CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION
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The main purport of this study was to examine the interaction pattern of political elite and bureaucrats in terms of development. The study was conducted at the micro-level of Block and District administration within the specified dimensions of Panchayati Raj. It was felt that macro studies are generally normative and ideological. Inter-elite interaction in such cases is generally based on certain assumptions. Macro studies thus ignore empirical and ecological factors. On the other hand, one of the main hypothesis in our study is that interaction process is influenced more by the cultural traits, social background and values of the elite in particular system than by the established norms, which govern the whole system. As such, for interaction analysis, a deep sociological study of the elite within their area of work-setting is required to achieve correct results.
No doubt, some empirical studies have been conducted earlier at micro-level with such a background, but they have been isolated research studies at either Block or District levels. The present study links both these levels with the assumption that development itself is a total activity. A balanced interaction pattern can emerge only if the study correlates the development process at both the levels.

As a prelude to interaction study, the elite and bureaucrats at Block and District level were identified within the framework of Panchayati Raj. An analysis of their socio-economic profile was made on the basis of the hypothesis that class and caste composition of the elite and bureaucrats with a similar socio-economic setting will lead them to interact more freely with each other. A contradiction between their socio-economic positions, however, will restrict their interaction with each other. This is also the leading hypothesis of this study. Attempts have also been made to analyse elite-perception of Panchayati Raj structure with the assumption that the structural pattern too
will have an obvious effect upon the actual relations of the interacting agents. The nature of elite-bureaucrat communication and other perceptions of development were also studied with the view that a similarity of approach will promote inter-elite interactions, whereas contradictory views will further lead to inter-elite tension and thus restrict their interactions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In terms of socio-economic profile, the study revealed that a majority of political elite and bureaucrats belong to middle age group. Similarly the pre-dominance of occupational castes is gradually increasing at the cost of the traditional castes, in the emerging set-up of rural bodies. Such elite are comparatively literate and mostly belong to middle and higher-income group. Correspondingly, a large majority of bureaucrats also belong to dominant caste and class group. In contrast, the scheduled caste elite are generally illiterate and
poor. Inspite of their statutory representation in the rural bodies, they do not command effective voice in the decision-making forums of these bodies. Then, again, there is little occupational mobility among elite, for agricultural continues to be a hereditary occupation of most of them. It can thus be fairly concluded that the Panchayati Raj set-up in our area of study is mostly dominated by political elite and bureaucrats who belong to dominant castes and class, which have also a higher percentage of literacy.

Whereas the bureaucratic perception of structure is influenced by the dichotomy existing between regulatory and development functioning of administration, there is no such influence over the political elite. In case of bureaucrats, the development officers refer to the dysfunctionalites arising out of the procedural lags in the regulatory administration and the privilege or status-consciousness of its officers. The development officers argue that only they can ensure mass-
mobilization and mass-cooperation, as they are able to interact more freely with the masses, than the regulatory officers who are status-conscious. Moreover, their approach towards development, unlike other bureaucrats, is neither static nor procedural.

The administrative officers, on the other hand, prefer development administration as an extended wing of general administration. They believe more in the rationalization, than in the bifurcation of administration. Such bureaucrats view development as progress achieved through schemes initiated by the government and implemented by the existing administrative structure. They do not treat development as a source of mass-mobilization. Because development is being treated as an additional source of power and patronage by the bureaucrats, it results in a tussle between regulatory and development officers, to secure absolute control of the development machinery.

The political elite too do not think the existing administrative structure as totally ineffective. They,
however, link the structural-performance with structural-output. Their attitude is correlated with the benefits that accrue to them through the structure. This explanation accounts for the satisfaction of the higher strata of society with the existing administrative structure. Such political elite prefer administrative rationalisation, rather than its modification.

In the field of communication, there has been a definite improvement in elite-mass communication. Through the media of inter-personal and mass-communication, the elite have been able to change the values and attitudes of the rural masses. The masses now favour and utilize the elite-channel of communication with the government. They feel that, as elected representatives, they have some claims on them. On the other hand, they find some difficulty in communicating with the bureaucrats, especially with the senior officers. Communication between political elite and bureaucrats is more
horizontal than vertical. It is also influenced by caste and class-factors. Most of the bureaucrats prefer to come into contact with the office-bearers of Panchayati Raj, in their official capacity. Among bureaucrats themselves, there appears to be a communication lag between senior and subordinate officers. It is noticeable more between Block level and District level officers than between district and other senior officers.

