

Monitoring of rural projects through people's participation

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Project interventionists for developing the rural poor often assume that the target group, as understood, defined and located by them will be benefited positively and sufficiently if the internal variables of the project are monitored and the project output is delivered on time, within estimated costs. Internal variables imply those aspects or components of project organization over which the implementing agency has full control. It is often believed that, since the processes of manufacturing or construction are visible and can be monitored, consequently in rural projects also, only whatever is visible and can be determined from the internal project variables needs to be monitored. This introduces a major bias in the methodology of monitoring. Certain basic features of rural projects are ignored and the blind transference of techniques leads to very little improvement in the conditions of rural poor compared to the labor cost, skills and energies involved.

It is believed that project failures are largely caused by slippages during implementation. Thus the problem is defined as that of improving the implementation through stricter control and close monitoring of bureaucratic instruments, so as to ensure "coordination" — the magic world of developmental projects. It is not recognized that effects on the society start accruing right from the stage of project selection to its activation, and so forth. The project no longer belongs to the designers and implementors. The ownership passes on to the local actors, other influences and vested interests (THOMPSON, 1973). These interests permeate the organizational boundaries and various bureaucratic channels and tiers of administration. The challenge before the project planner thus is not only to anticipate the technical dimensions of the projects, but also the social effects which may help achieve or defeat the project objectives. The social effects also influence the performance of future projects. Earlier experiences with similar or dissimilar projects influence the participation of farmers in the new projects.

Thus, the implementation of a project initiates a chain of reactions in society the moment its conception is announced. These changes are triggered by (a) the social stratification, (b) the ecology of the area, (c) the culture and design of the key organizations responsible for im-

plementation, (d) interorganizational communication and congruence of the objective and consensus about meanings or the methods to achieve these objectives. (e) the monitoring of internal project variables vis-a-vis external effects on/or of the earlier listed aspects.

This paper seeks to present a conceptual discussion on social effects monitoring. Part one includes a brief review of the literature. Part two describes the problem and relates it with a rural social system. Part three presents a new paradigm on the MOSED (Monitoring the Social Effects of a Developmental Project) approach and raises some issues regarding relevance of this approach, and in conclusion the lessons of this discussion are synthesized.

Part one

The state-of-art: monitoring: Monitoring implies keeping track of an implementation process that is expected to follow a particular predetermined trajectory. However, when it comes to monitoring the social relevance of development projects, the "unpredictability" of human interactions, the focus shifts from effectivity to efficiency. The former concerns the impact of the project output, while the latter is like increasing the speed, no matter in which direction (HONADLE & INGLE, 1976).

It is being increasingly realized that effect monitoring has been given very little attention in project management (UNDP, 1979). It has been suggested that two questions should be asked when designing and appraising a rural development project: "How can likely negative effects be eliminated or reduced and how can positive effects be introduced or amplified?" It is hoped that by taking into account effects having a bearing on equity, self-reliance, communal participation, employment and attainment of basic needs, percolating down to the people, the work plan can be suitably adjusted (UNDP). However, this approach again assumes that the effects are a consequence of the project implementation, while we will be developing the argument that the effects start accruing from the stage of project design. Who is consulted, who is not, which villages are selected in preference over others, how identification of the target group is contemplated, etc, determine, who will actually participate when the project is implemented and who will not.

Development projects require an enormous effort of organizing the implementation process. Organizational survival is found to be dependent upon sensitivity and manipulative capacity. Sensitivity is defined as access to proximal environment information and manipulative

capacity as control over proximal environment (WAMBLEY & JALD, 1973; MONADLE & INGLE, 1976). The "fit" between the project and its environment is important in determining which forces will engulf it the most and how they will do it (MONADLE & INGLE, 1976). This view, as Van Dooran describes it, interprets society and social forces as "environment." The focus is on organization, the outside world being no more than a field to move in (VAN DOOREN, 1979). The distinction between environment as understood by an organizational theorist and as it relates to the social processes of change is further elaborated by Wood, who argues that the environment is not only something to be adapted to; it includes various types of other organizations, institutions, classes of people, markets, bureaucracies and a whole range of cultural and social values. Thus, the implication that organizations cannot be designed once for all, that is the unintended consequences of change or no change, must be accorded the most significance (WOOD, 1979). This view implies that one will not have to consider the reasons for what Thompson calls the 'mutation process' if the understanding of environment is broadened to include the dynamics of various social and institutional forces operating in an area (THOMPSON, 1973).

