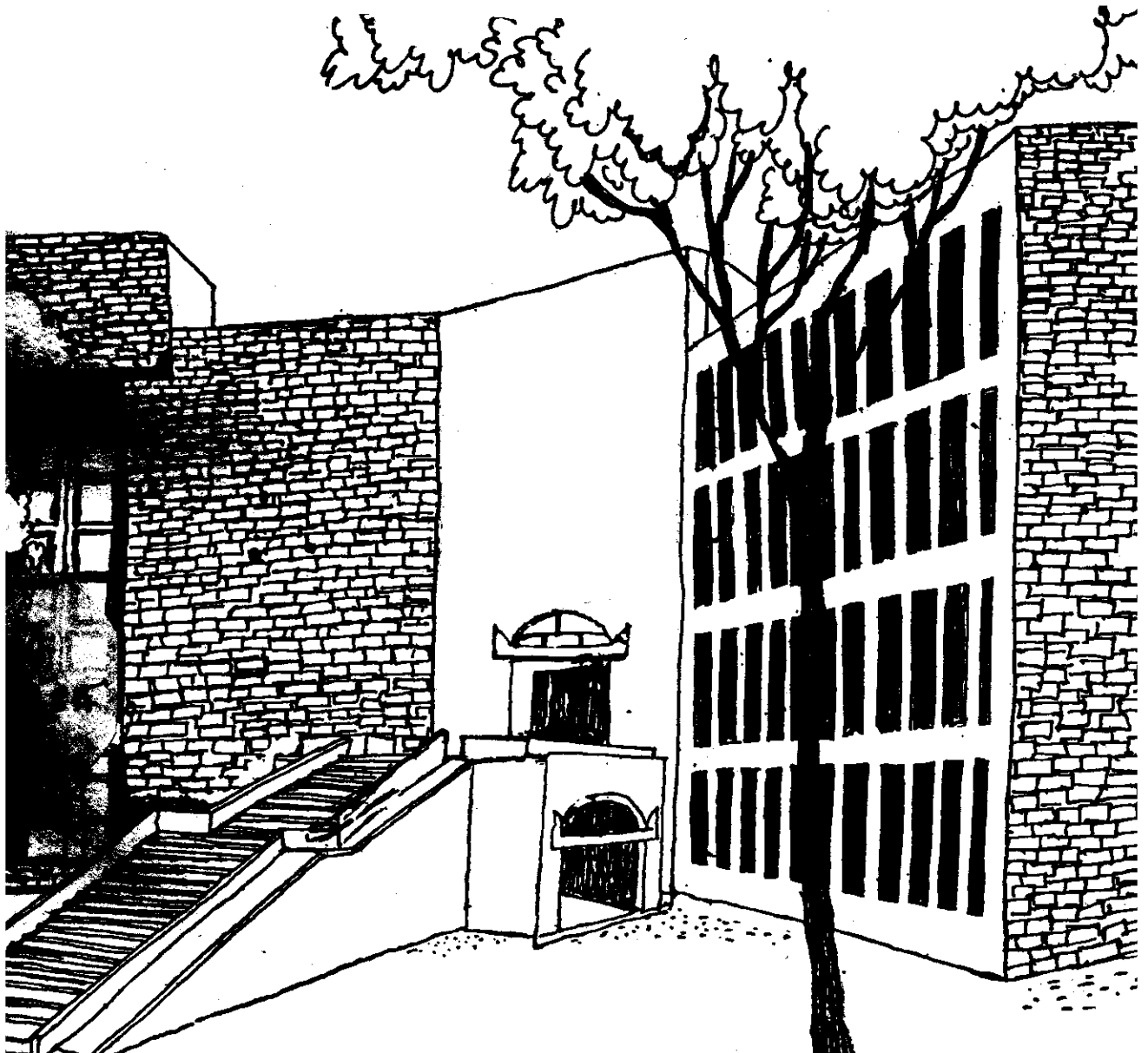




W. P. 485

# Working Paper



DIRECTING PROGRAMME EVALUATION  
TOWARDS THE FIELD WORKER: AN  
EXPERIMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION

By

Anil Bhatt  
&  
Ashok Subramanian

W P No. 485

December 1983

The main objective of the working paper series of the IIM is to help faculty members to test out their research findings at the pre-publication stage.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT  
AHMEDABAD-380015  
INDIA

DIRECTING PROGRAMME EVALUATION TOWARDS THE FIELD WORKER:  
AN EXPERIMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION

ANIL BHATT  
ASHOK SUBRAMANIAN

ABSTRACT

Although there is now a more widespread attempt to carry out systematic, evaluation studies of development programmes and projects by external agencies, the users of these studies continue to be the elite management group of policy makers and planners and international agencies. The lower levels of the development bureaucracy in the district and in the block seldom have access to evaluation reports, despite having their work studied for purposes of evaluation by social science researchers and consultants. This paper argues for a wider use of evaluation efforts by the involvement of programme implementors and field workers in the process of (1) debating the nature and content of evaluation (2) using the feedback from evaluation for further planning at their levels and (3) initiating follow up action. An experiment of eliciting such involvement through an intensive two day workshop during the evaluation study of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) is discussed in the paper. The reaction of the field workers to the evaluation study and an exercise on action planning designed on the basis of the study are described. The paper concludes with the authors' observations on the experiment and a plea for less mechanistic uses of evaluation of large scale development programmes.

