinforced by the presence of the Pradhan, which

made the Raigars believe that the Project group was another government agency. It was the continued persistence of the project group and the CLRI experts for a considerable period of time, the Raigars accepted the seriousness and purposiveness of the whole project believing that something would be done for them.

Over a period of six months, about 20 Raigar households distributed in six villages in the area joined the project on leather work. The evolution of a cohesive organisation of the Raigars went through similar processes as the weavers with certain basic differences. Firstly, the first binding factor used for the Raigar group was not the 'income earning' with assured marketing as in the case of the weavers, but it was based on shared expenditure for joint purchasing of raw materials (hides, chemicals etc.). Initially there was no assurances given by the project group regarding the sales of the output of leather work as there was no definite buyer identified. As a result, it took long time for the experimenters to get the Raigars together at regular intervals (fortnightly) until such time as some assured market developed. By the time some market for the outputs was developed, the prevailing distrusts between subcaste groups within the Raigar community and inter-village feuds intensified.

Secondly, the external linkages used for the leather work were initially the CLRI experts and the Banks, apart from the project group. The level of technical risks and the variable nature of the raw materials required for leather work needed more rigorous control than the weaving, which necessitated continued external assistance and follow up. There has been considerable problem in getting such continued assistance from external agencies like CLRI.

Finally, the Raigars being more backward, poorer and less exposed to external world than the weavers, the evolution of cohesive group of Raigars in the form of an effective organisation has been a difficult and slow process.

Due to the similar reasons of 'functional' convenience as in the case of the weavers group, the Raigar artisans finally decided to come together as a formal group and formed the Jawaja Leather Association (JLA). The mechanism of fortnightly meetings of the Association members was used by the project group to evolve group norms. Again, for the same reasons as in the case of weaving, the product lines chosen for the leather work was oriented to the urban market.

Raigars needed greater reassurance from the project group, particularly in terms of finance, and marketing, and therefore were more dependent on the project group than the weavers. This was inevitable given the socio-economic status of the group, extremely low risk-taking ability and equally uncertain markets for their urban-oriented products. However, in spite of these limitations which had created tensions and distrusting among the JLA members reinforced by the inter-village feuds, the Raigars had demonstrated their willingness to identify with the JLA as their own organisation by helping each other across the villages even at the cost of self-sacrifice. Still there remain considerable amount of tensions and distrusting among the Raigars which need to be overcome in order to make the JLA self-reliant autonomous organisation of the Raigars. As an effort to this direction, there has been deliberate attempts by the project group to involve the Raigars in the marketing functions. The hope is that

some assurance from the market might help the Raigars to build a strong self-reliant organisation which eventually would cater to other basic socio-political needs of the group.

3. Introduction of improved cultivation of tomato and its marketing

Tomato is one of the important vegetable crops grown in Jawaja block. The arrivals of tomato in Beawar town mandi (market place) is substantial to the extent that a few merchants (euphemistically known as "Tomato Kings") do a very profitable business in the season. Tomatoes are bought by these merchants from the farmers in the mandi (advance booking of the standing crop in the field through agents is also practised) and after grading and crating, the tomatoes are finally sent to the wholesalers in the metropolitan markets of Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bombay. In the whole process of marketing through this channel, the growers' share of the final consumer price is negligible. On the other hand, the growers are almost captive in the hands of these few tomato merchants in Beawar town and therefore easily exploited.

Initially, the project group's idea was to work with a selected group of teachers in selected villages to form a Tomato Growers' Cooperative which would own the tomato processing plant which many villagers were keen to see established. The selected teachers and the independent volunteers spent days with the target group in the selected villages discussing about the project. Since it was found that the target groups were not in a position to buy shares in the co-operative, it was decided to organise marketing of their tomatoes directly in Delhi so that the increased earnings could be used to buy shares.

To start with, five villages were selected for the marketing effort in close collaboration with the local teachers. Also a collaborative arrangement with the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) was made to market tomatoes in Delhi. Thus, instead of bypassing the power structure as in the cases of weaving and leather work, tomato marketing was one activity which directly confronted the power structure. As expected, the power structure, that is, the tomato merchants reacted sharply and became hostile to the extent that at one point the project group had to think about police protection.

However, the efforts of tomato marketing failed due to defects in the scheme. The presence of the NAFED and the project group did push the market price up. But the growers could hardly be persuaded to sell their products even if accompanied by agricultural input loans, to the procurement centres set up by the project group. Since the growers were not sure how long this effort would continue, they were reluctant to terminate their linkages with the merchants, who exploited the situation most skillfully, even by sending agents to the villages for advance booking. On many occasions better grade tomatoes were sold to the merchants, while the rejected lots were sold to the project group at the same market price. This was the result of faulty pricing policy of a flat rate adopted by the project group. Unlike the merchant group, the project group including NAFED officials were less sensitive about the changing prices in metropolitan markets due to lack of information system. Finally, when it was realised that the project group was buying merely about 1% of the market arrivals, the merchant group relaxed their hostility.

