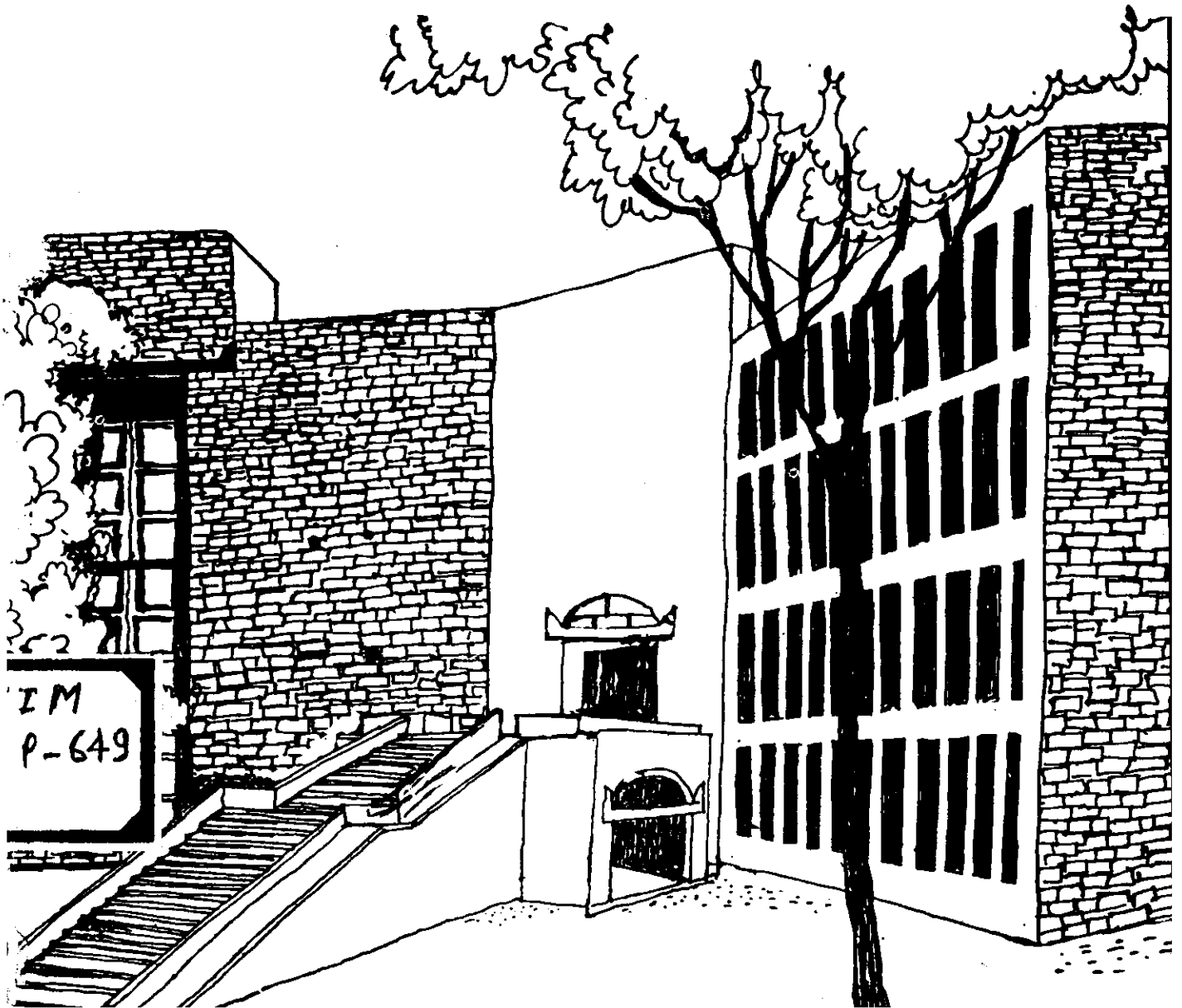


Working Paper



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CREATING DEMAND SYSTEMS IN DROUGHT
PRONE REGIONS; RANDOM THOUGHTS AND
PERSONAL FIELD NOTES FROM A GROUP
ACTION--RESEARCH PROJECT--JOURNAL II

By

Anil K. Gupta

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

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ABSTRACT

Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad had initiated an action-research project in three districts with similar ecological and social stress but dissimilar administrative system. A group of faculty members from Centre for Management in Agriculture and Public Systems Group pursued the idea of creation of demand groups of poor by the local bureaucracy on itself. The hope was that generation of this demand might help in counteracting the demand from vested interests resulting in unfair distribution of resources, information and services.

The first journal of this project was written by late Prof. Ravi J. Matthai and the draft (written in 1983) reported here was expected to be the second journal. However, it never could be discussed in the group at length and hence remains author's individual understanding and account of a group action-research endeavour. It is hoped that various hypothesis which were generated might provoke more comprehensive, sustained and meaningful explorations by other colleagues.

The ethical issues in initiating an endeavour of this sort without taking it to its logical conclusions will be discussed separately.

<u>Contents*</u> :	<u>Pages</u>
1. Preface	
2. Introduction	
- Brief Review of Earlier Journal (Written by Prof. Ravi J. Mathai)	1-4
3. Chapter-one:	
Creation of Demand Groups: Some hypotheses, some possibilities	5-14
: Demystifications of Expertise	5
: Why could people come together	8
: Learned Helplessness	9
: Demand groups and Technological Change	11
4. Chapter-Two:	
Incentives to Perform : Performance Evaluation of officers by 'Superiors' vis-a-vis 'Inferiors' i.e. the people	15-21
: Time-Target trade off : Illustrations of how 'monitoring generated designs'	15
: Fishing by Tribals/Non tribals(bhois) (Fish or the fisherman-who is the target!)	17
: TRYSEM: Choice of Enterprises	18
: Traditional skills	19
: Maximising average income vis-a-vis individual income	20
: Sector-space time interface	21
: Redundancy : Building underutilized capacities in delivery systems	21
5. Chapter-Three	
Politics of Participation : Camps, Campaigns and Commitment	22-35
: Participation	22
: Process of Intervention - Tenure : Time : Participation	25
: Feedback as Spur for Participation : Examples	26

* Only some of the sub-themes in each chapter are included in the contents. There are several other ideas discussed in each chapter not flagged or mentioned here.

Case I :	27
Regional Rural Bank - Institutionalising Feedback Through Camps and Meetings	28
Selection of site for Farmers Meetingr	28
Purpose of the Feedback	29
Process of Feedback	30
Invitation, Dias etc.	31
Case II :	
Integrated Rural Development Programme - Camps	32
Case III :	
Fisheries Project : On Attended Feedback	33
Case IV:	
Feedback in Inter-Organizational Context	34
 6. Chapter-Four :	
Inter Organizational Interface : Sectoral Development in Multi-Sectoral Context	36
: Illustration 1 : ITI-DIC-TADC-Manufacture & Repair of Boats	38
2 : Misor Irrigation & Forest Department	39
3 : Police - Banks - DRDA, Seasonality of Crime	39
4 : Industrial Service Units	42
5 : RRB, Forestry, DRDA - Basket making	43
6 : Tribals' Sub-Plan - Agri- cultural Department-DIC	43
7 : Coordination and Control	46
8 : Feedback Through Formal & Informal Channel	47
9 : Mutual Monitoring	49
 7. Chapter-Five :	
Irony of Equity : Standardization of Parameters for Implementing Projects	52

8.	Chapter-Six :	
	Interface Between Political, Administrative and Social Systems vis-a-vis Demand Groups	57-62
	: Illustration 1 : Fisheries	59
	: 2 : Payment of Loan	60
	: 3 : Complaints from Below	62
9.	Chapter-Seven :	
	Mobility of Officials : To Move or not to Move Too Much	63
10.	Chapter-Eight	
	Some Random Issues, Ideas and Implications : Lest We Forget	70 - 84
	: Creating Groups within Bureaucracy	70
	: Transaction Costs	71
	: Land Transfers in Tribal Region	71
	: "Kam Unkahi, Bhagna Hame Padtha hai" -	72
	: Group Technology	72
	: Reward and Punishment System	73
	: System Overload	74
	: Transition of Initiative into Innovations	74
	: Socio-Ecology of Demand Groups	75
	: Developing Tribals but why?	80
	: Incentives for Officials in Backward Regions	80(a)
	: Transition of Peasant Protest into Pressure Group	81
	: Summing Up : Closing the Gap	82
	: After Thought - As If It Matters	:5

PREFACE

The field notes or tour diary seldom interests large number of academics involved in rural development research. If it were not so, one would find more and more researchers sharing what they normally do not publish in the rounded and polished reports or monographs. At the same time the processes and provocations that guide action-research are quite different from other conventional studies.

Eight faculty members* from Centre for Management in Agriculture and Public Systems Group of the Institute came together under the informal leadership of Prof Ravi J. Mathai to discuss various alternative approaches to Rural Development. The action-research project started in 1982 as a part of Rural University project and was called - "Experiments in Educational Innovation - Experiment-II." After discussing several possible ideas, the group decided work on the idea of local level bureaucracy creating demand groups of the poor on itself.

Three adjoining backward drought prone tribal districts were selected viz: Banswada (Rajasthan), Panchmahals (Gujarat) and Jabua (Madhya Pradesh). The idea was also to explore how similar people reacted to dissimilar administrative system and vice versa.

Initially, the group used to make joint visits to the districts, however, as the time passed the interest of different members started waning. Perhaps, by virtue of having made maximum visits to the districts as well as having kept - detailed field notes, the author requested to write the second journal of the project. Accordingly, the draft reported here was written for the

* These were Profs. Anil Bhatt, B.M. Desai, Anil K. Gupta, Ranjit Gupta (Coordinator), Indrajit Khanna (who left in between to resume his duties with Rajasthan Government), Ravi J. Mathai, Girja Sharan, Manu Shroff. *

purpose in 1983. It was circulated amongst members but except Prof. Manu Shroff* and Prof Matthai, none bothered to offer critical comments except some homilies on how to make 'objective' observations and also how observation need be reported without interpretation. They had obviously not concurred with Sen (1980)**, Popper and Toyanabee who felt no description was possible without some interpretation or interpretation of some thing (even if it is the values of the researcher). The result was that the draft remained undiscussed with wider academic community. Since, Prof Matthai always believed that the processes of research and action were as important if not more, as the product, I have decided to share the original draft with wider academic community and the officials in the three districts. Having not shared our findings formally and explicitly with those from whom we learned so much. We have obviously failed in discharging some of the ethical obligations that I believe we must fulfill. It might still be not too late to do so.

As far as this draft is concerned, it represents only my personal views interpretations of individual as well as collective endeavour. If I have erred in interpreting views of some of my colleagues. I plead meaculpa.

Value judgements are difficult to avoid in action-research which extends the frame of accountability of researchers beyond the boundaries of their formal roles and peer groups.

I own my share of blame with regard to the violation of various promises that we had made to the officials in the district about sustained interest on our part.

I hope, colleagues will send their critical comments and suggestions with regard to the ideas, assertions and implications drawn in this note.

* I am grateful to Prof. Shroff for very valuable editoric* comments besides numerous other suggestions, some of which I did not accept only to the detriment of the quality of this draft. Some people never learn!

** Sen, A, 1980. Description As a Choice, Oxford Economic Papers Vol. 32(B) pp 367

I am most grateful to the district collectors and numerous other officials and people of these three districts for having shared with us so many of their insights. If they remain unnamed, it is only because many of them wished it that way. Responsibility for all the views expressed here, I repeat lies with me and not the group or the institute. Needless to mention, without the liberal support from CMA and PSG, none of us would have been able to learn so much from this project.

ANIL K GUPTA

Dec., 22, 1986

EXPERIMENTS IN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION
EXPERIMENT - II *

Introduction

The first journal of our experiment describes how we recognized our involvement in the creation of demand groups at the district level in an action research framework as a worthwhile pursuit. A number of visits which various members of the group made to different districts together or separately have generated numerous insights about various dimensions of creating demand groups. In the process, we also discovered that our own understanding in this regard had become clearer though the task looks much more challenging now than it did ever before.

It was difficult for me to be always clear about the audience to which this note was addressed. At times, I seem to be talking to my academic colleagues and at other times I was addressing myself to the officials in the districts with whom we have been interacting so far. Perhaps, this confusion was inevitable.

* I have drawn liberally from the comments of various members of the group made during our discussions on some of the ideas contained here. This draft was supposed to be circulated like Journal-I amongst wider academic community after comments from 8 members of the CMA-PSG sponsored project. The team included Profs. Ravi Matthai, Ranjit Gupta, Manu Shroff, Indrajit Khanna, Girja Sharan, Anil Bhatt, B.M. Desai and the author. Only Prof. Matthai and Prof. Shroff had time to comment others either disassociated themselves from the views expressed or felt that narrative should be like a snapshot-description without interpretation. I am sharing this collection of random thoughts about our (or my) experience with the hope that ethical and value aspects of action research projects would be discussed more explicitly. I own responsibility of all imputations and interpretations (intended and unintended). The story of what we learned about each other and our commitment to the process of action-research still remains to be told.

It is quite likely that four notes of various members from which I have drawn the ideas, views and even implications may not have been interpreted by me in the same way as the authors would have intended. But then, this underlines how complex is the task in action research to develop a common language or what Professor Matthai calls mutuality of expectations "within the group as well as between us and field officials with whom we interact." I do hope, however, that the officials would recognise the painful dilemma that they as well as we have before us in this collaborative effort. I acknowledge that I have allowed my own biases and conceptual filters to select certain notes and not others. While drawing lessons I may also add that if at places I have extended the meaning of the experiences that we had in the project, hope is that the feedback on this note will help in further crystallising our thoughts on the subject. Perhaps the future search for clarity will be more collaborative vis-a-vis district officials and in that sense the next step might as well be in that direction, i.e., to get the project owned by the officials.

Brief Review of Earlier Journal

Professor Ravi Matthai narrated in Journal-I how out of three different approaches that the group deliberated upon, the experiment that ultimately has been contemplated concerned our working with the government system to explore whether "the delivery

1 As the experience has shown, hopes in this regard were only partially fulfilled in one of the district-Jhabua. Elsewhere, we still don't know what happened because we never met as a group to discuss the things once Prof Matthai was no more with us. Two other initiatives were expected to start at the same time.

systems could be convinced that their work could become much easier and external political and other pressures less overwhelming if they could develop group of villagers who were the intended beneficiaries of government programmes to make such demands on itself." It was also explained how in an action research project the role of 'we' vis-a-vis 'they' had to be properly defined and diluted progressively so as to stimulate initiative and creativity on the part of officials who should ultimately own the project. The contradictions in the groups about various assumptions were not only recognised but encouraged. The hope was that in the disagreement was inherent the necessary impetus required to encourage each one of us to explore not only within the group but also with the officials how far we have been wrong. The possibility of learning through sharing was built into the very design and approach of the experiment.

