CHAPTER SEVEN

BUREAUCRAT'S PERCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENT.
BUREAUCRAT'S PERCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

Fundamentally speaking the problem of development is one of inculcation of aspirations, building of attitudes and an action-oriented bent of mind. Since development programmes, by and large, continue to be dependant on Government initiative and funds, it becomes imperative to know how the bureaucrats view the problems of development. Their views are to be reflected in government-sponsored programmes, for they continue to be the decision-making and implementing agency of the Government. The ruling-elite in developing countries recognise that planning and implementation of development objectives is not possible without a well-organised bureaucracy. Heavy emphasis is therefore placed on the role of the bureaucrat in accelerating the process of development.¹

Since we too have conceptualised development in the sense of economic and social change, little will be accomplished unless administrators actively feel involved in this effort and work honestly and enthusiastically for such a change. This can be possible only if bureaucrats are

¹ In India, in all the Five Year Plans heavy reliance has been put on the administrators to achieve development targets. Even in the initiation of community project programmes, the administrators were asked to elicit rural cooperation. The Officers were also asked to develop the qualities of leadership.
able to adjust themselves with the ecology of their area. They are also expected to be well-versed with the local development problems. Their interaction with the local elite and masses too will have a considerable bearing on their role as development agents.

A study of the socio-economic profile of the bureaucrats and elite in earlier chapters has revealed that a majority of them belong to dominant caste and class. The communication pattern between them too is influenced by these variables (i.e. caste and class). The point at issue is whether bureaucratic and elite perception of development is also influenced by caste and class? Similarly, we must also know whether the development objectives will be better achieved, if bureaucrats feel themselves committed to the ideology of development, or they prefer to remain neutral?²

Proceeding with the hypothesis that Bureaucrats mostly prefer to remain neutral, the response of the bureaucrats is given in Table 7-1.

**TABLE 7-1 BUREAUCRATIC RESPONSE TO IDEOLOGY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURE OF RESPONSE</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should be committed</td>
<td>% n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should remain neutral</td>
<td>% n</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Officers n=16 * | 37.5 (6) | 50.0 (8) |

* The percentage is not upto 100 as 2 Officers did not respond.

² The bureaucrats generally take 'neutralism' in the sense of 'non-interference' in their official work by the elite.
The response shows a significant variation. A large number of bureaucrats (50%) prefer to remain neutral. They feel themselves to be quite competent in doing the work assigned to them, and wish that they should not be interfered within their role as development agents by the Politicians. In his study Trivedi (1977) also observes:

Officers believe that people’s representatives are unaware of administrative method and procedures, so they cannot be relied upon for playing an effective role in development. The Bureaucrats, on the other hand, are trained for administration, policy-formulation and programming.

Iqbal Narain (1964), too, expresses similar opinion that, "a number of civil servants, earnestly insist that development should be treated predominantly, if not exclusively as an administrative agency".

Even the respondents who feel that bureaucrats should be committed to the ideology of development (37.5%), perceive by it as a loyalty on the part of the bureaucrats to execute faithfully the objectives and programmes as laid down by the party in power. They do not distinguish between development as an ideology and the political commitments to the ruling elite. The hypothesis that

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4- Report of the Study Team on Panchayati Raj (Panchyat and Development Department—Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur 1964), p. 4
bureaucrats mostly prefer to remain neutral is, therefore confirmed. To understand this, we have perhaps to comprehend their class-caste relationship. If the development objectives favour their class and caste, the bureaucrats feel committed to development. If such group interest between the elite and bureaucrats clash, the bureaucrats take shelter under 'neutralism', by which they mean non-interference in their administrative work by the elite.

Another issue is bureaucratic orientation towards 'development activity'. Along with the elite, they are also expected to act as an agent of change at all levels of administration. Bureaucrats do understand the importance of development. This is reflected in their response in Table 7-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATURE OF RESPONSE</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Considerable</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS</td>
<td>% n</td>
<td>% n</td>
<td>% n</td>
<td>% n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers n=16*</td>
<td>12.5 (2)</td>
<td>56.2 (9)</td>
<td>6.2 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentage is not up to 100 as 3 Officers did not respond.