Essentially, we are faced with the task of defining the processes through which monitoring can continually create organizational design, which would not be of advantage to the privileged few only, but would help in channelling project benefits to those for whom they were intended. Since organizations are embedded in a large social system and are dependent on that system for resources (PFEFFER & SALANIK, 1977). It is imperative that project planners build an implementing and monitoring system into the project, planning which people are the causes and not the objects of change. We believe that this might be possible through monitoring social effect and development projects (MOSED) as described here.

Part two

The problem and the setting: Records of monies disbursed, fertilizer supplied, milk collected say very little about the consequences of these activities. It is a common mistake to measure the success of a project in terms of such records (COCHRANE, 1979). Before we discuss the basis of monitoring desired and undesired consequences, we must identify what management means by monitoring. Monitoring processes are fairly advanced in construction or manufacturing projects but in rural projects they have still to acquire a meaningful expression.

Two conditions have been generally considered for a monitoring system to be effective:

- The time interval of measurement should be appropriate to the phenomenon being observed (weekly reports of heartbeats will not save the lives of many patients).
- The activity should be directly observed and information should be available to the people able to influence the activity (MONADLE & INGLE, 1976).

Traditional project management techniques like PERT/

CPM offer means for control over the cost, time duration or resources, etc involved in a project. Control may be differentiated from management, Siffin suggested, adding that some "monitoring techniques of control render difficult the true tasks of management." Thus, management information systems can be devised more for information than a priori control" (SIFFIN, 1973). However, it has been recently argued, on the basis of an extensive review of IBRD projects for rural development, that "in the newer projects, success is determined not only by the most logical or efficient arrangement of internal component parts under the control of the implementing agency, but also by (a) skillful handling of entities outside the control of the agency that it must influence (other government agencies, professional groups, input suppliers, etc); and (b) correct appreciation of those entities in the environments that affect organizational performance but are not subject to either the control or influence of the project management (eg political, legal, economic or social institution)." This has been contrasted with an earlier view that the "implementing agency operates as autonomously as possible and attempts to control all necessary resources for project completion..." The author adds that modifications suggested in the "learning process" approach should ensure "that any project selected serves the legitimate purpose of both those affected by the project and those implementing it (SMITH et al, 1980). The entire discussion, however, seems to rest on the premise that the project organization personnel will not only look inwards (as attempted traditionally), but will also look at the uncontrollable but concerned environment. Further, it is hoped that there could be a congruence in the objectives of those affected and those implementing a project even if the affected ones have no control over the implementers who may or may not have participated in its design.

How can we assimilate the deterministic (ie tendency to assume the entire impact can be anticipated) origin of traditional techniques in a multiorganizational rural development perspective? Management, Blankstein argued, must concern itself with the whole rural system into which the project is set and not with the project as an isolated activity. "Management needs to know" a great deal more about the physical, social, economic, political and cultural conditions of the target population, their attitudes and responses and the effect of the project on various individuals, than has been thought necessary in the planning and implementation phase of other types of projects.

The reasons for project failures are not the inefficiency of markets, delivery system, technological inputs, misallocations of credit, massive defaults, etc. To judge the project a success in terms of "changes" in the attitudes of the target population towards development, as defined by the project planner (SMOCK & SMOCK, 1972), may not be a valid index of success: instead, the ability of the participants in the project to influence the project design should be an important parameter for judging the success of the project over time (BLANKSTEIN, 1975). This ability has to be carefully assessed and responded to. Sometimes, certain projects, despite avowed aims of helping the rural poor, are known to help only the better off (eg Gobar gas plant projects (GGP)). The actual

beneficiaries are the "small farmer sons of big farmers" who are able to afford a "luxury" like the GGP. However, the design and implementation system covers this up by choosing monitoring indices that make no mention of it.