Why we had selected adjoining districts, viz., Jhabua, Panch Mahals and Banswada of 3 different states - Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan, was also mentioned. It was thought that how similar people were dealt with by official strategies dissimilar in nature should be studied so that one might be able to better understand how the lateral and vertical possibilities of learning within the organizations as well as between differential governmental systems within the country could be further enhanced.

We were aware of several dilemmas that faced an action researcher. For example, Professor Matthai raised a valid question as to whether the manner in which we ask the questions and subsequent direction of our questioning did not cause them further to answer in accordance with their perception of what they thought we wanted to hear. The continuous dilemma of whether the tribal development programmes were aimed at making the 'activities' viable or the 'tribals' viable was mentioned which continued even during the second phase. The 'targetry' as a strategy to develop people invariably figured as an important mode of delivery of programmes.

Our perception of their approaches and their perception of our experiment and assumptions inherent therein provided occasional remarks like the one below:

When two of our members got late in reaching one of the districts, the D.D.O., who received them mentioned immediately, "So, now you understand, how difficult it is to perform at field in various developmental programmes." The way State governments responded to our experiment was also described. Views regarding posting in backward regions, stereotype about tribals and the possible areas of work were also mentioned.

The present journal takes off from May 1982 and includes substantive discussion of ideas emerging during visits undertaken after that. At some places it has been necessary to refer to the discussions that took place even earlier. But to whatever extent possible the overlap between the current journal and the earlier has been minimised. If problems have remained same or similar, it is inevitable that in every journal we should come out with some similar issues. Perhaps differences, if any, should indicate progress in our learning, though we must confess that we are not yet sure about learning by our other partners in the game, i.e., district officials.*

* In a study entitled, 'Learning to Unlearn: an Action-Research enquiry into Rural Banking' by Anil K Gupta and Manu Shroff, 1985, CMA-PSG, IIM-A, mimeo, "we have described the learning in one of the sub projects pursued in Jhabua. A seminar of all the participants and co-researchers was held at IIM to compare notes and discuss the findings."

Chapter - OneCreation of Demand Groups : Some hypotheses, some possibilities:

Action research with bureaucracy with an objective of exploring whether it would like to organize groups of poor people to make demand on itself involves making a few assumptions. Some of the possible reasons along with assumptions that have guided our search so far regarding the feasibility of creating demand groups are mentioned below:

(1) We had taken care not to appear as a group of experts who had some readymade solutions with them for the problems that were faced by the officials at local level. However, it was not very easy to dispel the expectancy that our academic background generated in the mind of officials as narrated in detail in the first journal. When we started pursuing some specific activities through repeated dialogue with the officials with whom we have interacted earlier, some signals about our priorities and parameters of searching people/activity/institutions must have been received by the officials. Perhaps what remains to be explored is to what extent we have been sensitive to the feedback from our other partners in research i.e. officials. This search began with a basic premise, i.e. within bureaucracy there were, people who were willing to assert and tilt the scales of developmental processes in favour of poor. To what extent an action researcher with the very defined role can withstand the active resistance of those who would not believe in such a tilt was an open question.

We were aware that certain modes of demand generation and response provision already existed in the administration - people interface. We also realised that many times when we talk of demand groups such interfaces could be cited as the evidence of already existing groups. We made special efforts to distinguish creation of demand groups which would have the capacity to control the leaders and at the same time would be able to build sufficient groups strength from the groups that existed already. However,

it is likely that we may not have conveyed fully what we meant. To this extent this phase of our experiment is not yet over, even if it appears as if it has taken too long - over two years, to communicate what we were really aiming at.¹

(2) Continuance of the existing practices or systems is assumed as the direct outcome of certain expectations that poor people historically have had from the administration at various levels. The expectations from the administration were not independent of the expectations people had from politicians again at different levels. The question before us, therefore, was to what extent can we succeed in generating mutuality of expectations not only between us as action researchers and the officials as the generator of demand groups but also between groups and officials and groups and politicians at various levels. We have been deliberating on the strategy that would ensure the process through which mutuality would emerge. One step in the direction is seminar of officials from all the three districts who would interact among themselves and with us on the experience that they have had vis-a-vis us as well as regarding any sporadic effort that they might have made on their own to organize the groups of people.²

(3) The national level policy planners recognize that organization of poor is a necessary condition even though it may not be a sufficient condition for improvement in the performance of developmental programmes at grass-root level. If the groups have not been organized, one possible reason could be that no

1 This action-Research project was started in 1981-82.

2 Design of such a seminar was indeed discussed in the group meetings at considerable length but somehow, the seminar never took place. The ostensible reason was that we did not yet have enough to share.

operational framework existed in which bureaucracy could itself initiate the process as distinguished from activities, triggered by academicians and voluntary agencies. Also probably the mechanics of monitoring developmental programmes with insistence on quantities that is numbers there never was a room allowed for any such ideas to be experimented within the bureaucratic system.

(4) Eventhough bureaucracies have often been characterised as not being neutral to change and in fact being biased towards the rich and the well off people, sufficient attention has not been paid to the minority in bureaucracy which would, like in any social system, rebel against such nexus. In fact, as was pointed out in the earlier journal, some people at lower level were found to be more eager to make changes and trigger initiatives which somehow did not become innovations because of the existence of contradictions at the higher level within the bureaucracy as well as socio-political system. Perhaps the organization of demand groups would reinforce the initiatives of such a minority which in absence of such support might not be able to muster enough strengths to pursue its mission of organizing people.

(5) In any collaborative research involving as varied groups as academicians with different background as well as developmental officials with different sectoral boundaries, it was expected that different participants in the action research would not necessarily have same or similar incentives to participate. It has been hypothesized that creation of demand groups both within bureaucracy and amongst rural poor would provide a necessary platform, in the absence of which the tendency for one-to-one exchange to reinforce the notion of mutual helplessness would not get diluted.

(6) While allocating resources, officers legitimise the roles of intermediaries who bring bad name to both the parties, the people and the public systems. At times it is the complexity of rules that creates need for people who can interpret them; at some other times historic access to the official systems has been

structuring the way newer efforts for gaining access emerge. How to neutralise intermediaries, thus becomes a question, to answer which people might explore the need for a collectivity.

(7) People might come together -

- (a) because seeking information individually is costly;
- (b) negotiating a transaction with an official alone might involve more risks.
- (c) it is possible to check and validate one's own understanding of officials' reactions with others. This validation homogenises the data-knowledge-action implications for various members of groups;
- (d) they might be able to provide support in group to such officials who may try to help them but may be too weak to pursue their ways done.
- (e) to act as pressure groups for sectarian interests.

(8) One issue which emerged repeatedly was were we trying to substitute patronage of informal but local power centres with formal bureaucratic systems? Probably the groups will be able to dissolve dependency through building leadership and mobilising officials which will generate pressure for creation of organizational memory.

(9) Aggregation of demand Prof. Matthai felt could be expressed in two forms:

- (a) high density lower leadership;
- (b) low density higher leadership.

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In the latter case, the risk is about the capacity of group to control leaders, in the former case, the complete subservience of the group to the leader makes at times even the processes of participation quite dispensable.

The high density might mean, greater personalization of power while lower leadership might imply in this case higher accountability to group. The power here only refers to lesser reliance on leader for group functioning. The leaders that can be dealt by the followers.

(10) Is it possible that patronage by one group could be traded with the patronage allowed by another group - in other words, how does one link the possibility of exchanging patronage through multiple roles with groups created around specific roles?

(11) Dependence of Bureaucracy and Officials on Farmer

Demand groups by helping in achievement of targets that officials have before them may try to make officials more dependent on them. However, the concept of dependence of bureaucracy over farmers has several dimensions. Some people suggested that one way of enforcing dependence could be, to illustrate, not to pay the salaries of say the teachers unless they got the signature of the non-officials about satisfactory performance, the contrary view was that many of the buildings constructed by the panchayat officials had collapsed implying that non-official leadership could not be considered to be any more benign than the official delivery system. The dependence, therefore, will have to be conceptualized taking into account the very contradictions in the trust that different sections of bureaucracy have towards non-official leadership that exists already and the leadership that might be thrown up by the creation of demand groups.

(12) Learned Helplessness

One reason why many times people did not collectivise their individual suffering was due to their internalizing their feelings of helplessness. They felt that nothing would happen even if they should make any demand. One reason put forward to explain this helplessness was the lack of functional autonomy or decentralization leading to bureaucrating impotency in the minds of people. At times, the generation of demand might be used against the people who made it, particularly if it exposed some corruption. The issue was how would one reinforce the expectation of fair-play in the minds of people unless the officials would agree to observe rules of the game' (yet to be defined collaboratively!).

(13) Stagnant Officials vis-a-vis transferability

One of the barriers to creation of demand groups could be the lack of mobility on the part of some officials. Sometimes, when officials were not transferred from 10 to 15 years, they also came to know about the weaknesses of various people in the area of their operation. They played one man against another to ensure the continued lack of cohesion amongst the people. (Later, we explore the implications of two frequent transfers, See p-25, also Chapter-7.)

(14) Role of traditional leadership

Creation of groups in some places might be facilitated by involving the authority of traditional leadership like that of 'tadbi' as still existent in some of the tribal places. Example, was given how a pasture plot was protected by the farmers without any fencing just because of the influence of the Tadbi. However, it remained to be explored as to what extent these traditional leaders were representative, democratic or just. It was not unlikely that in many cases, these leaders could be exploitative in nature and the villagers would have lost their capacity to control them. Opposite may be the case in some other contexts.

(15) Intra and Inter-group discipline

Discipline within a group could well be a function of discipline at inter-group level. While adherence to the rules of the game within group would have to be ensured by the members of the group, between the groups, the same adherence may not be easily possible to be enforced by the group leaders. In such circumstances, the role of officials/bureaucracy becomes quite crucial.

(16) Adaptive Strategies of Groups at Various Stages of Evolution

The adaptive strategies for groups to face various internal and external stresses would vary at formative, adaptive and decadence stage of the group. However, it was quite likely that in the formative stages of the group formation, if the bureaucratic systems interfered too much, the people might become dependent on them.

all the more, it had happened in the initial phase of development when government through product-push strategy had increased the dependence of people on the delivery system. Further, the groups formed around commodities or services which were not in shortage might not be able to sustain themselves when commodity or the services became scarce. This proposition could be further explored only through experimentation. The issue is relevant from the point of view conceptualising these groups as self-reliant as far as their decision-making was considered but inter-dependent when it came to making demands on delivery system.

(17) Generation of demand at lower level might substitute the need for conformity to demands from higher level in bureaucracy - something which often annoys the officials at lower level.

(18) Very often in the absence of demand from those for whom the programmes are intended officials compromise and bend the policies to suit to demand of those who were not the most needy ones. If they did not do so, their own performance would be just as poor because targets would not be met.

(19) Demand group as a means to bridge technological gap

There has been for long, a strategy of choosing contact farmers in transferring new technology. The recent introduction of training and visit system makes only little difference in as far as it increases frequency of visits and reduce the extent of technological message to be transferred per visit. This apart, the mechanism of selecting people and assumption that they (the selected people) would transfer the technology to others continued to be the same. During our discussions with tribals as well as some people who had interest in traditional technologies we learnt a few instances of a very high order mode of experimentation and trial on the part of tribals in certain agricultural activities."

We also learnt how certain scientific principles in the historical process had been ritualised so much that the essence of those practices was no more available to the tribals in their

cognitive system. In other words, rather than presenting them with technologies evolved in quite alien experimental conditions and terming those who did not adopt the technology as laggards, it might be worthwhile to explore where the tribals did not have a very different parameter to evaluate the technology and thus adopt it. There was a possibility of creating demand group to deliberate on their traditional technologies and make demands on researchers as well as departmental people engaged in transferring certain technologies to reorient their assumptions about tribals and their needs (as against wants).

The specific instances can be recalled here which reveal the scientific nature of tribal as breeder and thus generate possibility of pursuing with researchers and agricultural department officials, the idea of mobilising these groups so that the research could be more in line with the expectations of tribals.

(i) Preservation of Maize Seed

It is found as noted in some other tribal regions also that best maize cobs were preserved on the top of roof without taking the grains out of the cobs. They were hung in such a manner that the smoke from the stove/chullah fumigated the cobs daily. The result was that these cobs never attracted pests no matter for how long they were preserved. As yet there was no modern technology which was as fool proof as this. Seeds of Chillies and some other crops were also preserved in this way.*

- (ii) The crop mixtures developed by the tribals were extremely sensible arrangements for dealing with risk of various types. For example, if the rains were too early a particular crop would succeed and if it were too late earlier one might fail

* In some other countries, instances have been noted where substitution of usual stove by smokeless stove created the problem of white ants eating the wooden beams of hut. (See Bina Aggrawal, 1982, World Dev.)

and another crop would succeed. Likewise, planting maize on the hill-top and paddy in the valley revealed their sensitivity to the problem of maize being very sensitive to water-logging whereas paddy being suitable for low lying conditions.

- (iii) We also came across a breed of poultry called as 'Kadak Nath' which had all its bones black. Tribals were said to be very possessive about male bird of this variety lest they lost the valuable germ plasm. They would never sell Kadak Nath male bird in the market. It was said that the meat of this bird was highly nutritious and also had lot of medicinal properties.

It is also found that some of the varieties of gram developed by the tribals through selection over historical period of time had not been surpassed in their yield by the new varieties developed in agricultural universities in the given ecological conditions.

It is therefore, possible to explore whether a demand group could also be a vehicle for flow of scientific insights from the tribals to the researchers so that the researchers can try to redirect their exploration to suit expectation of tribals. Department of Agriculture might find this process very helpful because it might enhance its credibility with the tribals whose

ecological endowment may not be suitable for most of the so called modern varieties.*

The thoughts presented above in retrospect, appear too abstract for some of the readers. Author would appreciate enquiries and comments from the readers. There are concrete experiences which triggered these ideas. Unfortunately, since Prof. Matthai is no more, those ideas that were spawned by him (and have thus been so attributed) may not be explained by the author in the manner he would have probably intended. During discussions with him prior to his visit to London from which he was never to return, he did clarify many of the ideas and criticized others. If I have not made many changes, the fault is entirely mine and reflects in no way on the quality of his comments (Gupta 1986)

Chapter - Two

Incentives to Perform :

Performance Evaluation of Officials by 'Superiors' vis-a-vis 'Inferiors' i.e. the people.