No bureaucrat is prepared to admit that he is unaware of the importance of development. The response
confirms it. This is quite natural. Educated as they are, bureaucrats are expected to know all the development trends with which they come across. The problem, is, how the bureaucrats perceive 'development activity' in terms of their own and the elite role. To accelerate development activity, various committees have advocated a greater involvement of local elite in the Panchyati Raj Bodies and a simultaneous introduction of orientation courses in development to the bureaucrats. Studies in bureaucratic attitude towards development however show that they desire the transfer of entire responsibility for development to them. The bureaucrats doubt the capability of the elected incumbents of the Panchyati Raj Bodies. Marx observes:

In so far as the distribution of powers was concerned, Mehta Committee recommended that Zila Parishads should be empowered to coordinate and consolidate district development funds. The bureaucrats however desire that such responsibility of coordination and consolidation of district development


6- Marx, Fritz Morestin, *The Higher Civil Service as an Action Group*, (Extract from La Palambora's Bureaucracy and Political Development) op.cit., p.15-16
plans and distribute development funds. The bureaucrats however desire that such responsibility of coordination and consolidation of district development plans should be shared both by the Zila Parishad and the Deputy Commissioner. Bureaucratic attitude towards non-official Block Advisory Committees, had also been one of neglect. As Guha observes that "Block Advisory Bodies had been more or less neglected and that the non-officials were not treated by the Officers with proper regard." Here too bureaucrats try to re-assert themselves. The block establishment has all the formal characteristics of a bureaucratic set-up. Among the block staff, the general administrator enjoys higher prestige and status than the specialists. Both the Block Development Officer and his assistants spend much of their time in paper-work. The administration is top heavy and there is an undue pressure on the village level workers from the senior


8- Guha, A.C.; "Officials or Social Workers" (Kurukshetra, Vol.V. No.12. 1957), p.14


10- Matalib, M.A.; Development Administration in Rural Government for Agricultural Production- an approach in comparative administration (Osmunia University, Hyderabad, 1973)
Officers, to achieve targets. 11

Even in our area of study, Bureaucrats doubt the role of the elite as development agents. Their response is given in Table 7-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7-3</th>
<th>ROLE OF ELITE AS DEVELOPMENT AGENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUREAUCRATIC PERCEPTION</td>
<td>NATURE OF RESPONSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS</td>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICERS n=16*</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 (1)</td>
<td>31.2 (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentage is not up to 100 as 3 Officers did not respond.

About 43.7% Bureaucrats feel that people are less satisfied with the elite role. This is in contrast to the assessment of their own role as development agent, which is given in Table 7-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7-4</th>
<th>ROLE OF BUREAUCRATS AS DEVELOPMENT AGENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BUREAUCRATIC PERCEPTION</td>
<td>NATURE OF RESPONSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS</td>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICERS n=16*</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 (1)</td>
<td>64.5 (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentage is not up to 100 as 2 Officers did not respond

The response shows that bureaucrats feel that people on the whole are satisfied with their role (i.e. 64.5% satisfied and 6.2% mostly satisfied). The 'less satisfaction' is limited to only 18.7% of bureaucrats.

In simple terms, it means that bureaucrats believe in their own superiority to others and assume that they alone have the monopoly of understanding the problems of development. Refuting the criticism of certain empirical studies concerning their role, Bureaucrats say that these studies do not reckon with the reality of existing power-structure in the countryside. Political power in these areas is by and large in the upper-category of landed interests. The Bureaucrats must be given the necessary authority to deal with these powerful interests from a position of strength.  

How far such a self-assessment and that of elite by the Bureaucrats is correct, can be finalised only after a similar assessment of the two is given by the elite? Such an assessment is the subject of discussion in the next chapter. But one thing is clear. Bureaucrats ignore such a critical factor as 'National Will' in the process of development. Without it, even the most generous development programme will have little effect. Any kind of developmental

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12- Mundle, Sudipto; District Planning in India (Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi 1977), p.9
effort, without the involvement of the leaders of opinion at the local level, and tightly controlled by the Bureaucrats could be rejected by the people. 13

BUREAUCRATIC PERCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS.

In the present study development problems have been classified into two general categories, Economic problems and social problems. The Bureaucrats were requested to identify such problems. We started with the hypothesis that being educated, experienced and closely associated with the development problems of the area, the bureaucrats will be well-acquainted with them. The response of the Bureaucrats towards Development problems are given in Table 7-5 and Table 7-6.