The term "luxury" here is no reflection on the validity of energy conservation in rural areas. It merely highlights the state of technology and its distributive aspects. Thus the fuel conservation by GGP owner, who doesn't rely on it totally any way, doesn't necessarily increase the fuel availability to nontargetted people; rather the situation is made worse. The landless people can no longer collect the dung without any major cost as they did before. How to monitor, therefore, the effects of a Gobar gas plant project? What constitutes the success? The increased felling of trees by the laborers whose fuel supply is constrained or an added facility to the well-off farmers, who might not be really conserving much. The availability of gas might generate demands in the family for frequent cooking which on the whole may contribute towards increase in the total energy consumption (as per the law of entropy). Even the agrarian relations may be affected on account of monetarization of certain exchanges which earlier might have involved commodities and services of different types.

The whole design of technology would change if these plants aimed to provide an industry to the landless to collect waste (a task which they traditionally did) and convert it into manure (which also in many villages even today is sold on pit size basis or cart load basis) for income generation. The gas could have been used either as a fuel by them, in lieu of managerial and maintenance costs of these plants or for community lighting providing avenues for adult as well as children's education in the night. The range of alternatives changes tremendously the moment the concept of social effect analysis is brought in. Thus the ability of "beneficiaries" to influence project design should be assessed after discriminating between the intended, desired, actual and potential beneficiaries (GUPTA, 1981).

Sometimes monitoring through only those who should have participated but who did not, provides powerful insights into the implementation process. However, this argument requires faith in the rationality of the individual farmers which collectively may lead to sometimes irrational decisions; for example, in a pasture development project in an arid district, only some farmers were selected as members of a cooperative development project on communal lands. Although the project succeeded in raising grass yields and conserving soil, through officially managed plots for three years, discernible conflicts took place in the concerned village society. Those who could not participate because only limited members were enrolled grumbled that earlier, everybody had grazed their animals on the communal land, regardless that it had very poor grass cover, but now only a few did so, that too with the added advantage of the increased grass cover. In this case, monitoring only through the beneficiaries would generate one type of information and the nonbeneficiaries would generate quite another type.

In rural areas numerous organizations serve various needs of the rural people. The objectives of these organ-

izations are different as well as their methods and instruments to achieve those objectives. The farmers' response to each organization is also different from their response to their collective action. Small enterprise projects (such as those for dairies, sheep etc) aim to help the farmers only in the limited area of their operation. Simultaneously the farmers have to arrange inputs that will enable a profitable use of the added enterprise of the "Project" and also ensure the successful upkeep of their other engagements. Therefore, for any project intervention to succeed, it will have to take the following facts into account:

- The whole rural society, comprising landed and landless farmers, big, small and marginal farmers, farmers with rich fertile lands and those with poor eroded soils. The endowments differ with each class of farmer and also spatially.
- In any area, poverty is not uniformly spread: the landless in some villages may be in more difficult conditions of subsistence than in others. The spatial scatter of poverty has to be laboriously delineated if project implementation is to be area-specific.
- The articulated needs of the poor may not indicate their actual needs. In the historical process of deprivation, sensitivities get blunted so that many existing exploitative institutional and noninstitutional processes are often assumed to be something about which nothing could be done.
- The processes that cause poverty are important. If elimination strategies are to be long lasting; if poverty has been caused by problems of employment, projects for raising production only may not fructify in the foreseeable future. The direct attack on poverty through projects will have to deal with short term mitigation aiming at increasing the survival capacity of the poor and long term efforts to improve their power to influence the allocation of resources (MATHUR, 1980).
- Different sections of society have different access to developmental institutions. Opening new "windows" often does not help the really poor because it merely increases the options of those who can convert knowledge into access and then get inputs; but those who lack the capacity to gain access will be further impoverished in proportion to the increase of access of the haves.
- Credit by itself can not grow anything. However, additional liquidity or solvency makes a big difference in rural relations of production and distribution because of the factors of indebtedness, usurious rates of interest and the existence of farmer and trader money lenders. On the one hand, credit projects must discriminate between the potential, designed and actual users of project benefits, continually monitor the drift or leakage, and measure the effects of intervention in one market over processes in other markets. On the other hand, credit projects should increase the capacity of the population to monitor and redesign the projects. It is possible that excessive emphasis on output monitoring (in the form of number of dairy animals financed, number of artificial inseminations

done, number of pasture plots laid out) without monitoring who has been financed, whose animals have been inseminated and at whose farm the plot has been laid out may lead to highly erroneous impressions about the project's success. The moment these questions are raised, one finds current monitoring systems and sets of indicators highly inadequate.

