

INTRODUCTION:

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Development Programmes

Land

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Power Structures

Towards a Better Delivery System

Our Involvement

Four of us first came to Bhim Tehsil in June 1987, with the objective of working with and organising the poor. To understand the specific reasons for poverty with the community, document it and seek possible ways of resolving them. Because we saw this as a broad educational and developmental process, we undertook a study on Government poverty alleviation programmes from the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The Institute of Development Studies Jaipur was an appropriate partner in this study.

Education - a Point of View

Educational and democratic processes become almost synonymous in a situation of inequality, poverty and exploitation.

As it is well known and understood, education means far more than just schooling and literacy, or even skill learning. It is an ability to absorb information and knowledge, assimilate it and come to conclusions. Learning should lead to definitive action enabling those involved in the process, to make the shift from one position to another, be it ideological, emotive or physical, where conditions are better. Thus, education is seen as empowerment. Empowerment not through the input of one 'programme' but the change of perception of ones' existence in a socio-political context.

If education is so understood, then the most important aspect to comprehend is the way educational processes can be stimulated or used, so that the poor make the necessary shift in perception, understanding and action.

This study has perceived this collectively through a series of inter-actions with the people who are continually deprived of rights, access to genuine developmental processes and educational opportunities.

Development Efforts of the Government

An effort has been made to look at planning and implementation of programmes for rural development. In all of them, poverty eradication has been a major objective. Rural employment or development of assets have all been dovetailed into these programmes.

The people have looked at their own predicament in relation to these programmes and come to a set of conclusions.

The nature of examination and study has involved the community in a series of struggles. Meetings and workshops have also been held to reflect on their experience in preparation for further learning and action. workshops have also been held to reflect on their experience in preparation for further learning and action.

One major objective of the study was to see that regular Government programmes functioned. If there were lacunae in the programmes, they be found, identified, and changed. There were three kinds of

interventions made in the Government and its development system. One was to try and use the law. To try and get it implemented. To explore areas where movements for change could be supported by the law. The other was to examine a development programme from bottom to top. To quite literally trace the nature of both planning and implementation and see how much people participated in them and how far the poor could genuinely benefit from them. The third was to study the ordinary maintenance administration and the delivery system. To see how the system really functioned. Whom does it really benefit at its most efficient.

Involvement in the first two interventions has been very interesting. It has also caused confusion within the administrative machinery because of its ambiguity about its own objective and identity. Both of them deal with stated attempts by the establishment to bring about social change and economic equity.

Most people see these programmes essentially as a smokescreen. The attempt in the see study was to take the smokescreen seriously and put the establishment to a test. This resulted in bewilderment and a great helplessness about what to do. It also helped the people to see the establishment for what it was and help bring out the few in the enforcement machinery genuinely committed to the laws of the land.

Delivery systems for poverty alleviation deal with only a very small segment of the basic issues of poverty. Poverty exists because of basic inequalities in land, wages and employment. It became imperative therefore to look not only at programmes for poverty alleviation but also at the basic reasons for the condition arising at all.

Indrani,

Mohan from the IDS (Jaipur) and Brijesh and Shivraj from SWRC, Tilonia are entirely responsible for the manuscript ever being typed. The computer facilities provided by SWRC, Tilonia were also of immense help.

Finally we would like to thank the reader who picks up enough courage to go through this rather voluminous document.

We await your comments.

Anchie, Shanker, Nikhil, Aruna
Devdungri, December 1991

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