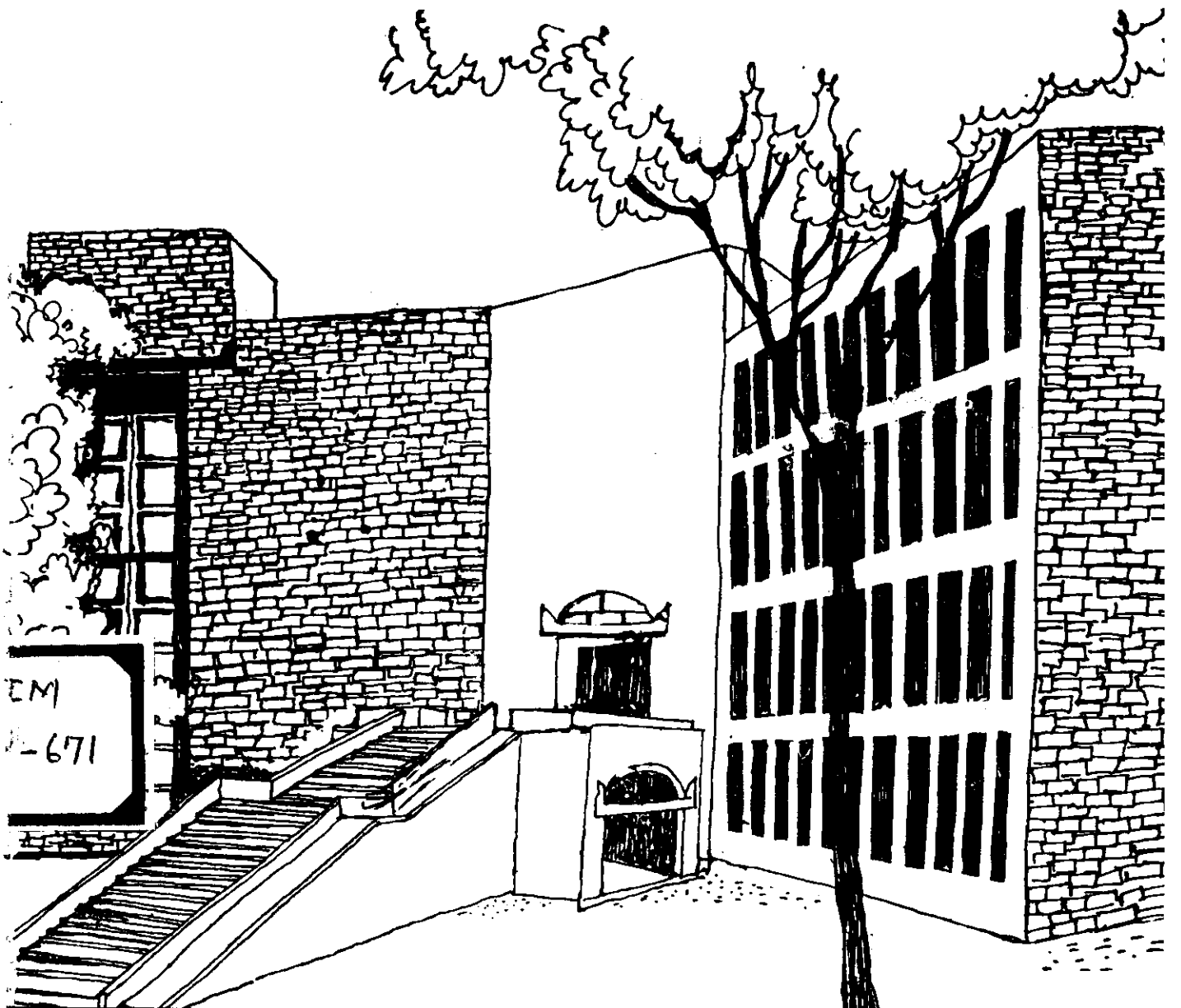




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SOME ISSUES IN MICROLEVEL PLANNING BASED
ON EXPERIENCE OF ACTION RESEARCH IN INDIA

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SOME ISSUES IN MICROLEVEL PLANNING BASED ON EXPERIENCE OF ACTION RESEARCH IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of microlevel planning is operationalized in India through special programmes involving allocation of specified funds over given sectors, space and time. While working with the district and block level administration in planning several such programmes, we faced many situations which require explicit mention and perhaps modification in the discussion of the methodology of microlevel planning in a developing economy. We have broadly categorized these issues into (a) nature and availability of required statistics; (b) alternative approaches, (c) target setting; (d) choice of strategy; (e) administrative structure; (f) identification of target group; and (g) people's participation. These issues are discussed with a view to deriving their methodological implications.