We summarize below some of the questions whose answers will be sought in the next part of this paper.

1. With whom in mind was the project designed? Who are the desired users of project output? Who can potentially make use of it?
2. What is the relationship between the desired and potential users?
3. Who has easy access to the project organization and other institutions required to make use of the project output?
4. Who has information about the internal functioning of these institutions and who can influence their working or modify their implementation designs?
5. Have similar projects been implemented in the past? Do experiences of these projects influence the participation of various people in the current project?
6. What are the current "stocks" and expected future "cashflows" of the different classes of farmers; how many have a surplus budget, subsistence budget or deficit budget?
7. What is the mix currently employed by various sections of the target population to take care of their individual resources and cashflow characteristics? What is likely to be the effect of project cashflows or the internal cashflows of variously endowed farmers?
8. How are environmental uncertainties, like floods or drought expected to influence the comparative positions of various sections of the rural society vis-a-vis their participation in projects?

In our efforts to seek answers to these questions, we will relate the concept of monitoring in rural systems to continual project redesign. Taking care of the inadequacies of the original project design, in catering to the needs of the target group, can build in a capacity to seek better social adjustments so that the desired and actual users are not only the same, but also the "use" comes to have more desired effects than the undesired and/or unintended effects.

Some assumptions of traditional project design are questioned such as:

- The viability of the project will ensure that the desired target group participates in the projects.
- The project personnel are the most competent to perceive and judge the consequences of their own actions upon the society.
- Improvement in efficiency of delivery will result in improvement in the living conditions of the participants, and so forth.

The spatial, temporal and stratification aspects of monitoring a project's performance should be taken into

account so that actual project performance compares with the expectations of both the planners and the participants.

We should not make the persistent mistake of trying to measure only what is easily measurable and then attributing to these measurements the entire judgment of the project. The people's participation in monitoring the project implementation can structure better project designs. The next part shows a method how to achieve this.

Part Three

A new paradigm: MOSED: This implies that various possible combinations exist in which Input-Throughput-Output of one subsystem may interact with I-T-O of another subsystem.

The monitoring functions of a project will record these interfaces and distribute this information widely to avoid possible distortions. The project objectives determine the extent to which such interfaces will be recorded, analyzed and discounted; for example, in an irrigated region, the introduction of cross-bred cows or artificial insemination aiming at improving the local breed also assumes that:

- The animal owner has abundant green fodder or alternatively, this can be arranged;
- He has space with enough shade and ventilation necessary for proper maintenance;
- He knows about balanced feed, has enough water and can manage sensitive cross-bred cows, etc.

Obviously, the supply or production of green fodder, silage preparation facilities, availability of concentrates, veterinary support, marketing arrangements for milk, and the like, become concomitant to the success of cross-bred cow introduction. In rain-fed regions, on the other hand, the question must be raised, whether there should be few animals of good breed and high productivity or more animals of inferior milk potential, but with better adaptability, less sensitive to green fodder, concentrate supply or diseases. These questions are obviously connected with who can participate in a program that envisages a high level of risk-bearing capacity, resources endowment and access to institutions involved in various stages.

Figure 1 demonstrates some of the ways in which organizations may be related in a project environment. For instance in a dairy project, the purchase committees are responsible for purchasing animals and their import into the project area. The milk of these animals is then procured, processed and marketed by a dairy plant or chilling plant. Thus, transport arrangements are important in projects involving the import of animals, procurement and marketing of milk, making mobile veterinary facilities available, and so on.

Different organizations will require facilities at different points of time, to a varying extent and of qualitatively different types (ie milk tankers cannot be substituted by a mobile veterinary van). However, the effect of delays and gaps in various transportation activities will be different for different classes of farmers, eg some farmers have their own conveyances. The transport