DIRECTING PROGRAMME EVALUATION TOWARDS THE FIELD WORKER:  
AN EXPERIMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION

ANIL BHATT  
ASHOK SUBRAMANIAN

Introduction

In the last decade or so, there has been a great deal of emphasis on systematic and objective evaluation of development programmes and projects. Governments and international agencies have increasingly encouraged evaluation studies of programmes they have implemented or have funded. Alongside, numerous evaluation methodologies have also emerged.

Evaluation studies of a large scale development programme is bound to have multiple users with differing expectations. Planners would expect lessons for designing new programmes or enlarging the existing one in the future. Those connected with the programme at the policy making level would look for changes which can be made in it so as to improve effectiveness. Lower down, state level officials might be concerned about actions they can take. These actions may relate less to programme design and more to implementation. Further down, at the district and block level, the programme staff would be looking for clues and concrete, operational changes to improve the field implementation of the programme in its actual local setting. Of course, people at

all these levels from planning to field implementation, would be concerned about the content of evaluation since it would reflect their performance and style of functioning.

If evaluation is to be responsive to many potential users at different levels of decision making, then there is a need for special efforts to direct the findings of any evaluation study towards all these levels. It is our feeling that by and large, feedback of evaluation studies are directed only towards the top management and hence are elitist. The studies are carried out by external researchers and consultants at the behest of <sup>an</sup> international donor agency, planners or top management of a programme. While users at the top can doubtless put the study to good use, neglect of the lower levels can deny a potential opportunity for field level programme staff to reflect on their work, debate the nature and content of the evaluation and effect changes in implementation.

This paper argues for a less mechanistic and wider use of evaluation studies of development programmes by directing the feedback of such studies towards the field worker. An experiment of providing such feedback through an intensive two day workshop during an evaluation study of the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) is discussed. The workshop offered the NAEP field worker an opportunity to react to the study, identify problem areas and plan changes in his activities

within the parameters of the programme and the context of the local setting.

### Using Evaluation Studies

The use of evaluation will depend upon its objectives. It is generally intended to assist decision making by "clarifying decision areas and in establishing criteria for judgement and standards for performance"<sup>1</sup>. There is a focus in evaluation on decision making and follow up actions so as to improve the performance of the programme. The overall goal of evaluation is an eventual improvement in programme design, strategy or implementation.

A managerial view of evaluation is evident in the following statement of the Planning Commission's Working Group on Evaluation in the States:<sup>2</sup>

Broadly speaking the objectives of evaluation at the Centre include purposive assessment of progress and impact of a programme, finding out areas of success and failure at different stages of administration and execution, analysing the reasons for success or failure, examining the extension methods and people's reaction thereto, and deriving lessons for improvement in the formulation and

---

1 Bhola, H.S. Evaluating Functional Literacy. Hulton Educational Publications. U.S.A. 1979. p.2.

2 Summary of the Recommendations of the Working group on Evaluation in the States, Appendix IV, in Programme Evaluation Organization - Structure, Functions and Activities. Planning Commission. New Delhi. 1979. pp.28-29.

implementation of programmes. Evaluation in this sense is distinct and separate from progress analysis and review on the one hand, and inspection, checking and scrutiny of schemes and works on the other. Most often, it means problem oriented type or case studies of programme under implementation and schemes under execution, and should as such be clearly distinguished from large-scale statistical surveys for estimation purposes.

The need for such action-oriented evaluation was realized in the NAEP. One of the programme documents specified that "systematic monitoring and evaluation ... should provide feedback for introducing necessary correctives from time to time"<sup>3</sup>. More importantly, there was an understanding that "monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should get built at the district and project levels also, for it is mainly there that the feedback has to be used for introduction of correctives"<sup>4</sup>. In fact, as an extension of this principle, NAEP provided for external evaluation by social science research institutions. The studies were commissioned by the central government. The evaluation report of the NAEP in a particular State, submitted by a research institution, was usually discussed in a seminar organised by the State. To some extent, this was an attempt to provide feedback to the States on the performance of the programme in their area as seen by an outsider.

---

3 National Adult Education Programme - An Outline in Directorate of Adult Education. Training of Adult Education Functionaries - A Handbook. New Delhi. 1978 p.14.