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ACTION RESEARCH IN INDIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of multi-level planning is dependent on systematic and well calculated decentralization of decision making which can achieve the stated objectives without sacrificing consistency. Micro level planning by itself may not be a worthwhile proposition if it is not considered within the overall framework of multi-level planning. This is so because unless the overall planning frame at each stage of regional aggregation is provided, the planning exercise may tend to lose the sight of constraints at the aggregate level and hence an element of inconsistency may enter. To avoid this kind of inconsistency under the existing administrative structure and reporting system prevalent in the less developed countries (LDCs), an aggregate amount of fund to achieve specific objectives within a given period of time is generally allocated to different regional units under what may be called special programmes. Thus, microlevel planning in LDCs is limited under the existing system only to the allocation of such funds over sectors (only permissible), space (within region), and time (within the specified period). Our experience is, therefore, limited only to such a concept of micro level planning since microlevel planning in its broadest sense has not yet been attempted in India. The decision regarding the space for which the funds flow is scarcely with the district authorities or the microlevel planner. The choice of spatial unit is invariably dictated by the central and/or the state government. The spatial unit varies from a village to a watershed or a block depending on the policy prescription for achieving various objectives within the programme.

Almost all the national plans in India so far have emphasised the objectives of (a) achieving the maximum possible growth, and (b) to reduce the inequalities. Although difference of opinion exists regarding the competitiveness or complementarity of these two objectives, there exists a strong belief that it is possible to find potentialities of exploiting complementarities between these two objectives in a vast country like India. But it is also felt

simultaneously that some really good opportunities of finding such complementarities between the objectives may be missed if one is planning only at the macro-level or at too aggregative level. The concept of micro-level planning, emerged to consider this aspect explicitly. Thus, the fundamental objective behind the introduction of microlevel planning in the framework of multi-level planning is to seek the complementarity between growth and equity through the optimal exploitation of the resource potential in relation to specific problems of an areal unit.

In order to organize our discussion of issues, we may consider the following four steps involved in microlevel planning: (a) Analysis of existing situation, (b) Translating objectives into specific targets, (c) Identification of constraints operating within and/or on the system, and (d) Suggesting remedial action to remove those constraints in an optimal and consistent manner. The issues that will be discussed in the next few pages emerge from the above mentioned steps at each step independently as well as jointly. The way of resolving these issues, then, becomes the assumptions for the planning exercise. However, all the problems that one faces in the process of formulating a plan need not become serious issues in the specific context. Similarly, all the issues need not be of equal theoretical and practical importance. Non-response and non-cooperation of different departmental heads at the district level is the illustration of a grave practical problem which may not be considered a serious methodological issue. Similarly, the controversy over the existence of a uniform poverty-line may be a very interesting theoretical problem, but could hardly be considered a relevant methodological issue in micro-level planning.

II. DATA AVAILABILITY

Analysis of the existing situation is the foundation that has to be carefully and skillfully laid in order to build the solid plan structure. Without adequate statistics and the ability to interpret and analyse these statistics, the existing situation cannot be analysed in a meaningful manner to derive logically the rest of the details of the plan. While planning for the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) in Panchmahals district and several other block level plans [1 to 4] we came across the following specific problems with regard to the statistics:

1. Data were not available at the requisite level of disaggregation in the case of some important variables such as crop productivity per hectare for different crops at block or village level.

