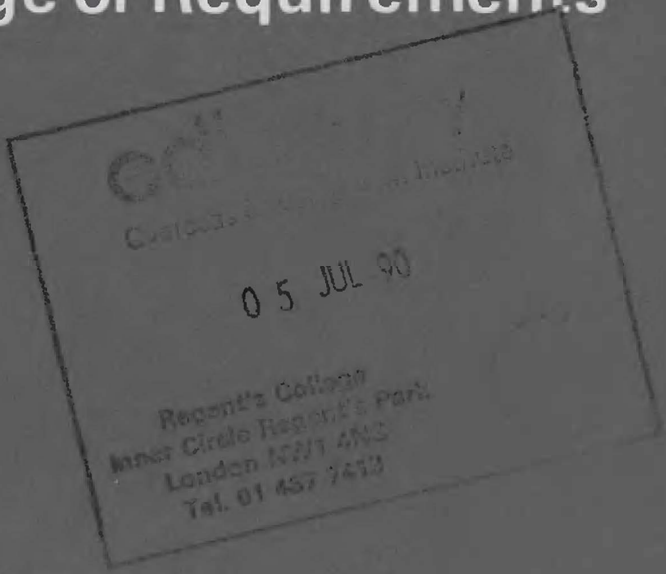
Agricultural Administration Unit
Occasional Paper 4

Enlisting the Small Farmer: The Range of Requirements



Overseas
Development
Institute

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Enlisting the Small Farmer: The Range of Requirements

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Agricultural Administration Unit

The Agricultural Administration Unit (AAU) was established at ODI at the beginning of September 1975, with financial support from the Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM).

As its title implies, the Unit is concerned with the study of agricultural administration and institutions in less developed countries, with the emphasis on field implementation - the planning and programming of development, the provision and co-ordination of services, and the support of participatory and self-managing groups.

It aims to widen the state of knowledge of agricultural administration through a programme of policy-oriented research into selected subject areas, the promotion of informed debate, and the exchange of ideas and experience. The Unit also seeks to influence directly the organisation and management of agricultural development through the provision of specialist advice. The scope of the AAU's work is therefore threefold: research, dissemination and advice.

A major objective of the AAU is to provide a bridge between 'thinkers' and 'doers'. Accordingly, each research subject is studied in collaboration with a 'network' of individuals in the UK and overseas who have been directly concerned with the problems of implementation in developing countries. Network members are drawn from a wide range of nationalities, professional backgrounds, and disciplines. The Unit aims to keep itself well-informed on other important aspects of the organisation and management of agricultural development outside its specialist fields and to help, to the extent it can, other organisations and individuals engaged in related work.

The purpose of the AAU's 'Occasional Papers', is to disseminate the findings of this collaborative effort to a wide audience of interested people in an easily accessible format. The first Paper, *Stimulating Local Development*, appeared in 1976, the second, *Extension, Planning, and the Poor*, in 1976, and the third, *Institutions, Management, and Agricultural Development*, in 1979. All three are available from ODI; numbers 1 and 2 at £1.00 each and number 3 at £2.00 per copy.

Further information about the work of the Unit may be obtained from the AAU, Overseas Development Institute, 10-11 Percy Street, London W1P 0JB.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper springs from Discussion Paper No 6 in the ODI Agricultural Administration Unit Network series, which was entitled 'A Hard Look at Directing Benefits to the Poor and at Participation'. Comments on that paper were requested, and more than 20 considered comments were received, some raising new issues, some amending or questioning the existing text. This new Occasional Paper is aimed to share these comments with Network members, but in a form which will also be intelligible to new readers.

Discussion Paper No 6 was structured by listing and discussing a rather numerous list of assumptions which it would be necessary to make if development programmes more directly aimed at small and marginal farmers were to meet the difficulties and objections which have been raised against them, and which partly account for the neglect of the very large section of the rural economy - the poor.

This Occasional Paper takes a rather more positive line. It is structured by listing and considering what modifications would have to be made to commonly existing policies, structures, attitudes and administrative arrangements if development of the poorer rural sections is to be achieved on any considerable scale.[1] It does, therefore, assume that change is desirable, and the emphasis is on its nature and on its practicability.

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1 'Enlisting the Small Farmer' implies winning his active participation in programmes on which he has been consulted, and which help to bring him a far greater share of development benefits.

The justification for change

The need for change can be justified in three main ways. First, there is a moral argument against the injustice and inequity of continued existence of dire poverty, in all its deplorable aspects, in the present world; if it can be remedied, to whatever extent, it should be. This view may not be equally held everywhere; but there are substantial signs, worldwide, that it does have an effect at least on declared policies and to some extent in action.

Second, there is an economic argument. It is hard to deny that a great waste of human energy and intelligence and of many physical resources (land, water) is involved in the very existence of many millions of small and marginal farmers at levels of productivity and of consumption so far below both human and resource potential. The changes which it has been possible to make where real attention and effort has been devoted to this situation - still, alas, in too few instances - are evidence that much could be done. That there are costs to this effort - particularly initial costs in personnel and training - is not to be denied; but they must be weighed against the costs of doing nothing.

Third, there is a political argument. The stability of governments in countries where such a mass of poverty continues, is always in question, and more questioned as modern communication reveals ever more sharply the contrasts and inequalities of the modern world.

The major obstacles to change

Out of a host of details, five major obstacles to changes in the policies and practices of governments towards small farmers and the rural poor stand out.

a) The direct economic costs in personnel, training, and multiple minor investments, of servicing initially a large new section of rural society - 'initially' because later it should become far more self-supporting; 'new' because very little *special* service has been given in the past to this section.

b) The political aspects of this cost Here must be mentioned a major comment by *Carey Jones*,[1] too long for full quotation. His argument, in brief, runs as follows (in my words). Any government depends for its survival on its supporters - even if it uses guns, it depends on those who carry them. From inevitably limited resources, it must see to it that supporters receive a good slice of benefits; and it can hope that by support of influential followers, the mass of people behind them will be influenced too. If resources are static, diverting a greater share to the poor means giving less to wealthier or influential supporters. Only if resources are growing substantially can a larger constituency enter the area of benefit. Governments will therefore look for the most profitable investments and to the agents who are most likely to manage them effectively and to generate a return on investments, probably including foreign exchange. The poor are not likely to be these agents; in fact what they are likely to get is more in the nature of 'charity' or sops to cool off unrest.

This comment, even if not acceptable, is important because it represents an attitude - if not so frankly expressed - which has had great influence. It is reflected in the idea of 'backing winners'; it is reflected in one aspect of the World Bank's policies - to finance projects in the areas of best potential, of most progressive farmers,

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1 A list of commentators is included in the Appendix.

with a high prospective rate of return; and it is reflected in much macro-economic planning by governments in developing countries. Two comments are in order here. First, it is not self-evident that the poor are not profitable and earn no foreign exchange. In commodity schemes in particular (tea, coffee, palm products, and many more) foreign exchange on a huge scale has been earned by the product of very small holders and indeed by groups often called 'primitive'. Second, it assumes collective agreement by governments, as single, rational decision-makers on a single strategy; and this in practice does not seem to reflect the rivalries, jealousies and often individualism of many of them. Further, the whole argument does not do justice to the efforts now being made by quite a number of governments, within their limited resources, to devise new methods of bringing greater development benefits to the poor.

c) The socio-political pattern The first two obstacles concern the hesitations of governments to face the economic costs of expanding existing services, and perhaps adding new ones, in order to include a very large and previously neglected section of the rural population - and the fears of governments that such a policy might alienate powerful elements of political support. The other two obstacles are of a rather different nature. *Assuming* that at least some governments, despite these hesitations or fears, do make an effort to reach the smaller and marginal farmers, two very serious obstacles still stand in their way. First, there is in most developing countries - as there was in developed countries now endeavouring to sustain a welfare state - a socio-political hierarchy, running down through society, in which the richer, better educated and more influential elements are able to appropriate to themselves an unduly large share of the benefits of economic development, allowing to the poor only that

meagre share which would bind some of them as dependent clients and political supporters. The relationship of dominance and dependency is pervasive. It is not necessary for the dominants to have formal powers as landlords or officials; their financial resources, their commercial competence, their ability to handle officials, to use the courts of law or the influence of a creditor is enough to maintain their superior position, to become chairman of a local council or co-operative, to obtain quicker and better service from junior field staff.

d) The special position of the poor This is partly the obverse of the power of the rich; but it would exist and present difficulties of approach even if the rich did not capture development benefits intended for all. The very lack of assets, the rational fear of financial risks, difficulties in dealing with officials, lack of self-confidence of the poor, make special adaptation of services to them necessary - and also difficult.

e) The administration of change This is a major difficulty of many facets, and showing itself in many different contexts. It shows in the unwillingness to decentralise (mainly by delegation) operational control and finance; in the choice of institutions which governments elect to favour; in the formulation of technical agricultural programmes; and pervasively in the style and attitudes of official bureaucratic management which run right down to services at village level. The fact is that a decision to include, in policy and programmes, a whole and very large new element in rural society cannot be achieved simply by adding to the existing administrative structure some 'special' arrangements for 'the poor'. Such an effort involves changes in extension, in research, in institutional policy, in local planning and in the content and objectives of the training and management of field staff.

It should perhaps be emphasised that these major difficulties do not apply with the same force to all types of agricultural development. They apply with full force only if a viable system is to be created which will in fact meet the special needs of small and marginal farmers; which will give them some effective voice in the design of programmes for their benefit; and which will help them to participate actively in the management of such programmes. In consequence, this Occasional Paper will not deal with, for example, plantation systems or with special commodity schemes, in which the whole sequence of research, extension, credit and supply of inputs, processing and marketing is executed by a single crop authority or parastatal board or private company. It is concerned with the general country-wide approach to the small-holder growing a variety of crops and/or animals in which he himself makes the final decision of what to grow and how to grow it, in relation to his needs and to local physical and market conditions. It applies mainly to programmes and very little to those projects which are so heavily loaded with special staffing and finance that they cannot be widely applied.