Some of us in the group felt that incentives and disincentives for a bureaucrat to perform in the way he does largely emanated from the historical experience that he has about the parameters on which his performance is monitored. One of the classical axim in the administrative system is, "Monitoring generates design." Implication being that very often the way in which performance of people at various level is evaluated and the feedback provided to them, generates incentives for various types of actions. This is not to say that everybody we met was very conscious of his evaluation. In fact most at the lower level did not show any great concern towards the evaluation although they were very sensitive to the way they were monitored by the superiors.

The informal mechanisms to communicate what actually mattered in the minds of superiors seem to work quite effectively. However, very rarely we came across any instance where officials showed sensitivity about how they were evaluated by the various sections of society. Of course, in practice, their sensitivity to those in society who could influence their rating in the minds of the superiors certainly could be understood. To what extent this sensitivity has desensitized the officials to the need for seeking evaluation or feedback from people at grass-root level cannot be said unambiguously. Certain dimensions of performance evaluation which might have bearing on creation of demand groups are given below:

Performance Evaluation

(1) How did one get to know whether what one was doing was upto the mark or not? To what extent the oral appreciation

resulted in tangible rewards was a concern expressed by many people?

(2) While the adverse confidential report (CR) was always communicated, the excellent was never a point which was repeatedly mentioned by officers in different departments. The need for communication of strong as well as weak points so that one could systematically improve ones' performance was mentioned. Others who disagreed with this view felt that it was possible within the current system to gauge ones own rating.

(3) Some people felt that in any case promotions were very few and far between, with the result, people were generally indifferent to C.R. and only during the last few years just before promotion, they started caring for the performance evaluation.

(4) Another issue mentioned in this regard was the system of incrementalism - no matter at what base level a person stood a uniform percentage increase in performance was generally expected. A difference would not be maintained between those who increased their performance, say from 0 to 5 per cent compared to those who may have improved from 75% to 90%. In other words, creating new demand was not considered a task quantitatively different from catering to already existing and articulated demand.*

(5) Time/Target Trade off: Some illustration of how Monitoring generated design

The compulsion to show the maximum results in minimum time gave rise to various type of compromises by the administrators at local level. Whatever alternative was preferred seemed dependent on the way officials interpreted the signals from above vis-a-vis their performance evaluation formally or informally. Some instances that reveal how monitoring system for programmes

* This, we feel, probably was one of the most profound lessons we learned about the practice of public administration at local level.

generates pressures at local level leading to compromises are given below. We will discuss the conceptual implication of these compulsions for participation of officials subsequently.

(a) Fishing by Tribals/Bhois

In one of the states, the government had a policy of encouraging fish collection by tribals only particularly because:

- (i) it was one of the traditional sources of income to them; and
- (ii) the tribals displaced by the backwaters of reservoir could be rehabilitated to some extent in this activity.

The survival mechanisms of tribal households depended to a great extent on their resources constraints and opportunity matrix. Their aim could be to have lowlevel of production but with sustained income over a longer period of time rather than having a high level of production in less time to be converted into cash (to buy other necessities in the period when production would not be possible). It would thus conflict with the interests of officials whose performance was rated on maximising income in shortest possible time at minimum cost. Officials repeatedly mentioned that if only they could legitimately engage Bhois traditionally skilled non-tribal community in catching fish - their (officials') performance could improve many times. The objective of setting up official system was to support the tribals and fishing activities was the means. However, due to the inappropriate monitoring system, the fishing activity became an end. And major objective of helping tribals got side-tracked. Surely, Bhois who are much better organized ethnically and socially would be willing to become a partner in this game. One could argue that even they needed help but the question was whether at the cost of tribals!

(2) Bank branch location by Regional Rural Bank (RRB)

In one of the districts Regional Rural Bank was set up to provide easy and effective access of tribals to credit so as to increase their income and level of living. The idea was that in backward regions the cooperative and the commercial banks somehow do not take care of small farmers adequately and thus, RRB might be able to make dent on the problem of poverty pervading in the regions. However, the performances of RRB's was monitored again on the similar norms as that of any other public institutions.

It was expected that quantities will generate design that is more of the same will lead to the 'same' but 'better'. Since RRB had to show its performance in terms of giving as many additional loans as possible in the shortest possible time, the logical approach adopted was to open branches in the regions where demand for loans already existed. Further, to cater to this demand, the portfolio was also adjusted in such a way that purposes which consumed maximum capital, got the priority over others. Understandably, in the regions where the poverty was maximum, development was least, population density low, tribal population maximum, natural resources abundant, infrastructure poor, opportunities for commercial production for resources less - neither branches were set up nor lending was done. Again the parameters of performance evaluation determined the process of demand creation and response.

(3) Organising Milk Cooperatives

In the same district after lot of delay a Milk Chilling plant was set up on so called Amul pattern. Since the norms for cost per litre per kilometer had been prescribed by the Apex Organization in the dairy sector, the selection of milk route had to inevitably follow the logic of these norms. In other words, the regions where milk collection was already abundant and where perhaps is able and efficient private channels for marketing existed, the cooperative

societies were organized first. The regions where cost of collecting milk would have been higher or organizing society would have been difficult because dairying would have been only the minimal sources of cash income (though one of major sources of manure for the farm) had been bypassed.

(4) TRYSEM - Choice of Enterprises

When it was discussed how the selection of various enterprises for which trainees could be selected for subsequent self-employment was done, very interesting insights became available. In the trades in which most of the rural youth could be employed and ones which were facing lot of competition with the market goods, it was not easy to generate the demand from trainees since opportunities were perceived to be limited. On the other hand, in activities such as tailoring where the quota of trainees under the programme could be easily fulfilled because a lot of women would have liked to have learned tailoring even for domestic purposes maximum attention was paid. It was observed that the focus of the programme got shifted. Rather than training rural youth for self-employment, the objective became getting as many middle aged man and women trained in tailoring no matter whether they would go in for self-employment or not. Even subsequently, financing sewing machines became an important component in IRDP.

(5) Traditional skills- Modern Markets

Since most of the programmes in tribal regions were monitored on the same parameters as in any other regions, the good services which modern markets offered became the basis of designing programmes even in the regions where traditional skills needed maximum support. That is how could one understand how poultry, leather work, blacksmith, comparatively speaking were neglected in the whole programme.

(6) Upgrading the Average Level of Income vis-a-vis maximising Individual Incomes

As mentioned earlier, the time frame in which tribals might like to evaluate their income prospects and thus determine the choice of resources vary considerably from non-tribals. Further, the social homogeneity which tribals society tries to preserve might call for a strategy which aims at improvement of average level of income of the entire group or social network rather than maximising increase in opportunities for only a few. The example of organization of fishing societies in Gujarat part of Mahi Kadana reservoir brings this out, while groups of about five fishermen each were financed fishing boat and nets, but generally only two or three members went out to catch the fish. The officials interpreted this as a sign of lethargy on the part of the tribals who did not accompany others on the boat. Another view was that the tribals anticipated well the yield and expected share of each person. They, therefore, did not want the catch to be divided amongst many people. They also probably preferred to have a minimum amount of income at a point of time rather than having little bit of income from every trip. Also, it was possible that the marginal returns to labour might be higher with the group of about 2 to 3 persons such that carrying more members became sub-optimal. At the same time, it may not be possible for two or three people to take the entire burden of loan for boat and nets. Thus, they might have preferred to stagger their turn in such a way that various members got reasonable return with a common investment.*

Many times, it was mentioned that tribal did not have the entrepreneurial quality. It is worthwhile to note that if entrepreneurship implies maximising individual incomes, surely

* The above hypotheses need empirical validation. If found true, the new knowledge might demolish very effectively the dominant paradigm of culture-free decision making system (1985)

tribals might not be a game for it. However, if such strategies could be developed which tried to improve average income, it was likely that participation of tribals might improve. It has, therefore, to be appreciated that when programmes are monitored on the basis of target group approach involving individuals rather than groups certain classes of poor people will remain out of purview for the mentioned reasons.

(7) Sector-spaces - time interface

As mentioned earlier, with the compulsion to show results in shortest possible time involving expenditure of maximum possible amount, certain sectoral choices were inevitable. The extraordinary higher proportion of Dairy in IRDP had implications for the class of people who would participate. The budget exhaustion capacity when became the reason for evaluating performance of officials, the activities for which demand already existed became the official choice for developmental programmes. Where such people would be located could be easily inferred.*

(8) Redundancy - Building under utilized capacities

One of the implications of monitoring performances sectorally in intr-organizational perspective was that every department or organization tried to acquire a full complement of the necessary infrastructure even if some of the components were to be only sub-optimally utilized within the boundaries of these organizations. The implication is that a lot of wastage of scarce resources takes place because the performance is not monitored through inter-organizational networks. It is also not evaluated as to what extent different organizations have pooled resources to achieve their respective objectives. Some exceptions to this practice would be reported under the discussion on inter-organizational relationships.

* Also see, Gupta Anil K, 1986, Ecology, Market forces and Design of Resource Delivery System, paper presented at the International Conference on Organizational & Behavioural Perspectives on Social Development, IIM, Ahmedabad, Dec. 29-Jan 2, 1986.

Chapter - Three

Politics of Participation: Camps, Campaigns and Commitment

Participation

One of the reasons that we are exploring the idea of organizing demand groups is that these groups would rather than reinforcing the notions of poor people as beneficiaries or receivers of deliveries by the government would emerge as articulator of demand. This articulation hopefully would be reflected in the design of programmes and projects as they should be implemented at grassroot level. In this sense, the participation of people, which has been talked about in various five year plans, would be experimented in an operational framework for its institutionalisation at district level administrative system. Various approaches to participation particularly IRD camps that are currently popular with the administrative system were closely observed to understand why these methods only had been chosen. Some facets of participation process are mentioned below:

(1) The camps and the campaigns are considered the ultimate instrument of mobilising people. However, following arguments suggest the need for re-consideration:

- (i) The camps convert routine into celebration;
- (ii) They immobilise people in a normal times such that every camp generates a need for another camp;
- (iii) They raise the level of tolerance that is the homeostatic level such that unless concerted pressure in form of camp or campaign is launched, the systems does not attend to many the normal activities. These are left for being handled at the time of camps. It, in other words, desensitises the people and the officials.

(2) The participation ends where it should begin that is the interest of the officials in a programme finishes the moment campaigns end. The aftermath is not of any consequence to the camp managers.

(3) People interpret camps as a sign of helplessness on the part of officials who in the usual course do not find it possible to galvanise their own machinery to act. The need for external tension to generate internal pressure for action is probably met through camps and campaigns.

The possible advantages on the other hand are: (i) the concentrated attention make its evaluation easily possible by people compared to a diffused attempt; (ii) in bureaucracy with multiple objectives, particular objective at a given time has to be underscored by a visible effort in the form of campaigns. Senior officials find monitoring campaigns easier than to monitor programmes spread over a longer span of time.

The former chief secretary and then adviser to the Chief Minister in one of the states while replying to the request for posting district officials in our proposed inter-district seminar mentioned: "People will be attending in their personal capacity and not authorised by government, their views will be entirely personal". He underlines thus the dangers of participation as perceived at top level within the administration. For example, participation might mean accountability which may not be the necessary incentive for people to participate. It is also possible that authorisation for representing official views which the system would generally like to withhold. Participation of people in programmes may be different, as Prof. Shroff suggested, from the participation of officials in official and semi-official seminars & meeting. However, the concensus of officials about participation do impinge on their willingness to involve genuine participation from the people. The game thus becomes. One way power and two way communication (Gupta, 1980).*

* Gupta Anil K. 1980, Communicating with farmers, I.I.P.A., New Delhi, mimeo.

The ambiguity in rules was a safe device for generating scope for exploration at the people's end so that some pressure which might have otherwise forced the administration to act might get diffused in the process of exploration.

(4) The national five year plans and other documents have been listing the need for people's participation as a necessary condition for developmental programme to succeed. However, the meaning of participation might quite genuinely vary at different levels in the system.

(5) An interesting perception about our participation in the project was mentioned by the Collector in one of the districts who offered explicitly not to come with us during our visits. We were perceived perhaps as objective and 'neutral' data collector.

Repeatedly it was mentioned that we would write a report to be considered by government for action and in that sense it was our need to indulge in a purposeful research activity probably triggered by government to get a feedback.

(6) The stereo-types about the tribals often were found converging no matter which official in which department in whichever districts referred to them. Apparently, the alienation from the people is so large that mutual reinforcement has even convinced the officials about irrelevance of questioning their basic premises about tribals.

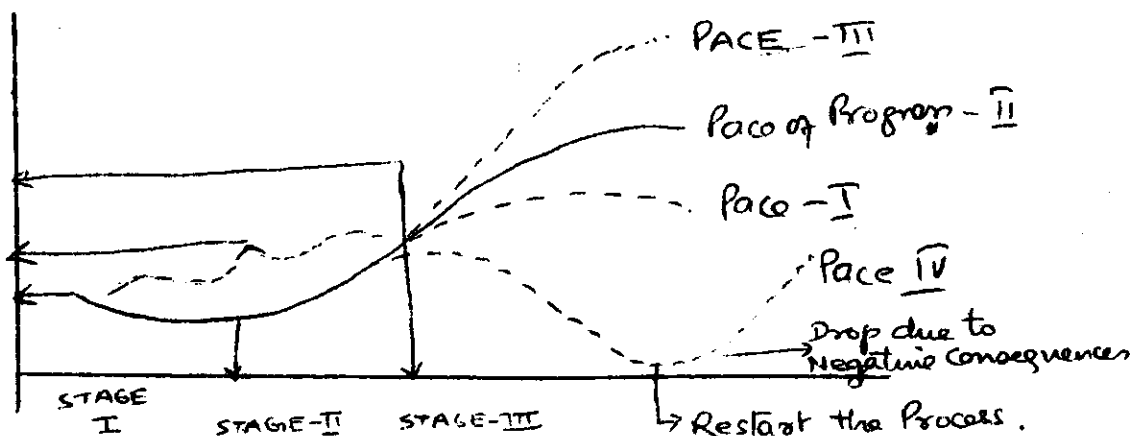
(7) The maximum interface of tribals was with forest guards or police; should we not therefore be intervening at that level to get into the real problem context of tribals.

(8) The stereo-types of tribals alluding to their alleged "animal" like behaviour simultaneously tried to communicate a superiority on the part of the 'civilised' system over the tribals. 'They' could not keep buffaloes and improved cattle and thus were uncivilised. Likewise, if we can't use fork and knife, we become uncultured.