4 Ibid, p.14.

The efforts by the NAEP managers at the centre to share the evaluation studies with the States is to be welcomed. Perhaps there are few parallels of this kind in other developmental programmes. Nevertheless, even in NAEP, the field staff at the district and block level do not usually have the opportunity to review, debate and act on the evaluation studies done. In fact, in the course of our study, we have often found field staff complaining that they "do not know what happens to the studies once they are completed." They did not have access even to evaluation reports, let alone the opportunity to react to the studies. For the field worker, the changes brought about in the programme following an evaluation study were ad hoc and were communicated as directives from the top without adequate explanation. These experiences seemed to dampen the enthusiasm of the field staff for participation in evaluation by way of providing data and sharing views and insights. In these circumstances, the very legitimacy of any evaluation study was doubted. It was being seen as yet another mechanical activity done routinely by "someone at the top".

While the involvement of the field worker could legitimize the study and enrich follow up action, there could also be problems in eliciting this involvement. For instance, if the evaluation study clearly showed that the programme implementation was extremely poor and this was largely due to the field staff, then some "tough" decisions may have to be taken by the



management in order to correct the situation. The situation then warrants drastic follow up management action to tone up the programme rather than dissemination of the findings of the evaluation study. There could be a slightly different situation where hostility and defensiveness of the field staff towards evaluation may point to a deliberate decision of the management to avoid direct feedback in order to keep away from acrimonious debates. Even in this situation, feedback of some kind will be expected by the field personnel. The point is that irrespective of the purpose of an evaluation study, the very process of gathering data triggers an interest in the analysis of the data and the inferences on the part of the people who are studied or whose activities are reviewed. Inadequate response to this interest can unfavourably affect the very purpose of evaluation, that is follow up action.

### The Experiment

An experiment in the form of a feedback workshop to generate more intensive involvement of field staff in the NAEP was tried out during the fourth appraisal of the programme in Rajasthan in 1982-83. The evaluation study was carried out by a faculty team of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.<sup>5</sup> The Institute's involvement with the NAEP dates back to 1978. The first two appraisals<sup>6</sup> reviewed the functioning of projects

<sup>5</sup> The authors of this paper were members of the study team.

<sup>6</sup> T.V. Rao, Anil Bhatt and T.P. Rama Rao. Adult Education and Social Change. Manchar, Delhi. 1980.

D.M. Pestonjee, S.N. Laharia and Deepthi Dixit. NAEP in Rajasthan - Second Appraisal. PSG Monograph 20. IIM Ahmedabad. 1980

of voluntary agencies in Rajasthan. The third appraisal<sup>7</sup> studied the impact of the programme through an in-depth study of two districts. The fourth appraisal<sup>8</sup> focussed on the theme of project management based on the experiences of the earlier appraisals and observations made in the reports regarding management strategies and systems used in implementing the programme.

Data for the fourth appraisal were gathered from two adult education projects in Ajmer and Dungarpur districts. We found considerable potential among the personnel at the project and supervisory levels in the districts studied. In our opinion, the relations between the project personnel and ourselves changed from one of a cautious and differential attitude in the beginning (October 1982) to a respectful and collaborative one by the time the study was completed (March 1983). There was a great deal of professional interest in the study by March. Given the interest and cooperation in the two projects of Ajmer and Dungarpur, the study team felt that there was a good opportunity to move beyond diagnosis to actual changes in operational planning and implementation. Since any change in project operations would require the approval and support of the State Directorate, we felt

---

7 R. Harihar and T.V. Rao. Adult Education in Rajasthan - Third Appraisal. PSG Monograph 45 and 46. IIM Ahmedabad. 1982.

8 Ashok Subramanian, Inderjit Khanna, Anil Bhatt and Anil Singh. Managing an Adult Education Project. PSG Monograph 51. IIM Ahmedabad. 1983.

that members from the directorate should also be involved in the project level discussion on the evaluation report. Accordingly, a 2-day workshop was organised jointly by the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur and the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad's Adult Education Cell.

#### The Fourth Appraisal

Before describing the workshop, brief references to the NAEP and its organization and the fourth appraisal may be in order.

The National Adult Education Programme was started in 1978 with the objective of making 100 million adults literate in about five years. The programme has three major components: The development of literacy skills; the formation of functional skills and the stimulation of awareness of rights and responsibilities. It is implemented through the directorates of adult education in various states, through voluntary agencies, universities and Nehrū Yuvak Kendras. Fig.1 shows the organization structure of the programme.



The project in NAEP was conceived of as an autonomous unit in keeping with the "NAEP's stress in flexible, diversified and relevant programmes"<sup>9</sup> so that local conditions in an area can determine the "locale, content, material and methods of the programme"<sup>10</sup>. While the general goals of the NAEP are expressed in terms of literacy, functionality and awareness, it is the responsibility of the project management to find ways of translating these goals into appropriate project activities. Specific measure for programme implementation and monitoring have to be worked out by the project personnel.

