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THE NATURE OF CONTACT BETWEEN  
THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM AND THE  
RURAL SOCIAL SYSEYEM: A NEPALESE EXAMPLE

By

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## ABSTRACT

### THE NATURE OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM AND THE RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEM: A NEPALESE EXAMPLE

By

Sharad Prasad Dhital

We have identified, for our analytical purpose, two distinct social systems taking a Nepalese example. The first is the government system which seeks to actualize a certain pace of modernization through a series of institutions. The second is the rural social system which historically has evolved to its present form more or less on its own, with little outside influence. The study analyzes various dimensions related to the mode of contact between these two systems in terms of selected institutions, specifically, education, transportation and marketing, and agricultural extension. Such analysis is conducted under the framework of some pertinent sociological theories.

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## CHAPTER I

### General Plan of Inquiry

#### Introduction

Nepal is a relative newcomer to the process of modernization. Modernizing the rural economy is a major concern for Nepal as in every developing country. Modernization implies a deliberate and a directed attempt to bring about social change. In such a process of social change, two analytically distinct social systems come into interplay. The first is the government system which seeks to actualize a certain pace of modernization through a series of institutions. An attempt is made to diffuse desirable behavioral attributes, along with material means to achieve predetermined goals in the rural areas. We shall identify this system as the "outside-system" in the modernization process. It is outside in the sense that from the point of view of rural people, this system is alien. Most rural people are not aware of the government system and even those who are aware feel reluctant to interact freely with it.

Secondly, there is the rural social system which historically has evolved to its present form more or less on its own, with little outside influence. Since simpler

societies are more directly conditioned by the immediate environment than advanced ones, social behavior in rural social systems, to a considerable degree, depends upon man's adaptation to his ecological environment. Although national level institutions exist in the rural area, their influence is, at best, minimal up to the present time. As Julian Steward suggests: "The individual lives within the framework of a set of national institutions, but his non-economic (in a simpler society even his economic) daily activities are normally carried out within the context of a fairly small segment of society that consists of people substantially like himself who, therefore, may be said to have a sub-culture."<sup>1</sup> We shall identify this subculture or rural social system as the "inside-system." It is inside in the sense that rural people identify themselves with and interact freely within that system.

The process of modernization can be seen as a process of contact and thereby a reciprocal interaction between these two systems. This is what has been and is now the concern of the government of Nepal. Despite the government's effort of the past several decades, modernization remains largely outside the purview of the rural social system. For example, if productivity of food grains is used as one of the outcome variables of modernization at the material level, the data on the productivity of food grains of Nepal over time exhibits a very poor performance. (See Annex 1) This performance record suggests that the

interaction process between the "outside-system" and the "inside-system" is not sufficiently developed to produce desirable results. Initially, the whole process of modernization starts with the contact process between the two systems. Effective interaction between the system would seem to be essential in order to achieve effective modernization goals. Therefore, to analyze various dimensions related to the mode of contact between the "outside-system" and "inside-system" is the central focus of this study.

This study consists of four chapters. The first chapter provides a general background, problem context, objectives of the study, and establishes the general plan of inquiry. The second chapter seeks to gain insights from some of the more important and relevant sociological theories of societal development in general and of modernization in particular. The third chapter is devoted to a brief account of a typical rural social system of Nepal, and to the mode of contact between the "outside-system" and the "inside-system" in terms of selected institutions, specifically education, marketing and transportation, and agricultural extension. Finally, in the fourth chapter an attempt is made to draw some conclusions from the previously presented analysis.



### General Background

Nepal, with a total geographical area of 55,000 square miles, is inhabited by 12 million people.<sup>2</sup> Recent estimates indicate that 94 percent of the population depends upon the agriculture and that 75 percent of the total export earnings originate from the production of that sector.<sup>3</sup>

The country may be divided into three distinct regions. The first is the Terai, a relatively flat plain which borders with India. The second region is the mid-hills which includes the central part of the country. The third region is a mountainous area which includes the ever-snowcapped Himalaya Mountains. Agriculturally, the most important region is the Terai known as "the grainery of Nepal," followed by the mid-hills and then the mountainous region.

The annual population growth rate of 2.4 percent exceeds the estimated growth rate of food production (2 percent).<sup>4</sup> The increase in food production, although rather paltry, seems to come from an increase in additional land brought under cultivation and from some increase in cropping intensity. Thus, increased food production is not due in any important way to increased productivity. Productivity, defined in terms of production per crop per unit of land, seems to be declining in the Hill region, although there has been some insignificant gain in the Terai. (See Annex 1)

The population of Nepal has at least three major racial components. The Indo-Aryans, immigrants from India, is the most important group both in terms of number as well as socio-economic and political status. This group is followed by the second group of Mongolian origin, and the third group constitutes a minor proportion of aborigines.<sup>5</sup>

Nepal, by and large, is a Hindu society which has a caste system. In crude terms, a caste is a rigid, hereditary, endogamous group ranked in relation to other groups or castes in terms of ritual purity and religious status. A caste again is divided into numerous sub-castes. If Indo-Aryans belong to the caste system, the aborigines of various ethnic groups fall outside the purview of the caste system. However, the dominant Hindu culture has a significant influence on these ethnic groups as well.

#### Nepal's Agricultural Development Policy

In a nutshell, the development policy of Nepal centers around modernizing the rural economy by promoting technological intervention under the existing socio-economic and political structure without any radical change. Since 1956, the agricultural sector has been given top priority in subsequent national plans. Modernization of the agricultural sector is characterized by the efforts toward monetization of the rural economy, the institutionalization of various agricultural services (agricultural research and extension, input-supply, credit

supply, marketing, land-reform, cooperative societies, irrigation, etc.), the development of various aspects of the infrastructure, and the creation and promotion of trained manpower. Under the circumstances of rudimentary development of the private sector, the government or semi-government employees are seen as the unit-carriers and stimulants of change in the rural communities.

### Problem Context of Thesis

In the introduction of this chapter, we identified two systems, the "outside" and "inside-systems." We also mentioned that the "outside-system" has more or less failed to penetrate the "inside-system" and to ensure the continuous process of interaction between them. Emerging from such a condition, we made the mode of contact between the two systems the central focus of this study.