The remainder of this Occasional Paper will deal with these obstacles and with the wide range of adjustments and changes which are required if programmes for this poorer section of the rural economy are to be genuinely successful.

PART I: CENTRAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POLICIES

DIRECT ECONOMIC COSTS

That there will be extra recurrent costs in programmes which involve closer contact and consultation with small farmers is virtually certain. The main issues are: 1) the size of this cost and 2) the benefits which might arise by incurring it.

As to the size, information is, unfortunately, rather scanty, and a great deal more research needs to be directed to this issue. A very rough estimate of the recurrent costs of the agricultural field services (from District Agricultural Officer downwards) in five Indian states[1] indicated that they accounted for about 18 to 23 per cent of annual recurrent expenditure on agriculture. A figure of 30 per cent has been mentioned for Bangladesh. This is a substantial figure (which needs much closer definition); but it looks less formidable in relation to total governmental recurrent expenditure of all types, and in relation to the proportion of GNP derived from agriculture. Even to double the numbers of staff at field level (without increasing - perhaps even reducing! - the staffing levels at State level) would not weigh very heavily on the national budget, even if additional training costs are taken into account.

As to potential benefits, the numbers of small farmers are enormous in Africa and particularly in Asia. Fairly conservative estimates in Asia would show that farmers with less than one hectare represent in many countries 60 per cent to 75 per cent of all farmers, and occupy around 30 per cent of all land. It must be remembered that percentages of all land are in a sense distorted by the very large holdings

1 Figures obtained personally from Agriculture Departments (1977). Figures cover salary, subsistence, travel and administrative costs but not major physical investment.

in some regions which consist of marginal grazing. In a number of countries (India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Thailand and others) 40 per cent or more of the rural population are classified as below the poverty line.

As to benefits, there is evidence that small farmers (because of family labour intensity) maintain a level of productivity per acre very near (sometimes slightly above, sometimes slightly below) the average productivity of larger farmers. If it could be assumed that additional numbers of field staff and an alteration in management training and methods would substantially increase the output of the mass of small-holdings on 30 per cent of the land, the benefits of the investment might well outweigh the costs. It is the suspicion, quite reasonably held, that in fact even the existing numbers of field staff do not make much impact on productivity (larger farmers can get on by themselves; small ones receive little benefit) which may be at the root of reluctance to expand.

Here other factors enter - the management of field staffs, the question whether the existing ratio of staff to farmers is below a critical level for effective action, the efficiency of delivery of credit and inputs, the technical content of programmes, the suitability of research.

POLICY INITIATIVES AND FAILURES

The argument (*Carey Jones* - above) that governments deliberately direct benefits primarily to influential supporters, at least in a crude form, is certainly not universally valid. There have been, and are now, many governments which, by different processes of reasoning, have endeavoured, with considerable persistence, to reach the poorer sections of the agricultural communities and to small and marginal farmers. Tanzania, India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka are some of many examples outside the Communist regimes. That these efforts have had limited success - and sometimes failure - does not deny their existence. Several other factors account largely for poor results. At worst, the stated intention to reach the poor may indeed be mere verbiage - electoral or dictatorial propaganda in search of mass or 'grass roots' political support. In somewhat more genuine cases, expenditure and new administrative arrangements for poverty programmes may indeed by made, yet without any vigorous or sustained effort to remedy major abuses and inequities in the political economy - corruption (both political and administrative), maldistribution of land, and inequitable tenure. But perhaps the most important remediable causes of failure are: 1) a failure to recognise that apparently democratic institutions - for example co-operatives - can be, and are captured by the richer and more influential *local* dominants; 2) a mixture of inefficient management and real poverty of infrastructure which fails to deliver effective services to that large proportion of farmers who have not the power to insist on being served; 3) a failure to adapt research and technical programmes to the real needs and potential of small farmers, largely because farmers are not consulted but presented with programmes devised by officials and technicians far from the village scene.

In Parts II and III below we will consider what are the requirements for effective contact and service to small farmers, and how the local political and the administrative obstacles can be reduced or overcome.

PART II: REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO SMALL FARMERS

THE LOCAL POWER STRUCTURE AND THE CHOICE OF INSTITUTIONS

The reasons why small and marginal farmers need special attention are well documented and need only the briefest mention. They are less able to face financial or social risk. They find it difficult, sometimes unpleasant, to deal with officials. They are often dependent upon richer, more influential figures in the village and are often treated as inferiors. They are sometimes ignorant, not of their existing land and circumstances, but of new technical or earning potential. They are very frequently neglected by Extension staff. They are often suspicious not only of strangers, but of each other.

For all these reasons, they need a special degree of encouragement and continuing support. The burden of this Part II is to consider the various institutions and initiatives through which effective contact, organisation and support can be designed.

a) The Extension Service

Criticism of the coverage and management of the Extension Service has been widespread, and a number of comments on this subject were received. By no means all of this criticism reflects on individual officers at field-level, or on the performance of the Service in promoting a good technical innovation to large or medium-sized farmers. Much of the trouble arises, in relation to small and marginal farmers, from the very situation in which so many Extension staff work. Expected as they are to meet targets of technical improvement, and often overburdened

with both field and office duties, often without adequate transport, they naturally visit those farmers who are most likely to adopt a programme. They have little time to visit or consult with small farmers, and little expectation of benefit from such visits.

Further, the management of the Service often leaves much to be desired. *R.J.G. Steele* comments vigorously on this management issue:

> Decentralisation of the Ministry of Agriculture is the essential prerequisite, even in a very small country like Lesotho. Real delegation of power should motivate senior District Staff, who should be made responsible for failure and given credit for success. In my limited experience it has been very difficult to get middle level supervisors to take their responsibilities seriously. I believe this is due to their immediate superiors not holding them accountable; but they in turn do not have authority to take action, and so incompetence passes unchecked. I may appear rather authoritarian on this point, but it is most damaging to the morale of the service if blatant laziness and sometimes dishonesty are allowed to continue without sanction. Good performance should likewise be commended publicly.

Steele goes on to mention that serious shortage of transport, and often very poor housing, constantly attack Service morale. They have often been treated as a purely technical service (as their name implies), and their training has not inclined them to consult farmers to help them to organise themselves, or to look for alternative options to the limited 'package' which they have to deliver. *H.M. Mathur* strongly suggests that the retraining of middle level staffs who control or support the field services, is of high priority.

Steele's reference to'alternative options' raises a point about the technical package delivered to farmers (large and small) which will be mentioned later. But it

is worth mentioning here that the adoption of the (Benor) Training and Visit system of Extension management, although it can greatly improve the regularity of service and the allocation of weekly tasks, is, in practice and despite the intention of the author of the system, very apt to deliver, through 'Contact Farmers' identical packages to small and large farmers alike. What modifications of existing Extension Service and training should be made must await discussion of some other institutional and service systems.

b) Formal co-operatives

Whatever institution is entrusted with responsibility for contact and service to small farmers, some organisation or grouping of farmers as a receiving system is administratively essential. Almost all developing countries have, for longer or shorter periods, looked to the co-operative as the prime tool for this purpose, although some have preferred the Farmers' Association (Taiwan, Malaysia). Indeed, a fully developed and commercial multi-purpose co-operative is, in a sense, an alternative method of organising services - input supplies, credit provision and recovery, storage, marketing services - which, in the absence of a co-operative, have to be covered by government or parastatal organisations. In some areas these are capable of great financial and developmental success. But such successes seem to be concentrated in areas already quite far advanced in commercial development and skills. In less developed areas (whether in Asia or Africa), the remark that 'co-operatives are for big men' is apt to be heard, and active participation in their management by smaller men is minimal.

A rather deeper analysis of the essential nature of co-operatives (in Africa) comes from *Goran Hyden*. His

first point is that co-operatives were born not out of general goodwill or socialist theory, but out of a dire necessity - a lifeline for groups threatened with catastrophe from market forces; and that they have succeeded mainly in those places where such necessity pressed upon them. Secondly, he emphasises that co-operatives were and are a capitalist institution, concerned with selling and competing in the market; where this European institution was transferred intact to developing countries it met with a very different environment, in which the bulk of the poor were only marginally in the market economy at all. He writes:

> This does not mean that co-operatives have failed as business organisations in these countries. In fact, their business record is oftentimes quite impressive, particularly in areas where the market economy is well-established and social behaviour adapted according to its demands. One finds invariably, however, that the driving force behind these co-operative successes is a core of relatively well-to-do farmers. There is no evidence that the co-operative in the rural areas of the Third World has been able to serve as an instrument of the poor. The reason for this is not too difficult to find. As a means to incorporate rural producers into the modern economy the co-operative has proved particularly attractive and important to those with the strongest inclinations and greatest capacity to move in that direction. Thus, it has become the tool of rural entrepreneurs. The argument that these people are using the co-operatives to exploit the majority of the rural producers is too simple. It must be recognized that it is primarily to them that the co-operative makes a difference. They have a stake in it to a much greater extent than the ordinary peasant producer who still might stand with only one of his legs in the market economy. He tends to be a more reluctant participant in co-operative business affairs.[1]

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1 Goran Hyden, 'Cooperation and the poor', *Rural Development Participation Review*, Cornell University, 1980.

And again:

> Establishment of special co-operatives for the rural poor is likely to be a far more difficult exercise unless some form of political consciousness exists or can be developed among the potential members. Co-operatives in themselves are not bringing about greater equality but are the vehicles of social action based on certain types of consciousness. John Saul (1981)[1] draws this conclusion quite firmly after having studied the co-operatives in Tanzania.