It was felt that the crucial field unit of a project in the Fourth Appraisal deserved a closer look/in order to see if its management in terms of implementation of the NAEP can be made more effective. Working within a given budget, a received structure<sup>11</sup> and numerous guidelines, the project manager has to devise measures by which the adult education centres under his charge function satisfactorily. He utilises a variety of strategies and systems to ensure their satisfactory performance. The main purpose of the fourth appraisal was to review project level strategies and systems in NAEP. Observations and suggestions for change were made on the basis of this review.

---

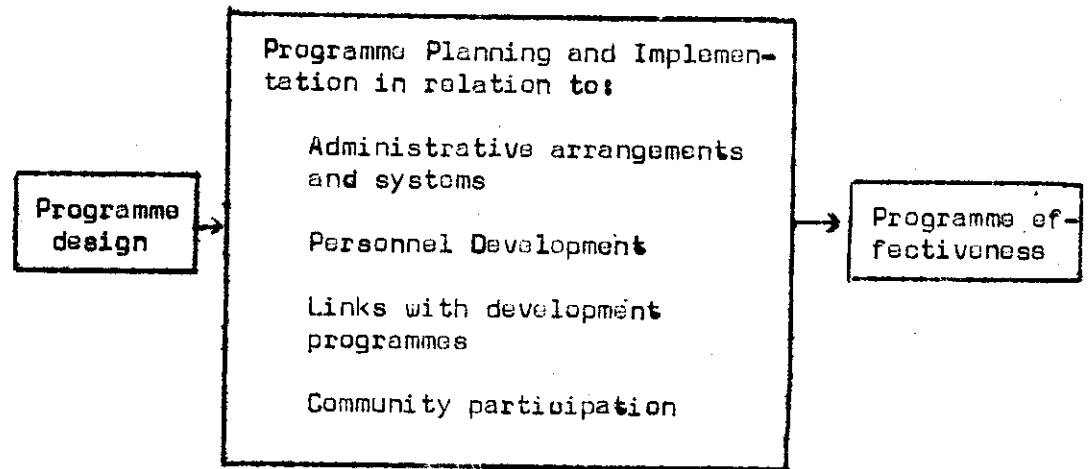
9 Directorate of Adult Education, Training of Adult Education Functionaries - A handbook. New Delhi. 1978. p.26.

10 *ibid.*

11 Choice of organization structure and the project outlay are items which the project manager can do little about. They are fixed by the central or state governments.

On the basis of our understanding of a project and findings of the earlier studies, four critical elements of a project were identified. They were: (1) Administrative systems (2) Personnel development (3) Inter-departmental linkages for functional and development efforts and (4) Community participation.

Figure 2 presents these diagrammatically.



Critical Elements in Project Management

Fig.2

Our view was that the efficacy of administrative arrangements and systems, personnel development process, links with development programmes and process of community participation significantly influence programme effectiveness. There could be other factors that have a bearing on the effectiveness of an adult education programme. The study, however, concentrated on

four significant factors mentioned most frequently in other evaluation studies of NAEP. The failure of systems for distribution of supplies and salaries and systems of human resource development have been repeatedly referred to in earlier reports. That NAEP was fast becoming only a literacy programme was a lament of several observers. Hence our focus on the functionality component and NAEP's links with other development programmes. The estrangement of the programme from the community has also been criticised. It was therefore our feeling that the project-community interface needed more specific attention.

Two districts, Ajmer and Dungarpur were chosen for the study. They were more and less educationally developed respectively. It was not our intention to compare the projects in the two districts. Rather, the rationale for selection was that the chosen projects should have different settings and serve different types of adult population. Thus Ajmer had a mix of communities, was relatively more urbanised and economically more developed. Dungarpur on the other hand, was largely rural with a predominant tribal population. A large number of projects could have been included in the study. However, since our intention was primarily to raise questions for project management in general in NAEP, we decided to opt for an intensive study of two projects.

### The Workshop Experience

The objective of the workshop was to (1) invite the field workers' critique of the evaluation (2) provide an opportunity for the field workers to use the study for planning future work (3) identify changes that would be required in the administrative structure and systems to support such plans.

Accordingly, the workshop had two major parts:

(1) Discussion on the evaluation study (fourth appraisal) findings and (2) An action planning exercise by the participants on the basis of the evaluation. The morning of the first day was spent in feedback on the fourth appraisal followed by clarifications and critique by the field staff. An exercise on planning was initiated in the afternoon of the first day. The outcome of this exercise was presented and discussed on the second day. Some sample presentations were taken up for in depth analysis and critique. Some preliminary thoughts on the management of an adult education centre were also reviewed by the group on the second day. The workshop ended with a discussion on follow up and an evaluation of the two days.