If the analysis of mode of contact between the two systems considers those aspects of initiating and promoting modernization, the review of literature on modernization cautions against two major problems. We can call them "outcome problems," as they are results of modernization. The first arises from the distorted and unbalanced absorption of the functions of the "outside-system" by the farmers. To clarify this problem, one example is given here: The Agricultural Credit Institution, a unit of the system of government in Nepal, disburses production credit in the agricultural sector. However, in the absence of

other interrelated functions of the outside-system (for example, inputs or marketing) or in the absence of the absorption of such functions by the farmers, the credit institution does harm rather than benefit to the farmers. The explicit assumption of credit disbursement is that money borrowed by farmers would be used in the better allocation mix of the factors of production, and would be repaid by the earnings from the sale of increased output after retaining a certain profit margin level by the entrepreneurs. But, in the absence of an increased increment in productivity (which is typical of Nepal) because of the nonavailability of related functions or because of the partial absorption of functions by the farmers, the credit institution further increases rural indebtedness, thus pauperizing the farmers even more. Identification of this problem points out the need to see various functions of the "outside-system" as interrelated units of that system. That is, change in the function of one unit leads to change in the function of other units of the system.

The third problem, also an "outcome problem" of modernization, is the inherent problem of modernization itself and is well-documented in the literature. That is, modernization not only bypasses poor people in a given social stratification system of a society, but also tends to pull out the resources from them, thus further pushing them into deeper poverty. The eviction of tenants by the landlords after the opportunity of profit, made possible by

the "Green Revolution" in India, is a good example. Also, Briscoe conducted a very perceptive, empirical research in a village in Bangladesh. Having shown the changing patterns of social organization because of modernization, he concludes: "agricultural development in Bangladesh is essential but at the same time disastrous to the majority of small farmers."<sup>6</sup>

The problems identified above are the fundamental issues selected from the broad topic of modernization on which to focus in this study. Therefore, the major task of analyzing the mode of contact between the systems will be done in the framework of outcome problems just identified.

### Objectives

The major objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the nature of contact between the "outside-system" (seen in terms of selected institutions, specifically education, marketing and transportation, and agricultural extension), and the "inside-system" of social organization of the rural area.

2. In doing so, it is our purpose to establish a theoretical framework against which the nature of the contact process will be analyzed, and to view the nature of contact between the two systems under the framework of two "outcome problems" identified earlier.

This study is to be conducted in the locational

context of the Hill region of Nepal. While discussing the rural social system of Nepal in the third chapter, a typology of the rural community will be constructed. We do not deny that there are some significant variations from one community to another. At the same time, there are certain similarities among them. It is also true that various differences can be found on some specific aspects of social organization at a particular level. We attempt to capitalize on commonalities in the mental reconstruction of a typical rural community. At this point, it should be noted that to the extent that a rural community in reality is similar to our typology, the arguments of this study may apply.

Finally, this study is envisaged to be descriptive, generalized, and couched in an appropriate level of abstraction since it has not been possible to conduct original fieldwork. At the same time, the paucity of accessible materials does not permit empirical rigor in the study. The study, then, must be made based on and supported by whatever published materials are available. To the extent that it is possible, evidence for the key arguments will be provided by drawing parallel instances from other places under similar conditions. Also, having observed various rural communities of Nepal in several years of work experience, the writer's personal observations will be used to support the arguments.

## CHAPTER II

### In Search of Theoretical Insights

Sociologists from the very beginning were concerned with theories of societal development. However, this concern was greatly revitalized after 1950 when new nations in Asia and Africa began to emerge. Along with them, there came an urgent need for a comprehensive theory of development to enhance understanding and to provide insights for practical action. The ultimate goal was to induce changes in such nations in order to bring them closer to the development level of Western nations. For our purpose, theories of societal development can be classified into two broad categories: a) theories which stress the nature and form of social life, and b) theories which stress the causes of social change. Social change often has been classified as imminent change and contact change. Contact change is again divided into selective contact change and directed contact change.<sup>1</sup> If imminent change refers to social changes originating from within its own social system, contact change refers to the process of modernization, which source of change is outside its own social system.

In order to give a general picture, first of all, we shall simply put major theories of societal development under some classificatory scheme, and having done so,

emphasis shall be given to those theories that stress the causes of social development. The area so delimited is of practical importance as it narrows the scope to those aspects which might give some clues and leverage for practical action toward deliberately effecting change in a traditional society.

Julian Steward gives a perspective on cultural change that leads to societal development. He identifies three types of theories of cultural change which are: a) unilinear evolution, b) cultural relativism, and c) multilinear evolution.<sup>2</sup> The theory of unilinear evolution assumes that societal development occurs as a result of evolutionary change, considered to occur in a linear fashion in every society. The theory of cultural relativism places emphasis upon the importance of culture in the process of societal development. And the theory of multilinear evolution argues that the process of evolution can take a multitude of forms in different social systems.

There is a whole array of theories of societal development in the sociological literature. We shall simply name them, based on one classificatory scheme of contemporary theory of social change, as given by Gerald Zaltman and Duncan Robert. The authors identify five major types of sociological theories, which are: "positivistic organicism, conflict theory, sociological formalism, social behaviorism and functionalism. Some of these schools have developed major subbranches: positivistic organicism



partly subdivided into traditional organicism, biological organicism and voluntaristic positivism before it disintegrated in recent times into pure organicism and pure positivism. Sociological formalism subdivided from the beginning into pluralistic behaviorism, symbolic interactionism, and social action theory. Functionalism is divided into macrofunctionalism and microfunctionalism."<sup>3</sup>

Having enumerated major sociological theories, perhaps at this point the classificatory scheme of Szymon Chodak can be very useful to open further discussion. Chodak, after reviewing contemporary literature, distinguishes at least five approaches taken in the formulation of theories in an attempt to understand the process of societal development. They are: a) evolutionary theories, b) theories of development that stress the process of growing interdependence, c) theories interested in motivation of action objectively producing the effect of development, d) theories concerned with specific aspects of the process of societal development, e. g., economic, political development, and e) theories concerned with specific modes of action sparking organized development.<sup>4</sup>

In what follows, since our interest is in those theories that emphasize the causes of development, we shall omit discussions of the theories under the first (evolutionary) and third approaches (specific aspects). We shall give a very succinct version of theories under the second approach and elaborate those theories concerned with

modernization and causes of development.