Whereas bureaucrats perceive development as progress achieved through the implementation of government sponsored projects only, the political elite view it as a socio-economic change achieved through mass-cooperation and mass-mobilisation. This contradiction in attitude itself results in elite-bureaucrat tension. On the one hand, it leads the elite to think in terms of decentralisation of powers, but on the other hand, it prompts the bureaucrats to advocate further centralisation of powers. Bureaucrats also assume that the masses, by and large,
are satisfied with their role and performance as a development agent. Such an observation depends, mostly upon their interaction with the elite of their own rank, caste and class. The point at issue is whether this bureaucratic observation is equally shared by the political elite and the masses. The study reveals that the latter co-relate bureaucrats' role and performance with the intensity and success of development schemes in their area. The response of the elite and the masses thus varies from place to place and, depends on the nature and the process of development in their areas.

However, both political elite and bureaucrats attach more importance to agricultural development than community development. They are greatly concerned with problems like increased agricultural production, better provisions for agricultural inputs like irrigation, better seeds, fertilizers and the creation of an agro-industrial infra-structure. Problems concerning community
development do not occupy a high priority in their preference.

Since they belong to higher and more affluent section of agricultural community, they prefer agricultural development to community development, for they have not any special social problems to face. Here they are suitably helped by the government, which for its own requirements, prefer a policy of promoting agricultural development.

The political elite, however, are more articulate than bureaucrats in discussing the problems concerning development in their area whereas bureaucrats do not commit themselves either favourable or unfavourable aspects of development process, the elite unhesitatingly refer to the dysfunctionalites of administration as the major hurdle that impedes the process of development. The elite are also more articulate because of the changing pattern of rural leadership, for they know that, inspite of their caste or class domination,
they cannot take their leadership for granted. Hence they have to adopt a democratic and secular outlook in order to maintain their position. They have to attend to the aspirations and requirements of their constituents, whereas bureaucrats are under no such obligation.

The basic problem of interaction among the political elite and bureaucrats is thus of socialisation. Whether the interacting agents are prepared to merge themselves into a composite social personality, or they desire to keep their separate identity and culture. The study shows that both of them are not prepared to act as interdependent units of a composite process of socialisation. They also differ on the norms that must govern the social behaviour of the elite. Whereas political elite prefer similar norms of social behaviour for bureaucrats and the elite alike, the bureaucrats feel otherwise. According to them, there should be different norms of behaviour for
the elite and bureaucrats, and among bureaucrats themselves, depending upon their rank and position in the structural hierarchy. Bureaucrats feel that similarity of norms will lead towards unnecessary interference in the development administration.

A similar deviation is also visible in the social relationship of bureaucrats and political elite. The political elite normally develop friendship with their own professional colleagues. Wherever the professions are diffused, the elite pattern of friendship is also diffused. But bureaucrats limit their friendship to only persons belonging to their own rank or status or class. The elite-bureaucrat friendship is less frequent. Their contact is either institutional or a caste-class-contact. Wherever elite-bureaucrat contact is based on caste and class similarity, they also claim considerable influence over their counterparts. This also makes the elite of higher
castes and class, psychologically more satisfied with their powers, prestige and status, than their counterparts who do not belong to such castes and classes. Satisfaction of the elite of higher castes and classes is, however, more psychological and societal than institutional. In relation to bureaucrats, such satisfaction is more hierarchical than psychological and societal. In this context we can analyse that political elite and bureaucrats of similar caste, class or rank are likely to interact more freely than the other elite and bureaucrats, where such variables are diffused.

Even as development agents, the political elite and bureaucrats do not think alike. Whereas the political elite feel that elite-bureaucrat role should be an integrated one at all hierarchical levels, the bureaucrats desire it to be classified. According to them, political elite should limit their role to that of policy makers, while the bureaucrats should be exclusively concerned with
the implementation of that policy.

The overall analysis thus shows that there is no stable pattern of interaction between the political elite and bureaucrats. The contradictions arising out of a number of variables have resulted in straining the relationship of the two elite. One of the damaging consequences is that it creates doubts about the sincerity of political elite and bureaucrats in their role as agents of development.