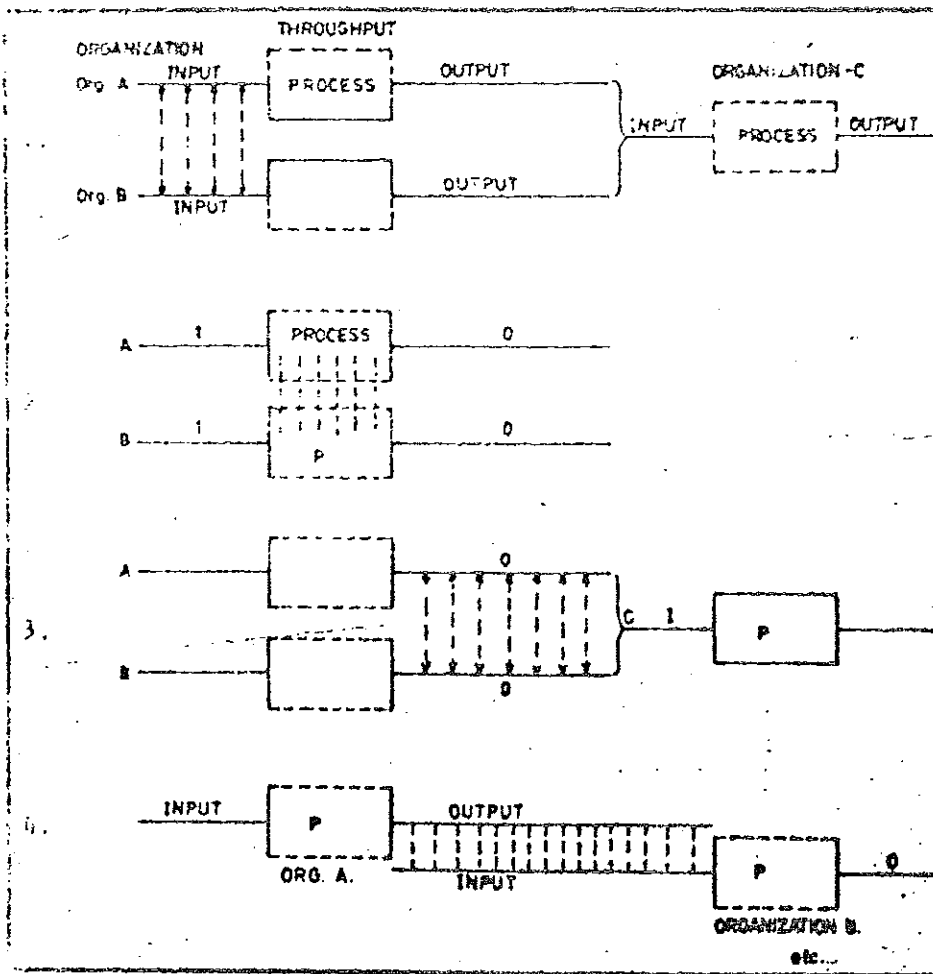


Fig. 1: The interaction of the system's subsystem.

... will also affect those farmers whose villages have a milk collection center differently from those who do not. Figure 2 presents the concept of "effects."

The process of any activity triggers negative and positive effects in the project environment. Some activities are of greater consequence than others though they may require less cost. Likewise some events are of strategic importance in terms of the bearing they have on the social processes of participation and change. The monitoring of activities needs to take account therefore of the effects of the processes.

Documenting effects at different stages of various activities will lead to effect budgeting which will have an estimate of the performance of the project; whether it is on the right course or not.

Identification of beneficiaries: In a rural development project, the distinction must always be drawn between the desired, potential and actual participants (fig. 3).

The potential participants are those who have the capacity to make use of the project facilities: eg in a dairy project any one who knows dairying and is able to maintain cattle can become a participant. Farmers with 10 acres, 2 acres or even no land can maintain cattle, perhaps with different efficiencies. In a tractor project, however, only those with more than 8 to 10 acres of land can be potential participants.

The desired participants are those whom the planners want to reach, such as small and marginal farmers and agricultural laborers. All the desired participants may not have the potential to participate; some may lack previous experience and need training, some may be aged or disabled or lack some other necessary resource. Ideally the subset of actual users should be wholly in intersection of desired and potential users (fig. 3).

Some of the issues that arise in this context are:

- Who sets down the criteria for selection?
- Have they an understanding of the area where the project is to be implemented: its topography, population density, and various other ecological and institutional factors?
- Who identifies the prospective beneficiaries: the VLW, the BDO, a bank officer, Panchayats, People's Councils with a member of the landed and landless class or only the landless farmers' association, etc?
- Who selects: the bankers who have to finance the project, the authorities who have to provide a subsidy, or VLWs, who have to transfer new technology (supported by credit inputs, etc)?
- During which time of the farming operations will the selection process be exercised? Seasonality will also influence other processes of the project implementation (CHAMBERS, 1979).