### Theories of Development Stressing Growing Interdependence

Theories under this category emphasize growing social differentiation in the process of societal development, resulting in growing "systemness" and interdependence. Among American sociologists, MacIver and Page have emphasized the role of differentiation in social change. Social differentiation entails the creation of new roles, institutions, values and social relationships. Cautioning against drawing parallels between biological and social evolution, these theorists recognize that social differentiation can take a multitude of forms in different social systems. An array of sociological theories can be included in this category: Toennies', Gemeinschaft vs. Gesellschaft; Weber's traditional vs. rational legal authority; Durkheim's mechanical vs. organic solidarity; Sir Henry Main's status vs. contract; Robert Redfield's folk vs. urban culture; Howard Becker's sacred vs. secular; F. X. Sulton's communal vs. associational; and the characteristics of pattern variables which are: diffusion vs. specificity, ascription vs. achievement, particularism vs. universalism, collective orientation vs. self-orientation and affectivity vs. affective neutrality.

### Theory of Modernization

For the sake of brevity, we shall limit ourselves to the fundamental characteristics of modernization. At

the very outset, it should be mentioned that we shall abstain from placing any value judgments on modernization. At the same time we cannot deny that modernization is the major concern of every developing society and that different evaluations of modernization are given.

To open our discussion, we shall use Chodak's three basic types of modernization, which are: a) industrial modernization, b) acculturative modernization, and c) induced modernization.<sup>5</sup> Industrial modernization refers to industrial development leading to modernization. Northern European modernization was essentially an industrial modernization to the extent that the industrial revolution altered the very structure of such societies. Thus, industrialization first started in Northern Europe, and in due course of time other nations also were caught up in this process and collectively came to be known as developed countries. These developed countries are often considered models or "pace-setters" or reference points for developing countries.

Modernization of developing countries does not refer to the process of industrial development on its own, thereby leading to modernization, but starts with the linkages established with developed countries. "Thus, modernization is not a self-sustaining evolutionary process progressing on its own. Rather, it is a process of emulation, of the transplantation of patterns and products from the achievements of other countries to one's own. It is

striving to equalize one's own level of development with the most advanced and modern achievements of others."<sup>6</sup>

Acculturative modernization occurs in the process of interaction between a developed and developing societies whereby the cultural elements of the former get diffused in the latter. What distinguished this type of modernization is the absence of controlled, guided, or deliberate attempt at cultural transformation from the developed to the developing country.

In the contemporary scene of development, striving by developing countries to induce modernization is the most important type. Induced modernization entails a guided and deliberate attempt to bring about social change in a society. When communication linkage is established between a developed and a developing society, in due course of time a group emerges in the latter by the virtue of education and/or socio-economic status which possesses certain behavioral attributes of the developed country. At the same time, that group does not become completely detached from its traditional ties. The notion of "third culture" or "buffer culture" characterizes such a situation. Members of this group become the personnel who come to occupy different positions in the government. The government plays a very important role in the initial stage of modernization. As a matter of fact, the lesser the level of modernization, the stronger will be the role played by by government. Employees of the government are supposed to

induce changes in the rural sector. Hence, "modernization is a mode of inducing development from above. Modernization is successful only if it sparks a reciprocal trend at the grass roots, an orientation toward change, variant innovations in pursuit of higher standards of living."<sup>7</sup>

In keeping with this line of argument, whatever caused change in Europe (either changes in modes of production and technical innovation leading to changes in the social and political sphere or vice versa), social and political reform is fundamental in developing countries in order to spearhead changes in the modes of production and in creating a favorable climate for technical innovation. Similarly, while it was industrialization in Europe that gave birth to modernization, in the case of developing countries the process of modernization may lead to industrialization.

According to Marion J. Levy: "A society will be considered more or less modernized, to the extent that its member use inanimate sources of power and/or use tools to multiply the effects of their efforts."<sup>8</sup> This gives a narrow perspective and does not take into account structural changes occurring in the process of modernization. Eisenstadt gives a more comprehensive picture. He recognizes two key aspects of modernization: structural characteristics and the adaptiveness of socio-economic systems. The structural characteristics include economic specialization, the breakdown of ascriptive criteria, the increase

of mobility, urbanization, the development of a highly differentiated political structure, the spread of political participation, the differentiation of cultural and value systems, and the growth of a widespread communication network. The adaptiveness of sociocultural systems refers not only to the generation of continuous change but also the capacity ". . .of absorbing changes beyond its own institutional premises."<sup>9</sup>

Friedland's sociological definition of social modernization is similar to Eisenstadt's understanding. He defines it ". . .in terms of adaptiveness; that is, the ability of a society to confront, overcome, and indeed prepare itself for new challenges by rearranging its social structure. Whether challenges originate from internal social dynamics, from external social contact, from the impact of natural forces, or from other sources, modernizing societies must be able to accomodate to the need for change."<sup>10</sup>

In the process of modernization, proliferation of roles and institutional networks take place. It happens basically in three ways: innovation occurring within a social system, adaptation of innovation from outside, and diffusion, that is acceptance of such innovation by the population at large. Friedland identifies three possible means through which innovation can take place: through differentiation, where a single role or institution is divided into two or more new roles or institutions; through

a recombination of existing roles and/or institutions; and through the introduction of a completely new role or institution.<sup>11</sup>

If the proliferation of different roles is the central mechanism through which modernization starts and proceeds, then it is necessary to increase such roles in the social structure either through innovation from within the "inside-system." In doing so, the content of the new roles has to be acceptable to the members of the "inside-system." In this diffusion process, an effective system of communication has to be established between these two systems ensuring a continuous reciprocal interaction.