2. Data were not available for certain important variables e.g. the asset holding of farmers at village level or at a higher level.
3. Data on certain crucial variables were not found to be regularly collected so that a time series analysis could not have been undertaken which is certainly an important exercise to talk about the trends, e.g. the form giving information on land utilization and cropping pattern is not regularly filled in districts.
4. The periodicity of data in the case of certain variables is much more infrequent than desired, e.g. livestock census.
5. We found an intolerable time lag between the collection and the availability of data in almost all the variables. These delays rendered the data irrelevant for taking some crucial decisions within the current planning exercise, e.g. data on irrigation were backdated at least by five years. In case of a district like Panchmahals where the irrigation potential has been created recently in a very big way affecting the total irrigable area, such delays in obtaining the data can mar the entire exercise.
6. The degree of reliability of whatever data available considerably differed from sector to sector and variable to variable, e.g. while planning for Sayala block, reported data on irrigation was found to be questionable.[2] There were two attempts to collect these data by the Government agency. One was the regular collection and the other was by the Block Magistrate whose office was instructed to ration the diesel for pumpsets. The two sets of data varied considerably in the case of most of the villages. However, it was interesting to know that both the sets of data were available from the same source. In another instance, the population growth rate at the block level calculated through different data sources such as past censuses, electoral list, vital statistics, etc. differed significantly.
7. Some of the data were collected by the regular agencies but were not accessible when required, e.g. the use of fertilizer, pesticides, improved seeds, etc. by crop at village level got collected by the village level worker but was not accessible.

On the basis of above discussion it is clear that the data availability to carry out such microlevel planning exercise would be far from satisfactory in LDCs. An important issue that emerges at this very stage is whether our exercise would be of any meaning and relevance if it is conducted on the basis of the existing nature and quality of data. For instance, in the Jambughoda block plan [3] the planner had suggested a scheme based on forest on the basis of reported data available from the block office. On the

other hand, when the plan was being implemented it was found by the Block Development Officer that the suggested location for the activity did not have any forest though the records showed forests! The implementation of this issue clearly forces the planner either to make sure about each and every statistic or to proceed by assuming that the data are correct, adequate and reliable. The former alternative is almost ruled out on account of cost and time constraint. Even if these constraints are not there, it should not be the intention of the planner to challenge the existing network of data collection. One can hope to extend, strengthen and modify the statistical network to suit the data needs of the system and the planner.

To sum up the whole discussion on the statistics issue, we may say that the very concept of microlevel planning is based on seeking complementarity between growth and equity objectives in relation to the resource potential and particular problems of the given micro unit. If the statistical base which is supposed to reflect these things is not adequate, the planner's inferences from the assessment of these statistics would also be necessarily inadequate. Conceptually speaking, the alternative to microlevel planning is not to have microlevel planning which may turn out to be superior. This is because without microlevel planning also some set of activities will take place in the micro unit and if the "planned" intervention is based on inadequate information, it may turn out to be a less efficient way of achieving the predetermined objectives vis-a-vis the possible achievements without microlevel planning. We may, however, assume that inadequacy of the statistical base does not render the planned interventions less efficient in comparison to the absence of microlevel planning. On this assumption, we shall proceed to discuss further issues.

III. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

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When we have to plan at a microlevel, theoretically there exist two approaches : need based planning and resource based planning. By need based planning is meant planning on the basis of specific needs of the area. It should be clarified that 'the needs of the area' refers to the individual needs of the population as well as their collective needs. This approach assumes logical derivation of the objectives for the planning effort. The alternative planning approach, viz. the resource based one emphasizes making optimum utilization of existing resource potential of the region. A fundamental question that arises at this stage is whether the planning should be need based or resource based.

If the microlevel planning is based on the need based approach, in all possibility it is likely to take the form of a catalogue of needs of the area which may not be fully backed by the regional resource base. On the other hand, if the resource based approach is strictly adhered to, the exercise may lose the relevance from the view point of the needs of the population of the area. Since, however, these two approaches are not mutually exclusive, it is possible to resolve this issue by carefully combining them in most of the cases.

In the case of the Jambughoda and Sayla block plans [2,3] not only the broad objectives but also the specific targets were given by the State Government. The objective in this case was to provide self-sustaining productive employment to the un/underemployed among the weaker section and bring them above poverty line within next 10 years from the respective years of reference. A financial allocation of Rs.1 million per annum per block for 5 years was made. In these cases, therefore, the plan had to take into account the resource potential of the area and work out a scheme for their optimum utilization to ensure the most efficient way to achieve the stated objective. In short, the plans had to be resource based. While confronted with planning for villages under Abhinav Gramnirman for Shehera block under IRD [4] and for DPAP in the district, however, only the broad objectives were given from above. The derivation of specific objectives were left to the choice of the planner in each of these cases. The specific objectives behind planning exercise depend on the characteristic profile of the spatial unit. This offers at least some scope for considering explicitly the needs of the area in relation to its resource potential. Thus, the planning approach can become a combination of resource based approach and the need based approach.