There is, however unfortunately, abundant evidence from Africa, Asia and Latin America that the formal co-operative *as an institution through which active participation and full benefit can be induced for small and marginal farmers* is very rarely successful. Indeed, the adoption of this tool as the *initial* way of providing small farmer service has been at the cost of failure in many countries for this particular purpose. A time may come when small farmers, after gaining more self-confidence by experience of running their own affairs through other methods, may be able to play a rewarding part in a large co-operative. Meanwhile, they are all too often 'passengers' in an organisation in which the richer and more influential members virtually monopolise the benefits. Even India, which has used co-operatives so widely, had to recognise this and create special agencies to reach small farmers and the poor.

At a later stage we shall discuss the role of elected local councils and development committees. But it is worth noting here that a similar capture of these institutions by their strongest members is always likely.

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1 John S. Saul, 'Marketing Cooperatives', in P. Worsley (ed), *Two Blades of Grass*, Manchester University Press, 1971.

c) Small, functional groups

Almost any multi-purpose institution which any member of the whole local community may join (co-operative) or elect (council) is likely to recapitulate the local power structure. It is partly for this reason that experiments with smaller, single-function groups have considerable importance: joint and active participation in the use of a single well, or irrigation channel, a milk collection scheme, a credit and savings group, attracting only those immediately concerned, may work well for a group of small farmers and is small enough for them to manage themselves. Small groups, whether of farmers or of weavers, or for almost any productive or social purpose, are in fact being increasingly used perhaps mainly by voluntary organisations but also in government-administered projects. The need to give them some legal personality for some purposes (especially for credit) can be quite easily overcome by registration where necessary. There are, indeed, some difficulties to overcome. *Gilbert Etienne* points out that the poor 'are not easily "clubable"', because they are often in competition with each other, often divided by class or caste, and with differing allegiances. Part of this objection can be avoided by the very formation of the group round a specific function in which all are interested. *Niels Röling* adds that 'natural groups' (emerging from traditional customs) are not often homogeneous in the sense of identical occupations, status and wealth.

However, the issue is obviously not one of organising all the poor in a group but of several small groups each built round a function; and here their common opportunity and interest may be enough to overcome some heterogeneity. It may well be that small groups will (if successful) tend to grow larger or to merge into

some formal co-operative organisation later on; but this should not be assumed from the start.

Roger King in a study of Nigerian co-operative systems, adds a practical illustration. In relation to co-operative effort by *small groups* (about twenty members) he writes:

> Encouraging this sort of basic co-operation requires a very different approach to the part of government officials. Groups need to be based on specific local needs which the case study showed can be quite different even in neighbouring villages. To be sensitive to these needs it is necessary to involve the rural population in decisions about which activities a new group should undertake and how they should undertake it. The government co-operative department would then support rather than direct co-operative activity. This approach is quite the reverse of that in the case study, where top-down planning resulted in each co-operative being offered the same package and being required to adhere to identical rules.[1]

d) Special organising staff

Neither normal Extension staff nor co-operatives have either the clear responsibility or the training for a genuinely consultative approach to small and marginal farmers, which might encourage them to express their problems, to organise themselves, and to play an active part in managing their own programmes (with technical support and some facilitation of their contacts with officials). It is the recognition of this situation which has led to experiments in the use of 'group

1 Roger King, 'Co-operative policy in peasant societies: the case of Nigeria', Second Co-operative Seminar, Plunkett Foundation, September 1977.

organisers' or 'institution officers' or 'facilitators'.[1] FAO, some universities and some voluntary agencies have usually initiated this additional, catalysing activity, to fill an obvious gap. As in the case of voluntary agency work (see following section) this at present can only be done on a small scale. But insofar as it is effective, it can at least serve as a pointer to the kind of training and the methods of approach needed in the national Extension Services.

e) Voluntary organisations

The relatively small scale on which voluntary organisations can at present contribute to national effort is obvious. A further common difficulty, particularly in agriculture, can arise from their technical weakness; often they cannot afford the professional staff needed. This can be remedied by close collaboration with government staff, although this is not always evident. It is therefore from the quality of their work rather than its range that some lessons for wider action can be learned.

These qualities can include: 1) a genuine concern to serve the weaker sections; 2) usually much less transitory staffing than in government service - thus more time and care can be spent in developing personal relations and trust; 3) much more flexibility in action, since they are not bound by pre-selected programmes and regulations as the bureaucracy is; 4) economy, and a concentration on using local resources and energies; 5) quicker decision, made locally.

1 For example, in some Asian Survey on Agricultural and Rural Research and Development (ASARRD) programmes (eg Thailand); in Sri Lanka (Gala Oyo) and Bangladesh and Nepal. 'Facilitators' are recommended by Bruce Johnston and W.C. Clark. Similar work is recommended by D. Thakar (Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad).

It is evident that these five qualities set standards which are extremely hard to achieve in national development, implying elements of devolution, local concern, staff training and posting which constantly show up as failures on the national scale.

There is a host of ways in which voluntary organisations may appear on the rural scene - from individuals within a local community; from religious and other organisations, whether indigenous or as branches of international movements; from what may be called 'donors', including universities and other socially - or developmentally - oriented institutions, indigenous or foreign; from experiments sponsored by UN agencies (eg FAO, WHO). There are also a host of variations in their approach to their work. Insofar as each or any of them share the five qualities listed above (and most of them share many), they should be treated as a source of experiments and of inspiration to the larger agencies, including governments, concerned in rural development. In the particular field covered by this Occasional Paper - the widening of the flow of benefits to the poor and the strengthening of genuine participation - their work has peculiar relevance and value. There is a fast growing number of examples, too long to quote here.

Robert Chambers admirably summarises the main issue:

> Both for promoting demand from below, and for linking resources and the poor, there is the eternal problem of spreading on a larger scale what can be made to work on a small-scale, of the shift from the voluntary agency to the government department, of the transfer from committed leadership to routine administration. It is here that the two approaches are strongly complementary, and give cause, I think, for hope. For if the poorer people have or can be given rights over natural resources, and if they know that they have those rights, then their demands may offset the slippage towards the rural elite which would otherwise occur.

> There is also the approach (which colleagues here have been exploring) of intermediate or hybrid organisations, supported by government, operating on a larger scale than normal voluntary agencies, but retaining their conviction and flexibility.

f) 'Self-help'

Self-help organisations, in which a local community sets itself the task of building an access road or a school (even in 'Village College' in Kenya), or a bridge or a clean water supply, a cattle dip or an irrigation channel, have all the characteristics of active involvement in both labour and monetary contribution. Although the effort is usually organised by a leading local citizen (and occasionally the road leads to his house), in many cases rich and poor alike gain. It is partly an offspring from community development ideas, in which some technical help and materials are expected to come from government sources, but may also exist (as in Kenya's 'Harambee' effort) as a local, although officially blessed, effort in which all sections of the people may contribute and benefit. It can generate, at least temporarily, much local enthusiasm and some capital gain to the nation. But it is usually a 'one-off' effort, more often concerned with local social infrastructure, and therefore cannot be classed as an agricultural development system.[1]

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1 For a full discussion of Kenyan experience in this field (and for several able articles on agricultural administration in East Africa) see David K. Leonard (ed) *Rural Administration in Kenya*, East African Literature Bureau, Management and Administration Series, No 2, Nairobi 1973.

Combatting the effects of the local power structure

The foregoing paragraphs have run through briefly most of the important ways of contact with and organisation of small farmers. It is evident that several of them, unfortunately the most widely used, do not fulfil the requirements of a method which would be likely to ensure an easy and widespread response. Moreover, it is not only a question of goodwill in the central government, important as that is. Let us assume that the government of India established the Small Farmer Development Agency, the Drought-prone Area Programme, the Marginal Farmer and Landless Agency, and the Integrated Rural Development Programme in good faith - as I personally believe. Let us assume also that the installation of democratic, elected committees at village, block and district level (Panchayats) was in good faith - and indeed in democratic idealism - as I believe it certainly was. Yet these committees and programmes have been partially captured by local power-holders - though they have reached a substantial number of the poor. The point to be made here is that the assumption - indeed the fact - of central goodwill in some countries is not enough to achieve adequate benefit to the rural poor, unless additional and, indeed, subtle measures are taken to neutralise or evade local exploitation or, in other words, to breach the prevailing local social pattern of relations.

A word is needed about 'capture of benefits'. This is often treated as a deliberate act of obstruction or exclusion; and there are indeed some shocking cases of this. But there are other, and less sinister, factors involved. The first lies in the bare fact that more powerful people have more access to and more influence with the sources of supply. If supplies are short, or late or faulty, they can needle officials effectively;

the poor cannot. Secondly, the content of a scheme may be such that the poor dare not take the risks of adoption: to risk one acre out of two, with a credit debt, is a far greater risk, with less chance of recovery from failure, than to risk three acres out of twenty. Nevertheless, the poor find it very hard to organise themselves to exert effective pressure. They are in competition with each other, and the nature of their dependency on the more powerful makes it difficult and economically dangerous for them to challenge the village establishment or officials. In conflict situations they feel themselves to be the weaker side. If outsiders urge them to take risks, they will want to be sure that support will be both present and effective if a crunch comes.[1] Outsiders (including Extension staff) have to be aware of this situation; and no doubt schemes which enhance the capacity of the poor with a minimum of direct challenge will stand more chance of success.