(9) Some structural barriers to participation emerged in certain programmes because of the historical reasons. For example in Jhabua long ago soil conservation programme involving contour bunding was apportioned as loan against each beneficiary. Reportedly, the contour bunding was not right treatment with the given type of soils. The present policy of conservation comprised of bench/terracing. However, the problem faced was that the people who have participated in the earlier programme were defaulters as per the official records and thus could not participate now even though contour bunds did not exist any more on their lands and they needed the assistance very badly. The point that participation in previous projects/programm at a location affects participation in subsequent even unrelated programmes as noted in an earlier action-research project at IIPA too in 1978-1981 (Gupta, 1981). Unless the system of review of such liabilities which were almost thrust upon the farmers was not undertaken, it was difficult to assume that such events would not recur in different parts of the country. Even in the current programme not many farmers were apparently being informed that the entire cost of a development was being entered as loan against their names because fear was that given earlier experience, farmers might not agree to participate. Official justified this by arguing that such developmental expenses had very seldom been recovered from the farmers and by not making issues of this aspect, they were only being realistic. Such participation in programmes was based on very different expectations and understanding of each other's responsibility.

10. Process of Intervention ; Some further hypotheses (Also see, Chapter 7)

Tenure; Time; Participation



Pace of take off, sustenance and spinning off could be a function of:

- a) homogeneity of group;
- b) individual capability of facilitating official;
- c) network of related official in other supporting sectoral subsystem;
- d) mutuality of expectation;
- e) continuance of an official at a position from stage I to stage III, which will vary from project to project and also depend upon organizational memory;
- f) extent of unwanted and wanted effects of intervention; a bad start at time T1 place P1 may affect the change of success of programmes at Time T2, Place P1, as well as P2, P3 and so on depending upon how widespread the impact of failure was. Thus, the historicity of experience which varies from one section of peasantry to another at same, place and time may crucially determine participation;
- g) Simultaneously several programmes are being implemented at the same place. Experience with one programme will affect the expectation and interpretation of experience from other programmes.

These ideas would need further experimentation/empirical verification.

11. Feedback as spur for Participation; Some examples

Generation of Feedback from people who may or may not 'choose' to participate or even may be constrained to remain indifferent to, various public programmes is a very sensitive process. Governmental machinery seeks the feedback in different formats/channels. The faith that different functionaries put in these attempts also vary. We mention below some instances where the process of generating feedback was closely observed. Major issues which are relevant in this context are:

- (1) To what extent the expectations different parties have from a feedback process can be made explicit?
- (2) To what extent feedback generation through a group will lead to revision of expectations that individual members will have from each other as well as from the officials seeking feedback?

(3) 'Mutuality of expectation's gets revised iteratively every time some players in a game choose to provide feedback or not. The action taken on feedback from one person affects substantially the possibilities of feedback from another person in a group.

(4) Capacity of the official/s seeking feedback to take action is also weighed by those being asked to provide feedback. People and amongst them the poorer one are generally very humble. They might avoid embarrassing the seeker of feedback by not conveying the opinion which in their view the seeker does not have capacity to absorb. It is quite likely that in some cases even if the official seeking feedback has the capacity to act but has not used that capacity in the past (at least not in the knowledge of the people concerned), the people might still view it as a sign of lack of capacity. The issue gets related with the whole discussion on authority and power and use of power to claim authority vis-a-vis refusal to use power to enforce authority.

(5) By institutionalisation of certain feedback mechanisms without allowing processes to develop and mature, the senior level administrators and officials give a clear signal to the officials and people at lower level how much faith they have in the desirability of feasibility of the feedback system so instituted.

(6) Many times feedback may takes the form of protest which may not have been galvanised properly and so may turn into apathy. Many times it is beyond the capacity of local level officials to prevent transition of demand into apathy because he may have no influence or control over those who may have power to redress the problem of the people.

(7) While sectoralisation is quite deep rooted in the governmental systems, one came across several groups of people who understood the sectoral boundary and also those who did not understand. *It is likely that tribal may not have come into contact with many subsets of government machinery in past. They might, thus, have expectations from it which the officials concerned genuinely may not be able to

fulfill. However, it is also possible that the concerned official does not dispel the heightened expectation that people have because doing so might undermine his image and also the perceived power.

The instances which generated these issues are mentioned below:

Case - 1

Regional Rural Bank (RRB): Institutionalising feedback through Camps and Meetings

(1) In one of the districts the bank had been organizing camps and meetings with the farmers and beneficiaries to seek feedback of its performance. The initial response encouraged the chairman of the bank to get the resolution passed in the board meeting authorising a token grant to take care of incidental expenses on such occasions. He was quite keen to involve beneficiaries so that the bankers may be able to understand expectations of tribals. However, some of the process which were observed in one of the farmers meetings organised for the purpose revealed very interesting insights about the structural features of feedback mechanisms. It is possible that if our observations put more meaning into what we saw. The intention is to highlight the possible ways in which various assumptions about the process of feedback may impede or accelerate the creation of demand groups.

(2) Selection of Site for Farmers Meetings

It is quite important to note while institutionalising a system of generating feedback as to wherefrom one begins. It is possible that even if information is not widely shared amongst all the beneficiaries particularly those who were living at far off places from the site where feedback seminar was organised, the selection of site might have only limited effect. However, if the information is widely shared through official or unofficial channels, the selection of site would give a signal to the people about the parameters that the concerned organisations gave more importance to

while initiating the feedback process. In this case, the site selected was a well endowed region where the Chairman of the bank had earlier worked as an officer of sponsoring commercial bank and thus had a very close rapport with the farmers both big and small. To reduce the risk involved in invoking farmers participation in the very first effort such a site was chosen. Here not only people were already very well articulated type but also the earlier familiarity with the region ensured definite participation. There was a fear that if beginning was made in the backward pocket, sufficient number of farmers might not come forward with the result a failure in the beginning might dampen the spirit of entire staff who might not be able to continue with the efforts later with the same enthusiasm. Acknowledgement of the possibility of lesser participation in backward region indicated the sensitivity of the RRB Chairman to the historical process of development. He know for sure that in backward regions generating feedback would be difficult because either the people had lost faith whatever they had in the system or they did not have enough faith to begin with which might act as spur for them to participate.

The issue is that very often people begin new activities in the regions which have already had an early start. Our choice of some of the most backward district of the country inhabiting tribals, therefore, underscores our preference for a region where it would be difficult to show results in terms of any change very soon.*

(3) Purpose of the feedback

It is very difficult to suggest categorically whether a platform for feedback should be restricted to seeking only feedback. Could it also, be an occasion for training or educating people about new

* It is a pity that the project culture of academic institutes militates against long term involvement in such an enterprise. The ethical imperatives of short term involvement in a process of change which is essentially long term needs separate discussion, however (Gupta, 1986).

technology, programmes or for dissemination of some other information? The implication is that even if more than one objective is sought to be achieved through feedback process, the primacy of various objectives could nevertheless be communicated explicitly. We will discuss in the next point how the process of feedback could influence considerably the primacy of issues in the minds of farmers as well as officials. Within farmers those who had a close nexus with the concerned organization would give primacy to different objectives compared to those who have not had such experience.

(4) process of Feedback

There are two crucial aspects of this process: One, the very physical layout which structures the mode of response that people in first row provide vis-à-vis those in the last row. Second, the sequence in which different issues have been discussed and different people have spoken also influences considerably the chances whether less articulated people would speak out or not.

For example, if the process begins first by the feedback which officials would like to give to the people rather than the other way round it is possible by the time farmers get their turn they may have already inferred what the officials really wanted to hear. Also, if officials mentioned some such problems about which farmers had a different view, they might realise that the officials probably did not understand their problem too well, or had made up their mind already. For instance, if farmers could not complete the documents for loans in time in all respects, the problem probably arose on account of their lack of influence with different sub-systems of the government rather than their lack of appreciation of the problems that non-completion caused to officials.

From the point of view of the farmers, another issues which affects the process is; which type of farmers sit in the first row and what do they communicate. It is an universal experience that in most such encounters there are almost always only a few people who always speak and even give an impression that they were representative

of those who were not speaking. It is not coincidence that such people are always sitting in the front row and seemed to be intently aware of various deliberations going on. The question that arises in this context is how would such a process of feedback influence the hope amongst the people who are quiet and who always sit in the last row in every such meetings about the creation of demand groups. They might very genuinely realise that safest course of action could be to use existing channels of communication, i.e., articulated leadership rather than creating the new ones.

(5) Invitation, Dias etc.

The channel through which the invitation was sent to people to come together for such an occasion also may influence, which section of people may prefer to participate and which may not. Likewise the issues as to who are the people who should sit on the dias influences the extent to which people in the background may be able to gather support to speak out.

It was quite interesting innovation to honour those who had repaid their loans in time so as to put a premium on better repayment performance. Probably it would have been quite useful and instructive if some people, who have not been able to pay back in time due to genuine hardship like failure of investment had been extended rehabilitationary finance on such occasions particularly if such an instance was brought out through the feedback.

In other words, the signal which the developmental organizations should be eager to communicate is not only that all those who have performed well are the worthy clients but also that those who have for some genuine reasons lagged behind would be taken care of through a mix of policies. Such a signal might generate feedback from even such people who otherwise preferred to keep quiet but who may have had some genuine reasons to communicate.

A very crucial issue in this whole process of feedback seminar is that many times the senior officials are transferred from one place to another or from RRB, back to sponsored bank. To get a stable group organised through the people who are less stable in their position posed a dilemma. One way would be to involve people who are less transient, for example, clerks or even peons and second, to institutionalise mechanisms which gradually will make individuals dispensable though one cannot suggest that such a sensitive process can ever be neutral to individuals.

Case - 2

Integrated Rural Development programme - Camps

We had an opportunity to attend IRDP camps meant more for delivery of loans than to seek feedback in two or three districts. "Kutumbpothi"-monitoring passbook-has been provided to the IRDP beneficiaries all over the country with the intention of streamlining the monitoring system.. The assumption is that every developmental official visiting the village would contact the beneficiaries and record his or her impression in the pass book as well as would pursue with other officials if any problem was referred to by the beneficiaries. It appeared that even the officials were not sure whether the system was feasible. There was also a provision for evaluation of IRDP to generate a feedback about the impact programmes have made on the people. In fact from one of the districts we received a request to get involved in such evaluation work which we very politely avoided. Under TRYSEM the beneficiaries are expected to be given certain cards which are to be posted back to the beneficiaries for two years intermittently so as to provide feedback by the authorities about the extent to which they have been able to stabilise in their life after getting the training.

However, one did not find many instances where these cards had either been received, analysed or some action had taken place on the feedback so received. Perhaps the emphasis on outputs and

impact rather than reviewing the process had led the feedback system to acquire present shape. The reason for following standard method of getting feedback is the insistence of top planning authorities at central level of following uniform methods for entire country. It is very interesting to note that the side effect of functional or dysfunctional feedback system that have already been instituted would invariably affect creation of new demand groups particularly because the same official who had instituted the earlier system will also be involved in organising people to make demands on them.

Case - 3

Fisheries Project; Unattended feedback

As separately mentioned the transition of a protest into a legitimate demand in a fisheries project in a tribal taluka revealed very interesting processes of network. Without repeating the exact process through which a contractor's boat was impounded by the tribals because it was poaching in their waters, it will be worthwhile to underline the impression created by incapacity of the fisheries superintendent to respond to the request of tribals who had been wrongly implicated in a police case by the contractor. The tribals after testing his incapacity approached another official at higher level who also could not get the grievances redressed by pursuing the matter with the police. So much so that it involved the intervention of a state minister to get the tribals due relief. The issues which emerged vis-a-vis feedback processes are:

(1) If it is true that politicians would always been interested in serving their constituents, was it not likely that they might legitimately like people to make demands directly on them or their henchmen rather than making them on the bureaucratic officials. In the latter case, if the bureaucracy want interface with people to become effective and functional, the politicians might see it as an effort to make them dispensible and reduce their power and influence. Thus, feedback process became important because the tradition of patronage

leading to building of constituencies is much more dominant in our socio-economic system than building constituencies through building groups of the constituents. Thus, one has to explore whether politicians in whose area the demand groups are created would like these groups to be strengthened.

Also, how the officials use these groups, whether to counteract the processes of politicians who would be more hesitant if they know that this process might lead to protest from the people or to reinforce the traditional system.

Case - 4

Feedback in Inter-organizational Context

The details of the discussion with the Tribal Development Officer in one of the districts is mentioned in the section on 'inter-organizational interface'. It will be worthwhile to mention here two or three salient features of this discussion as related to the feedback process.

- (i) Quest for feedback by a senior developmental officer who has no administrative control over other departments but would like to influence their functioning is of a qualitatively different type than the one where the officials might have control and yet may choose not to rely on the administrative channels alone for generating feedback. Therefore, it is important to recognize the role these groups may be expected to play depending upon what use the concerned department or the official may make of the feedback which can be generated through these groups.
- (ii) The problem of coordination amongst various departments receiving funds from a common agency becomes extremely crucial particularly when the nodal agency may like development to take place in a particular direction. In this context, it would be very important to make it explicit that if the groups were organised first in the regions where infrastructure already existed, people were articulated, and chances of success were

high, the flow of resources might continue to follow the pattern that it does currently, albeit at a higher pace. Lest regional imbalances widen, there is need to ensure that the demand groups are created first in the regions which are lagging behind under the current system of resource allocation and only later in other regions.

- (iii) In continuation of the above, it has also to be appreciated that feedback from those who have succeeded in using nexus with the institutions would be of a qualitatively different type than from those who have never even tried. In other words, officials creating demand groups in the better-off regions may not be of any use in creating similar groups in the regions where the articulation of demand is very feeble and where institutions and individuals may be indifferent towards each other.

Inter-Organizational Interface: Sectoral Development
in Multi-Sectoral Context

That most of the developmental problems were inter-organizational or at least search for their solution could be more effectively made in inter-organizational perspective, was one of the most striking issues which emerged from our exploration in all the three districts.* Various dimensions of inter-organizational problems that were pursued are as follows:

- (i) Pooling of such resources which perhaps could not be optimally utilized within the boundaries of organization having these resources.
- (ii) The mutuality of expectations likely to emerge when rather than independent, inter-dependant mode of planning and implementation became the dominant ethos.
- (iii) The dilution of coordination function through emergence of inter-dependence which otherwise led to reinforcement of collector as the sole authority of decision making. Most inter-organizational problems were referred up so that collector could use these problems for controlling and managing the inter-organizational interface.
- (iv) The creation of demand groups amongst people will require simultaneous creation of demand groups amongst

* All the three districts viz. Jhabua, Banswada and Panchmahals were drought prone and extremely backward. The author was involved in detailed exploration in only one of the districts i.e. Jhabua (see, Gupta & Shroff, 1985). The exploration in other districts were pursued by other subgroups.

bureaucracy. It was possible that the officials responding to the demand from the people's groups may be isolated from their colleagues within the concerned department. The inter-organizational networking might provide necessary support for such initiatives (of people one may call as 'Organizational Insurgents' *). The network may create demand on those who resist the response behaviour of the said official. The demand within bureaucracy could also be used the other way round i.e. by majority of officials who agree to respond to demand from below could create pressures on the minority which resists. The problem in this framework only arises when one conceptualizes the creation of demand in a historical perspective. For instance, the demand that is being created by some officials on behalf of well-off people will continue to be made along with the new demand that is likely to be created by a few officials on behalf of the groups of poor farmers and labourers. How would these conflicts resolve is difficult to predict or speculate but we are quite conscious that such a conflict would have to be faced at some stage. One possibility of resolution of conflict in favour of minority of officials supporting demand group of farmers is the positive intervention from above (i.e. superior officials) in favour of groups of minority officials.