Again, the concept of and the content of new roles which are shaped by the "outside-system"--mainly by the members of "buffer-culture"--are not by any means independent. They are also external to those who depend upon the pace setters or developed countries. However, we do not intend to explore that aspect here. But it should be noted that the modernization process includes selection, modification, and adaptation of the content of roles from the role inventory of the developed countries. Such roles then have to be accepted by population at large to give them a structural dimension. Therefore, parallel to conceptualization of such roles, an institutional embodiment for organized action must be built, and a political system must be developed. "Thus, modernization becomes a process of learning--learning about the vices and virtues in the

achievements of others--and a process of paving the roads and bridges into the future of new nations with blocks of concentrated experience from other nations."<sup>12</sup>

Modernization then is a process of change. "The very fact that modernization entails continual changes in all major spheres of a society means of necessity that it involves processes of disorganization and dislocation with the continual development of social problems, cleavages and conflicts between various groups and movement of protest, resistance to change."<sup>13</sup> Following the same line of argument, Friedland reports "deviant behavior, anomie, juvenile delinquency hooliganism, crime, insanity and riots are all manifestations of the problems implicit in continuous and sustained social change. While such problems are found in all societies, they appear to be more serious during modernization."<sup>14</sup> Likewise the notion of "cultural lag" can be fitted in here, which states that change is inexorable and, therefore, new cultural items are likely to appear which do not fit perfectly with the rest of pre-existing culture.<sup>15</sup>

If modernization entails social change, and social change in turn entails a certain disequilibrium in a social system, then disequilibrium is inevitable in the process of modernization. Therefore, the crucial issue is to maintain disequilibrium to an optimum level where a society neither becomes static nor disintegrates into chaos. Everett Rogers calls this state of affairs to be



a "dynamic equilibrium."<sup>16</sup>

### Theories Emphasizing the Causes of Development

The theories in this category attempt to understand the underlying causes of development of a society rather than to account or observe the nature of forms of social life in the development process. Such theories have a strong psychological orientation starting at the individual or microlevel with a belief that change at the individual level will eventually lead to change at the societal level. This tradition of understanding was initiated by Max Weber, and the psychological component of the Weberian tradition can be seen in the work of other scholars. At present, we shall limit ourselves to a brief discussion of the most important and sophisticated efforts of a few scholars, including Weber himself. What is important for us is that if the underlying causes of development are manipulable, then they might provide some insight into the process of inducing modernization in the developing countries.

#### Max Weber

The contributions of Max Weber are so well known that they are considered classical pieces of sociological writing. Of all his work, we have special interest in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, since it focuses on the causes of the development of capitalism. In the beginning of his discussion, Weber puts forward a statistical fact that leaders in business, owners of

capital, skilled and technically trained personnel of modern enterprises of the West are overwhelmingly Protestant. According to Anthony Giddens, Weber maintains that "this is not merely a contemporary phenomenon, but also is an historical fact: tracing the association back, it can be shown that some of the early centers of capitalist development in the early part of the sixteenth century were strongly Protestant."<sup>17</sup>

In a nutshell, Weber argues that the religious teachings of Protestantism, characterized by behavioral attributes like devotion to the legitimate economic activity, avoidance of extravagant use of income, performance of a chosen vocation as a duty and a virtue, and a stringent attitude toward relaxation and enjoyment, was not the only, but one of the most important, factors in the development of capitalism. It should be noted that whatever carried or sustained the capitalistic process once begun, Protestantism was the original impetus for this process.

It is not the details of Weber's writing per se, but rather the implications that can be derived from his work, that interest us.

There is no question but that Weber's work stimulated interest by a number of other scholars, a few of whose works will be discussed later. At present, the most important implications for modernization contained in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism can be enumerated as follows:

1. The important role that religion plays in the process of development of modernization. Interpreted differently, if religion can be viewed as an ideology governing or influencing the social organization of a society, then the right type of ideology has to be developed in a given society based on given particular conditions.

2. Those aspects of a given religion of a developing country have to be highlighted which are commensurate with an ideology to initiate modernization.

3. Frank Young and Ruth Young have deduced practical implications from Weber's work. In their own words: "The Protestant sects were functioning groups, and may be seen as sources of innovation for the whole society. That is, if a given religious sect was able to find an organizational niche for itself, then all of the activity of that sect, including the business acumen of members of the congregation, would be available to the society and would influence the other institutions."<sup>18</sup>

4. Following the argument that a sub-group within a group can give "push from below" in the process of development, a "sub-community" within a community having certain characteristic attributes, if acted upon or stimulated properly (by the government in case of inverse modernization) may contribute to the development of the larger community.

Everett E. Hagen's Theory of Status Withdrawal

Hagen also employs the model of extrapolation by differentiating between traditional man on one hand, and modern man on the other. He says that traditional society is dominated by an authoritarian personality who makes the decisions based on patterns established by tradition and authority and expects the same from his subordinates. He wants to avoid anxiety brought about by being independent and by changes in established patterns of behavior. Thus, he becomes hostile to innovations and change.

On the other hand, modern society is characterized by the innovational personality. He persistently seeks new solutions to problems and acknowledges the causative interconnections of various phenomena around him. He searches for new ways in his pursuit of achievement.

To the issue of how the authoritarian personality changes to the innovative personality, Hagen answers that this happens under the circumstances of "status withdrawal." The central core of his argument is that in a traditional society, under certain circumstances when a group becomes dispossessed of its awarded status, it eventually produces different types of personalities. "Anxiety and resentment cumulated and bred from generations give rise to a series of generational personalities: first, the retreatist, followed by the ritualist, the innovational, and finally the reformist personality which, in his views, is typical for modern changing societies."<sup>19</sup> Hagen argues that this

transformation occurs as a result of child-rearing practices.

Again, the central issue for us is what the "status withdrawal" theory offers as a guide for policy formulation in developing countries. As Chodak says, "certainly not that they (developing nations) should breed innovators by withdrawing status from selected groups."<sup>20</sup>

It is very difficult to draw many practical implications from Hagen's process of induced modernization. However, his contribution can be seen in the argument that innovative personalities often originate from culturally and socially marginal groups.