The danger of over-emphasising the capture of benefits by the rich - and thereby neglecting other common reasons for failure - is mentioned by *S.K. Rao* and *N.K. Jaiswal*:

> The other assumption that the dominant socio-political forces at local level are defeating the purpose of development efforts for the rural poor could sometimes be over-emphasised. The effect is that other factors lose their gravity. For example, in India, the milch cattle distribution programmes, or handicrafts or cottage industries projects, quite often fail due to inadequate project assessment at the feasibility and appraisal stage, discordant management of input supply, and inadequate

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1 Cf W.H. and Charlotte Wiser, *Behind Mud Walls*, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1963, for a description of the multiple fears which beset the poor. Also Paul Devitt in *Extension, Planning and the Poor*, Occasional Paper No 2, ODI, 1977.

> stream marketing of the output. But external factors/forces including local power structure are often adduced as plausible arguments as an excuse for this deficiency.

B.F. Johnston and *W.C. Clark*[1] mention the danger of an over-suspicious attitude to local 'leaders':

> A second reason for the neglect of leadership issues is ideological. It is well known and hardly surprising that effective leaders at all levels of development organization tend to be drawn from the more progressive, better educated and often relatively better off strata of rural society. (See, for example, Korten 1980.) We have already called attention to foreign advisers' often uncritical advocacy of superficially democratic and egalitarian forms of organization. In the present context, this advocacy often amounts to a hostility towards the emergence of forceful, innovative leadership. It emphasises instead a vague blend of local (leaderless) autonomy plus 'professional' (read 'central' or 'imported') program management. Such a simplistic attitude is precisely the opposite of what is needed to achieve practical results.

The argument goes on to suggest that an answer lies in 'a productive balance between the facilitation and the control of leadership behaviour'. Alas, this is not so much an answer as a restatement of the difficulty - by whom and how is this balance to be struck and enforced? Honest and unselfish leadership may indeed exist in some cases, and should not be discouraged. But to rely on it generally is not enough to prevent widespread failure. The effort in this Occasional Paper is to suggest institutional and organisational approaches which 1) reduce the likelihood of benefit capture and 2) seek to build up the self-confidence of the poorer sections to manage more of their own affairs themselves.

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1 In a draft of *Redesigning Rural Development* (forthcoming from Johns Hopkins University Press).

Despite these qualifications, the deeply engrained patterns of socio-political life constitute a most serious obstacle to any easy assumption that better technology or better management can by themselves ensure the growth of a more participative and more equitably rewarded life for the rural poor. If they are more noticeable in Asia, where social hierarchies are more detailed and closely defined, they have grown up also among the modern societies of Tropical Africa and have long been prevalent in Latin America. It is all too easy to think of 'small farmers' as atomised individuals, who can be persuaded to co-operate with each other. But in fact each is imbedded in loyalties - to family, clan, tribe, racial group, patron - and in fears that neglect of this security (such as it is) by behaving as clubable individuals for some new economic purpose may lead to disaster. It is against this background that we need to consider some suggestions by which the risks of capture can be minimised.

Quite a number of such suggestions are put forward. We have suggested that small special-purpose groups are less likely to attract capture than whole-village organisations. *Robert Chambers* has emphasised the possibility of channelling assets directly to the ownership of the poor - eg a bamboo-tube well, an IHP pump. *Tendler* has suggested that some social benefits, often already available to the well-off, provoke less competition from them. She also remarks that some powerful infrastructure organisations, eager to expand their operations, may provide structures and services which in fact benefit large numbers of the poor as well as the rich.[1] *Gilbert Etienne* rightly stresses that shortages of supply are often the precipitating cause

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1 Eg the Kenya Land Development Organisation.

of unequal benefit; the rich will be first come and first served. The same applies to attractive subsidies; scarce and subsidised supplies create the greatest temptation of all. If chemical fertiliser is too expensive to import in adequate quantity, extension packages should be changed rather than the poor excluded.

Another suggestion, though more difficult to handle, must be recorded. *Tendler* also mentions that in some circumstances 'you may do better for the poor with strong, centrally managed, non-participatory projects, if "participation" turns out to mean "control by the elites"'. This thought is echoed by *J. Jacobs*:

> The paper states that 'without devolution the rest fails'. It goes on to indicate some of the factors in most developing countries which inhibit or even prohibit this devolution. I do not share the author's confidence that 'localism' is the key to the development of the rural poor. In the majority of the poor nations, the greatest development took place concurrently with the maximum centralism. I would suggest that the key to the development of the rural poor is rather the convincing of the urban affluent that it is in their own interests to bring about this development. Localism may in the event be one of the tools capable of bringing about that development.

These two comments do not undermine the critical importance of decentralisation if the poor are to be intelligently served. But they do emphasise timing and some discrimination between subjects and programmes. The Government of India deliberately retained initial financial (and some administrative) control of the special agencies, partly for speed of execution, but also precisely to avoid local capture of benefits at State or District level, whether by politicians or Panchayats. In doing so, they hoped to take a step which would increase the self-confidence and security

of the poor. Even so, they did not wholly succeed, and quite a lot of benefits reached unintended hands. Such precautionary action may well be needed elsewhere. As to discrimination, there are indeed some large projects (particularly some forms of infrastructure) in which village-level participation may not be helpful in early stages. But in the end, services have to reach the ground in the village; and at that point local views and knowledge always matter.

This leads us to a gloomy comment by *A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan*.[1] It starts by quoting a UNDP statement:

> The experience of both MFAL[2] and SFDA shows that it is not enough to set up an organisation catering to a target group without first undertaking thorough changes in the social and political environment. As long as the village remains stratified and dominated by the rich groups, it is difficult to implement measures which solely cater for the under-privileged.

And he comments:

> The target group approach is in fact a modified form of centralised State paternalism which, through a dedicated bureaucracy, hopes to circumvent the rural power-structure and to channel programmes and benefits directly to the poor - an example of the triumph of hope over experience.

One might comment that it is in the triumph of hope over experience, if the hope is aware of the dangers, that human progress makes its way.

It is here that an extremely vigorous contention must be given a place. It comes from *Janice Jiggins* and

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1 A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, 'Rural Development in South Asia', *Asian Affairs*, Vol 3, No 2, June 1981, quoting UNDP Evaluation Paper No 2.

2 The Marginal Farmers and Landless Labour Agency.

Niels Röling,[1] with some support in its emphasis on strengthening local organisations, from *Goran Hyden*: it doubtless would have much support from many radical organisations. It is the concept of 'countervailing power' - that is, basically political and administrative punch developed within the so-called 'target groups' of the poor (and here they assume that someone, at least, perhaps the central government, does regard the poor as a target, and that someone (an outsider?) helps the poor to organise). The comment demands neither a simple top-down nor a simple bottom-up approach, but action from both ends - a vigorous and efficient government matched by vigorous and effective counter thrust from organised and confident local pressure. Perhaps a brief extract from *Robert Chambers'* comment should be added:

> Effective demand from below requires deliberate fostering. Collective awareness and organisation, and action and negotiation by the poor is one course. Democratic political processes can help: the ballot box is a powerful weapon at some times and in some places and should certainly not be underestimated in India. But in countries with a reasonably independent legal system, the courageous and dogged use of the law may be the most powerful weapon. In India, for example, the land reform legislation, which diligently implemented could transform the life of many, perhaps most, of the rural poor, is already on the statute books. What is needed is a prolonged, brave and detailed campaign to secure enforcement.

Precise and limited objectives, such as the law, are always welcome, and admit of immediate local action. The wider sweep of a new balance of power in the *Jiggins/Röling* vision requires that most of the changes discussed in this Occasional Paper must be achieved - sooner or later.

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1 From correspondence and a draft paper by Janice Jiggins, Niels Röling and Arnoud Budelman, not quotable verbatim.

TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH, PROGRAMMING

We move now from discussion of institutions for contact and protection of small farmers to the content and technology of programmes more deliberately designed to meet their physical, social and economic needs and to encourage their active participation in the choice and execution of such programmes.

The idea that local programmes should emerge from consultations with very local groups is not a new one. It is as old as community development (whether in Asia or Africa), where the ascertainment of 'felt needs' featured largely in the prospectus. This idea fell somewhat out of fashion from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. It was overshadowed by the Green Revolution and by concentration on major projects, for *all* farmers, in theory, but benefitting the larger ones in practice, in which the technology and programme content was decided at central level. It has, however, recently gained new life from the technical side - from the realisation of great local variations in what can, technically, be done in particular villages or village clusters. It has been accentuated by the movement to push local planning or programming further down - at first to District, then to sub-District, and (increasingly) to village or village clusters; it has been exemplified in the Daudzai Project[1] (Academy for Rural Development,

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1 For description see *Agricultural Administration*, Vol 3, No 6, 1976, and Address to the 2nd International Seminar on Change in Agriculture by Shoaid Sultan Khan, published in *Policy and Practice in Rural Development*, Croom Helm/ODI, London, 1976.

Peshawar, Pakistan), where new programmes for villages were worked out by consultation, village by village, by a three-man team of officials with local farmers, followed by execution by the farmers and continuous 'training' and technical support from the sub-District level. It is exemplified by a new proposal in Bangladesh, in which the detailed soil survey of small areas will be used, as well as other local factors, in discussion between farmers and a technical (official) team to settle local programmes, fertiliser requirements, etc. It is exemplified increasingly in India where Block Level Planning and detailed discussion of local needs and potential is spreading very widely. It has been used very successfully in Botswana.

This type of approach[1] concerns the formal process of agricultural programming and planning, and, as such, could become a regular methodology of government action. There is also a comparable process in the actual execution of a particular function. It is worth mentioning a remarkable case of detailed consultation with farmer-beneficiaries in a Philippine irrigation programme.[2] In this project consultation was continuous, from the moment when farmers walked the fields with engineers to settle the most appropriate alignment of distributaries and field channels, to final and joint approval of the whole project layout. There is an important point here - that 'participation' is not only to be achieved by creating special agencies or representative bodies or

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1 I have described this more fully in terms of 'diagnosis' and 'prescription' in earlier ODI publications (eg *Agricultural Development and the Rural Poor*) and elsewhere.