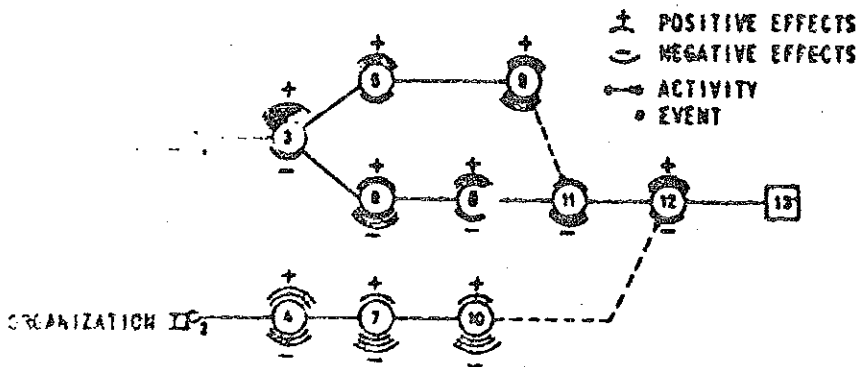


Fig. 2: Effect monitoring (this can lead to social effect monitoring).

Implications: The process through which selection takes place has a direct bearing on the ultimate consequences of the project. Who selects will determine the types of participants who are selected. Different organizations may "genuinely" interpret the objectives of a project differently. The interest of a bank may be to identify safer clients with good repaying capacity, which it may infer from the existing resources of the farmers, rather than from the aims of the project. A milk cooperative may be interested in getting the maximum quantity of milk and so may prefer larger suppliers or those who have minimum consumption. It may even discourage excessive or optimum domestic consumption. The village level workers or block development officer may be interested in identifying people who are recommended by village leaders or elites. A livestock department may prefer those who can maintain cross-bred cattle. They may be those who can get green fodder and have a ventilated cattle yard. Logically, they are likely to be the larger farmers.

Once farmers from the more favored villages have been selected in preference to others, the tendency may become self-perpetuating. Projects which may be unrelated technically may get routed to the same areas because of their involvement in the same bureaucracy, because the villages (probably road-side) have been found credit-worthy by all project planners, and because of the ability of farmers in these places to come up to the expectations of the planners.

The time taken in applying, processing, sanctioning and releasing of a loan, on a credit project can be monitored conveniently, if desired. If all the stages are completed within the stipulated time, cost and resources, the project manager using a PERT chart will happily move on to the next stage. But this is not so in the case of social effect monitoring. The consequences of wrong selection and of delays for farmers with poor resources vis-a-vis costs and delays to other farmers, will become vital aspects of the project performance.

The data generated in the normal course of monitoring do not lead to organizational correction or project redesigns as has been argued earlier. Welck said of this weakness of monitoring: "Quantities do not generate design. Whenever managers tell people to solve their

problems by redoubling their efforts, they can make a fatal mistake. They assume that quantities can change pattern. Pouring more money into a system that has a shape, will not generate a new shape. All quantities can do is to help discover the pattern that already exists" (WEICK, 1977).

A recent study in a drought prone district of Western Maharashtra showed how reckless propagation of sugarcane by the government and private/cooperative sugar factories had led to a very anomalous situation. There are people in this district who have to migrate out of the district for work in the years when rainfall falls because they cannot even get one rainfed crop. On the other hand, there are people who grow sugarcane. They do not even pay laborers for weeding operations because grass so collected provides a meagre source of income to dryfarmers cum laborers who have hardly any other options.