Meanwhile in the second year of tomato marketing efforts, the project group introduced a production oriented programme by organising the tomato farmers, setting up demonstration plots to introduce new varieties and by arranging bank loans for agricultural inputs. With the help of technical collaboration of an Agricultural University, government technical departments and block office, several demonstration plots were set up and a substantial quantity of improved variety seeds were distributed among large number of farmers. Attempts were made rather successfully, to involve the school system (teachers and students) in tomato production scheme by organising demonstration plots in a school, which, however, created some counter reactions among a section of the teachers and parents.

Unlike other economic activities introduced by the project group, tomato production programme was not specific target group oriented in the sense that it encompassed growers irrespective of their socio-economic status. There was therefore no obstruction from the power structure since it would ultimately benefit them unless the small growers were organised for major marketing efforts as discussed earlier. To this end, the project group is continuing its efforts to organise the growers by interacting with them in groups, while government department provides the technical expertise.

4. Introduction of agave cultivation

Agave is a cactus which can be grown easily in the semi-arid conditions of Jawaja block with minimum care and protection. Agave cultivation is useful for soil conservation and rope making.

Initially, in consultation with the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, a demonstration plot of agave cultivation was organised in a school premise. Over a period of two years the demonstration plot had proven the feasibility of agave cultivation in a wider scale. Accordingly, to popularise agave cultivation, the project group organised a number of demonstrations through the schools. Seeds were distributed to about hundred middle schools by the Forest Department. To make sure that school teachers take initiative, an incentive scheme of cash prizes to the best three schools was recently introduced. While the criteria for evaluating the performance of the schools were set up, cyclostyled copies of technical notes and protection measures for the plants had also been distributed by the Forest Department. The Education Department has been playing a leading role in the programme.

5. Introduction of Dairy

The dairy activity was initially introduced rather casually. It began when the project group got the government agency MFAL (Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency) and the Lead Bank in the area to collaborate in financing the purchase of 11 buffaloes by interested villagers in a particular village. The energetic school teacher (referred in the case of weaving activity) helped in this whole process.

It was this casual initiation which prompted the project group to realise the wider scope of dairy as relevant economic activity, given the existing government scheme under MFAL. Accordingly, Ajmer Dairy was approached to examine the feasibility of buying up the milk from the area. Ajmer Dairy agreed to the plan of the Beawar Milk Chilling Centre purchasing the milk

and insisted on organising Co-operative of the buffalo-owners. Ajmer Dairy also agreed to provide the technical expertise in training the buffalo owners on breeding, diet and upkeep of the livestock. The project group initiated lot of discussions with the target group in the villages and a very enthusiastic response was received. Loan for the purchase of buffaloes for the target group are being arranged in the same manner as mentioned earlier.

Meanwhile, the project group has been negotiating with the National Dairy Development Board, Anand for a possibility to instal a dairy route covering about 11 villages in the area. Again, a school was selected as a demonstration unit with 4 crossbred cows. The milk route is yet to be established.

6. Introduction of non-formal education

Very recently the project group introduced a non-economic activity in the area in the form of non-formal education centres. With the emphasis on deliberate process of learning as its prime objective, the Rural University has long been toying with the idea of introducing non-formal education as one of its developmental activities with active linkage and involvement of the formal school system. Although the processes of economic activities already started in the area are in actual practice the initiation of non-formal education for the target group, there has been no deliberate strategy to widen the scope of such non-formal education. Thus, with the recent announcement of government scheme of non-formal education, the project group decided to take the benefit of the scheme to organise non-formal education centres in the area.

The Director of Education (Boys), Rajasthan had agreed to sanction funds for 20 non-formal education centres in Jawaja block. Unlike typical government schemes in other areas, it has been agreed that no target constraints or standard formats would be imposed and the project group would be free to devise their own experiments. A post of project level coordinator in the senior teacher grade has been sanctioned by the Director as a full-time liaison between the project group and the Education Department.

The project level coordinator has since been selected by the project group in collaboration with the Education Department, the programme of setting up non-formal education centres are in progress. Initially six such centres are planned to be introduced and some in the villages where no economic activities have so far been started by the project group. The experimental design about the content, timing and the target group for these centres are being worked out presently by the project group along with the project level coordinator.

V. Lessons for Design and Implementation

The Jawaja Project of the Rural University shows how people-oriented rural development programmes can be mobilized by a group of outside intervenors with supportive linkages with the government and non-government agencies. It suggests strongly that the effectiveness of people-oriented development programmes with primary focus on learning to be self-reliant and self-generating resources, depends largely on patient and persistent process work by the outside intervenors with the target group rather than the size of financial investments in the programme.