IV. TARGET SETTING WITHIN THE GIVEN STRATEGY

The next methodological issue is to opt for a suitable strategy to convert these specific objectives into targets and/or to achieve the targets. On the basis of our experience, we have come across two distinct cases here. One is where the strategy is given by the central and state government but there is full freedom to set the targets at the micro level. The other is where the targets are given by the state government, but there is enough freedom to select a strategy at the micro level. For DPAP planning in Panchmahals [1], we had detailed strategy clearly outlined in the government directives. The strategy was to concentrate planning effort in only a few selected pockets which were to be demarketed on the basis of watersheds. Given this type of strategy, the planning exercise at the microlevel would reduce only to programme planning exercise. The programme planning exercise essentially means deciding about projects and schemes with definite space

dimensions from among the various alternatives if available. To make it more clear, the freedom with the planner is limited to selecting (a) projects or schemes out of possible alternatives, and (b) locations from within the areal unit. Having identified different watersheds and sub-watersheds, we were required to decide about the composition and magnitude of the activities in different sectors. The logical combination and sequencing of these activities of the package in the given space had, then, to be worked out.

By logical combination of such activities, we mean the intrasectoral and intersectoral linkages of different activities, e.g. if we are planning to provide milch animals in the identified watersheds to the target beneficiaries, logical combination of activities would imply regularizing, channelizing and/or creating fodder facility, milk collection facility (hence roads), veterinary services, etc. in the same region. Similarly, logical sequencing of activities implies systematic ordering and phasing of intra and intersectoral activities. To illustrate the logical sequencing with the help of the above mentioned logical combination of activities, the stepping up of veterinary units should precede the distribution of milch animals and should succeed by forming milch cooperative societies.

When the decisions regarding the spaces and the corresponding package of activities are made, the sectoral allocations are implicitly determined. The entire exercise regarding the selection of spaces and the corresponding package of activities rests on the extent of integration via horizontal co-ordination among various sectors/departments. Effectively this is the most crucial exercise expected to be carried out by the planner. This, however, raises an important practical problem of integrating the efforts at micro level. We shall treat this problem at a later stage.

Another issue which emerges in this type of the case is that the given strategy may not be consistent with the working set-up as obtained in the regional unit, though it may be consistent with the objectives. The strategy given for DPAP zones by the government was consistent with the overall objectives as it specified that a few watersheds/sub-watersheds should be selected and concentrated upon. The implications of this strategy would have been to identify the watersheds/sub-watersheds on some objective criteria and plan for its treatment by taking up soil conservation measures, forestry and so on. When we put up plan proposals with the authorities, one of the departments viz., the soil conservation department raised a problem. The department expressed its inability to either shift and/or create new sub-divisions in the proposed watershed from the one where it was already implementing soil conservation schemes. This gives rise to an important issue especially in such cases where the overall

strategy for the microlevel plan is already defined by the government. The issue is whether the planner should sacrifice the strategy and stick to the working set-up (however inapt it may be) or expect the working set-up to change in accordance with the given strategy. It appears from this discussion as if there are two separate bodies responsible for defining the strategy and for the existing working set-up. In reality, however, this is not the case. The body remains the same in both the cases. This means that either there is a serious communication gap between strategy designers at the macro-level and the implementing agency at the micro-level or this type of contradiction is deliberate. In any case, if the planner has to accept the working set-up as it is and dovetail the plan accordingly, it is most likely that the priorities, the target group itself and all other related aspects may get seriously distorted. Under such an event, the plan would hardly be able to achieve some targets within the specified time, some of the targets may remain as far as they were at the beginning and certain targets may be pushed even farther away.

V. CHOICE OF STRATEGY FOR GIVEN TARGETS

The other case of planning with given targets and enough freedom to select a suitable strategy (Jambughoda and Sayla block plans [2,3]) needs separate consideration because the strategy has to be so chosen from among the available alternatives as to achieve the given targets in the most efficient way. In the case of both these block plans, the plan objective was not only to generate more mandays of permanent employment, but also to increase simultaneously the marginal productivity of labour among the weaker sections. As it is wellknown, we have two alternative strategies for this : (a) keeping the same technology (i.e. remaining on the same production function) increase capital intensity (K/L), or (b) improving the technology (i.e. shifting the production function upwards) increase labour productivity at a given capital intensity.