#### David C. McClelland and Achievement Motivation

McClelland's theory is one of the most rigorous and empirically grounded formulations. It became well-known after he published his work entitled The Achieving Society in 1961 and subsequent writings. The fundamental tenet of his theory is that need for achievement, technically called nAch, is the most important source of motivation eventually leading to economic development. McClelland regards nAch as "competition with a standard of excellence" whereby an individual has the thrust to excel.

According to J. E. Goldthorpe, McClelland cites the success of a ten-day motivational training program for businessmen in India. "More than half the business leaders so trained showed marked increases in business activity.

In the two years after attending the seminar they invested twice as much and created twice as many jobs as a comparable group who had not undergone the course."<sup>21</sup> At the same time, McClelland advocates nAch training for women as well. For, "it appears not to be possible to maintain an achievement ideology in a population which is, so to speak, "half slave and half free." Furthermore, women as wives and mothers play enormously important roles in encouraging achievement in the male half of population."<sup>22</sup>

At the same time, Goldthorpe reports that McClelland's colleague Winterbottom had shown that the development of nAch takes place at a fairly early age (about eight years) which depends upon the teachings of parents to gain a "self-reliant mastery." It has also been shown that if such teachings of "self-reliant mastery" are taught too early, then children can have reduced self-confidence; and on the other hand, if too late, then their nAch will remain low.

McClelland's theory is as much criticized as it is well-known. A few of the criticisms take the form of questions such as: Can nAch be taught effectively or not? Should the investment made in teaching be made elsewhere? What is the guarantee that a person with high nAch will work for his personal achievement under the prevailing social norm? As David B. Macklin points out, they may be deviant and work against the society.<sup>23</sup> Does this individualistic orientation fit into the collective orientation

of the people in developing countries?

Whatever the criticism, the development of "need for excellence," together with the moral element if taught and inculcated, can be a motivational force to stimulate economic development. While treating the implication of McClelland's theory for the developing country, Goldthorpe writes: "In at least one sphere, this is largely under the direct control of governments, namely, in the schools and there seems no reason why a government which takes McClelland's finding seriously should not act directly on, for example the content of children's first school reading books."<sup>24</sup>

#### Lerner's Concept of Empathy

The key concept of The Passing of Traditional Society is empathy, used by Lerner for the combined meaning of the terms "introjection" and "projection." According to William H. Friedland, "introjection" is the ability to attribute to self the desirable attributes of others, and "projection" is the ability to assign to other objects the preferred attributes of self.<sup>25</sup> In simple terms, Lerner defines empathy as "the capacity to see oneself in other fellows' situation."<sup>26</sup> According to him, traditional society has a low empathy, and it can be increased by the development of communication and education. However, it should be noted, as does Douglas E. Ashford, that "empathy does not tell the observer anything about the substance of

the respondent's attitudes, but only provides an indication of the versatility and expansiveness of his attitudes."<sup>27</sup>

In this chapter, we discussed some of the pertinent sociological theories of societal development. A greater emphasis was given to those theories concerned with causes of development. Having analyzed the nature of modernization process, we saw the works of Weber, Hagen, McClelland and Lerner, who took a socio-psychological approach. The various concepts of these theories will be used in our systems analysis. The analysis again has to be seen under the context of modernization theory that we discussed before.



### CHAPTER III

#### The Nature of Contact Between "Outside-System" and "Inside-System"

The sociological theories discussed so far sufficiently stress that it is not merely the accumulation of capital or the presence of physical resources that stimulates a sustaining process of development, but rather a certain socio-psychological drive that initiates a society's drive toward development. Such a socio-psychological atmosphere seems to be a precondition that nurtures the process of development. Therefore, at the center of such a philosophy remains the central figure of development--man. That is, man working within a structural context. Man becomes the parameter and other physical resources and technology are the variables.

Following this line of argument, this chapter deals with the various institutions of the "outside-system" in a situation of contact with the "inside-system." Of the various institutions, education, marketing and transportation, and agricultural extension are selected for discussion here.

Before proceeding with our analysis, an introductory note on a typical rural social system pertaining to the Hill Region of Nepal is in order, upon or within which the

various outside institutions operate.

### A Typical Rural Social System

A system is a unit whole of functionally related parts or sub-units. When it possesses a relational dimension, then it can be called a social system. Rogers and Burdge define a social system as "a collectivity of units that are functionally differentiated and that are engaged in joint problem-solving with respect to a common goal."<sup>1</sup> And when such a social system is seen within a rural area, then it can be called a rural society system.

To start the discussion, we follow Axinn's model of a typical rural system. He characterizes such a system as having eight functional components, interrelated with each other through a linkage infrastructure. These components are all set into a social, political, economic, religious, cultural and physical environment. The eight functional components are a) production, b) supply, c) marketing, d) governance, e) research, f) education/extension, g) health care, and h) personal maintenance.<sup>2</sup> As different components are interrelated, change in one brings change in another. It is also equally true that resistance to change in one leads to resistance to change in another.

When a society is in its traditional stage, all of these functions are diffused with minimal specialization. These functions are carried out through an extended family system and one individual carries out different functions.

Age and sex are often the important factors in the division of labor associated with differential allocations of rewards. For instance, age may be associated with the governance function, among others.

We shall follow this pattern and attempt to mentally reconstruct a simplified model of a typical rural system of Nepal in the Hilly Region. Specific variations in different social systems may be anticipated, based on ethnic, demographic, level of development or integration, and other factors. However, we shall concentrate on fundamental characteristics at a general level which might hold true across the various social systems.

#### A Simplified Model of a Typical Rural Social System in the Hilly Region of Nepal

The production function in a rural village can be analytically separated into two categories. First, the production function can be seen ecologically, that is, the nature of exploitation of physical resources by the members of a society. Second, it can be seen in terms of the production relations reflected in social stratification.

Agricultural production in Nepal is carried out in small, fragmented plots of land. An average household in the hills and mountainous regions (hereafter collectively called the Hilly Region) cultivated 0.4 to 0.6 hectares of land.<sup>3</sup> The farmers in the hills are faced with a necessity of exploiting one ecological niche, whereas their

counterparts in the Tarai exploit various economic niches. This occurs as the mountains, standing as a barrier in the development of transportation and communication, lag far behind in social and cultural contact with the larger society. Hence, economic opportunities are minimal.