Table 7-5 BUREAUCRATIC RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFF ICERS n=16</th>
<th>NATURE OF RESPONSE</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faulty supply of Irrigation and power</td>
<td>Problems of Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% n 12.5 (2) 6.3 (1)</td>
<td>% n 12.5 (2) 12.5 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of industrialisation</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% n 12.5 (2)</td>
<td>% n 12.5 (2)</td>
<td>% n 43.7 (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13- Family Planning is clearly the best contemporary example, where a programme strictly enforced by the Government, was rejected by the people.
The Bureaucrats have referred to a number of local problems. They have not been able to pin-point a few major economic problems. They have divided their response equally into different categories of problems like faulty supply of irrigation and power (12.5%), high cost of agricultural inputs and delay in the grant of loans etc. (12.5%), lack of industrialisation (12.5%), unemployment (12.5%) and problems of communication. A large number of bureaucrats (43.7%) have preferred to remain quiet by giving 'no reply' at all. This is surprising because previously all the bureaucrats claimed that they were well-versed with the problems of development. We, too, started with this hypothesis. We have therefore to find what prompts them to adopt such an attitude? Why the bureaucrats at local level are not able to give a clear picture of the economic
problems, they are expected to tackle, specially when the State Government declares from time to time that effective steps are being taken by the Government to deal with such problems.

For example, in the problem of agricultural inputs (like fertilizers, power, diesel and pesticide) in increasing agricultural production, we find a contradiction in the attitudinal approach of State-level bureaucrats and local bureaucrats. The Director of Agriculture, Punjab assured that arrangements have been made to supply these essential inputs to the cultivators at subsidized rates at various sales point in the Blocks. The Development Commissioner, Punjab, also gave a similar assurance, "that the Department of Agriculture has taken all the necessary steps to integrate these facilities and to approach the farmers for imparting necessary training and technical knowhow." 14

14- Giving a detailed account of the steps taken during Rabi Campaign 1977, Development Commissioner, Punjab observed "that during Sept-Oct, 1977, a chain of farmers training camps were organized at the District and Block levels which imparted training to 60,000 families of farmers. Their impact is quite evident now. Review committees at various levels have been formed to assess and ensure that the cultivators are approached in time for applying recommended doses of fertilizers. A control room has been set-up in the Office of the Development Commissioner and all necessary instructions have been issued for each functionary. Ample literature on Rabi crop has also been provided through Agriculture Department to farmers."
On the other hand, a few senior bureaucrats at the local level observed during the course of their interview that, "the cause of rapid agricultural development in Punjab is mostly due to the personal effort of the farming community. Panches, Sarpanches and cooperative societies have also played an important part in agricultural development." 15

The contradiction here further confirms a vertical communication lag that exists between the senior and junior bureaucrats, as well as the absence of a regular feedback process between them. Naturally, the local bureaucrats are not able to reflect a clear picture of the economic problems they are expected to tackle. This vertical communication lag between the bureaucrats also influences their attitude towards development problems. Whereas the local bureaucrats take into consideration ecological factors, the attitude of senior bureaucrats is purely administrative. 16

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15- During a recent survey taken by the Department of Rural Sociology, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, it was found that facilities in the field of agriculture, for rural population, like PUNSUP shops and agro-service centres were almost inoperative. *Indian Express*, (Chandigarh, October 19, 1978)

16- Richard Taub who otherwise commends the role of senior IAS Officers, however, expresses doubt about their success in promoting agricultural development, manufacturing and distributing fertilizers and changing the social attitudes of the people. Taub Richard; op.cit., p.203
Like economic problems, bureaucratic response to social problems has also evoked diverse responses. A large number of bureaucrats (56.2%) have given no reply at all. Such a high percentage of negative response in the context of social problems is startling. The main social problems referred to by the bureaucrats include social backwardness (12.5%), dowry-system (12.5%), illicit distillation (12.5%) and untouchability (6.3%). Significantly speaking no bureaucrat has referred to caste-system as a burning social problem of the area.