Some of the illustrations which provided us the above insights are mentioned next. It may be added that the group did not have consensus on some of the initiatives which individual members proposed. Also action in many cases could not be pursued for want

* See, Gupta, Anil K., 1984, Why Don't We Learn, IIM, Ahmedabad, Working Paper No.542

of sufficient follow-up by various members of the group. However, since many of these ideas still have potential, it may be worthwhile to take note of them.

1) ITI-DIC-TADC - Manufacture of Boats/Repairs

ITI provides training to young people including tribals in various trades. During the discussions with DIC, it was learnt that not many entrepreneurs were coming forward to make use of the credit and infrastructural facilities provided by the government. The problem became particularly acute in the case of the tribal regions where the demand was almost negligible. The Tribal Area Development Corporation (TADC) was engaged in numerous activities ranging from the provision of consumption goods and essential commodities to the provision of employment and income to the tribals. One of such activities was fisheries development both in the tanks as well as Kadana reservoir backwater. A large number of boats were required by the TADC to be given to the tribals on loan for catching fish which was also bought by TADC. Currently the boats are manufactured at Udaipur from where they were transported to Banswada.

The suggestion was that if the boats required sheet work which did not involve the very complicated technology or skill, perhaps these could be manufactured within the district by the trainees of the ITI. Some of them might also like to take it up as an activity for their further employment by taking assistance of the DIC. It was also mentioned that these people could go into the manufacturing of several related products such as drums of gober gas plants, grain storage bins, miscellaneous repair work etc. The issue was who would coordinate this interface and who would monitor? In the same context, idea of fabrication of wind-mills which may have a lot of potential for

lifting water in some parts of the district, was also explored. (One member of our group in fact had expressed desire to pursue the agriculture-engineering related interfaces.)

2) Minor Irrigation - Forest Department

In one of the districts, minor irrigation department had been managing the tank irrigation systems beyond a particular size. An Executive Engineer narrated how he took initiative to persuade the Forest Department to develop a nursery at the tank side for which he agreed to provide uninterrupted supply of water. While Forestry development was not an activity to be looked after by the minor irrigation department, through this interface it would have become possible for Forest Department to raise nurseries right in the regions where conditions for afforestation due to the spread of irrigation were most conducive on the bunds of the fields or even in the less productive lands in the command area. However, the Executive Engineer regretted that the idea was not picked up.

3) Police - Banks - DRDA - Seasonality of Crime

In a very interesting discussion, the Superintendent of Police in one of the districts described how the crime rate had gone down in that district where irrigation was more, credit had flown more and DRDA also had maximum achievement of its targets. Although the general impression is that with the increase in irrigation the crime is increased in this case experience was different. While reviewing different types of crimes, it was noted that most of the crimes occurred during the rainy season when probably the economic stress on the tribals was at its maximum.

One possible way to deal with the problem was to activate the network of various departments in these regions in such a way that the stresses leading to crime got reduced.

The idea would have to be tried out by concentrating on the creation of demand groups in one of the regions where the crime was high and where developmental activities might expectedly be quite low. For long, the law and order activities have been subsumed under regulatory administration creating a false dichotomy between regulatory and developmental administration. The discussion with the Superintendent of Police and a quick review of data that he provided, revealed that the relationship between crime and development was so inter-linked that it was futile to draw an artificial wedge between developmental and regulatory functions of district administration. In fact, the regulatory system might have within it, the penetrating insights which might serve as a feedback to the developmental system and as well as provide the necessary barometer indicating the social temperature. The implication is that when the barometer shows higher reading (i.e. higher crime rate) particularly in the lesser endowed regions, one could start looking into the functioning of the delivery system to see whether its inefficiency was leading the tribals to take to crime.

It was also mentioned that a very strong clique existed involving advocates, traders-cum-money lenders and even local bureaucratic officials. To pay the fees of the advocate in one criminal case, the tribal had at times to repeat the crime and due to the nexus between traders and advocates, the payments were received by the advocates even in kind. At the given level of education and understanding of bureaucratic systems, it might be necessary to redefine the police function in tribal areas so that the police became an important sub-set of developmental programmes rather than being totally alienated from them. Incidentally, it

was mentioned that only informally the Collector and the Superintendent of Police in this district had tried to visit some places together. However, this was not the regular factor.

One of the biggest reasons cited as responsible for continued deterioration of the crime position was that a lot of money had been spent on roads and other infrastructure under relief programmes rather than on irrigation, agriculture and animal husbandry.

The S.P., Police mentioned that there was a provision of incidental expenditure out of which the police informants were paid. He had done an experiment to use these funds for developmental purposes so that with the improvement of trust between people and the police, information collection became easier leading to quick detection of crime. Regarding the seasonality of crime, the Superintendent of Police mentioned that probably by providing employment during the months in which crime activity was high, the crime rate could be reduced. The characteristic of crime seasonality in 1982 were as follows:

	peak in
i) Animal theft	- July-August
ii) Ordinary theft	- August and October
iii) Loot	- July and August
iv) House trespassing and theft	- July and August

It also appeared that in the drought year, the murder rate was maximum in the more backward taluka of the district as compared to developed regions. In the developed part, the dacoits and loots had been increasing which signify an interesting dimension of development, i.e. the very nature of crime shifted from petty thefts or trespassing, etc., to loots and dacoity with the increase in development. (Perhaps) The lesser number of crimes also reflected probably the possibility in the developed region of a rather small number of large crimes. Further exploration of this proposition might provide some clue to the social dimensions of

developmental processes which will have implications for the creation of demand groups vis-a-vis different activities possible at different times of the year.

4) Industrial Service Units - DIC, ITI, Fisheries, Irrigation and Agriculture

It was mentioned in the discussion with the DIC as well as ITI that a lot of repair work requiring not very sophisticated skills at present was got done either outside the district or by a very limited number of repair shops. Could not one have a system where some tribals who had undergone the ITI training and were capable of starting entrepreneurial activity with the support of DIC may start servicing of the equipments of various departments like irrigation and fisheries? They may even be encouraged to fabricate small accessories wherever possible. An example was given of pumpsets where it was found that ITI could train tribals in repair and service of pumpsets financed by various banks. This would not only improve energy management through better up-keeping of equipment but would also provide employment and income to the tribals in the small scale industrial sector.

5) RRB, Forestry, DRDA - Basket Making

RRB provides loans to small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers to engage in various economic activities, within the jurisdiction of one or two districts. DRDA is an agency, set up to coordinate various Rural Development Programmes in a district including Trysem, IRDP, NREP, etc. The Forest Department apart from looking after the maintenance and development of existing forests also looks after the commercial exploitation of forests besides meeting the genuine needs of tribals. During discussions with an IRDP beneficiary who had got loan from RRB for basket

making, it was learnt that the concerned tribal had to go to the Dahod in Panchmahal district to buy the bamboos whereas the forestry department within the district auctioned the bamboos in large quantities to traders from outside. The price at which bamboos were sold to traders was much less than the price at which the tribals got them.

The issue was whether RRB could find it a legitimate organizational activity to network with DRDA and Forestry Department, to ensure the supply of bamboo locally at reasonable prices to the tribals as a part of economic development programmes. It was possible that through tribal Development Corporation or Department, the marketing of various products which these tribals made could also be coordinated. Further DRDA could also consider providing the transport subsidy as was applicable to the industrial beneficiaries for taking their products to distant markets, where the prices were more attractive.

This sort of networking could be thought of for various other forest based activities which currently involved a whole range of intermediaries providing hardly any succour to the tribals. The issue is whether any particular agency would like to take care of an activity which is at present outside its organizational boundary but which had an important bearing on its ultimate objectives.

6) Tribal Sub-Plan - Agricultural Department - Soil Conservation Department - DIC

The Tribal Development Officer looking after the tribals sub-plan is a Senior IAS Officer having considerable amount of funds at his disposal (about Rs.19 crores). The role of TDO in Panchmahal is largely as a funding agency which tried to influence the choice of investments or their location by different departments. TDO did not have any control over the spending of funds.

Agricultural Department apart from looking after various agricultural development activities had also a mechanical wing which had compressors for blasting or deepening of old wells. DIC provided subsidy for various small scale industrial activities and also provided technical support in certain limited cases.

Several interesting activities involving inter-face between different organizations were narrated by the Tribal Development Officer: Several basic issues in coordination, eliciting feedback from the beneficiaries directly or through organizations and in managing a programme highly interdependent in nature through independent sectoral official were raised. The TDO had at his disposal instruments for managing coordination, e.g. the meetings of usual quarterly consultative committee, project implementation committee and committee of directions; however it was observed that most of the negotiations among officials and non-officials as well as Tribal Development Officer took place informally outside the platform of meetings. Also TDO did not have any direct power of authorising expenditure of funds in a particular way because technical sanctions as well as administrative powers were granted by the higher-ups in the concerned departments.

The increase in proportion of nucleus budget for which authority for expenditure largely rested with him had diverted his attention from coordination to devising ways of spending funds. His efforts to control the use of funds or at least influence them more effectively led to the emergence of certain interesting inter-organizational interfaces:

- a) Whenever TDO had to deal with a department over which he found his control to be very deficient or ineffective, he tried to involve panchayats in such activities. In Kyari Soil Conservation Project, TDO persuaded the Taluka panchayat

to hire an agricultural graduate on temporary basis to look after the project costing about Rs.2 lakhs. The Soil Conservation Officer who did not get formally involved was contacted and asked to supervise the project informally particularly because the person hired was temporary and could not be held accountable. The interesting issue is that the informal involvement of Soil Conservation Officer in no way influenced his accountability (which was nil) though it atleast provided some confidences to TDO about the work done through Panchayat through which he might route more funds in future.

- b) **Well Blasting:** The problem under the scheme of blasting new wells or deepening of old wells were very acute. The Agricultural Department (Mechanical Wing) had only one compressor which could blast five thousand wells in a year. They could dig only 16 to 17 hundred wells last year. The private blasters who could do as many as 10 blasts per day could not be involved because as per the government norms farmers getting blasting done through private persons were not eligible for the subsidy of fifty per cent. One way to come out of this problem was to use DRDA funds for farmers having land less than 7.5 hectares since DRDA did not observe the constraint of public blasting.

The Assistant Agricultural Engineer in Agricultural Department could have helped the progress of the work in basically three ways:

- i) The blasting machinery could be based at taluk level even if the engineer had to travel up and down from the district headquarter (presently even the machinery was moved daily wasting lot of time in transportation.)

- ii) At least four compressors could be reserved for the project area and one for non-project area rather than having only one as at present.
- iii) Blasting material could be issued for at least ten days rather than only for one day as at present.

The TDO felt that whenever the blasting material had to be replenished, he could provide a jeep to take the concerned engineer to district headquarter and bring him back. However, despite the above suggestions nothing seemed to have happened.

- c) Coordination and Control: TDO many times was not even directly involved in earmarking the budget for various sectoral departments as the action was taken at the state level. Yet, he was expected to coordinate the use of such funds by various departments. He treated the problem as lack of his control over resources or the implementing agencies using the resources. He also did not want to be given too much of power because then possibly the pressures would be too many which he wanted to avoid. He regretted that neither was he involved in planning of various investment nor in monitoring their impact.

On the possibility of organizing demand groups of villagers who could provide feedback about the problem they faced regarding various departments, TDO reacted by saying that so far he had been trying to monitor the entire investment through two Assistant Project Officers and one Chitnis. His idea was that 15 to 20 people comparatively much less qualified could be involved in generating data which he thought would enable him to make his presence felt in the meetings.

He, however, narrated an instance where he had tried to elicit feedback from farmers and used that feedback to influence the action of the Agricultural Department.

This year, when rainfall was less, maize crop did not come up. In the demonstration plots, jowar was being tried for the last three years. TDO found through quick survey done with the help of his staff - that response to jowar was very good. When he gave this information to the Agricultural Department, the reaction was not very encouraging in the beginning. However, afterwards, they recognized the advantage when finding of the survey was fed to the Director of agriculture at the state level. Ultimately, the scheme got absorbed into the departmental programme and in the process the pressure on the funds of tribal sub-plan was released.

The implication was that the involvement of people to whatever extent could influence considerably the quality and extent of interface between different organizations. The ability of nodal agency to have direct access to the data from farmers influenced considerably its capacity to influence organizations on whom it did not have any control but with which it had to coordinate for its own success.

Feedback through formal and informal channels

The TDO raised some very pertinent issues about how to elicit the relevant information in a reliable manner from the farmers as well as departments. He said that many informal exchanges did not enter the records. At the same time, it was recognized that many times feedback from one channel was needed to be validated by feedback from another channel formal or informal. He felt that one could not have officials/expert in the villages who would collect data and provide feedback to him. However, there were

some important considerations which would influence incentives for any farmer or groups of farmers to share data with him.

- 1) For sharing non-confidential nature of data a person need not have any fear of him or his agency, but to share confidential data, the farmer or the group of farmers should not only have trust, but also confidence that the TDO could take care of any problem caused to the giver of information on this account.
- 2) How to deal with the problem of different individuals having different sensitivity, was next issue. TDO mentioned that if an individual was not say, health conscious, how would he know that he needed same help even if he actually had the need.

How does one know how many people should be contacted to elicit feedback when one knew that different people had different sensitivities and also one did not know (who know) who was sensitive to which part of the environment.

He further, mentioned that he could not criticize his own departmental people in the presence of non-officials and other department officials. Further, many times pointing faults of others in the meeting might injure the feeling of the concerned departments and thus may prevent coordination from them subsequently.

He illustrated the point by taking the case of certain teachers who were giving books as some sort of prize after seeing the performance of the boys in a few tests rather than distributing them before hand to the needy students. He felt that by making this point in meeting

he might have hurt the other persons. He wondered whether he should not have talked about this outside the forum of meeting.