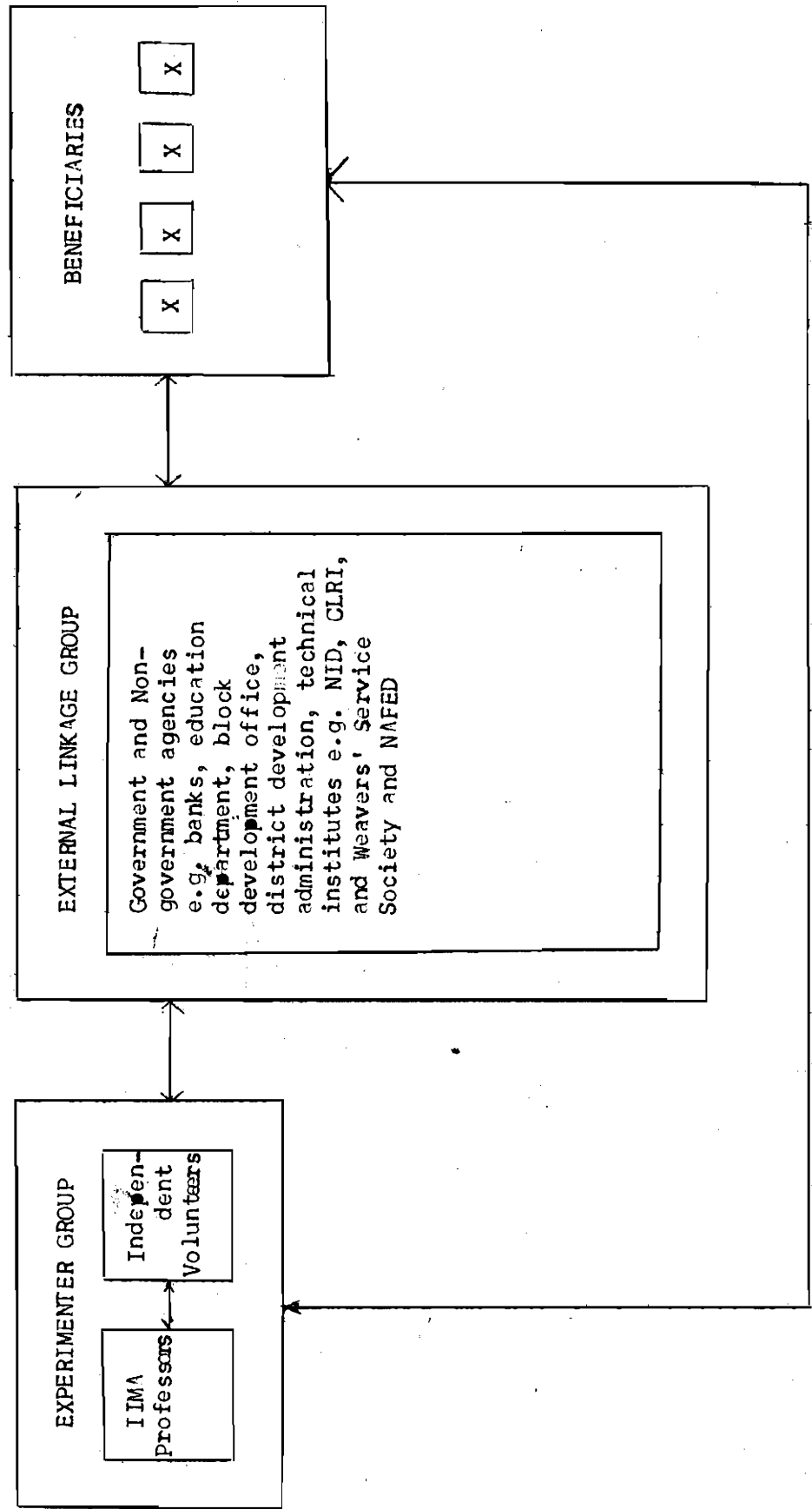
There were some unique features in the Jawaja project which contributed to its success and failure. Perhaps the most important of these was the flexible and experimental nature of the project, implemented by a completely unstructured and non-hierarchical organisational set up of a group of outside intervenors under the broad concept of the Rural University. In addition, the association of IIMA and the national status of Professor Ravi J. Matthai, the initiator of the project, provided the kind of leadership which facilitated the project implementation immensely.