It appears that bureaucrats do not attach much importance to the social problems as compared to the economic problems. The reasons may be varied e.g. social problems are normally associated with a traditional society whose rigidity creates social tensions. As already discussed with its liberal culture, improved means of mass-communication and less social tensions, the people in Punjab (including bureaucrats and elite who belong to Punjab (including bureaucrats and elite who belong to

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17- The omission can be regarded as significant because in other parts of Northern India—specially Bihar and U.P.—caste-tensions have resulted in violence and riots. In contrast, in Punjab, it can be said that caste-tension while existing has not culminated in violence or riots. It has therefore posed no law and order situation for the bureaucracy. This can be one of the explanations that caste-system is not recognised by them as a social problem. Another explanation can be the predominance of the Jats, both in the elite and bureaucratic ranks.
the same social pool) do not give much preference to social problems in comparison to the economic problems. Likewise, the Government is also interested, more in the solution of economic problems due to their impact on the working on political system. Even in their budgetary allocations social problems occupy a secondary place. Then again social problems are mostly connected with the uplift of the scheduled and backward classes. It can therefore be hypothesized that elite and bureaucrats who belong mostly to dominant caste and class, will not attach much importance to social problems.

BUREAUCRATIC PERCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

For purpose of existing study, development schemes have been categorised as (a) schemes for Agricultural Development and (b) schemes for Community Development. Such schemes are generally sponsored and financed both by the Government of India and the State Government. We can start with the hypothesis that bureaucratic response to development schemes will normally be within the framework of government-sponsored schemes. Bureaucratic response to agricultural schemes is given in Table 7-7

18- According to a Senior Officer at the Panchyati Raj Directorate, Punjab, most of the Community Development schemes have been included and are implemented by the Government under the Head- Agriculture and Animal Husbandry.
The bureaucrats have referred to a number of schemes in the field of Agricultural Development. They include Intensive Agricultural District Programme (31.5% - a Government of India Scheme started in 1961), Seeds-Fertilizer-Irrigation Technology (18.7% - a Punjab Government Scheme introduced in 1966) and Gobar Gas Plant (6.4% - a Government of India Scheme started in 1974). The hypothesis that bureaucrats normally prefer Government-sponsored schemes is thus confirmed. It is also clear from their response that bureaucrats recognize Intensive Agricultural District Programme as the most important scheme. Their perception of the scheme has generally been favourable.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{19}\) In an earlier study too, the attitude of extension personnel towards IADP and Community Development approaches in agricultural development, it was observed that the overall attitude of BDPO's towards both IADP and CD was favourable. Sinha, P.R.R., and Gill, S.S., "Attitude of Extension Personnel towards IADP and Community Development Approaches in Agricultural Development - a Case study of Ludhiana and Jullunder District." (Behavioural Science and Community Development, Vol.5, No.1, March 1971), p. 1-18
Next scheme preferred by the bureaucrats is that of Seed-Fertilizer and Irrigation Technology. Other minor schemes like Gobar Gas Plants etc. are not given much importance by the bureaucrats.

Significantly a number of bureaucrats (43.7%) have again failed to respond. One possible explanation may be that they do not desire to involve themselves into any political controversy by commenting over the fundamentals, planning and implementation of these government-sponsored development schemes. Another reason can be that bureaucrats treat the implementation of such schemes as merely an administrative routine.

Critical observations made earlier on the working of executive machinery reveal that the symptoms of administrative deficiencies are many varied, structural and organisational which manifest themselves in numerous forms at different levels during the execution of the programme. For example, Gaikawad in his study, refers to the following routine which is generally observed in the execution of the agricultural development programme:

1. Directive by the State Government.
2. Reminder by the Government if any.
3. Action at the District and Block level.
4. Observation by the Government about the progress of the scheme.
5. Second directive by the Government, if any.
6. Further action at the District and Block level.
7. District and Block Headquarters letters to Government, and
8. Final picture.

Bureaucratic response to community development schemes is also reflected in Table 7-8

**TABLE 7-8** BUREAUCRATIC RESPONSE FOR GOVT-SPONSORED DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICERS</th>
<th>NATURE OF RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated Rural Development Programme*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Link Roads Model Villages etc**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICERS n=16</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICERS</td>
<td>25.0 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*In 1977, Punjab Government introduced a scheme known as 'Integrated Rural Development Programme.' The broad features of the scheme are as follows, i) Selection of villages including one 'cluster' village in each block for Integrated Rural Development with a goal to cover all villages in the block within a period of five years. b) To increase production, raise income, and provide more employment opportunities to villagers. c) Dairy, Poultry farming and Cottage and ancillary industries to be developed, d) Provision for machinery and raw-material for the educated unemployed and arrangements for the marketing of goods in villages, e) Link roads in the remaining villages and their metalling, f) Provision of tap-water in the water-scarcity villages in the next three years and g) Spending of an amount of Rs 1.12 Crore in the year for the pavement of streets, construction of drains and disposal of sullage water.