Under the first alternative, we have to follow such policies that, at a given technology, the rate of profit falls and capital output ratio increases with increase in capital per worker. Here the rate of investment becomes exorbitant since, under the given situation, the rate of un/underemployment is very high, which has to decline drastically in the new situation. Should the capital intensity also increase in the new situation, the requirement of investment for the removal of un/underemployment with simultaneous increase in the wage rate is likely to become almost unrealistic. The second alternative, therefore, is the only remedy.

The shift in the production function is to be achieved in such a way that the minimum required increase in the average wage rate under full employment is obtained at the lowest possible capital intensity. If capital intensity is not to increase substantially in the new situation, it implies that the capital productivity should rise or the capital output ratio should fall. Moreover, it is not necessary that the rate of profit should fall, it may also rise in this case. It may be relevant here to discuss briefly the type of technical progress required. Between the definitions given by Prof. Harrod [6] and Prof. Hicks [7], the one given by Prof. Hicks seems to be more relevant in the present context. Most important thing to note here is that under all the three types of technical progress viz. neutral, labour using and capital using, the marginal as well as average productivity of labour increase at a given capital intensity. Even capital using technical progress can, therefore, effectively solve our problem if its rate is somewhat higher.

We generally find from our experience at Panchmahals and Surendranagar that the existing stocks of capital and natural resource are not fully and/or optimally utilized in most of the regional economies. To illustrate, in Sayla Block, Class V and VI type of land which have high potential to be developed into pastures are simply lying idle [8]. Similarly, in the case of energized wells, generally the choice of pump-sets is very often not in conformity with the geo-hydrological characteristics of the wells [9]. There could be a number of reasons for this. Only lack of demand in and outside region does not always prove to be an effective constraint to the full utilization of capacity. In reality, many a times lack of general awareness, ignorance about the technical aspects of production, bad management of resources through improper methods, lack of infrastructural and other facilities, pressure by the survival constraint faced by the population (e.g. cutting the forest out of destitution), etc. also come in the way of optimum utilization of the capacity [9]. It is, therefore, possible to increase the effective stock of capital significantly by increasing the existing capital stock only marginally. We can conclude on the basis of these observations that it will be a step in the right direction to achieve our target if we are able to increase the rate of utilization of the capital stock and natural resources through any method. The scope of increasing the effective demand for labour by increasing the rate of utilization of other resources in the regional economy, is much more than what appears at the first sight. Our experience suggests that the proportion of underutilization and misutilization of land, water, animals, real capital stock, other inputs, etc. is not negligible in the regional economies of LDCs. It is not that methods to save certain resources and utilize some other resources better have not been devised; but because of the lack of proper extension network, information about these methods hardly reaches the relevant groups. This is not to deny the existence of some socio-cultural constraints in the system.

Proper extension services can, however, certainly bring about some definite improvements.

Thus, the most important strategy of planning for income and employment generation in the short term perspective is to make efforts to identify and remove as far as possible all those constraints which restrict the optimum utilization of resources like land, water, animals, etc. Instead of creating new assets, emphasis should be placed on utilizing the existing resources optimally. Even when new assets are created, the optimum use must be ensured. In short, we should accord the top priority to managing the existing system more efficiently and the second priority to expanding the system if required for achieving greater efficiency. But in the long run perspective our strategy should be to emphasize (a) skill formation to diversify the base of the regional economy, and (b) creation of new assets to explore and utilize further the resource potential of the region.

It should be noted here that this is a broad strategy applicable to any level of planning. When we are doing this exercise at the block level, we have to be extremely careful in selecting different projects. It does not require elaboration that decision regarding certain types of projects cannot be taken at the block level where the information pertaining to the block alone is processed. Whenever the supply of inputs and/or outputs having alternative uses depends on a region wider than the block, the production decision should better be taken at the district or higher levels. Whenever we take such decisions at the block level, we have to be careful enough to consider probable impacts on the higher order regional economy, otherwise it may ultimately lead to inconsistent and inefficient decision making in the national context.