More broadly, the Jawaja Project offers some relevant lessons for future design and implementation of rural development programmes:

1. The project illustrates the futility of a rigorous socio-economic survey in initiating action projects for rural development by outside intervenors. Apart from the cost and time spent on such rigorous survey, the data generated in the process are often misleading. On the other hand, initiating action project on the basis of intensive dialogue with the people concerned not only saves time and money, but also in the process builds credibility of the outside intervenors and therefore creates possibility of generating reliable data subsequently through serious research.
2. The experience in the project suggests that however well-intentioned government policies and programmes are, there are limiting factors in the implementation structure of the bureaucratic official organisations which inhibit the effective execution of policies and programmes, particularly of those directed towards change in the existing social and economic structure of the rural communities. On the other hand, the Jawaja Project demonstrates the feasibility of implementation of rural development programmes through outside-the-government-system agency, but utilising the government policies/programmes and also existing government bureaucratic structure as supportive linkages. The necessary manpower and overhead cost for such outside intervenors are in no sense prohibitive as compared to the total outlay of the existing bureaucratic structure. A couple of committed youngmen like the independent volunteers of the Jawaja Project can easily and effectively cover an area of the size of Jawaja block.

Figure I

Organisational Framework of the Rural University



3. The project suggests the importance of organising the target groups into self-reliant autonomous organisation of their own in order to enable themselves to derive benefits of the policies/programmes as well as to change the socio-economic power structure in their favour. The project clearly demonstrates that organising target group can be achieved only when the basic objective of rural development programmes shifted from time-bound physical target-orientedness to people-oriented learning processes without time constraints. Such a shift to operationalise needs motivated workers, intensive dialogue and group-process work with the target group continuously and persistently as well as a built-in flexibility in the implementation structure. Peoples' development in group learning and group action cannot be achieved through a time-bound programme.
4. The fact that the Jawaja Project initially concentrated on income-earning economic activities suggests that immediate economic benefits through income-earning opportunities are the first binding factor for a viable group to evolve in the rural areas, particularly among the rural poor. Rural development programmes should therefore preferably start with income-producing activities by design simply because of the fact that the most pressing basic need for a majority of the rural population is economic. It is also necessary that to start with the income-earning activities should have to be reinforced by sufficient re-assurances of benefits from the implementing agencies and the re-assurances need to be continued until the target group develops capabilities to handle their own affairs. It is inevitable that the re-assurances given to the target group will create dependency on the outside intervenors and the levels of dependency will vary according to the levels of re-assurances given. The outside intervenors should deliberately plan the levels of re-assurances at different points of time in the course of project development and also involve the target group in actual experience-based learning situations to develop skills, to handle necessary functions of the action projects.
5. The experience in the Jawaja Project suggests some concrete lessons for the entry strategy of outside intervenors for implementing rural development programmes in an area:
 - a For an outside intervenor group, a process of legitimization in relation to administrative/political authorities is useful merely as an enabling process. The process of legitimization should not be mixed up with the process of operationalisation and implementation. Involving existing village power structure or administrative officials in the operationalization and implementation stages tend to bias the target group about the outside intervenors which eventually may mislead direction of the project and delay the process of entry.

- b It is important that in the process of legitimising working relationships with various official and non-official agencies the outside intervenor should properly understand the operational structure of these agencies. Legitimation of such working relationships is entirely inadequate if achieved at the top level and not followed through to the field operation level. Also the process of such legitimisation may turn out to be dysfunctional if the collaborative roles and responsibilities for the participating agencies are not worked out explicitly in details through discussion as the project progresses.
 - c As an entry strategy it is absolutely essential for the outside intervenors to determine the target groups first and then establish intensive dialogue with them directly.
6. The project suggests the possibility of initiating economic activities for the rural poor bypassing the existing exploitative local power foci instead of confronting it. However, this is possible so long as the size and scope of these economic activities do not jeopardise the existing power structure. Confrontation and conflict with the existing power foci in the villages cannot be avoided if the final objective of rural development programmes is to organise the people to assert their rightful aspirations. Also, if bypassing the existing socio-economic power structure means designing of non-traditional economic activities, then the level of reassurances should be high accompanied by the development of various supporting services. Correspondingly, the level of dependency of the target group on the outside intervenor will be high and will continue for a longer period limiting the expansion of the project.
 7. The most crucial factor for organising non-traditional economic activities is the development of assured market for the finished products. Since the products are non-traditional, there will be greater responsibility for the outside intervenor to develop assured market and to involve the target group deliberately in marketing functions as a learning process.
 8. Lastly, the Jawaja Project illustrates the limitation of using income-earning opportunities alone in evolving effective and cohesive organisation of the target group. The day-to-day problems of economic activities, particularly, non-traditional, create tensions and distrusts within the organisation, which compels it to overlook other basic socio-political needs of its members. It is assumed that an organisation formed around an economic activity will eventually respond to other basic needs of its members. This seems to be possible only when the target group is deliberately conscientised about the role of their organisation in bringing about changes in the existing socio-economic structure which will ensure the flow of development benefits to the group.