A new era dawns in Punjab (issued by the Director Information and Publicity, Punjab, Chandigarh, 1977)

**- Similarly, with a view to giving impetus to development work and to create better living standard conditions in the villages, Model Village Scheme was started in 1969-70. It was proposed to carry out such work, e.g., pitching of streets, pavement of drains, metalling of approach roads (known in village slang as 'Phirnis'), establishment of kitchen-gardens etc., through government agencies. Out of 973 villages selected for this purpose, work in 551 villages was completed in 1975. For the year 1976-77 a further provision of 20 Lakhs Rs was made.

Plan Scheme Memoranda of Punjab Govt- Head Plan-Sub-Head Community Development (Part I-Approved Planned Schemes-Sub Part CD-II- Model Villages, New Expenditure for the year 1976-77)**
Here too bureaucratic preference is for government-sponsored schemes like Integrated Rural Development Programme (25.0%), Link Road, Model Villages etc (6.36%). Once again a large number of bureaucrats (68.7%) have failed to express their opinion on Community Development Schemes.

The overall picture of bureaucratic attitude towards development problems and schemes is very depressing. Whether it is an economic or a social problem, as much as 43.7% and 56.2% of Bureaucrats have shown their apathy by not responding. Similarly in relation to Agricultural and Community Development Schemes, Bureaucratic apathy has gone up to 43.7% and 68.7%. It is hard to think that the bureaucrats are not in knowledge of the existing problems and schemes, to which the Government attaches considerable importance through their policy declarations and official circulars.

Commenting over such an attitude of the bureaucrats, Sachidananda (1974) observes that, "it is purely a technocrat’s approach to the concept of change. It has to be given up. Change in productivity relationship must be made." 21

21- Sachidananda, Social Implication of Agricultural Development: Extracts from Social Dimensions of Agricultural Development (National Publishing House, Delhi-6, 1974) p.159-160
Actually, until now, development policy has been geared to maximizing agricultural production, the cause being both political and economic. We have already analysed that development structure in Punjab is controlled by elite and bureaucrats who belong to dominant class and caste. The policy of maximising agricultural production, benefits the dominant elite, who are also interested in maximising their profits. The bureaucrats also find it easy to interact with such elite, because they can reach the fixed targets for their areas, with their support, and without much effort. The apathy of bureaucrats towards social problems and schemes is, therefore understandable, for they do not correlate economic change with social change.

On the other hand, the need of the hour is to reach the maximum production which would benefit the largest number of people. Agricultural production should not be allowed to be the responsibility of a few persons in the name of 'Progressive Farmers', but should reach the largest number of farmers. Therefore, it is necessary to give equal importance to the social infra-structure that controls the development of a particular area. Economic development without corresponding social reforms will not serve the whole purpose of development.
OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The study reveals that bureaucrats recognize development as the political commitments of the ruling elite implemented in the shape of government-sponsored development projects. Such an approach prompts them to adopt a neutral attitude in assessing the success or failure of government-sponsored development schemes. Bureaucratic attitude towards development problems is influenced by factors like caste and class etc.

Belonging mostly to the dominant caste and class, bureaucrats prefer the solution of economic problems without disturbing the existing class and administrative structure. Their apathy towards community development shows that they do not wish to be a partner in changing the class-structure of the present social set-up.

Even interacting with the elite as co-equal development agents, the Bureaucrats have no objection in accepting them as policy-formulators at government level. But they do not like to be disturbed in the implementing process, which they claim to be their own jurisdiction. Bureaucrats thus appear to ignore such an important factor as 'national will' in the development process. They hesitate in soliciting mass-cooperation and to work for mass-mobilisation. They treat development merely as an administrative routine.
The Bureaucrats also prefer a centralised power-structure even at a local level. They like to play a dominant role there. Even if a decentralised power-structure is sought to be created, the bureaucrats always attempt to possess co-equal powers with the elite.

A definite assessment of the attitudinal and interactional pattern of bureaucrats and elite can be made only after our analysis of elite approach towards development. Hence, we move on to the next chapter, to analyse elite perception of development.