The following participants attended the workshop:

2 project officers; 2 assistant project officers; 15 supervisors; a senior official from a district education office; the director of the state adult education programme; a deputy director and two assistant directors from the state directorate;



three faculty members from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad who had carried out the fourth appraisal study and a research assistant who had helped the study team. Four instructors from four villages in Ajmer and Dungarpur districts were also invited to keep the discussion grounded in the village realities. The workshop was conducted in Hindi, the language commonly understood by all.

To begin with, the findings of the evaluation study on each of the four critical elements were presented by us to the group, along with suggestions for change. A summary of these findings and suggestions is presented below:

1. Administrative arrangements and systems

1. It takes a long time to fill vacancies in the project. Officiating personnel cannot get totally involved in the project due to other responsibilities. Delays relating to appointments should be curtailed.
2. Even where personnel have been working for two or more years, they are not formally "selected". This is a demotivator. Immediate action for the appointment of fullfledged supervisors in Dungarpur is necessary.
3. The special allowance given to supervisors should be extended to those who have reached the maximum of their grade.

4. It is advisable to designate Assistant Project Officers (APOs) also as gazetted officers. This will be particularly helpful to those APOs who are in independent charge of projects.
5. There is apprehension that the experience of supervisors and PO/APO in NAEP will not be considered relevant for purposes of promotion within their parent education department. Their experience should be counted as relevant administrative experience.
6. Agricultural extension officers have access to separate budget and can get priority for obtaining a vehicle loan. The same facility should be extended to supervisors also.
7. The remuneration of various village level functionaries under various government schemes seems to be different for the same kind of tasks. Central and state governments should review the remuneration of these functionaries in a unified perspective.
8. Delays in payment of honorarium to instructors is a demotivating factor. There have been changes and considerable improvement in the two projects during the study, but scope for modification of payment procedures exists. Some specific suggestions have been made in this regard.
9. Kerosene oil distribution to the village instructors for use in the centre needs to be streamlined. A full term ration

card or permit for each adult education centre and links with the nearest retail outlet could help. Rule 232 of the General Financial and Accounts Rules may be amended so that under the head "Education", adult education project authorities can be given the power to draw Abstract Contingency Bills for purchase of kerosene oil.

10. The item of travel in the project budget is grossly understated. A more realistic budget should be decided for the project.

11. An appropriate amount of contingency or imprest fund should be made available to each PO and supervisor.

## 2. Personnel development

1. Due to the importance of the selection process and the potential role of local politics in employing instructors, it is necessary to communicate the minimum requirements for the adult education instructor to the zilla parishad. The parishad, in turn, can convey the information to panchayat samitis and panchayats.

2. It is not necessary to insist on a set procedure for recruitment of instructors for all projects since the projects can use the flexibility available depending on the social and political environment of the local district, block and village.

3. Since the composition of the instructor group varies considerably in terms of age, qualification and competence, it is necessary to use differential strategies for training and developing instructors. A selective approach in training, monitoring and follow up with emphasis on the weaker instructors is essential if available time of project personnel is to be used judiciously.
4. The same differential and selective approach is warranted even in relation to supervisors. Their capabilities also vary and PO/APO would do well to take the variations into account.
4. Initial training for instructors or appointment is very critical. In order not to miss this, the project budget must explicitly provide for the initial training programme. Thus a programme oriented rather than an administrative budget is to be made for every project, which can then be monitored by the Directorate.
5. Time must be provided for programme related discussion for
  - (i) instructors, collectively with the supervisor and for
  - (ii) supervisors, collectively with PO/APO. Currently, discussion on administrative matters dominate meetings.
6. A project level newsletter would be a useful means of disseminating information and sharing experience.

7. Suitable recognition for instructors and supervisors is necessary. State and district level special awards for adult education in the form of certificates and cash awards are indicated.

### 3. Links with development programmes

1. The present ad hoc and personalised process of links with development programmes must be made more systematic and more institutionalised.
2. The broad goals of functionality should be translated into specific, realistic and concrete activities which the needs of the adult education centre, strengths of the various development departments and of the NAEP will permit.
3. A selective approach which focusses on one or two activities in a cluster of AECs during the 10 month session would be more productive than scattered attempts at many activities.
4. The few activities for which links with development programmes are sought could be evolved (i) from the learners through the instructors and supervisors (ii) from discussions with development departments in line with their priorities and (iii) mobilising learners as pressure groups.
5. Participatory planning exercises starting with learners and instructors would be useful. Accordingly, a six step

planning exercise for building links with development programmes and fulfilling concrete functionality objectives is suggested.

6. The director of the DRDA rather than the Collector could be associated with the programme at the district level.

7. Links with the block level officials are very weak. The PO/ABO and supervisors should activate association with block level personnel. Supervisors can also attend panchayat samiti meetings whenever adult education is discussed.

#### 4. Community participation

1. Concrete plans for community participation will have to be worked out sectorally. Weak AECs which need the support of the community can be selectively chosen for special attention in such plans.

2. A sector wise and project wise budget for community participation related activities would compel project personnel to evolve these activities.