Production of different commodities in the Hills depends upon various ecological zones. For instance, paddy is predominantly grown in valleys and river basins. Maize, potato, millet, etc. are grown on high altitude areas. Crops and livestock are an integral part of the production system, where one supplements the other. Livestock provides manure, milk, meat, wool, and power, and crops, in turn, provide the fodder for the animals. Often different types of livestock, like buffaloes, cows, goats, etc. are raised for different purposes. Besides, a few fruit trees and birds, such as poultry or pigeons, can also be simultaneously raised.

The simultaneous undertaking of different commodity production, or different combinations of the commodities, can be understood in viewing the subsistence nature of production whereby a household tries to produce most of what it needs. This strategy is also functional in spreading the risk over different enterprises. For example, if the paddy production in the valley is damaged due to drought or other reasons, at least there will be some harvest left from upland crops.

Often a tiny parcel of land near the house is used



for vegetable production, either grown separately or in combination with other crops. This is functional in that vegetables need intensive care. They last longer in the field than in the store, since there is not any cold-storage facilities available in rural areas, and they provide a handy source of food near the house.

Most of the labor is provided by the members of the household. In the peak season of labor demand (transplanting and harvesting) as well as during other occasions, labor exchange takes place whereby some members of a household work for other households in return of the same at the time of need.

Marketing is done based on the barter system. There is very little monetary transaction in the exchange of goods. Mostly, non-agricultural products (blacksmiths, pottery) are produced by the occupational castes and are exchanged for food grains.

The basic unit of the rural social system in Nepal is the joint or extended family. The joint family consists of two or more nuclear families whose male heads are close, consanguineous kin. They live together in the same house, cook together, hold property in common, and worship the same deities. The oldest man of the household adjudicates intrafamily disputes. He also makes day to day decisions concerning farming operations and other important affairs.

After the death of the main household head, different nuclear families separate from each other, dividing

property among themselves and living in different houses. They often live nearby and maintain close kinship ties. Over time, the separated nuclear family grows into a new joint family and repeats the same cycle. Such separation of nuclear families can also occur before the death of the main household head, often stemming from intra-family conflicts among various nuclear families. Females commonly do not inherit the property of their fathers, although present law states that if a woman remains in her father's household without getting married until age 35, she is entitled to some inheritance.

The settlement pattern is very closely associated with the extended family system. Okada argues that "a ward (a village) is basically composed of several patri-lineage or unilateral descent groups in the male line which typically cluster together in a given section, neighborhood, or locality of the ward."<sup>4</sup>

Okada found in his study of a district that all 22 households of the "Sarki" caste were found concentrated in ward 8. Also in ward 8 were 24 "Chetri" households and 20 of them were of the "Thapa" sub-caste. Similarly, 30 of the 34 ethnic "Tamang" families were found in ward 5.<sup>5</sup> A ward is the smallest identifiable administrative unit.

These various families are grouped into endogamous castes or sub-castes that define social rank, mode of social interaction and occupational categories. Often marriage relations are outside of the village which helps to tie





different villages together.

### Social stratification

A typical rural community is non-egalitarian in nature and the present social stratification system may be partially a result of crystallization of the caste system. Sanskritization, an anthropological term meaning the cultural dominance of Hindus over non-Hindus, is associated with differential allocations of rewards, be they economic, symbolic or influence.

Caste is essentially a social rank where Brahmins and the Brahminic system of values occupy the central position in social structure and the relative position of other groups or social ranks are determined with reference to Brahmins. Ideologically, the caste system draws parallels between the cosmic and social order of life, based on purity and pollution which is ascriptive. Monorific forms of social behavior are required of the low caste in the social interaction with the high caste. As Weber says, "caste, that is, the ritual rights and duties it gives and imposes and the position of Brahmins, is the fundamental institution of Hinduism."<sup>6</sup>

In contemporary sociological literature, according to Greenwold, there are two opposing views of the caste system. One gives emphasis to a purely ritualistic model of caste, where power, social control and social behavior submit to the rule of religion. The other view stresses

the importance of political and economic underpinning of the system. "The basis of rank is the unequal distribution of economic resources, political power and social prestige. The language of ritual purity is merely the means through which political and economic factors are validated and/or expressed."<sup>7</sup>

Historically in Nepal, Brahmans and the ruling elite, Kshatriyas, invariably formed a close alliance whereby one legitimized the position of the other. As a result of these mutual relations, economic resources were highly controlled by them. This is reflected at present in the rural community, where "they (Brahmans and Kshatriyas) usually constitute a significant proportion of the local elites and are frequently the largest landowners in an area."<sup>8</sup> It also should be noted that economic possessions reinforce social status in the caste hierarchy, mostly intra-caste wise, and in rare instances, also inter-caste wise. However, a member of an "unclean" caste can get higher social status than a "clean caste" even if economically well-off, which is also unlikely.

#### Landlord-Tenant Relationships

Land not only is considered a means of economic security, but also a symbol of social status. Taking Nepal as a whole, 55 percent of farmers are owner-cultivators who till 49 percent of the cultivated land. Landlords (3.3%) own 26.9 percent of the cultivated land.

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Owner-cum-tenants (20.7 percent) cultivate 15.4 percent of land and tenants (10.8 percent) cultivate 8.6 percent of the land. (Refer to Annex 2 for details)

The man/land ratio is higher in the hills than national average, and an average family cultivates only 0.4 to 0.6 hectares of land. Ordinarily, the patron-client relationship means the exploitation of the peasantry by the central government as well as by the non-peasant elites. This holds true in rural Nepal but to a moderate degree and is by no means as severe a relationship as in the large "hacienda" of South America. This is true because most of the farmers do not work solely for the landlords; a majority of them are owner-cultivators.

A typical rural community in the hills is characterized by very few landlords (who abstain from cultivating land themselves), a majority of owner-cultivators and owner-cum-tenants, tenants, and then landless workers. The tenants give about 50 percent of the harvest to the landlords who provide land. Occupational castes work for landed castes in exchange for food grains or some form of cropsharing. This relationship is called "jajmani system," a term used in popular anthropological parlance.