Mutual Monitoring

Another suggestion that he had about influencing the sensitivity of officials regarding feedback was to ask one department official to monitor the work of other department. In other words, to generate an inter-organization network in which mutual monitoring would generate open accountability. Some of the important implications of the above discussion are mentioned below:

- 1) On the one hand, TDO has suggested various ways in which he has tried to network the organization and on the other hand, he raised certain doubts or dilemma involved in the process. The whole issue is that of how one would institutionalize the networks vis-a-vis the process of feedback and control. In other words, if the network involved organizations with different ~~hierarchial~~ positions it was possible that one of the departments or agencies which was superior might try to use the information emerging through the networking for the purposes of control rather than coordination, which would weaken the network.
- 2) The feedback from beneficiaries individually if used to control departments might affect the flow of further information from the beneficiaries. Farmers would not like to burn their bridges with the officials with whom they have to deal with daily. The fear was that officials who may be higher-up in hierarchy could not control the activities of some of the officials at lower level, such as talati, V.L.W. etc.

The problem is further complicated when one recognizes a particular facet of peasant behaviour i.e. they would rather like to fight an enemy which was far-off than annoying an enemy who was very close. Thus, monitoring by collector or DDO or TDO through farmers directly to elicit data for control rather than monitoring of departmental activities might lead to either chocking off the channel of communication or generating the feeling of alienation on the part of officials vis-a-vis farmers groups. The ultimate purposes of helping these groups to generate demand on the delivery system might not fructify because of these factors.

- 3) Many times, the farmers had internalized certain types of official behaviours which would not be questioned even if they were highly unjust and improper because the farmers might not be even aware whether officials concerned had any alternative.

In such circumstances, generation of demand groups by a particular departmental officials would definitely give rise to data affecting other departments which if treated along the counters may threaten the concerned departmental officials. In such circumstances, if the network of the Officials was very strong, the officials would organize their groups which either may not share this data with the other departments formally so as to prevent weakening of their network or might not even take note of such data. The dilemma thus arises how to deal with the strength of group of officials vis-a-vis strength of farmers group. Further whether groups organized by one departmental officials would remain uni-functional or become multi-functional and if the groups become multi-functional how would the relationships emerge between various departments.

Probably these questions called for collaborative experimentation before anything definitely could be said.*

There were several other examples of inter-organizational interface which were noted, eg. the fisheries department in Gujarat and Rajasthan, and the respective Tribal Development Departments; relationships between a voluntary agency in Panchmahal and district authorities and minor Irrigation Department in Jhabua etc.

* Unfortunately group could neither embark upon the idea of such experiments nor discuss other alternatives.

CHAPTER - 5

Irony of Equity: Standardisation of Parameters for Implementing Projects

(1) Why is it that most of the programmes have uniform implementation mechanics in highly variegated ecological contexts? For example, the norms for soil conservation vis-a-vis cost of labour per hectare or other costing relationships are designed uniformly no matter whether the topography terrain, structure of soil varies from one place to another. Likewise, in minor irrigation works, the cost provision for digging of channels are uniformly applied in different parts of the state as well as districts irrespective of soil characteristics. 20:1 is the universally applied combination for sheep and ram unit under IRDP.

Why do we prefer standardised prescriptions for various infra-structural as well as developmental programmes? It is inconceivable that planners are not aware of the ecological diversity and the need for variability. Does it imply, therefore, that uniformity in prescriptions signify an administrative convenience? It was easy to sanction and monitor uniform norms compared to sanctioning different norms for different regions and monitoring variability around even those norms.

Further, the cost escalation leading to revised estimates particularly in engineering departments are too well-known and perhaps have been institutionalised through periodic revision of budget, eventhough the under-estimation of costs could have been anticipated very well at the design stage itself. One of the reasons for miss-match between expectation of people and performance of administration could be traced to the tendency for uniform standards for various works particularly in investment

oriented infrastructure. Apparently, if uniformity was designed with neutrality in mind, the average standards would favour those contexts where cost would be less than the average, and would disfavour those where the costs were higher. It may, however, be added that criticisms of standardised provisions in project or programme implementation is in itself, a standardised criticism. Most studies would come out with this complaint. However, some of the alternative perspectives are being mentioned here:

- 1) Given too much of flexibility in the absence of design capability, projects might founder and in such case standardised provisions would guide the implementing official within the safe margins;
- 2) Standardisation was necessary because it might make comparisons possible though one could introduce the need for negotiation on some of the parameters;
- 3) Certain basic services have to be provided uniformly irrespective of the fact whether they appear standardised in nature;
- 4) One has to explore whether compensating flexibility would serve as the answer for the standardised provisions. In other words, within the given budget, official could be ready to increase or decrease the expenditure on various components as long as he shared increased achievement of the physical output. For example, if proportion of labour could be increased because of cheap availability of labour and machine component could be decreased, the discretion should be available to the official to take appropriate decisions. One of the fears which might prevent the granting of the flexibility would be the avowed aim of the planners to avoid disproportionate shift towards certain approaches to implementation - for example, capital intensive against labour intensive.

- 5) Many times, the compensating flexibility could be mis-utilised by spending funds meant for backward regions in the regions where the capacity to absorb funds was higher. Why should the compensating flexibility always work against the interest of backward pockets within the district or the state? Is it not true that standardisation tries to prevent distortion?
- 6) It is interesting to note that even the discretionary outlay (15 per cent of the district budget allowed in Gujarat for being spent according to the choice of District Development Board) is spent in highly standardised activities - i.e. the demand for uniform purposes is raised from various regions. For example, in Panchmahal district, it was learnt that when demand was raised for dhobi ghats (washing platforms) around the tank sides, requests comprised of the same size, specification and cost no matter whether the tank concerned was large or small.
- 7) Perhaps standardisation in allocation of resources compared well with the standardisation in expectation of people. People only demanded what they thought they can get. The standardisation of expectations is on a historical basis, and diversified programmes many times become standardised through standardised procedures and norms of audit and evaluation.
- 8) While it is possible in the manufacturing or construction activities to specify the rate of production or consumption of raw material or delivery of outputs, etc., in developmental programmes it is difficult to understand uniform unit size of an enterprise, for example how "20 plus one sheep and ram" would suit people in different ecological and social contexts is difficult to understand. Therefore, it is possible that

standardisation also could be an indication of neglect of the proposition that the different production functions would operate at different endowment levels.

- 9) Many times standardisation is also argued as a natural and logical norm of decision making in large organisations where impersonal neutral nature of bureaucracy is supposed to take care of variability under the given administrative mandate. However, the large systems which are loosely held together should be expected to have less standardisation unless the structure is tightened through the monitoring instruments available with the higher level officials in the organisations.
- 10) It has been noted that Tailoring was one of the most prevalent activities under TRYSEM just as dairying was the most popular activity under IRDP, though the list of activities which could be covered under IRDP or TRYSEM was fairly large. The activities selected were few. In other words, mere provision of choice does not necessarily imply the exercise of the choice. Many times we were told that when farmers wanted a particular enterprise which was not considered feasible with the resources available in given time, officials would advise the prospective beneficiary to change their preference. In other words, the choice formally articulated by the people could be quite different from the choice generally preferred by the person concerned. Since the delivery systems operate through patronage, farmer does not protest against such practices.
- 11) The realm of feasibility fit concerns the whole gamut of administrative convenience and its supremacy over any other parameter of performance. If performance is monitored on the basis of budget exhaustion capacity of the developmental

agency in the district, it is inevitable that such sectoral choices should be reflected in the portfolios of the agencies that facilitated the exhaustion of maximum budget in shortest possible time in the limited space. Given such context we should not be surprised that similar activities get manifested as the most sought after investment options by people/administrators in highly variegated regions.

CHAPTER - 6

Interface between Political, Administrative and Social Systems Vis-a-vis Demand Groups:

How do people articulate their demand individually and collectively vis-a-vis various instruments of delivery in the government was a question that we posed in several ways. e.g.

- a) Whether creating demand at a level where the resources for action lie is sufficient to change the resource flow pattern.*
- b) Whether the officials at district level respond institutionally more readily to politicians and administrators superior to them, comparable to them or lower in hierarchy to them.
- c) Whether when this approach higher political leaders to get directions issued to middle level executives at the district level (who ignored the demand from lower administrative or social system) reinforce the notion that it was not worth the effort to invest in negotiating environment at peer level.
- d) The issue is how does one conceptualise the restraints that should be applied while articulating demand at lower level vis-a-vis administrative and political systems such that in the process of managing social change at one point of time, one did not create additional barriers which would prevent change at a later point of time unless pressure of a similar

* This question was raised like many others despite available evidence which probably would have called for alternative question or question with different focus.

See, Mathur Kuldeep & Anil K Gupta, 1984, Action-Research for Micro-level Planning: A Self Appraisal, International Review of Administrative Sciences, No. 1, pp.60-68.

sort was again applied. Politicians, while building constituencies by responding to a local demand directly, may at the same time see the desirability of nexus between the groups of people and the bureaucracy.

- e) While political systems are fluid, transient and have shorter time perspective, the administrative systems are stable in terms of systems but unstable in terms of people - i.e. they have life in perpetuity and have no particular reason to broad-base their constituencies since the administration is not elected by the people.* In such a context, the creation of demand by people at local level will have to be supported by an administrative response which should counter-act the political expediency of seeking short-term solutions.

However, the dilemma is that local level politics is played in much longer time frame and records are settled even over the span of a life time. Thus, the administrative response to local level politics has to be different from high level politics; at the same time, administration at high level is as much dependent on political system as vice-versa. The implication is that even if the local level administration realises the validity of generating demand groups and creating consensus around the need for social change, there is no guarantee that this priority would remain in tact independent of the inter-face between higher level administrators and higher level politicians. The common front of local level politicians and administrators would have implications for the exercise of authority at higher level. Rather than utilising this front for improving the deliveries, the top authorities might look at it as a filter of higher level intention.

* The implications are that accountability norms are different in political and administrative system and so are the sources of strength.

A few instances which generate these impression are given below:

1. Fisheries:

The Mahi-Kadana back water extends from Gujarat to Rajasthan. The Gujarat part of the reservoir is managed by the Gujarat Fisheries Department in a different manner than the Rajasthan part. While on the Gujarat side, fishing was managed through cooperatives, on Rajasthan side, a private contractor was given the lease.* Till 1981-82, there used to be a fair amount of poaching from the Rajasthan side. The Fisheries Superintendent of Gujarat narrated how this was controlled.

The tribals on the Gujarat side were told that water on their side belonged to them and they should thus protect it against poaching. In February 1981, a boat of the contractor from Rajasthan area intruded into the Gujarat waters. Gujarat tribals captured the boat and gave a beating to the contractor's men. The contractor, apparently on police advice from lower levels, got his men admitted to the hospital and filed a complaint to the police against tribal leaders. The police arrested the chairman of the concerned village tribal fisheries society. The Fisheries Superintendent, after learning this incident, took up the matter with DSP at district headquarter who was busy in resolving some other disturbances in the district. He advised the Superintendent to resolve this matter at his own level. Two months later, when the Commissioner of fisheries visited the dam site, the tribals raised this issue with him and the Superintendent supplied the necessary details, but no action took place. A week later, the Minister visited the dam site along with the

* Later, Tribal Corporation took over.

Commissioner and the tribals again put up the matter to him. The Minister spoke to the DSP who arranged for an armed guard and in due course the contractor withdrew the police complaint.

The demand for an action generated from the lower level did not suffice^{for} the bureaucracy, so much so that a minister's intervention became necessary to influence a small action at the local level. Perhaps, DSP neither recognised the importance of a non-disturbed region, nor did he think that the nexus between the Fisheries Superintendent and tribals, if strengthened, could be utilised even for policing and social security purposes. The Fisheries Commissioner also did not visualize the possibility of exploring the matter with the police Commissioner. Further, the Tribals also witnessed the powerlessness of the Fisheries Superintendent. Perhaps in future they might by-pass him even in matters for which he had the discretion and even for the resources over which he had control. How did one resolve this dilemma?*

2. Repayment of Loans

A senior civil servant, part of the researchers' group, visited along with a few of us a village in the district which belongs to his parent State. The issue was that tribals who were financed under IRDP in villages far away from the banks (situated at the urban places) faced a lot of difficulty in remitting the instalments of the loan regularly. The cost of transportation was quite heavy apart from the time which it involved. Many times, the tribals went on foot to remit even a small instalment, spending

* Prof Shroff, while commenting on this question wondered whether there was any dilemma at all. If bureaucracy fails, he felt the politicians were bound to prevail. The dilemma in this view arose when politicians restrain or prevent bureaucracy from being active or responsive.

The other side is that how can politicians strengthen institutions: by working through them or by by-passing them.

almost the entire day for the purposes. The question was posed to the Block Development Officer by the civil servant-cum-researcher as to what could be done to solve this problem and reinforce the repayment ethics which already existed amongst the tribals. The Block Development Officer immediately replied that he would get the instalments collect every month.

It required a lot of efforts and discussion to clarify that the answer was not to solve a specific problem. However, the observation that the historic expectation that the problems posed at a higher level have to be solved at the lower level, if necessary by personal action probably led to the remark of the Block Development Officer. Only later, a suggestion was given as to why the bank and post office system should not be linked up so that the tribals could remit their instalments through the post office to be credited to their accounts in the bank without any additional cost.* While such a suggestion called for major policy changes at top level - not within the state, but at the centre, the point is that initiatives very often are constrained at the lower level of administration because of the consideration of conformity and compliance. A need (that of repayment) at minimum cost had not become a demand by the tribals, probably because neither the Block Development Officer nor the local village panchayat officials nor the policy planners at higher level had visualized that tribals would have a problem of time.

In fact, it may not be out of place to mention that the training of administrators and researchers in neo-classical economics which often reinforces such concepts as marginal productivity of labour being zero institutionalises the neglect of such needs and thus reinforces our administrative culture in which the need will not be allowed to become demands.

* This issue had been once raised by Prof Indrajit Khanna. I am not sure whether he still considers this as a viable choice.

3. Demand Groups: Non-Officials -- complaints from below:

In one of the districts when it was discussed as to how the concerned District Development Officer managed to meet his targets for various governments programmes, he mentioned that finance was not a problem; the major challenge was to get a demand for funds. This he managed by calling meetings of Sarpanch (village chiefs) who would be motivated to make demands.

In his view, the major incentive to generate demand from below was to prevent complaints reaching higher authorities such as the D.D.O. He felt that messages from above were quite irritating. He was not bothered if non-officials took credit for the delivery of services or goods. He also realised that using multiple channels rather than only one formal official channel might create a sort of mutual surveillance which might check the leakages also. He, however, was not sure whether people knew enough about what government was doing or whether it was possible administratively to manage various messages or whether the Sarpanch would really let the messages reach down.