Further, in absence of any large scale drainage system, excessive irrigation had led to waterlogging or salinity increase in some parts. There are cases of a few farmers who, after having grown sugarcane for some years, have now been reduced to the status of laborers. Interestingly, when one case of such a farmer financed by a bank was sent to a credit guarantee organization,

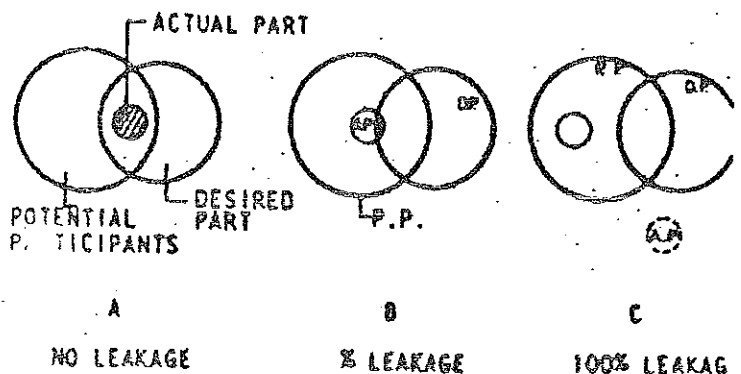


Fig. 3: Monitoring participation in projects.

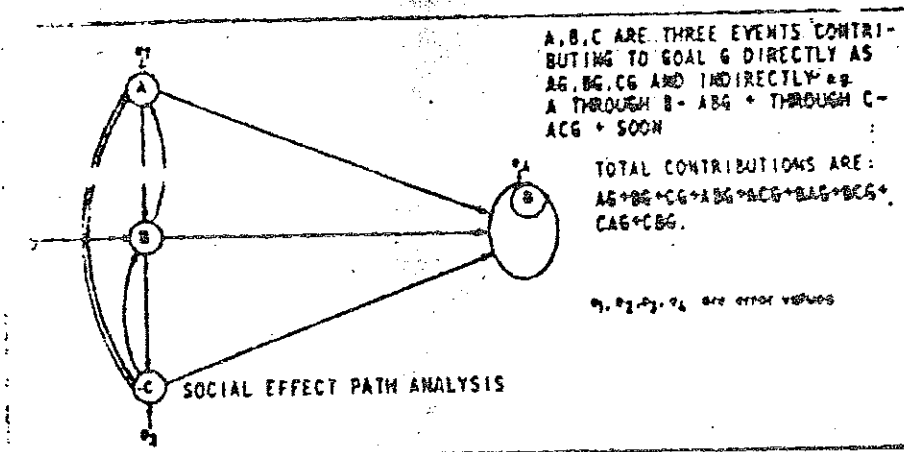


Fig. 4: Social effect path analysis.

the response received was "why has the bank not disposed of the land of the party to recover the dues?"

Such questions are raised not infrequently. The issue of providing abundant irrigation to a few vis-a-vis only life-saving irrigation to many somehow does not appeal to policy planners who are used to think in terms of quantities, i.e. of increasing production of some cash crops rather than stabilizing production of many food crops to a varying extent.

In the same district, under drought relief large sums were spent on digging community wells on land of big farmers who have now been formally given even the cessation of the wells, probably because the silent community did not have courage or capacity to use them. Again the data monitored referred to number of wells dug and number of mandays of employment generated.

Another aspect of MOSED can be termed sequential by its nature. Its assumptions are given below:

- Various activities have to be performed in a definite sequence (all of these cannot be predetermined in rural regions because there are too many uncertainties). Rondinelli argued that to make up for the inability to determine beforehand the various uncertainties or risk inherent in rural projects, project organizers often create very loose designs with very vague objectives. He added, "Designs should be prepared in such a way that the project defines problems and alternative possible solutions, and progress incrementally towards testing what seem to be the most effective approaches. In other words, designs must be considered a partially experimental and continuing process — one that can guide but not entirely control implementation that is modified and revised during the execution of task and activities (by the project officials). Indeed, design and implementation must be seen as mutually interdependent aspects of project management." However, the problems here are sought to be defined by the "implementing officials" and not the real "target group." Thus, as argued earlier, a different set of answers will emerge if the sequence is defined by implementors rather than by the people who are directly or indirectly affected by the project.

- Each activity or event influences others and also the ultimate goal, as shown in figure 4.

- The effect of an activity at the beginning of a project may be more serious than towards the end, by which time probably most of the project benefits have been disbursed.