2 See B. Bagadion and F. Korten with D. Korten, 'Promoting participatory management on small irrigation schemes' Irrigation Management Network Paper 2/80/2, ODI, 1980.

associations but can and should be treated *as a management method* for use in a wide variety of technical and environmental decisions and execution.

The movement towards far more local consultation, technical assessment and programming has been slow but steady over the last ten years. It was, in the early days, considerably more academic. First, rather theoretical work on District planning; next, a phase when detailed local resource surveys were carried out, often by academic institutions (universities, management institutes, project designers).[1] At that stage it was still some way from operational and technical implementation. It is significant and valuable that this approach, in which farmers are closely involved with local field staff in working out programmes in which both will be actively engaged, is now gaining ground at the operational level and as a management method. If government staffs are to work directly with small farmers and the rural poor, it is probable that schemes of this nature will be the best tool. The work on 'rapid rural appraisal', notably sponsored by the Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex)[2] has helped this approach by suggesting methods by which the time, cost, and expertise needed for local technical and economic diagnosis can be reduced and brought within the duties of local staff. It is by this diagnosis that the assumption that new production by the poor will be suited to them, marketable and profitable, can be safeguarded.

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1 For example, the university surveys used for the Special Rural Development Programme in Kenya, or the work in India by the Indian Institute of Management, the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the National Institute of Rural Development, or the Agricultural University of Coimbatore.

2 See *IDS Bulletin* Vol 12, No 4, 1981 and also *Agricultural Administration*, University of Reading, Special Issue, November 1981.

It is worth noting that these developments represent a happy convergence and also strengthening of three approaches to rural development which were previously separated and thereby less effective. First, the community development approach, strong on consultation but weak on technical expertise; second, micro-economic and technical appraisal, strong in its disciplines but costly in time and usually *ex post*; and third, planning, strong at central level but over-generalised for local application. The convergence represents full consultation but supported by economic and technical appraisal; appraisal simplified and *ex ante*; and much more local programming, moving up to sub-District level and towards planning at District and central levels.

On the side of technical research, the work of ICRISAT on very small-scale assessment, consultation, and choice of detailed technology is worth a short illustration. *James G. Ryan* writes (about such action at village level):

> We have again started by discussions at the whole-village level, with the officers of the Department of Agriculture playing a prominent role. Visits to ICRISAT Centre were arranged to inform villagers of the technology and to train them in the use of the improved implements and techniques. Then the 15.4 ha watershed and its occupants were identified and more detailed group discussion ensued. This proved extremely time-intensive but productive. Indeed I feel as coordinator of this project that the investment of this time was essential to ensure that we adequately recognised the constraints facing farmers, such as bullock power (especially small farmers) to drive the wheeled tool-carrier. This exercise was also important for the Department of Agriculture officers who were made aware that we had a range of technology options for consideration by the watershed farmers and not a single 'package of practices'. Hence on-the-job training of these extension officers was and remains an integral component of our approach.

He adds later:

> A team approach by extension staff would enhance the consultative approach with farmers even more. Having the soil-conservation officer and the agronomist jointly responsible for the watershed program at all stages increases the need for consultation with farmers at all stages.

By insisting on consultation and on local diagnosis and prescription, we have added some extra detail to the list of requirements concerned with the capacity of service organisations to reach the poor. If, here and there, a strong expert team carried out a long and thorough local diagnosis and prescribes accordingly, not much benefit or guidance to national development tactics will result - for senior expert personnel are not available for every cluster of villages. Such work can only be done on a large scale if it is mainly within the competence and training of local staffs (from the field assistants up to sub-District) with visits from more specialised staff from the District level or from a research station. There are certainly some implications as to recurrent costs, and above all training costs, if these operational cadres are to be strengthened to a level of competence equal to the task of diagnosis (which does not recur often) and support (which must be continuous).

Adaptation of research and technology

If the process of local consultation with farmers, diagnosis and joint identification of possible programmes, and small-scale organisation, is to be followed by technical action, the range of alternatives available to the field staff, ultimately from research, will have to be wider. The objective of small farmers in particular is likely to be intensification of production in their very small area, with a clear hope of worthwhile increase in income.

This may well point to crop diversification, in ways which might not be worthwhile to larger farmers with paid labour, and not necessarily on pure stands of cereal crops. It will also be constrained by a need to keep purchased inputs to a very moderate level, to reduce financial risk. Not only economic (farm management) research but also the availability of suitable crop varieties and small-scale technology (eg the IHP pump or bamboo-tubewell) will be needed; an example for a single situation evolved by ICRISAT has already been mentioned.

Economy in cash inputs, sharing of facilities, hardy varieties, perhaps able to resist water-stress, intercropping or relay cropping, minor investment on levelling, draining, fencing, etc may all be needed to fit the small farmer's situation. The dominance of a policy of high inputs for high yields, the emphasis on staple food production, well suited to larger farms, may not in many cases be the right answer where only two acres or even less is available. Subsidiary activities to raise income (eg small animals, vegetable production, etc) may all add significantly to very low cash incomes. Most of these possible remedies are well known; but the modifications of research effort needed to put them to widespread use have been very slow to materialise. Even adaptive research stations too often have been limited to fairly mechanical crop-trials to do the donkey-work of research testing of local soil responses, initiated by the major research institutions, without much adaptation to farmer needs.

SUPPLY TO SMALL FARMERS

Only a brief mention of systems of supply of credit, physical inputs, and certain urgent services (such as pest-control or veterinary services) is needed in the special context of small farmers; and that is to underline its extreme importance. Better-off farmers can exert considerable pressure on officials, bank managers or supply organisations to get their fair share (or more) of supplies; small farmers cannot. Yet timely credit and inputs are desperately needed by them; indeed, there is field evidence to show that they value this even more than technical advice. If they can get the money and fertiliser many feel that they could do their farming job as well as, or better than, a junior Extension Officer can suggest. If they fail to get it in time, the whole previous effort of contact, organisation and programming is largely wasted and discredited, and the morale of field staff sinks.

The principal reasons why fertiliser, seed and credit so often arrive late or in inadequate quantity lie, firstly, in the general weakness of physical infra-structure in poor countries - railway locomotives, trucks, roads, storate depots - ie the inadequate investment in a key function. This can only slowly be remedied. The second reason lies in the weakness of the final retail distribution network. Demand for small quantities of varied materials from villages outside the network of feeder roads is not attractive to private enterprise; and while a parastatal should have no difficulty in bulk purchase and wholesale

distribution, the necessary fine network of retail distribution is often lacking or very inefficient. Even co-operatives often find it commercially unprofitable to maintain stocks within reasonably easy access of farmers. In the end, small farmers are often driven to rely both for credit and inputs on small-traders and moneylenders, who may combine both functions. This is a problem which affects the whole agricultural economy and on which renewed management effort and some additional investment is needed. Failure has persisted over so many years that governments appear to have become fatalistically resigned to it.[1]

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1 Some of this argument on supply is derived from the draft of a (forthcoming) FAO paper on 'Delivery Systems'.

PART III: ADMINISTRATION

REQUIRED CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT OR ELECTED COUNCIL SERVICES

Up to this point we have mentioned or implied a number of changes in government policy and management.

a) A considerable change in the training and management of field services to take into account a new constituency with special needs.

b) A revaluation of institutional choices, to protect the flow of benefits towards small and marginal farmers.

c) A modification of research and technological effort.

d) Some restructuring of planning and programming systems to make more room for locale-specificity and local consultative choices.

e) A strengthening of the delivery system, with special emphasis on final retail distribution and on logistical infrastructure.

By no means all of these changes involve heavy new expenditure: a) requires some extra personnel and e) some extra expenditure on transport, communications, and storage - physical investment. But the remainder concern modifications of existing structures, changes in the content of the work of existing personnel and in their training, and a certain, difficult, change in attitude.

The nature of governmental effort - bureaucratic style

There has always been grave doubt whether bureaucratic action by itself could hope to achieve genuine rural development. The only possible hope has been that it could

help to generate and support, perhaps with the aid of democratic local institutions, a more dynamic, participatory effort by the people themselves. But perhaps the very style of bureaucratic action and attitudes stands in the way. The 'top-down' syndrome runs right through the services to the most junior member. It is not only that the junior staff are tied down to preconceived programmes in which they have had little or no say; it is not only that their immediate superiors look for obedience from them rather than initiative either from them or from the farmers; they themselves tend to feel in a superior position to the small and poor farmers whom they should serve. Combined with the normal suspicion which villagers feel towards any government official (though they may hope to exploit them if possible), the attitudes on both sides are not conducive to participation, let alone self-management by farmers in their own programmes.

Speaking from East Africa, *Goran Hyden* has some hard things to say on this issue:

> The local nature of farming systems, however, raises both the need for more research along the lines of how they can be developed and the question of how central governments can deal with these situations. Maybe they aren't suited for the extension task at all. The task could in some cases perhaps be better handled by other organizations which have adopted a specific mandate to deal with the poor. It is my view as expressed in the book *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania* (Heinemann 1980) that in a predominantly small-holder system of agricultural production, as found in Africa, which depends on a very simple technology, the opportunities for state interventions are almost nil, as these systems of production aren't really dependent on outside support for their own reproduction. Any development of these small production units has to come from efforts that are more closely associated with the day-to-day existence within these units than a government bureaucrat is.

Hyden adds later:

> There is plenty of room for manoeuvre here provided government leaders realize and accept that much of what governments now do in a terribly unreliable and inefficient manner can be carried out much better by NGOs and voluntary community efforts (of education, health, marketing, etc). I believe an increasing number of people in prominent positions around Africa are beginning to accept this point which isn't revolutionary, yet fundamental for the future of development on the continent.