Mobility of Officials: * To move or not to move too much:

Numerous writings on Rural Development at local level have pointed out that frequent transfers of people prevent emergence of a more effective strategic approach to programme planning and implementation. (See, Mathur & Gupta, 1984). The implication being that since officials were not sure how long they would stay, generally constricted their options so that they could show results within the time they were on the job. The trade-off between short-term results in long-term perspective and long-term impediments which achievement of short-term results might create for the system at a later date are legitimised by various political and administrative practices that we have come to live with. However, the problem is not that simple. One of the questions uppermost in our minds was - how would we organize stable groups of people who would make demands on the administrative system which, while was stable by itself, was manned by people who were unstable. The detailed statistical analysis of the duration for which different people stayed on their positions in different districts is separately available (G. Sharan & S. Narayanan, 1986). We mention below some of the perspectives generated on this issue:

1. Many times the frequent transfers of officials at different levels are considered a sign of weakness because they deprive the system of a stability that some people consider necessary for sustained performance of public programmes of the policies. However, another view in this regard was that with increasing

* Prof Girja Sharan had taken up a quantitative analysis of the tenure of officials in all the three districts, see Girja Sharan and S. Narayanan, How Frequent are Transfers of District and Block level Officers?, Vikalpa, 1986, 11(3) 215-224.

Also, see Wade Robert, 1985, The Markets for Public Office: Why the Indian State is not better at Development; World Dev., 13(4) 467-497. He even though doesn't acknowledge that he had these notes available to him, has bemoaned lack of interest by Indians in the subject.

extent of factionalization of politics at local level, transfer was the minimum price, a public representative wanted to extract to prove to his constituency that he wielded some power.

2. Emergency of leadership at grassroots level will be counteracted by the continued efforts of administrators to dominate the planning and implementation process at local level. Their transfers try to neutralise the concentration of power in any particular official.
3. Within bureaucracy many times the ground work is done by some officials and the rewards are reaped by others. In any development programme, programmes at local level required a lot of efforts in grounding the idea and mobilising the people. Very often when an official may be just on the time of getting results a transfer may act as a dampner to his spirit. Occasionally, the pressure from people might emerge to get transfers stalled in case the rapport between people and the official is very strong. The transfer could be got stalled also if the powerful people at the local level find the existing administrative arrangement to their advantage. In such a situation, while 'haves' would not like such an official to be transferred, it is not very uncommon to find the higher-ups in the system responding to the pressure of powerful people at local level. 'Haves' might have in the past complimented the performance of the people who are at higher level now or who may have direct links with the political masters at top level to whom the higher officials may be subservient.
4. If slow patient and participative efforts are necessary for any developmental programmes to succeed and if average tenure of officer is very short - is it not natural that pressure to

show performance in the shortest possible time will be very high on the officials? Therefore, there could be a direct relationship between tenure and tendency of officials to bypass the usual channels of people's groups.

5. In a transient system, too frequent transfers also created a load on the memory system. Very often, only such data is collected which can be stored easily. No matter whether it has any direct relevance with the performance of the officials or the effectiveness of the people or not. Too much of a memory could also counteract the initiatives of the officials because in that case the load of precedents and history will overshadow the search for new alternatives.
6. The officials in order to stay longer at a place might like to build constituencies and in the process may like to serve the interest of some people to a disproportionately higher extent. Mobilization of demand against such officials would also imply generating pressure against their (the officials') patrons in the society. In other words, any link between officials and people is not independent of a corresponding link between same people and other people and same administrators and other administrators.
7. Transfers Grid: One of the serious problems regarding transfer policy was a tendency in the administrative services observed quite often for certain people to remain always on the periphery while others remained always close to the centre. The implication was that there was no system by which

* Eventhough, the evidence is that the transfers are more frequent in certain type of positions than others. However, a question which has been left out is whether trend would be different during different phases of development, say in further, post SFDA period till 1974, 1974-75 to 1977, 1977 to 1980 and 1981 onwards. Or in pre & post IRDP/SFDA phases.

a person could plan his career in terms of postings which remained largely a function of influence. One of the suggestions given by a district level officer was to develop a transfer-grid for the entire state. The idea being that the entire state should be divided into different zones depending upon the degree of deprivation which an official will face if posted there. Every officer should be made to pass through the places of maximum deprivation at one time or the other. Since generally concerns like education facilities for children or other amenities become more pronounced in the middle stage of the career of a new entrant, the transfer should take into account the postings in more backward regions followed by less backward regions. Other implication is that those people who have been posted in developed regions or cities should also be made to work in backward pockets irrespective of political connections or otherwise. One came across any number of instances where on the one hand, there was a serious problem of unemployment and on the other hand a lot of positions remained vacant in various departments in backward regions. This was very conspicuous with regard to vacancy in the position of teachers in tribal areas.

8. The tendency to punish people by posting them to backward regions is quite counterproductive. On the one hand backward regions required skills and attitudes which were very different from the ones required in developed regions, on the other hand a demotivated person would be marking his time. He would concentrate all his efforts to manage a transfer which would imply in practical terms, an effort on his part to align with stronger political or administrative personalities. It should be understandable why such a person would be least interested in organizing demand groups of

people who would probably be powerless vis-a-vis the higher-ups in his department and whose power at a local level may not be sufficient to counteract the influence of better-offs.

Punishment posting also is an indication to the social system at large about the concern government had towards the development of such regions! Perhaps, the marginality of people is reinforced by imbuing administrative apparatus also with the marginally effective functionaries. As one B.D.O. mentioned during the discussions, intentions of government were understood or translated through the language of circulars and not through the pronouncements of ministers.

Perhaps the gap between what is intended normatively and what indeed is the expectation is so high that the language of interpretation has been standardised sufficiently well in bureaucracy to generate well-established meaning of certain actions. e.g. posting in backward regions unless some highly capital intensive projects were being implemented means punishment is a message widely understood and shared. However, we did come across people who expressed their total indifference to the fact that there were serving so far away from their native places. They were not keen to go to any particular place. Generally such people comprised of four types:

- a) those who would never bend before their superiors irrespective of consequences such as posting in backward regions. Such people also were highly motivated, confident and sympathetic to the problems of people and would seem to be most active no matter whether they got a reward or not.

- b) there were people who were indifferent to the whole system and get a feeling of helplessness; they considered themselves powerless and thus did not utilize the discretion which was available to them, much less to exceed that discretion even if considered necessary for implementing a project.
- c) there were also people who were corrupt partly or completely and who wanted to stay in such regions because i) they were supervised much less and ii) because a lot of resources were allocated for the development of backward region where people did not have the capacity to absorb them, thus providing a scope for leakages. Such people would appear to be quite involved and concerned but would also have a feeling of contempt towards the local people.
- d) some people particularly in the civil services considered these postings a transient phase in their career which in any case was going to be over sooner or later within reasonable time and thus did not seem to make much of difference. Among such people there were some who were self motivated and took initiative to perform while others just waited till they received their next orders.

People who belonged to these regions comprised all sorts of individuals ranging from highly committed to totally indifferent. However, the issue which we are trying to raise is that given the contradictions inherent in bureaucratic organizations

(like in any other social institution), various issues like mobility of officials will have to be viewed in historical perspective with due sensitivity to various other dimensions.*

(Also see, Conceptual note on Time; Tenure; Participation, page 25.)

* The transfer of people is more than an administrative action. It can make or mar the chances of better education of children and motivate or demotivate the officials. Most importantly, the fact that socially conscious and alert officers are often transferred before they can effectively mobilize poor deprived people (almost as a rule) provides a contrasting perspective to our, shall we say, 'naive' hope! Perhaps, the search for exceptions provided the justification for this endeavour.

Chapter - Eight

Some Random Issues, Ideas, and Implications : Lest we forget

Some of the observations made by various members of this group during visits to districts are being mentioned here in the chronological order along with some implications that follow from the ideas mentioned.

CREATING GROUPS WITHIN BUREAUCRACY

1) May 1982, "As far as the collector is concerned, he can take work from me even without making me fully happy but as far as I am concerned, I cannot simply dictate terms to my sub-ordinates, I have to take them into confidence." District Development Officer - incharge of Developmental Programmes.

Implication:

The concept of organizing demand group amongst people has a concomittant derivation that within bureaucracy the groups will have to be organized to make demand on each other. The implication is that it is possible because of the historical reasons for an IAS collector to use his authority and ensure compliance. But people at lower levels have to use largely their persuasive power without having any explicit authority. At times invoking authority of collector becomes a means to exercise power. However, this works against the notions of effective functioning of peer groups because power is being derived from above and not from the peer group. It has to be appreciated that if power is derived from the peer group, it is not unlikely that collector might interpret it as a filter of his instructions and thus, may like to weaken such a power base. The possibility of congruence between the collectors' interest and the interests of the horizontal group at lower level arises when collector steps exercising authority and starts using his power as a leader amenable to guidance and control by the group at lower level (or is it the other way?). Whether such concept would be operational, given the pressure on the collector's time and an expectation from the collector to perform against all odds is an open question.

2. TRANSACTION COSTS

Whenever land values are high, patwaris also have higher values: Patwaris don't like being posted to adivasi region because the incidence of petitions and counter petitions is much lower in these regions.

Implications:

The more the transaction costs in any particular interface the higher were the chances of transition of a low price position or status into a high price status. The generation of demand at local level would thus directly cut at the roots of the process that generated the transaction costs, either by making information more accessible and widely distributed or by enabling sharing of the cost of ensuring the same. It is also possible that Patwaris might view the emergence of groups as a threat to their power of converting statutorily non-priced services into the priced ones. However, if these groups could also be a means to say land use survey, or higher and easier recoveries of arrears of land revenue through moral pressure of the groups it is likely that patwaris or talatis might see the demand being to their own advantage.

3. LAND TRANSFERS IN TRIBAL REGION: One of the very serious problems mentioned in all the districts was the mutation of titles particularly leading to subdivision amongst the family members who were living separately. On the one hand, there were government policies preventing the segmentation of land below the size, on the other hand, there were traditional practices under which the title was generally maintained in the name of the oldest person who might not agree to share it with the other members of the family. Since the eligibility to participate under many public programmes rested on the ownership of some land thus, this problem became a bottleneck in the implementation of programmes. There were also instances when tribals found the ban on land alienation as detrimental to their interest, because it prevented them from encashing land at a price which market could support.

One of the ways in which some of the tribals could overcome the ban was by complaining to the tehsil authorities that land actually belonged to the non-tribals and had been wrongly entered in their names. The issue was how could a policy of banning land alienation prevent ~~immiserisation~~ when the processes which generated the need for cash for which sale of land became a means were going on unchecked.

4) Widespread consensus amongst sections of bureaucracy on the meaning of Development : There were many people as reported in the first journal, who felt that a gradualistic approach to development was the only feasible course of action available to administrators. 'Let us be patient, things will improve' was the message.

5) "Kam unka hai, bhagna hame padtha hai" (it is their work for which we have to do the running about): A village level worker (VLW) made the above remark when enquired about his assessment of the development programmes.

Implication is that the task of generating demand for public programmes is not interpreted as a legitimate and a genuine responsibility of the functionaries in the government. This raises one of the very basic questions in development : should the public systems be tuned to respond to the demand that already exists or should they generate the demand from the people and regions for the purposes for which it would not emerge of its own momentum. In the process those who can demand should either be left to meet their needs through the market forces or be served from a different window. Further implication is that demand creation is a qualitatively different task, the windows for this purposes would need to be structured in a fundamentally different way than the counters for servicing existing demand. How does one discriminate and design systems to deal with such windows and counters?*

6) Group Technology (G.T.): A Forestry Officer in one of the districts termed his experiment of group action as G.T. Within a group, it was acknowledged that performance of everybody would

* The windows here refer symbolically to the arrangements for open access of people to a resource or institution as against counter which imply need for negotiation, bargaining and even cajoling.

not be alike, and yet rewards would be received by all possibly, equally.

Was not it the crux of group formation and sustenance? The issue is how to ensure that despite a group having people with varying capabilities, skills, and efficiency of production, rewards are shared by delinking redistribution from pooling - in the sense that belongingness to the group itself became the major reward. Also it will imply that the public systems institutionalise group rewards as against individual commendations knowing fully well that in loosely-coupled systems individuals by themselves could do very little, unless supported by others.

7) Reward and Punishment System

One of the reasons for apathy in bureaucracy towards creativity and innovation could well be the unjust reward and punishment system. Many times, people said that there was no reward for innovation or outstanding performance. Probably, what they meant was, it was not necessary that for an outstanding performance those who contribute most would get the reward. It should be appreciated in this context that historically the expectation of individual reward has been woven into the fabric of administrative hierarchies. Changing the system could call for very massive efforts at all the level from top to bottom.

8) System over load and need for following up previous actions:

Officers in one of the commercial bank branches regretted that newer branches have been opened without providing sufficient staff.

It was added that without sending reminders even the highly educated well placed individuals did not react: why should tribals be expected to repay loans on their own without any advance intimation? The

implication was that the desirable condition would be to have sufficient staff which could follow-up the recoveries particularly by sending advance notices. The issue is whether the group of beneficiaries could reduce the cost of following up advances if the groups were also used as;

- i) gate keepers for future flow of funds; and
- ii) as open forums for assessment of individual credit needs
- iii) as conscience keepers to prevent anybody from intentionally defaulting

9) Transition of Initiative into innovations*:

As was also mentioned in the earlier journal several initiatives were seen to be emerging at the various levels particularly so at lower level, which somehow could not become innovations. As mentioned, elsewhere in this note, the insistence on uniformity which was interpreted in the bureaucratic language as a sign of neutrality created conditions which worked against the emergence of explicit signals encouraging people to deviate from the norms. The issue is that if groups of people would be organized by the officials, it was inevitable that such groups in order to maximise returns to their limited ecological and infrastructural resources, would

* Also see, Gupta Anil K 1982, Barriers to innovations in lower Bureaucracy, Vikalpa Vol 7(5) 267-274.

make such heavy demands on the system that tolerance of deviance would become the most necessary conditions for organization of groups.* The question thus arises whether the top levels officials in bureaucracy which have an innate mistrust towards the lower level would allow lower level functionaries to respond to the demand for divergence by the groups. For example when an IIT principal made an exception to enable Trysem trainees to own their means of livelihood (sewing machine) while they were still learning, he was told in no unequivocal terms that any exceptions that he had created was at his own risk. For all practical purposes, the superior officer cautioned him that his awareness of the exceptional activities should be treated off the formal records.

There were several other such instances. The dilemma in organization of group goes hand in hand with a high degree of centralisation in systems and procedures. Should we not therefore simultaneously deal with the functionaries at higher level who should be persuaded and convinced about the need for decentralization and changes in the monitoring systems to trigger creation of demand groups.**

10) Fisheries and Socio-ecology of demand groups: Initially the commissioner of Tribal area Corporation in Kadana reservoir was very reluctant to sanction loans for nets and boats to tribals. It was felt that tribals would never be able to take to fishing. On a lot

* See, Gupta, Anil K, 1984, why don't we learn: Monitoring Barriers to 'our' understanding learning through 'their' knowledge, IIM-A working paper No. 542.