3. Formalisation of village or centre level literacy committees, meetings and their activities could be helpful in focussing attention on this important aspect of NSEP.

4. Knowledge and skills for understanding the nature of community participation and the scope and limitations for the centres in generating and managing such participation should be a part of instructor, supervisor and PO training.

5. Interchange of ideas between communities and AECs will help in gaining greater community support for NAEP.

6. Interior villages with less infrastructural facilities, homogeneous and socio-economically middle order communities seem to demonstrate effective community participation in the programme. Project personnel can build on this base in the various sectors and give this observation due consideration in planning.

#### Discussion on the Evaluation Study Findings

The observations and recommendations made by us in the workshop with reference to the two projects in Ajmer and Dungarpur and NAEP in general, were discussed. Reactions and comments were invited from the participants.

There was general agreement with the findings. The following points regarding specific issues were raised by the project personnel:

1. There is inadequate staff in the project office. Absence due to leave of the office staff further delayed administrative matters.

2. The report stresses regularity of monthly payment of remuneration to instructors. What is important here is regularity of payment, even if it is properly arranged once in every two months.
3. The study team may be more optimistic than project officials regarding the attitude of the treasury. Even bills submitted in proper fashion are delayed in the various sections of the treasury.
4. The suggestions regarding kerosene oil supply are useful. However, this should not convey the message that project personnel can be passive. There is scarcity of kerosene. When available, in the district, NAEP usually has no priority. Therefore, in addition to having an appropriate system of distribution, a great deal of effort at the project level may be necessary in following up with the district supplies officials.
5. Instructors and supervisors incur travel expenses in connection with the receipt of kerosene oil supply. This should be reimbursed.
6. Some of the administrative decisions should be taken soon. For instance, the matter of formal selection of the supervisors of Durgarpur must be settled quickly. In this connection, it may be worthwhile to look at implementation of recommendations of appraisal studies in NAEP. Reports



have been presented since 1978. There are doubts whether prompt follow up action is being taken on the numerous suggestions and recommendations.

7. It is necessary to organise a more efficient system of procuring and distributing materials. At the same time, attention must be given to the quality of material also. This is a problem with regard to items like slate, pencil etc. Moreover, the tendering procedure takes a long time.

8. There is a need for a range of incentives for good instructors and learners. Rewards offered now are ad hoc and dependent on each project.

9. The training programmes for supervisors should include inputs on how local skills and material can be developed.

10. There is a greater need to work for female literacy, but women instructors are not easy to find.

11. Development programmes similar to NAEP run by voluntary and governmental agencies in the same area as the project pay a much higher remuneration to instructor level personnel. This leads to comparison and demotivation for NAEP instructors.

12. Links with development programmes must be improved. But it is very difficult task. Among the programmes, Training for Rural Youth in Self Employment (TRYSEM) is attractive for learners and instructors.

13. Sports equipment and musical instruments distributed to the adult education centre will contribute greatly to making it a social centre. If resources permit, more of these items should be made available to the centres. Improvement of facilities at the centre should be planned. However, some of the participants were vehemently opposed to too many physical facilities and inputs at the centre. They felt that maintenance would be a major problem. In their opinion, administrative headaches to keep track of the facilities provided would be overwhelming.

The village level instructors present in the workshop desired that their monthly remuneration be paid regularly. They also wished to be reimbursed for the out-of-pocket expenses they incurred while travelling to obtain kerosene oil or assist in adult education activities at fairs and exhibitions. They found their orientation training useful and felt it was an important part of the programme. They found it extremely difficult to obtain kerosene oil on their own since prices varied greatly in the village.

#### Exercise on Project Planning based on the Evaluation

In the afternoon of the first day of the workshop, the group started on an exercise on project planning. We felt that the reports presented in the morning and the discussion on the evaluation study could be used as an

input into a concrete, experimental effort in project planning by the participants. This effort would be useful, especially since project planning and implementation strategy of NAEP has not received as much attention as had the function of monitoring and evaluation.

The participants were each assigned one of the four elements discussed in the morning; administrative arrangements and systems; personnel development; links with development programmes and community participation. Every participant was to attempt a tentative plan in his area of operations for the element assigned to him. He would keep the following factors in mind while formulating a plan:

- Assessment of needs of learners and problems in the area;
- Outlining desired activities;
- Assessment of resources available/necessary;
- Identifying training needs.

In this exercise, the feasibility of implementation, given the strengths and weaknesses of the project as well as of other agencies, would be considered.

Having worked on an individual plan, the participants discussed it in a small group of 6-7 members who had made their

plans in relation to the same element. Thus four groups discussed individual plans relating to the four elements. Clarifications were sought and changes incorporated in the individual plans.