The 'inefficient and unreliable manner' (with its effects on cost-efficiency) is by no means only due to the attitudes or performance of Extension staff, but also in large measure to failures in the supply system, and to unsuitable programmes; but the failure to consult farmers is due to Extension training, or, where there is some consultation, inability to modify official instructions. Voluntary organisations do indeed have many virtues at the contact level. But, at least at present, they are too small and too few to undertake the national task. At present there is no realistic alternative to the use of government services, retrained as far as possible to a more consultative style, using voluntary agencies where they can, and indeed seeking to get nearer to the example of the best of these agencies.

Without contradicting, and indeed sharing Hyden's wish that voluntary agencies of various kinds, could increase their range, their liaison with, and support from the government,[1] it would seem that in practice a steady effort to alter the style and training of governmental service might bring the most widespread results. In this connection,

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1 *Robert Chambers* mentions a possible initiative by the Indian Government to develop a joint scheme with voluntary organisations over a considerable area, and there are a number of other schemes (eg in the 'Peer Group' programme associated with the Agricultural University of Udaipar or the Bangladesh schemes involving joint initiatives of the Bangladesh Bank and the government services.)

the work of *David C. Korten* from the Asian Institute of Management, and of the Rural Development Committee, Cornell University,[1] under the leadership of *Norman Uphoff*, need special mention.

These two authors (both of whom commented most helpfully by letters and drafts) have published numerous papers on the subject,[2] and in terms of practical action, *Korten* has worked with the National Irrigation Authority in the Philippines on practical training of irrigation staff for a new style of approach, and has hopes of similar work on forestry. In terms of action research, *Uphoff* has produced an extremely interesting report[3] recording the success and some precise field problems of the Institutional Organiser approach in the joint Agricultural Research and Training Institute/Cornell University water development project in Gala Oyo, Sri Lanka.

All this work (carried out in the three years 1980 to 1982) which is beginning to show results of field trials of participation-theory not merely as a critique of existing bureaucratic style but as assessment of their trials of new methods, when it is added to the large documentation of voluntary organisational work in a large number of countries, together make a strong case for further experiment on a larger scale, entailing a policy decision; *Robert Chambers* has mentioned the possibility of such a programme in India.

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1 The Rural Development Committee, Cornell University also publish the quarterly *Rural Development Participation Review*.

2 See, for example, D.C. Korten and N.T. Uphoff, 'Bureaucratic reorientation for rural development'; D.C. Korten and F.B. Alfonso (eds), *Bureaucracy and the Poor*, McGraw-Hill International, Singapore, 1981; also their papers on 'Community organisation and rural development', *Public Administration Review*, September/October 1980; and their 'Agricultural planning and management for rural development', Asian Institute of Management, February 1982.

3 Published by the Agricultural Research and Training Institute, Colombo, 26 March 1982.

Modification of the bureaucratic approach is not only a matter of training; there are structural, institutional and management realignments involved, which are considered later.

Elected councils

While these systems of direct contact between officials and small farmers do need to rely on the formation of some grouping of the farmers concerned, they do not depend upon formally elected councils; they are more likely to use a purely functional group or possibly a 'pre-co-operative' or more formal primary co-operative, usually formed for a single purpose. But this solution is not satisfactory to many governments, who believe strongly that local democratic institutions are absolutely essential to guide and check officials and to mobilise popular energies. Democratic, elected councils, possibly at several levels, are therefore given development responsibilities usually both for agriculture and for social services of many kinds. Such councils may be primarily used to needle and humanise the bureaucracy in their area, or to use their political influence to assist governmental schemes. They may be given some sources of revenue, with corresponding powers to execute small schemes, either with their own or with governmental seconded staff. But there may be councils at a higher level to whom major powers and taxing authority have been devolved by statute.

It is not easy to quote any system of this kind which has proved to be fully satisfactory, particularly as far as full representation of the poor is concerned. It is indeed possible, and often said, that they have never been given a proper chance to succeed - good staffing and adequate finance under their own control - because the central

government and nervous civil servants (especially in the Treasury!) have kept their wings clipped.[1] Even if there is truth in this, such councils do seem to suffer two weaknesses in particular. First, they are apt to belabour government for greatly increased spending on social services (schools, clinics, subsidies of many kinds) while largely shirking the difficult problems of increasing production from local resources, let alone the problems of production disciplines (water dues, credit recovery, disease control, soil conservation).[2] Secondly, the larger councils (sub-District, District) offer ready-made opportunities of political influence, patronage and economic advantages to the leadership. This is unavoidable; but it is worth remembering that, in the administration of social services in rural areas, the leadership is not usually in such direct competition with the weaker sections as they are in credit-allocation, irrigation distribution, investment subsidies, access to services.

Small, face-to-face 'councils' at village level can be the most genuinely democratic, and indeed most villages have had various ways in which village affairs were managed (systems for conflict-resolution, use of wells, sanitation, clearing paths, etc). Attempts to graft agricultural development onto these functions have been tried in many countries. In Bangladesh, the 'Gram Sarkar' (village government) appears to envisage a cluster of special associations (youth groups, women's groups, farmer groups, etc), each of which is represented in the Sarkar. It seems to be difficult to graft on activities accompanied by monetary benefits, subsidies, etc, which are non-traditional and a cause of jealousies and power conflicts; and it may be that a number of small functional groups, which may later grow to larger and more formal co-operatives at a

1 Local government in Kenya was at one time starved in this way, and later, because of resulting failures, it was robbed of many of its functions on grounds of 'inefficiency

2 For example, in the Dandzai project (Pakistan) the first response from villages consulted was for services. This demand was gently deflected into willing co-operation in land, irrigation and road improvements in aid of agricultu

higher level, is a possible alternative to the all-embracing village council. Further, development of more genuinely democratic leadership and self-confidence within the village may be a necessary preliminary to the establishment of larger councils in which the interests of poorer sections will be more vigorously represented.

Tendler has two comments on the foregoing paragraph. First, it may well be that schools and clinics are what the people want and demand, and that councils are right to press for them - evidence from Nigeria is quoted, and it could be found in many countries. It may well be that villagers know that a social service surely can be provided, whereas production improvements are far more difficult and risky. The second comment is to agree that competition with the poor is less strong and direct in the case of social services than in production facilities (subsidies, credit, access to scarce inputs). The conclusion from both these comments would seem to suggest that to allocate some social functions to councils may well be desirable, on several grounds.

It can be said that, at least in India, a strong belief persists that whole-village councils, and indeed councils at higher levels, with wide development responsibilities, are a democratic necessity, particularly in the longer term. *S.K. Rau* and *N.K. Jaiswal* write:

> The local institutions like Cooperatives and Panchayats have by no means withered away nor become pernicious. It would be forsaking all the present to postulate that direct contact with the rural poor by way of consultation, stimulation and continued support could be achieved only by some agency not involved in the hierarchical structure and relationship of local society. Any attempt to create organisations parallel to local Panchayat or which bypass or ignore it, cannot be successful in the long run for a country which has chosen a particular path

> of democratic process for the whole country. Though due to some forces which always work as a churning process it could be that such organisations show results in some aspects only . . . there is also the need for organising special purpose cooperatives and functional groups for artisans, weavers, irrigation groups, etc, for taking care of the special interests of the weaker sections. But such institutions must have the patronage of local Panchayats.

This point of view is strongly supported by the present Secretary to the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction in Delhi:[1]

> One of the points of criticism against the Panchayati Raj institutions has been their domination by socio-economically stronger groups. This, however, is an intermediate phase. The political logic of articulation and intermediate aggregation has wider ramifications and improves the sense of solidarity among the weaker sections. It is aided by dynamic elements of competitive politics and leads to periodic shifting of elites and changes in the traditional power structure better aligned with growing strengths of the poverty groups. Thus in *the long run* {my italics} the development of these institutions is bound to accelerate the processes of politicalisation, democratisation and conscientisation of the rural poor.

Despite this long-run political vision, there is a good deal of anxiety about the *short-run* performance over the last ten years; and these doubts are also felt even in India. *H.M. Mathur*[2] writes:

> The community development programme of 1950s was based on the premise that the village communities were closely knit, harmonious entities and that in response to exhortations of the Community Development officials all people from the villages would come out to build roads, schools, wells, tanks and other community assets. It was believed that people would work together and equitably share in the benefits of development. Planners visualised a 'Panchayati Raj' and under the scheme of democratic

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1 S.C. Varma, *India's Attack on Rural Poverty*, New Delhi, 1981. This is a very valuable overview.

2 H.M. Mathur, 'Rural development in traditional societies: an anthropological approach'. Paper for the Symposium on Rural Development in S. Asia Intercongress IAUES, Amsterdam, April 1981.

> decentralization they devolved responsibility for local development to the village leaders. What happened to the Panchayati Raj which was introduced with a great fanfare to bring development and people closer together was described some time ago in the following terms: 'When Panchayati Raj came great hopes were aroused and it was expected that Panchayats would be in a position to involve all the people in local efforts to build the village community on a pattern in which disparities would quickly vanish. But the people who were elected later arranged themselves into strong warring factions, usually along the caste lines. Soon they became so busy in fighting among themselves - not always on issues relating to improvement of the village life - that the task of development simply got relegated into the background. In fact this situation did not allow much development to occur, and where development did occur it only benefited the powerful and influential members of the Panchayat or their relatives and friends. The benefits did not trickle down to the lowliest in the village.'

The fact is that performance has been very uneven - for some councils have succeeded to quite a high degree. The reason may well be that the growth of 'politicalisation, democratisation and conscientisation' (as *S.C. Varma* puts it) is necessarily slow, and, it may be added, not helped by failure in many States to hold the regular elections to Panchayats and thus give a chance for new leadership to emerge.