** This view, some how majority of the members of the group did not accept despite lessons of an earlier study, see Mathur and Gupta, 1984. op.cit.

of persuasion by the Superintendent of Fisheries, the Commissioner agreed to sanction a loan of Rs. 3.00 lakhs. The total loan burden was Rs. 600 per head to be repaid in 10 years. GAMP looked after the collection and, marketing of fish. Since the water could not be released for irrigation in 1981/82, the level of water was high in the reservoir and the catch was low. It appeared that people having boats situated near the society seemed to have considerably higher catch compared to the people who were situated away from the society. It was also being realised that having 5 persons per boat as a minimum unit was not reasonable and the proposal was that only 2 or three persons should be there per boat.

Most of the fishing cooperative societies, it was observed did not maintain records accurately. It was learnt that accounting knowledge was not imparted during the training programmes. Generally the tribals were paid Rs. 3 per kg. irrespective of the quality of fishes. Earlier the fishermen used to get only Rs. 1.50 per kg.

One of the reasons that private contractors could earn more compared to the earnings of Fisheries Cooperatives was that the contractor was never concerned about the preservation of fish. In order to maximise the individual gains in shortest possible time, the contractors used drag nets and caught fish of all sizes. The government authorities on the other hand did not have the short term view of profit maximisation. In Gujarat, several agencies looked after the fisheries activities. GAMP, a subsidiary of State Government Agro-Industries Corporation looked after the training. Negotiations were going on with West Bengal Government which had agreed to take over rights of marketing and processing. In Rajasthan, TADC in collaboration with fisheries department looked after the training of tribals and marketing and production of fishing.

It is interesting to note that in the case of Kadana (Rajasthan) when earlier private contractors were operating, the lease right was given for Rs. 3.00 lakhs as against 10.00 lakhs when tribal Area Development Corporation came in the picture. It seemed that the contractor lobby in collusion with some officials in the department of fisheries made sure that during open bid for leasing rights, contractors would go on bidding high even though fishing rights ultimately were to be allotted to the corporation. The matter did not stop only at this stage. When the corporation even suggested that the lease could be taken by the contractors, contractors backed out even though the matter was taken to the court through a petition by a cartel of fishing contractors. Ultimately after a lot of persuasion and correspondence only in the month of January when best part of the fishing season was already over, the rights were allotted to the corporation first for 10 lakhs, and later for 5 lakhs which was still higher than the three lakhs highest ever received through contractors.*

Implications

Some of the major issues which emerged from the above discussion on fisheries in Gujarat and Rajasthan are mentioned below:

1) How is it that within a common water system, i.e. the reservoir and the backwater of Kadana Dam, two states not only had so different organizational arrangements for fishing but also so much of difference in the productivity and output. Several arguments were put forward explaining the differences in the income of tribals in Gujarat, vis-a-vis Rajasthan such as:

- a) Tribals in Gujarat were more progressive as evident from the fact that Rajasthan tribals just adjacent to the Gujarat tribals and comparably higher productivity levels allegedly through demonstration effect.

* This information was collected though the joint discussion Prof. Indrajit Khanna and the author had with the concerned officials.

- b) From the socio-ecological point of view, the Gujarat Tribals were situated towards the head of the dam where the water was not only very deep, but also dependence of tribals on fishing was comparatively higher than in the backwaters in the Rajasthan side. It appeared that tribals were also very possessive about their water in this region, no matter whether they belonged to Gujarat or Rajasthan. The poaching, in other words, was more difficult in this region as compared to the backwaters. There were few roads, so that any large transportation of fish by private parties could not remain unnoticed.
- c) Migration also appeared to be much more from the settlements situated further up on the Rajasthan side. This apart, the proportion of income from crop and livestock was much higher apparently in the household economy of tribals on the Rajasthan side as compared to the tribals in Gujarat State where the forest also reportedly was more dense and agricultural activities probably were less intensive.
- d) Thus, incentives to produce, apart from compulsions and means to produce, contributed to the productivity of tribals in fishing in addition to the organizational arrangements. It is a challenging poser to those interested in tribal development, it raises the question whether tribal cooperatives around only fisheries would be more successful than cooperatives around more than one economic activity depending upon the primacy of such activity in the respective household portfolio of enterprises.

Another issue which also emerged very strikingly is whether the decision of fisheries department to propose fishing units of 2-3 people rather than 5 was to underline the non-feasibility of organizing cooperatives in that region. As discussed elsewhere

in this note, why should it be necessary for all the members of the group to be together on every trips. The theoretical issue is whether the tribals with different efficiency mix, economic enterprises and sources of income can be organized into a demand group by the bureaucracy of only one department (say, fisheries) around only one activity, i.e. fishing.

Further questions which emerged regarding the Rajasthan experience are the following:

- 1) Why is the public policy on the role of private contractors vis-a-vis public sector corporations in the exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of tribals in backward regions so vague as to generate the possibility of not only unhealthy competition but also positive discrimination against the public sector corporation by way of higher revenue demands.*
- 2) It is ironic that because of inter-departmental squabbles the whole activity should have started two to three months late.
- 3) While the role given to the corporation was to develop tribals, the parameter on which its performance was monitored was the total catch, no matter whether by a few or many tribals. Also transportation was still in the hands of the contractor who earlier was controlling fishing rights. We can understand the predicament of the fisheries Development Officer posted at one of the centres on the bank of the reservoir to take independent positions and curtail the poaching by the contractors when the only other person who stayed with him in that place was the contractor himself. The involvement of tribals in the whole process was much less pronounced.

* Prof Manu Shroff observed on this issue, "But the tribal corporation is not less exploitative." Fine. But who is more amenable to regulation and pressure from constituents, the private contractors or the public corporation?

While it was interesting to note that whole on his own, the fisheries development officer on Rajasthan side had gone to Gujarat to study the system there, there was no organized effort to exchange ideas and opinions between the Gujarat part of Kadana management and the Rajasthan part.

10) Organizations of Youth

One of the ongoing activities involving organization of groups was Nehru Yuvak Kendra. It involved organization of Yuvak Mandals, in different villages. The Mandal had only temporary membership and anybody could join them.

Generally 10 or 11 youths constituted the executive body of the Mandal. The camps were organized to improve the social awareness, interest in sports and other intellectual activities and possibly to develop leadership qualities in them. The attendance reportedly was very bad and the Mandal Executives seldom attended.

Some of our group members felt that even though the Mandals were loose organizations, perhaps they could be studied carefully to see whether they would fit in with our expectation of demand groups being organized by the bureaucracy through cooperation between NYK and some other developmental departments.

11) Developing Tribals but why?

On the issue of identification and organization of tribal cooperative units for fishing, one of the officials remarked: "They don't bother because they are not educated, if they had been so they would be running behind us."

Implications

As mentioned earlier when somebody had mentioned that for their work, (i.e. for tribals work,) the officials had to do the running about, a notion of task being imposed repeatedly occurs in one form or the other. It is quite interesting to note that officials were paid their salaries particularly for the purpose in which they were engaged and yet they did not consider it as task of their genuine responsibility. Probably historically the

people had been running around the officials because the commodities were scarce and targets were less insistently monitored. However, since the 'target group' approach has become the main developmental tool the government officials realize that they have to run about. Also the officials wondered whether they should get the whole target achieved through only tribals. Some of them mentioned that if catching fish was the objectives, why not get it done from the most efficient fishermen, i.e. Bhois? The issue arose whether the duality of objectives would be able to reinforce or complement our ideas of organizing demand groups.

12) Incentives for officials in backward regions: The fisheries Development Officer regretted that cooperative department had barred officials receiving any deputation allowance or bonus. The question was whether in a commercial activity, incentives in the form of bonus was a necessary motivation and if so to what extent the absence of such an incentive de-motivated officials implying their disinterestedness in any mobilising activity.* Wherever we met officials not concerned with commercial activities we generally found the motivation to be higher. For example in ITI, department of Forest, Soil Conservation, Minor Irrigation, etc. However, any officials concerned with the activities like Tribal Training cum Production Centre, Fisheries Development, DIC, KVIC, were generally less motivated.

Fisheries officer also made following observations:

1) Besides the issue of lack of bonus or deputation allowance, he regretted that he could not talk in Hindi to any one else at the place where he was posted. Further, as long as he had given

* Contrast this with city compensatory allowance (CCA) paid to officials working in metropolitans and other major cities where they enjoy better access to other facilities as well.

the fishing nets and boats to the tribals, he was respected but he was sure that whenever he would take these nets back, he would not be trusted. Tribals, in his view would not be loyal to anybody.

He also felt that it was easy to write an article while sitting on one's own desk (probably taking a dig at us) than to start new things as he had been trying. He also felt that the tribals did not need much money. One reason for their lack of participation in the upstream villages was that due to lower quality of fish, their average income would not be more than Rs. 2-3 per day where as they could get more income if they migrated to Gujarat. In his view, 'pantwallas' (people wearing trousers) had exploited the tribals in the past. Thus they were extremely suspicious about anybody of that type approaching them for anything.

13) Transition of peasant protest into pressure group

In Panchmahals District, many of those who lands had been submerged under the back-water of Kadana dam and were allotted forest land some years ago had now been dispossessed from those lands. It appeared that the new government policy of protecting forests was being enforced more strictly now than before, and the forest department was trying to get those lands back. The collector regretted the pressure from above which he felt had left him with no option.

Issue arises whether organizing groups of such people who are affected adversely by government decision in one way or other would not afford us a more volatile and yet purposeful opportunity to test the hypothesis regarding ability of bureaucracies to organize demand groups. In other words, advocacy of issues on which demands already existed and was being articulated, might facilitate the process of making this demand group generation more persuasive. Also during the process of mobilisation one could distinguish demand group from the protest movement. Also, leadership for organizing protest might of a quite different type than the leadership to deal with management of economic and other

related social activities. All these issues will become important once we get deeper into this exercise.*

The collector particularly mentioned the issue of pressure from above implying that most of the developmental programmes were not only directed from above but also were implemented largely in proportion to the pressure from above. Probably he did not give much weightage to the pressure from below.

The dilemma would arise when the issues on which the lower level bureaucracy might like to organize demand group may have a low priority in the minds of those at the higher level. Contradiction would arise further if such issue had a low priority even in the mind of people themselves.

Summing up: Closing the Gap

The process of narrating our collective learning through my individual perspective has been quite a traumatic dilemma. It might have also come through to the reader at various places as he would note contradictions were inevitable, perhaps even necessary, to provide us necessary motivation to continue our research for some answer to the problem of increasing apathy and helplessness being internalized by the poor people (and some of these working with them)

* In a self-critical tone, author would like to confess that the issue in question needed more sustained attention even if such a role conflicted with other institutional responsibilities. Prof. Vyas, had once raised, the question, how do academics conduct themselves as activists? Our record, to put it most mildly, can certainly improve in this regard.

One of the most severe contradictions of current developmental scenario in the country is not so much that delivery systems did not deliver as was expected of them as that the intended target group (i.e. the small farmers and agricultural labourers) did not demand strongly and collectively changes in the delivery system.

To an extent the problem merges with the whole issue of peasant mobilisation, political-economy of state and the role state should play in generating or responding to demands through different channels. The issue is of far more importance in backward tribal regions where the historical deprivation had desensitized the sensibilities of the people to such an extent that even legitimate demands were not raised because the boundaries of legitimacy have been blurred by various social political processes.

Is it too much if we were expecting the possibility of generating demand groups by the very agents of delivery who in past may have reinforced the helplessness expressed by the poor?

Those who are patient might like to wait for revolutions to set the social structure right in a way that poor got their due.* We, a diverse group of professionals with different persuasions and reasons for joining the group felt that creation of demand groups within bureaucracy will perhaps help in articulation of the demand of people, it might also hopefully create pressure for re-orientation of the planning processes.**

* Perhaps, raising false hopes contributes as much to maldevelopment as keeping patients when occasion demands impatience. An otherwise conservative friend remarked "Revolutions are normally associated with impatience, but in India one has to be patient!"

** The very fact that after the leader of the group ~~was~~ no more on the scene real reasons as different from the apparent ones started surfacing speaks volumes about our half hearted attempt. The games Professors play may not be very different from the games people with capital 'P' play to keep people with small 'p' divided. I hope, I am not violating professional decorum by sharing my predicaments/predilections. After all, is it not true that we did not keep many of the compliments we as a group had made to the district officials.

Our group somehow has emerged because most of us wanted to relearn some of the lessons that individually many of us had almost taken for granted. If we appear to be too optimistic sometimes, it is not because we are not realizing the contradictions in the process and the possible barriers to the creation of demand groups; but the extent of initiatives that we have witnessed at the local level make us hope that it might be possible to create a niche in the 'realm of relevance' that officials recognize today. Undoubtedly the realm of our own learning has considerably been enlarged with the experiences that we have had. We confess that we have not been able to assure ourselves about a similar feeling on the part of officials and the people. While exploring the process of helping bureaucracy in creating demand groups we are learning to make demands on each other within our group. If our failures could be the guarantee for the success of others who would follow, this effort would not have been wasted.

It is said that too quick an acceptance of an idea in the bureaucracy is a sure sign of its abortion. Perhaps the time we - the IIM group and the officials have taken to feel each other was necessary to generate humility on our part and to create sensitivity on their part towards the common purpose. Even though the idea was ours the experiment, we are trying to ensure, is owned by them.

The first journal ended with the thought that re-discovery of the wheel in itself could be quite exciting if the processes of re-discovery generate newer ideas which spin off into newer areas of research and also if these processes could build greater commitment among the people making discovery. We have advanced only a step further i.e. as a group we are a little more clear about the challenge inherent in the tasks of galvanising an interface between tribals and the administrative system which historically have been alienated from each other. Even if we succeed in discovering some of the means to dilute the alienation the research would serve a purpose.

At least, so do we believe!

After thought, As if it matters:

Lot of these thoughts mentioned above have remains naive hopes. Author's claim (in this draft of 1983) about the collective understanding in the action research group have been belied in more than no ways. He was effectively advised by the coordinator to make it most explicit that ideas presented in this note are only his (the author's) and his only.

However, given different accountability norms in academics terms the colleagues, the people in the field with whom one works (both the officials as well as the poor households) and the managers of academic establishments, one is not sure, who learned how much and with what effect.

The findings were indeed shared with the fellow researchers (the bank officers, patwaris, school teacher, U.L.W.S etc) and the member of the families who provided us the insights about deprivation though the field researchers in atleast one sub-project (Gupta and Shroff, 1985 op.cit) we never shared the outcome of the whole 3 year project with the district level functionaries not to mention about others even though we had promised them so. But that is a matter related to larger issues of academic accountability and ethics which deserve separate and more serious analysis.