As a rule, poor peasants provide labor to richer peasants, and at the top remain the landlords who are in a strong position to extract labor from poor peasants in exchange for food grains and other services.

The landlords provide a basic means of subsistence

for occupational castes and occasional economic help for tenants. They also provide a form of crisis insurance. Prindle, in his study of Tinglatar village, describes how landlords and relatively rich peasants were made to share their grain in the form of loans or sometimes even grants during a famine.<sup>9</sup> They were not allowed to sell food grains outside of the community. All of this was done through a social mechanism of ostracism and public ridicule against those who were hoarding during famine. The landlords also provide brokerage and exert some influence with the government officials in behalf of poor peasants. The poor peasants, in turn, provide basic labor services in agriculture and other supplementary work.

To conclude, a typical rural community is closed, where "the villagers' conceptualization of the central government or the (outside-system) is somewhat ambiguous; for them it is a powerful but potentially a dangerous ally."<sup>10</sup> The often-heard cliché, "always avoid the rear of a horse and the front of an officer," suggests their distrust and fear of the government. The village functions on consensus, whereby village institutions are supported by ceremonial appeals, religious doctrines, norms and values. Often, conflict and factions are as much an aspect of the rural community as is consensus. Generally speaking, it is also true that a kin-group, though internally conflict-ridden, unite in confrontation with others. The villagers also pose a united front to outsiders. The typical village

is ascriptive, familistic, localistic, and non-egalitarian. It is reinforced by the caste system and isolated from other villages and the "outside-system."

### Education and the Rural Community

Education for present purposes is seen as an institution of extra-village origin, trying to make an entree into the rural social system in order to bring about socio-cultural change. Education is used here interchangeably with formal schooling. The importance of education in the modernization of developing countries as a group is well understood and is reflected by the spending of the same proportion of their resources on education as the richer countries.<sup>11</sup>

In the empirical investigation of the role of education in bringing about individual modernity, various theoretical concepts have been used. Of them, the notion of "empathy," need-Achievement (nAch), aspiration, innovativeness, economic and political participation have been widely and cumulatively used as the attitudinal index of individual modernity. Education, thus, is considered as an antecedent variable, which through increased media consumption, brings about the behavioral attributes of individual modernity.

Lerner, Rogers, Inkeles and other students of modernization have given emphasis to education in bridging the cultural gap between the "outside-system" and "inside-system." The fundamental tenet of Lerner is that

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increasing urbanization increases literacy, and increasing literacy results in increasing media exposure, which then brings about individual modernity. In The Passing of Traditional Society, he writes about a worldwide phenomenon where "increasing urbanization has tended to raise literacy, raising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has "gone with" wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting)." <sup>12</sup>

According to Lerner, literacy increases empathy on the part of an individual. He variously explains empathy as "individuals' capacity for identification with new aspects of environment": "the capacity for rearranging the self system on short-notice"; and "psychic mobility." For him, empathy is a pre-condition for individual modernization.

Rogers, in a study of "Communication and Modernization" in a Colombian village, stresses modernization as a communication problem whereby literacy facilitates communication through increased media consumption. Literacy not only helps "to control the rate of print message input" but also helps "to store and retrieve print information for delayed use." It also enhances symbolic manipulation and the process of abstract thinking. <sup>13</sup>

Rogers found a positive association between literacy on the one hand and other variables like empathy, agricultural innovativeness, achievement motivation, social



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status, cosmopolitaness, political knowlege and opinion leadership on the other hand. This finding for a Colombbian village was also cross-culturally validated with findings from India.\*

Rogers maintains that there is a certain point of "modernization-take-off" which occurs after more than five years of schooling which affects an attitudinal variable like aspirations. He supports this with data gathered from Santiago in Chile.

Similarly, Inkeles and Smith combine various attitudinal variables, the synthesis of which they call overall modernity (OM), in their study of six developing countries. They found the following relationship between schooling and overall modernity scores in different countries. The co-relational value is significant at the .001 level.<sup>14</sup>

<u>Country</u>	<u>Co-Relational Value (r)</u>
Argentina	.59
Chile	.51
E. Pakistan (now Bangladesh)	.41
India	.71
Israel	.44
Nigeria	.52

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\* In India, he found functional literacy scores positively related with the following variables with corresponding co-relational values significant at .001 level. a) Empathy (r equals .350); b) Agricultural Innovativeness (r equals .315); c) Achievement motivation (r equals .215); d) Social Status (r equals .253); e) Cosmopolitaness (.111); f) Political knowledge (r equals .343); g) Opinion leadership (r equals .178).

Inkeles and Smith's stance is that schooling not only increases media exposure, but also its importance lies in the general process of personality building on the part of children. "Schooling lays the groundwork which makes it possible for later life experience to give concrete content to more general disposition established in childhood."<sup>15</sup> They identify three mechanisms through which the schooling works in personality building, namely exemplification, generalization, and modeling.

By exemplifying Inkeles and Smith mean, "the process whereby the individual incorporates into himself not a personal model but an impersonal rule or general practice characteristic of the social organization as such."<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, generalization occurs "when an individual enjoys so satisfying an experience in one specific relationship or performance that he is led to believe that he can attain comparable success in other contexts."<sup>17</sup> By modeling they mean, "the child's incorporation into his own role repertoire of the ways of behaving, feeling, and thinking which he observes in significant and powerful persons in his milieu."<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, in a study of Eastern Kentucky in the United States, which is relatively isolated from the larger society, Schwarzweller and Brown argue that education is more powerful than any other outside institution in bridging the cultural gap. It is their hypothesis that "the school system brings about great changes in general

orientations, and that these changes set the stage for changes in the specific orientations of persons in these rural communities."<sup>19</sup>

The modern institution of education in Nepal emerged and is growing following the advent of the political revolution of 1951. Prior to it, Nepal was isolated from the rest of the world, and education was very informal. The family played a monopolistic role in educating and socializing young children. Whatever formal education took place served to transmit the ideological hegemony of the ruling elites, thus it was as much a part of social control as anything else.