One-party organisations, represented at all levels from village to State, have also appealed to many governments. They not only give continuous grassroots support to the central government or head of state, but also supply an element of initiative at field level and an opportunity to needle the bureaucracy. The dangers of such organisations are obvious. They are easily led into technical mistakes, as party policy rigidifies, regardless of local circumstances; and they have little patience with opposition, with a tendency to become a powerful local elite. Not all governments have made the effort, noticeable in Tanzania, to retain a democratic element in the party by periodic re-election of local and even national

leaders. One-party systems, typical of the immediately post-colonial period when new governments are establishing themselves, are in a critical sense anti-democratic, because of their exclusion of opposition. A further reference to this topic will be made in the conclusions.

Apart from general political philosophy, the creation of a special agency (or agencies) giving almost the same type of assistance to small farmers which the existing agencies are supposed to give to *all* farmers has obvious administrative hazards, in terms of overlaps and ill-will between the special and the general service: it also can cause a considerable waste of personnel. Similarly, if elected councils are given responsibility (eg for co-ordinating development efforts in their area), these are also the responsibility of any effective co-ordination by officials of their own junior staffs - even if these are nominally seconded to the local council. The stress between the Block Development Officer in India who is the executive officer of the Block Panchayat, seconded from the government service, and the officers of the regular (government) services or of the special IRD agency is a case in point. It is possible that, in an experimental stage, governments have not been willing to commit themselves to hard-and-fast definitions of who does what - but this ambiguity will have to be resolved.

Special agencies for small farmers and the poor

There are distinct advantages in the special agency, recruited mainly from existing Ministry of Agriculture Extension staff. Such an agency is the Small Farmers Development Agency in India. It directs the attention of staff directly to the small and even marginal farmers, who are their sole concern; it directs technical and research attention to what may be their peculiar constraints and needs; and it can carry subsidies particularly directed to this section of the farming community.[1] Its work is concerned with agricultural services. Later, different special programmes (Integrated Rural Development and Drought-Prone Area programmes) were created, particularly concerned, at the level of individual village families, with raising incomes by various means, including schemes for artisanal employment, cottage production, utilisation of house-plots, etc. At the present time the services are gradually being unified under District Development Societies.[2] In some countries a whole special department is set up for 'Integrated Rural Development', thereby adding considerable confusion with the field staff of the main line departments.

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1 Subsidies are apt to encourage some cheating by larger farmers, who may declare fragments of their holding under different names.

2 These are legally established as registered Societies to which central government can direct support.

There is only limited comment on the value of special agencies designed to help the poor. *Judith Tendler* writes:

> I have some thoughts, first, on your question about separate ministries, and your concern that they create confusion and rivalry. This has been a subject that has interested me for some time, and I still feel I have no answer because of the following perpetual dilemma: a separate ministry or department for projects 'targeted' on the poor is desirable because you don't internalize the class conflict in the society at large within the agency itself; extension agents,[1] for example, don't have to turn their backs on a previously existing large-farmer clientele in order to serve a poorer, less politically powerful, and less physically comfortable small-farmer clientele. I feel the strongest argument against it, which creates the dilemma, is that an agency which deals only with poor people is likely to be politically weak. I suggest some ways out of the dilemma in the World Bank paper.[2]

Alec McCallum comments with a limited approval of the special agency, but with a *caveat* that it must not lose touch with agricultural research (which has its normal liaison with the Ministry of Agriculture). In fact in India the special agencies (under the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction) are increasingly to be linked with the agriculture staffs at field levels. But in some other countries the separation of staff does cause a problem of rivalry and confusion, both among the staff and among the farmers.

The special agency, as it has operated in India, has certainly achieved one major step forward, simply by *identifying* the poor in the villages. There is plenty of evidence that before the agency existed,

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1 The agents of the separate agency, not of the Ministry of Agriculture.

2 Forthcoming, but still confidential.

Extension staffs in India and in many countries no doubt knew of their existence in theory but had not identified them by name and place in their area. However, there remains some doubt how far, after identification, any major proportion of the poor have in fact been actively helped. At the present moment this doubt hangs over the performance of many countries which have proclaimed anti-poverty programmes and established new agencies or ministries to implement them.

The multiplicity of agencies and co-ordination

In fact, the new and growing emphasis on: 1) more benefits to the poor; 2) integrated rural development, to include both social services and the non-agricultural members of the rural communities; and 3) participatory development, recapitulate the earlier tensions between agricultural and community development bureaucracies, with an added element. This is a recognition that both the farming community and the total community in a village are not single targets but each divided, between large farmers and small/marginal farmers, and between the rich and influential and the poor and powerless, respectively. To involve small/marginal farmers in new agricultural activities, or to involve other poor members of the community in new health or handicraft activities, implies that the job of the agricultural officer as well as the social service job is not merely technical but also consultative, catalytic and organisational.

It now seems clear that, to prevent confusion about who organises what at village level, some far clearer definition of functions between the Ministry of Agriculture and other (old or new) ministries is urgently needed; and that 'Integrated Rural Development', valid as a statement of intent, has been, and still is, a

grave source of confusion as a *definition of administrative responsibility*. It may be that the principal distinction should be between agricultural services (for farmers large and small) and social services (including employment). Such a division should be administratively feasible. On the agricultural side, it would imply that field staff should involve themselves in helping small farmers and in consulting with them to launch participatory programmes. On the social side, a distinction of this type might, if government so wished, facilitate the allocation of at least some social services to an elected council, without confusing the agricultural services structure.

The confusion and cries for 'better co-ordination' arise not only from two closely parallel ministries of agriculture and of social development, but from a much wider multiplicity of departments, parastatal boards and authorities, 'special schemes' and the organisational demands of large donors. As regards the broad division between agriculture and social services, *McCallum*, *Johnston* and *Clark*, and *N.V. Ratnam* all agree in general terms. *Tendler*, on the other hand, puts in a word of caution, pointing out that the Ministry of Agriculture is usually a more powerful agency than the social services department or ministries, and that in consequence, there is a danger that the poor, already neglected, will have a less powerful advocate on the social side.

As regards the wider multiplicity of agencies, which arises from the tendency to add a new organisation for every new problem, *J.M. Leach* speaks forcibly:

> I agree with the general proposition that Ministries of Agriculture should be primarily responsible for agricultural production, including the human and social aspects of such matters. But I do not believe that it

> is possible or desirable to be tidy in such matters . . . Boundaries and definitions are hazy and difficult to draw when it comes to such matters as co-operatives, social services, local government, land, employment, the poor, women, community development . . . I suggest it is more profitable to concentrate attention on linkages, information flows and communications. The difficulty is not so much that all these agencies exist as that they do not talk to one another. Too often the magic word 'co-ordination' is intoned, co-ordinating committees are appointed, and then the magic somehow does not work.
>
> In my view the causes of such disappointments are seldom correctly diagnosed and are often very simple, straight-forward administrative or management incompetence. No-one has taken the trouble to establish an effective secretariat, the nuts and bolts of organising official committee work have been overlooked, adequate staffing has been neglected. It would be helpful if the mystique and mumbo-jumbo of 'co-ordination', 'integrated rural development' and 'decentralisation' could be swept away and replaced by simple network systems, working through existing structures and sustained by small, hard-working and efficient secretariats.

On this formidable problem of co-ordination *Judith Tendler* raises a more controversial point:

> I am not worried about the confusion and rivalry that separate agencies cause. There is a considerable literature in organisational theory that suggests that organisational redundancy and competition is wholesome and healthy. I have seen cases where more conservative, established and powerful agencies have eventually copied the programs of newer, poor-oriented agencies when they saw that the latter were being successful . . .

Tendler continues by re-emphasising the importance of having a powerful agency which may enter fields for which it is not specially designed with more success than a weak, though specialised, agency.

As to this comment, there are indeed governments presently at the stage of having a plethora of often

competing agencies - the Philippines and Sri Lanka are good examples. It could be argued that, with the passage of time, the most successful will come out on top and the less successful be absorbed (the latter a painful process, usually stoutly resisted). There may be also a case for some competition between, for example, bureaucratic services and private enterprise (eg in credit provision or between traders and a marketing board, eg in West Africa). But competition between government departments themselves seems to have little to recommend it and implies a weakness in central direction of the administration. There may be much to be said for: 1) at least two clear groupings at the centre (agricultural-social service) each with a secretariat (*Leach*), and 2) much stronger 'systems management' of the same groupings at the operational level ('District'). *Rau* and *Jaiswal* lean towards a system of: 1) a single team to assess local (village level) needs and potential, and 2) resulting action to meet these needs by appropriate departments (agriculture, health, education, employment, industry, etc) backed by appropriate entrepreneurial research and management services (eg for cottage industries). A consultative and participatory style, at the lowest level of assessment, is equally applicable to social as it is to agricultural assessment and programmes.

This may seem to be a tiresome concern with the formalities of government structure and the nomenclature of ministries. But in fact, as the development effort spreads out more widely to cover the multiple needs of the poor in rural communities, it is vital (particularly with official staffs) that responsibilities should be clarified. There will be multiple points of contact and ways of organising groups, for farming, for irrigation management, for health, nutrition, family planning, for developing artisanal or home-production

skills, most of which will involve some form of official support or guidance. It is important the channels for support should be clear.

The complexity of organisation cannot be wished away. Certainly, a small reduction in the number of agencies might be achieved if old agencies were reformed instead of adding new ones; but that is not enough. Taking into account the foregoing comments, it may be that a major improvement could be achieved 1) at the centre, forming distinct clusters of ministries, each served by a secretariat. These clusters might be a) agriculture, b) social services, c) employment services. They would be concerned with policy. 2) The same clusters at the (District) operational level, under a single management with clear authority to co-ordinate all operational decisions; and similar clusters at sub-District level, with considerable financial flexibility. 3) At the field level, a small team for consultation or 'diagnosis' and preliminary programming for helping to organise small functional groups, and for calling down expert help from the wide variety of expertise and services above them.