It should be emphasized that planning for the block is different from planning at the block level. As we have already seen earlier, under the present circumstances planning for a block is almost ruled out. We can at the most plan at the block level keeping specific objectives in mind to be achieved within stated time with the help of given allocation of funds. To incorporate this consideration explicitly in our strategy, we may further specify that for reducing the rate of underutilization of the resources in the micro unit, we concentrate first on utilizing the hitherto unutilized resources to meet the local needs as far as possible. We may, then, concentrate on increasing the rate of utilization of the resources already in use, again considering the local conditions. We may avoid as far as possible, diverting the existing resources from one use to another unless all the implications of such exercises are well within our reach to consider fully while planning at block level. If we also bear in

mind while identifying the projects that the exercise is meant for the weaker sections of the society; we are almost sure to find such projects where objectives of growth and equity are complementary rather than competing.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

All along the discussion on strategy above, we had assumed implicitly that we are not ignoring certain genuine constraints which the planner has to face while either designing the strategy to meet the given targets or set the target on the basis of given strategy. While discussing logical combinations and sequencing, we had earlier stated that the entire exercise regarding the selection of spaces and the corresponding package of activities rests on the extent of integration via horizontal co-ordination among various sectors/departments. The process of ensuring horizontal co-ordination among various departments is not as smooth at the microlevel as one may tend to think. One of the basic reasons for this is that the administration at the district has definite vertical links with the state directorates/departments. The latter, moreover, are having enough freedom to exercise their choice in terms of decisions regarding objectives, strategies and programmes within their respective departments. These things differ from department to department. It is, therefore, possible that they may not always be consistent with one-another and also with the objectives and strategies of microlevel plans.

Moreover, the formulation of sectoral schemes usually takes place in the respective directorate/department at the state level. The sectoral and vertical nature of the project formulation process necessitates that a list of technically approved schemes/projects is passed on to the district officials in most of the departments. This nurtures a tendency among the district officials to adhere to the approved list of schemes/projects. Any scheme/project which falls outside this list is generally resented by the district official. This, therefore, tends to become almost a constraint for the micro-level plan. The resource analysis of Panchmahals indicated the possibility of undertaking sericulture activity on a wide scale which was found to be technically feasible. The planner proposed systematic development of sericulture in the district via training of a few farmers in the specialized skill. This proposal met with strong reluctance at the district level and some inexplicable resistance at state level [10]. This merely implies that the choice of the schemes/projects to be included in the microlevel plan has to be restricted to the 'approved' list available at the district level.

In this context, it is an issue whether the existing administrative structure should be regarded as constant or variable for planning purpose at microlevel. Our experience of watching the implementation of the plan prepared by us for Jambughoda block, however, suggests explicit consideration of these type of constraints at the stage of the formulation of the plan itself. It is wise to treat the administrative structure as constant since it depends on the fundamental decisions taken at the state and central level. Changes in administrative structure usually involve a lot of cost, confusion and inconvenience. For the short term and medium term planning exercises, therefore, it has to be assumed constant and given.

There are several defects of the present administrative structure in the LDCs which do not require any enumeration here since they are very wellknown. The whole administration largely works in the vertical direction only. It hardly works horizontally. As a result, administrative delays have become established routines. Any institutional change or new appointments can be made only with inordinate delay. Growth centre or service-centre approaches, therefore, become impractical for programme planning where specific targets are expected to be achieved only in the short run. The whole infrastructure usually suggested in the service centre/growth centre approaches [11] would take nothing less than 3 to 4 years on average to get sanctioned and implemented by the existing administration in LDCs. Thus, this approach cannot be considered even as an effective alternative in the short or medium term planning exercises. Similarly, certain types of projects/schemes (like strengthening the extension network) are also ruled out from such types of plans on account of the most probable administrative delays involved. Moreover, it is also very important to give some consideration to the implementing officers at the district and the block levels who are already implementing a number of such special programmes and schemes. We have to see to it that there is a minimum possible increase in their difficulties and confusions by such additional programmes. Otherwise there is a full possibility that, if not this, some other programme/scheme would suffer. To illustrate, if the same scheme gets repeated under different programmes and has no logical combination and sequencing with other activities the scheme may be implemented merely as an expenditure item. The booking of this expenditure under the operating programmes is left to the whim of the accountant!