Putting these together, synergy operates not only in terms of multiplicity of subsystems and organizations involved but also in terms of their sequence as shown in figure 4. There is a growing literature on path analysis in sociological studies, yet little use is made of it. Some of the implications are:

- Different information about the same steps with a different time lag are received, showing qualitatively different implications for different classes of farmers or target groups.
- Information of any one subsystem may not enable one to assess the real magnitude of the problem (and its bearing upon other social subsystems).
- The effects of decisions will be different for different project participants in some respects, and uniform in others. This also calls for introducing the ecological approach to the usual sectoral analysis of projects. The poor in power, endowed regions are often bypassed by rural development projects. And the irony is that they are blamed for not having participated, implying that they did not demand project benefits.
- Socially effective activities, or activities that are critical because of the effect they have on the most vulnerable section of the project environment, will be different from those activities whose criticality is worked out on the basis of time/cost dependency calculations.

While projects are implemented, a specific mix of resources must exist to bring about tangible gains to the farmers: for instance, a sheep-rearing project envisaged that units of 20 sheep and one improved quality ram should be financed at a time. However, rams of improved quality were not available in that district and the local rams were not to be purchased. The officials implementing the projects went ahead with the scheme with-

... farms, with the result that lots of farmers could not derive sufficient income from their sheep. The rams could not breed a more remunerative herd. Lots of farmers suffered and felt it would have been better if they had not participated in the project at all.

... can be multiplied. In a particular district, a major irrigation project was implemented with great haste. Many tube wells were dug. The result was that the water table went down during the months when maximum discharge took place. The farmers who relied on these wells for drawing water through indigenous means like the counterpoise Pruslan wheel could draw no more water. The project made some farmers suffer while others benefited. As is usually the case, the farmers who suffered were the poorer ones (GRIFFIN, 1978). A similar problem was faced in an arid district of western India. To meet the drinking water needs of an urban settlement, several deep tube wells were dug in a village 40 kilometers away. After only a few years, the farmers found that their water table had gone down.

Such instances point to the fact that the monitoring of a project in the revised perspective that this paper suggests can help to correct many such distortions. A list of questions has been prepared by us that could be raised at different stages in a dairy project. It demonstrates how, in the project implementation process and in the increasing interaction of various organizations, a rather different set of questions has to be raised to monitor the social effects of a development project. The objectives will have to be better defined and supported by measurable indicators that can justify the assumptions held. The results show that if womenfolk maintain the livestock, efforts to train the men will not give an adequate reward. It will also need to be elaborated whether the total amount of milk produced and marketed in an area or an increase in consumption by the poorer farmers reflects the project's success.

The lessons and issues

The participation of people in monitoring can become possible only if the various interests involved are exposed through extensive sharing of information. Studies have shown that wherever the farmers have close awareness of the project implementation process, they have ultimately gained control over its distributive mechanism. Unfortunately, this is only true of the better-off farmers who make the task of implementing officials "smooth" by offering every possible help that the poor have no means to offer (MATHUR, 1978).

Monitoring indices can put a premium on the involvement of the poorer section of farmer in all aspects of project design and implementation (though this may be easier said than done).

Still, raising questions instead of avoiding them will take us closer to the goal. People have a stake in the quality of their environment, but they do not have information (which is power). Better insights for farmers can be institutionalized in the planning and implementation process. The monitoring of social effects involves playing with these levers. The task is fraught with tension and conflicts. Our submission is that these conflicts will decide, at much less cost and in shorter time, whether a project needs to be continued or not, rather than evalu-

ation studies that finally show "the benefits have not reached the really needy people."

Project design takes precedence over implementation, for it is the design that suggests who can potentially gain control of the benefits of the project. The implementation merely manifests it.

Thus those engaged in design and in monitoring systems will have to question the traditional assumptions of organizational design, project scheduling and monitoring, developing indicators, etc.

Monitoring can generate new designs. If those possessing the greatest insights about their environment, those who are most affected by the projects, are allowed to participate in the monitoring function (and possibly also in the appraisal function).

Nothing works neutrally; if a project does not help some people, it is definitely harmful, and for this it uses state intervention reinforced by the market apparatus.

It can therefore be concluded that redesigning projects through effect monitoring can have implications not only for communication between organizations and farmers, but also among the farmers themselves, on the basis of the dissemination of information about the project performance when it is still going on.

Let the implementing officials have power and discretion to redesign projects by monitoring their social effects, through the effective participation of "have nots" (who are now also "heard nots").

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