A volunteer from each group presented his plan in a plenary session the next day. Summary reports are presented below:

#### A. ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

(the volunteer concentrated on supplies and salary distribution)

1. Supplies: (i) Start purchase of material needed as soon as budget funds are released. Since there is often a delay in release of funds, purchase can be planned for the succeeding rather than the current year. (ii) Reach materials to supervisory sector at least a week prior to start of AECs. (iii) Arrange to repair/replace damaged lanterns at the beginning of the session. (iv) Work out a method by which supervisors ensure availability and use of material at the AEC.

2. Salaries: (i) Experiment with alternative systems for distribution of instructor remuneration so that the instructors receive timely payment.

## B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(The volunteer focussed on training and had worked out an elaborate design of the training programme. A very brief summary is presented here).

The instructors are to be given 21 days training during the year; this can be divided into 3 stages.

Stage 1: Pre-session, orientation training introducing instructors to NAEP (7 days).

Stage 2: Evaluation of experience with the adult education centre after 3 months. Difficulties and problems can be discussed (6 days).

Stage 3: Tailored to meet instructor and centre needs. Solving recurring problems. Discussing methods to carry out programme evaluation. To be organized in the eighth month for 8 days.

There will be a one day monthly follow up meeting in each supervisory sector. Supervisor's visits to the centre and community view of centre can also be incorporated in the follow up.

## C. LINKS WITH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

(A volunteer presented his plans for a set of centres)

1. Considering the need of the area, plantation of trees and caring for them till their maturity will be the major activity. A survey will be undertaken after a year to x

assess the success of plantation activity. The village development committee which grew out of the adult education committee will be responsible.

This will be implemented in two villages to start with in the months of July and August.

2. Action against malaria is critical. Due to water logging, incidence of malaria is high in the area. Three to four affected centres will discuss the problem and initiate action for prevention and cure.

Blood test for malaria detection and medicines are to be obtained through health workers. Local teachers and others will be involved in centres for preventive education. July to October is the usual period of trouble.

3. Depending on availability of time and district level resources, a small group of learners and instructors will be selected for participation in the TRYSEM programme.

#### D. LINKS WITH COMMUNITY

1. Form adult education committee at village level. Can have 10 members with instructor as secretary. About 6 meetings to be held during the 10 month session. Experiment in 4 villages initially with cooperation from the community.

2. Form separate women's committee. This will focus on maternal and child health and family welfare. Can meet once every two months or so.
3. Make special efforts to organize adult group to listen to the radio programme "Khula Akash" meant for rural adults. This will require a transistor in <sup>the</sup> village that do not have one to spare.

#### Comments on the presentation: An Illustration

The participants discussed the plans presented by various individuals. Each of the plans was critiqued. A sample of the discussion on the second presentation on Personnel Development (Training) is given below.

The presentation described a 3 stage model of training instructors. The group was of the opinion that it would be difficult to motivate instructors to participate in a 7-8 days' training programme as suggested. The compensation provided by the programme to the instructors was not adequate. It was pointed out that the plan was laudable but resources required were not considered. If all the stages of the training programme and the follow up are completed satisfactorily, there may not be much budgeted resources left for many other activities.

In a more positive vein, the group then "searched" for an acceptable plan. It was felt that the initial instructor training programme for seven days was highly desirable.

There was a suggestion that "old" instructors i.e. instructors from the previous sessions need not be brought into this programme. It could be exclusively organized for the newly recruited instructors. The savings could be used for Stage 2 training. However, there was a suggestion that some of the older instructors could teach the newer ones, sometimes more effectively and hence should participate even in the initial training.

There was also a discussion on the point that instead of the 6-day programme after 3 months, there could be a well organized monthly meeting at the supervisory sector level. At present, the monthly meeting was largely administrative and did not deal with the programme. So it could be strengthened, by making it into an educational get-together.

Similarly, the discussion highlighted the tendency of project personnel to (1) ignore resource needs (2) neglect priorities and sequencing of tasks and hence attempt too many things at the same time (3) ignore feasibility of follow up and maintenance before initiating an activity.

#### A Brief Presentation on Centre Management

After the deliberations on project management, the focus was shifted to the adult education centre. Our view was that there were two significant elements in centre management - the instructor and the community. Five propositions regarding centre effectiveness were presented to the group:



- 1) Even centres with moderate attendance and regularity of learners can be good centres.
- 2) Adaptation of curriculum to suit learner needs makes a centre effective.
- 3) Even instructors with moderate qualification (Std.V to VIII) can make a centre effective. Instructors with higher qualification may not always be effective instructors.
- 4) Instructors exposed to various development agencies and programmes turn out to be effective.
- 5) Community support not only to instructor but to learners, implying community interest in learners' progress makes a centre effective.

The instructors and supervisors were requested to react to these propositions on the basis of their experiences and the situation in their own area of work. These propositions were generally validated by the assembled group. Some of the comments were:

- 1) Community support for and interest in learners was essential.
- 2) It is true that instructors with exposure to other development programmes in agriculture, health etc. are good. They can initiate and follow up activities if there is interest on the part of the community.
- 3) With regard to instructor's background, one participant felt that older (in age) instructors seemed to be more effective. Therefore, retired government workers should be located for involvement in N&EP as instructors.