VII. IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET GROUP

It is important to note that we have all along tacitly assumed easy and unambiguous identification of the target groups. But, as it is wellknown, the definition of the weaker section itself is

hardly strong enough to make it possible to identify it unambiguously in practice. For the practical purposes of rendering the task of identification easy, the occupation, asset holding and income of the households are used as the criteria. Along with several other studies, our studies have also found this approach quite inadequate and inappropriate for the purpose, because this is merely an indirect way of deriving the number of households belonging to the weaker section. Somehow, the way of life in rural areas of LDCs, its social structure and social customs and traditions are such where these types of definitions can hardly yield a correct and precise estimate of the dimension of the problem. Regular farmers with no land on their name in the government records and register are not rare in the rural areas. Households of landless labourers having four out of a total of six members regularly employed in farm and non-farm activities are not surprising. Similarly, households of the other farmers (i.e. those who are neither small nor marginal farmers) living below poverty line are again not very unusual phenomena. The criteria for identifying the weaker section, therefore, has to be based on the direct approach of identifying "the poor".

Ignoring all the controversy over the existence of the so-called "poverty line" and accepting that there is one such line for the geographical region in question, the issue is whom should we designate as "poor"? Is a household which earns enough but consumes less poor or is the one which earns less but consumes enough poor? In other words, should the expenditure be the criterion or the income? Our experience has shown that estimates based on these alternative criteria differ significantly in terms of the composition and the magnitude. In the case of Sayla block plan, however, we have found it more reasonable to accept the estimates based on income criterion than those based on expenditure criterion [2]. It should be clearly noted that unless this issue is somehow resolved, the whole exercise is likely to lose relevance and rigour. It should also be accepted that for either one of the two, a sample survey of households in the region is inevitable. It is again a different question whether we can afford the cost of such sample surveys at the present stage.

VIII. PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

Even when we assume that the weaker section is properly identified we have to finally consider their participation in the programme because the success of the plan depends upon the active participation of the target groups. Our experience in Panchmahals and ~Sayla block suggests that the people's participation through village assembly have shown peculiar tendencies. Its involvement in implementation may lead to the failure of the projects. The welfare centres for children and women in many of the villages in both these districts are not functioning satisfactorily. The project failure, here, is largely ascribed by the residents to the

village assemblies who are implementing this schemes. A clear issue emerges here whether village assemblies can be taken to represent the interests of the weaker section or not.

Very often than not, the village assemblies are representing interests of the non-target groups because in the socio-economic-cultural milieu of rural area, the weaker section, though in majority, may not be allowed to organize, participate and reap the fruits of development. In Gosal village of Sayla block, for example, an approach road that was sanctioned was not allowed to be constructed because one segment of population did not like the idea of weaker section being connected to the market during the rainy season. It would have meant reduction of reliance of weaker section on that particular segment of the population. In the same village, moreover, an irrigation tank exists which is officially defunct though dire need for irrigation is felt by the farmers in the village!

This becomes an issue in the methodological context when the plan strategy, objectives or targets have to be arrived at in consultation with the people's representative bodies such as Block Level Assemblies and District Level Assemblies. It depends on the composition of these bodies how far the plan will be able to deliver the goods. While planning for Shehera block under IRD, a few clusters of the most backward villages were identified on the basis of certain objective criteria. Before finally arriving at the decision to plan an intervention in these clusters, the Block Level Assembly was consulted. This body did not approve the strategy of concentrated intervention. Instead, it insisted on adopting a scattered intervention approach which was the routine before. The concentrated intervention strategy on the other hand, was strongly recommended in the state and central government's guidelines. This is a case of clear conflict between the intention of the government at the macro-level and the interests of the government at the microlevel. This is a problem which needs to be resolved by the planner in a tactful way. Here is, therefore, a clear recognition of the human factor even in the planning methodology. Thus, it is possible that the methodology of microlevel planning instead of remaining objective, may become subjective in certain cases.

IX. CONCLUSION

In the present paper, we have discussed on the basis of our experience of action research various issues related to the microlevel planning in a developing economy. They are broadly categorized into (a) nature and availability of required statistics, (b) approaches to the microlevel planning based on

requirements and resources of the region, (c) target-setting based on the given strategy from above, (d) choice of appropriate strategy when the targets are broadly given from above, (e) administrative structure and working arrangements at the micro unit as a part of the macro unit, (f) identification of the target group, and (g) people's participation in the whole planning process at different levels. Our experience of working at several places on variety of special programmes leads us to attach great importance to all these issues because they are crucial, according to our perception, not only to the very success or failure of the entire exercise of microlevel planning, but also to the existing design of the multi-level planning in the LDCs.

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