Policy control and operational control: delegation and co-ordination

This is inevitably a confused scene, with many variations in ministries and other agencies between different governments. But it is possible to isolate a few main issues which are common to at least the majority of governments which are seriously interested in reaching small farmers and, in some cases, a wider range of the rural poor.

First, there must be concern for coherent *policy making*; and it is suggested (above) that this would be

helped by some grouping of departments concerned with agricultural development, of other departments concerned with social services, and possibly a third group concerned with rural industries, artisans, employment policy; each group to be served by an adequate secretariat.

Second, there must be concern with flexibility in *operations*, if the needs and wishes of farmers in very varied local circumstances are to be taken into account. Thus flexibility has to come from an operational command much lower down the hierarchy, a point which may be arbitrarily called 'the District'. Whatever it is called, it must be a point where there is a level of staffing, both administrative and technical, adequate to manage and co-ordinate programmes running in the District which involve many departments and agencies. This must involve considerable delegation of finance and authority from the policy-making centre, with certain nationally decided limits. This will only be achieved if a strict distinction is made between policy-making and local operations.

Many governments have, in fact, recognised the need for such a managing and co-ordinating centre at District level; and in many cases a senior administrator (whom we will call a District Commissioner[1] or a District Minister) has been appointed as the leader and co-ordinator of operations. But in fact this officer has almost never been given the authority or the financial resources needed to do the job. This is partly due to the mistrust of Treasury; but it is perhaps even more due to the doctrine of departmental sovereignty, by which each department claims complete control over its

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1 There are, of course, many other titled - Collector, District Magistrate, Government Agent, Chief District Officer, etc.

own staff, right down to their lowest position. The formula that District Departmental Officers are technically responsible to their department, but operationally responsible to the District Commissioner has never worked well, not least because the pay, promotion and prospects of the officer depend upon his department at the centre, not on the District administrator. Thus delegation and co-ordination are inextricably linked; for the District management cannot manage a team in which individuals are getting conflicting instructions from on high. There is a case here, if anywhere, for 'systems management', because multiple agencies are involved. But neither the structure nor the authority has been available. Matters have been made worse by the increasing complexity of development administration, with a constant increase in departments and parastatals, and a consequent gross overloading of the District Commissioner's post and (ironically) in some countries a down-grading of his status, though without a substitute method of co-ordination.

The particular relevance of these general issues to the service of small farmers is most clearly illustrated from the planning and programming function. Obviously, some things must be initially planned at the centre - a large irrigation scheme covering several Districts, or the financial allocations between departments; some rather smaller schemes at the District level. But if any serious attempt to consult farmers or assist them to manage their own schemes is to be made, then the village-level programmes must be planned, after diagnosis, at local level; and presumably these will come up to sub-District for aggregation, and next, to District. The District is then faced with a double task of aggregating and reconciling these up-coming schemes and fitting them into certain major schemes coming down to District from

the centre. The management of this task demands, in the last resort, a recognisable management structure which would probably resemble more closely the top management of a parastatal board (with the necessary functional divisions) than the array of departmental District Officers, each of semi-sovereign authority. It is hard to find any other method which avoids top-down and ill-co-ordinated programmes, largely devised by the central government, being imposed finally at the farmers' and villagers' level. Moreover, even the big projects, rightly planned in outline from the centre, have to be executed at very local levels. It is encouraging that even in a large surface irrigation scheme, which exists solely to bring water to the farmers' fields, water allocation can be managed at field level by small water-users' groups. *David Korten* suggests (by letter) that, instead of a head-on attack on the whole bureaucratic system, retraining and re-organisation might well be tackled function by function (irrigation, forestry, pastoral management, etc), ending in each case with a strong local management contribution.

Whatever the detailed application, there will always be the need, outlined above, for a strong District management unit. In countries which are committed strongly to local democratic councils, these can still be fitted into the operational system (as, for example, in Maharashtra, where the elected District Council - (Zila Parishad) virtually manages agricultural development through its own committees and its own senior executive and staff).

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Few, if any, governments of developing countries would deny that it is socially desirable to include a major larger section of their rural population - the poorer section - in development output and benefits. Perhaps rather more would plead that their resources are inadequate at present to take on extra expenditure in such an effort, even if in the medium-term at least both economic and socio-political gains would result; and in some, the suspicion that more investment in the poor would mean less gain to the rich may result in political opposition. This Occasional Paper has endeavoured to set out in some detail just what changes in direction and administration would be necessary for any government which, despite these hesitations, is nevertheless determined to attempt a programme much more deliberately directed towards small and marginal farmers and farm labourers.

Its major conclusion is that such an attempt cannot be confined to some single special agency, or indeed to any one part of the existing agricultural development administration. It is not a question *only* of retraining the agricultural field services; or of altering the content of research and of technological programmes; or of more investment in the systems of delivering inputs; or of tenancy reform. Each of these is important in itself. The argument here is that agricultural development is a system in which all these factors are facets, and that to adapt it to a new constituency with special needs and

constraints involves complementary changes in many parts of the system, including changes in attitudes and style of action as well as structural and functional changes.

Perhaps the allegation that governments lack the political will to make such changes have been over-emphasised; there are many which have demonstrated - often by establishing new departments or institutions - that the will is not lacking. It is suggested here that in many such cases it is not lack of will but four other factors which have hindered success. The first is an incautious choice of institutional methods of implementation, leaving open far too many opportunities for the power structure in the rural areas to capture benefits intended for the poor. The second is a concentration, in aid of quick economic gains, on the areas of highest potential and on the farmers best equipped, in resources and sophistication, to adopt sophisticated (and capital-intensive) programmes. The third, and not the least difficult to overcome, lies in the rigidity and conservatism of the administrative (bureaucratic) system, highly centralised and sharply compartmented in powerful departments. The fourth is quite simply managerial failure to make an admittedly complex system work.

It has been constantly emphasised that small-holding agriculture is highly locale-specific, both technically and socially. It would certainly seem strange to apply to such a system such a highly centralised bureaucratic system. This will explain the emphasis in this Occasional Paper on local assessment of potential; on local, consultative building of programmes; on a single, less compartmented operational management at the 'District' level; on a very careful choice of what institutions to support at local levels, having regard to the power structure; and on

variations in the technology and programme content, backed by research, for those farmers for whom the minimising of both financial and technical work is of overriding importance.

In terms of administration, the inevitable complexity of agencies dealing with so many aspects of agricultural development (contact, supplies, tools, credit, storage, marketing, access, power, irrigation, crops and animals) has been further increased by the loose attachment of 'integrated rural development' programmes concerned with social services to the poor (whether on farms or not) and employment income-raising programmes which may have some agricultural content (eg dairy) or a semi-industrial content (cottage industry, artisans, small processing ventures, etc), making it difficult to keep a clear distinction between agricultural and social service or employment programmes. Co-ordination over such a variety of activities is almost impossible and very time-consuming. The emphasis here has been a rough grouping of types of activity, so that the span of interests is reduced in each of two or more groupings. The agricultural grouping is by far the most in need of constant co-ordination of services because of the rigid time constraints (sowing, fertilising, irrigating) and the variations in weather conditions; social services can afford a more leisurely gait, with less danger of 'capture'.

In terms of planning, the upward movement of programme design from the farm level is obviously of key importance; and this implies a planning contribution from each ascending level - sub-District, District, centre - involving not only plan content, but the corresponding personnel, supply and financial aspects.

There is nothing inherently impossible in these multiple modifications in the systems concerned; nor in the cost of such changes, mainly in retraining and some redistribution of existing staff. But the change in perception of their role, by field and intermediate staff, from concepts of delivering packages of information, advice, down a hierarchy of superiors and inferiors, to a consultative approach concerned with building up the capacity and initiative of farmers, may well prove very difficult. Similarly, at a higher level, any whole-hearted approach to delegation of authority and finance is bound to meet with grave obstacles and reluctance from each layer of the bureaucracy.

The question of what degree of authority and finance should be given to elected councils at District level and below (including village councils) is one which depends on the circumstances and the philosophy of different countries and on the time-scale which may be set for such democratisation. Clearly, in some countries which have only a single generation of independent political experience, or which have strong regional differences, or are desperately short of trained personnel in the rural economy, delegation of power will not come easily. It would certainly seem that democracy is most real at its lowest, face-to-face level of the village or group of villages; and that, at higher levels, administrative and economic issues (and political ambitions) may predominate over direct concern with the village poor. But the speed and methods by which democratic organisation can be nurtured at each level, from village upwards, is a matter which each country will settle differently. It is fairly easy to devolve social and municipal services; but the devolution of agricultural development responsibility, with all its complex, interlocked activities, and with its varied requirements of expertise, is a much more adventurous proposition.

Finally this statement of 'requirements' cannot be a suggestion for early total implementation. It is the signpost for a direction of advance. There are many but very localised signs of technical consultation at very local levels; there are signs of more local planning. Here and there are signs of more truly adaptive and farm management research. Altering the structure and attitudinal change in the bureaucracy and resolving overlaps between Extension (and other offical services) and community development and elected councils will take much longer to grow. In the longer term it is certainly desirable that such bodies should take over much of the work now attempted by a growing number of separate official services at local level. Each change in a single direction will imply and perhaps stimulate complementary changes. Experience (eg with small groups) will give better evidence and, no doubt, amendment to the suggestions outlined here. Perhaps this outline of the range of tasks, so closely interlocked, will be helpful at this stage.

APPENDIX

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