On the whole, the feeling was that the instructor had a key role to play and if he was able to mobilize the support of the community, he could organize a very successful centre.

Directing Programme Evaluation towards the Field Worker:  
Some Observations on our Experiment

The workshop was intended to share the evaluation study with the field workers and initiate an exercise on planning and follow up action. It was thus aimed at making the evaluation of a national developmental programme (1) more widely shared by the lower levels of the programme bureaucracy and (2) more usefully applied for purposes of planning.

Participatory modes of evaluation have evoked much interest in the last decade. Freire<sup>12</sup> and others call for more participatory approaches to evaluation that treat the people studied not as more objects of study, but as participants in the inquiry. Tandon<sup>13</sup> demands the accountability of the external researcher to the subjects studied and hence suggests collaboration between the researcher and the subject. However, the focus in these approaches has been the community and the weaker sections of society whose collaborative role in any evaluation is stressed. While we agree with the rationale and need for such an approach in evaluation, we feel that, much before involvement of the beneficiaries and the community in the evaluation process, the participation of the lower levels of the bureaucracy is critical. This is particularly so in - large national programmes with several layers of

---

12 Freire, P. as mentioned in Bhola, H.S. Evaluating Functional Literacy. Op. cit., p.22-24

13 Tandon, R. Participatory Evaluation and Research: Main Concepts and Ideas in Tandon, R. and Fernandes, W.eds. Participatory Research and Evaluation ISI. New Delhi.1981.

bureaucracy. Brinkerhoff speaks of this as the process of "empowering managers to empower clients"<sup>14</sup>. When bureaucrats and managers within the programme organization are themselves stifled by the non participatory and authoritarian nature of their organizations, they are not likely to treat the clients and beneficiaries differently. For instance, in adult education, we have the example of project personnel visiting the village centre "to check" and "to inspect" rather than to support and facilitate the centre's instructor, despite the programme's stress on a less regulatory and a more developmental attitude on the part of the project personnel. The role model for the adult education supervisor is often that of an inspector who polices his subordinates rather than facilitating their task performance. Moreover, the field staff in any development programme come to know of programme matters mostly through circulars and fiats from above and rarely do they get a feeling of directing and influencing the programme. In these circumstances, it is our view that the programme personnel, particularly at the lower levels, must be made to feel a sense of involvement and allowed an opportunity for creative thinking and doing even before calling for beneficiary and community participation. The feedback workshop of the fourth appraisal indeed offered such an opportunity.

---

14 Brinkerhoff, D. Inside Public Bureaucracy: Empowering Managers to empower clients. Rural Development Participation Review. 1.1, 1979. pp.7-9.

It would be imprudent to project too much from a brief workshop of the type that was held. Yet the following observations can be made:

1. This was the first time that an evaluation of the field workers' work was collectively shared with them and where they got the opportunity to examine it.
2. It was clear that the attempt generated considerable practical and positive thinking among the field personnel as different from the routine and mechanical way they were trying to implement the directives and guidelines given from above.
3. It was for the first time that they realized the need for systematic action planning at all levels of a programme and the fact that planning was not always done only at the top by policy makers.
4. The evaluation exercise was legitimized in the eyes of the people who were being evaluated. They were not feeling threatened. This was further evidenced by the fact that field personnel of another district who later came to know about this workshop and its proceedings invited us to undertake the study of their district. This was despite the critical observations of the projects made in the report.
5. The field personnel also saw that, within the system and with all its constraints, much can be done to improve the performance of the NAEP at the project, supervisory sector and centre levels.

6. They also realized and agreed in principle that such evaluation and planning exercises can be done by them at their level on an ongoing basis. The monthly meetings at the project and supervisory sector levels are a good forum for such exercises.

7. It was not that the participants considered the evaluation to be without blemishes. Nor were they overoptimistic about follow up action. In fact, the participants were skeptical about the follow up on some aspects of the report and were quite apprehensive whether the administrative matters which were to be dealt with by the higher level administrators would at all be taken up. What is noteworthy is that they felt free to be quite open and vocal on this account.

8. It is also important to note the linkages of the project with the higher levels of programme administration for any follow up work based on an evaluation. In fact, constant support and involvement by higher authorities in the field staff's attempts to make changes as a result of evaluation are crucial.

We realize that a two day workshop is too short. Perhaps a more detailed exercise would be more useful. Also, intensive training in project planning would be more helpful for all projects with or without formal external evaluation.

A feedback workshop is only one of the methodologies of using appraisal as an instrument of planning at the lower rungs of the bureaucracy. There could be alternative methodologies, but ideally, it should be built into the programme design and made a part of the ongoing implementation process.