Greenwold argues in his study of "The Kingship and Caste" in Nepal that there was a strong coalition between Brahmans and the ruling elites whereby one legitimized the social position of the other.<sup>20</sup> As the religious doctrines were the important means of social control, education therefore was essentially religious in nature, without any scientific base and closed to outside modernizing forces.

The major political reorganization of 1951 gave a new direction to the educational system. Education became more decentralized in the sense that various schools were constructed in the rural areas. The Agricultural Institute of Nepal, which offered bachelor's degrees in agricultural science, was located in a rural area in the Tarai, for example.

Following this event, a reorientation of the

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educational system, popularly known as the "New Education Program," added new impetus in this area beginning ten years ago. This was the first major attempt toward making education more functional by introducing various vocational subjects at the primary level and onwards.

The centrality of education in the homogenization of the otherwise diverse sub-cultures is more true in the case of Nepal, since cultural diversity is one of her most salient characteristics. At least three major racial strains have been discerned by ethnologists and anthropologists in Nepal. A consensus on their subdivisions is yet to be achieved. Even as early as the 17th century, the social code of Ram Saha, the then king, specified four castes (i. e. Varnas) and 36 subcastes (i. e. Jatis).<sup>21</sup>

If cultural change occurs as a result of variation, selection, and transmission analagous to genetic evolution, the isolation of different rural communities for centuries in different ethnic, caste or sub-caste lines, owing to mountainous topographical features and the lack of transportation and communication infra-structure, gives rise to divergent cultural forms. Such diversity may be the result of a phenomenon called "cultural drift."<sup>22</sup> The greater the diversity of culture, the greater the associated variations in lifestyle, language, dialects, ceremonial forms, and range of castes, the more important is the role education plays in unifying different sub-cultural patterns to those of a national pattern of behavior. Therefore, considering

the cultural diversity of Nepal, education is perhaps the most important institution of the "outside-system."

Again, in its role of bridging the cultural gap between the "outside-system" and "inside-system," if education is standardized and diffuses a standard product in terms of content, physical materials, and procedures, then education will provide a centrifugal force in bridging divergent sub-cultures together.

Education then, in its manifold ways, contributes to the general process of modernization. On the other hand, it may not be as effective as it is thought to be, and even at times, may oppress rural development based on its content, delivery mechanism, and cultural context.

Lerner, a supportive and well-known advocate of education, also with equal emphasis opposes the dysfunctional education. He submits that the "literacy explosion" may constitute a more serious threat to human hopes for a rational world order than the highly publicized "population explosion."<sup>23</sup>

Adapting from William James, Lerner maintains that satisfaction can be seen as the ratio of achievement and aspiration. Based on this, if aspiration is increased while the numerator remains constant, dissatisfaction occurs. Education increases aspiration, and therefore, education without the provision of a means of raising achievement level leads inevitably to frustration. Such frustration may lead to conflict and even threat to the

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social order. Lerner, therefore, characterizes the 1950s as the "rising era of expectations" and the 1960s as the "rising era of frustration."

The government is the only major recruiter of educated persons in Nepal, owing to nominal opportunities in the private sector. For a short time, in response to the initial thrust of institution building, there was a spectacular rise in the local educated elites in different important positions. Once the top posts were filled, there was a slower pace of promotion, contributing to a certain degree of frustration in the newcomers who often find status disparity, considering education level and seniority. Goldthorpe has found this phenomenon in other developing countries of Africa and Asia.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the previous point, expansion in government jobs, in the near future, may not match expansion in educated personnel. It should be noted that unemployment of educated people is becoming a serious problem in India.

Finally, still in the present context, the main goal at each level of education is to prepare students for the next higher level, with the number of dropouts increasing at each level. Axinn notes that too many schools in Nepal, even with newly introduced vocational courses, begin and end with memorizing textbooks.<sup>25</sup>

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impact on different communities. We also understand that even if this variable is controlled, there are numerous other variables causing differences in the impact of education. For example, these include variations in physical and other resources, variations in the personality of teachers themselves, and differentiated perception of the children coming from different cultural backgrounds.

Lastly, on the cultural side, various factors affect the role of education as a homogenizer. We previously mentioned that the coalition of Brahmins and the ruling elite legitimized one another's social position and controlled the educational system. Thus, education was religious, philosophical and without any scientific base created by and for them. Having its root in such traditions, education in its present transitional stage is still afflicted by the past cultural inheritance.

Education is seen as a means to enter a governmental job not only for financial gain but also for the opportunity to exercise power associated with a given status. Rewards, thus gained, can be consumed directly in terms of financial gain, symbolically in terms of status gain, and combined as a resource for getting something else through influence. Exploitation of such rewards can be seen in the prevalence of nepotism and favoritism. The cultural basis of kinship, ascription and familial orientation is conducive to such prevalence. Also, manual labor is degrading in Nepali ethos, and education is seen as a

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To conclude, if education provides opportunities of integration at the societal level, it will initiate and promote a process of fusing the "inside-system" and the "outside-system." On the other hand, if education lends itself to the creation and promotion of educated elites, it will simply provide opportunities for individual integration whereby few individuals, due to their social position, will assimilate the cultural patterns of the outside system. Others left behind will remain conservative and will retain much of the traditional culture.

#### Transportation and Marketing

The main mode of transportation in the rural area is still on foot, and a load is carried on the back of a man or a donkey. The development of a transportation network in the hills is a very arduous task to be done at a formidable cost and would be carried out at the expense of development in other sectors. As yet, there is no railway line in the hills and to build a railway may be an almost impossible task. There are very few roads. Air transportation is getting an increasingly large share of transportation in connecting different parts of the rural area with urban centers.

Transportation, besides its role of carrying physical goods back and forth, its role in the process of acculturation lies in the exposure of the people living in

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rural communities to the outside world. Also, it promotes cultural change and integration of isolated communities. As people travel and cover a wider area, they tend to be more cosmopolite and tend to give up the localite orientation. The cosmopolite attitude not only enhances knowledge and awareness, it also may help break the grip of traditions often regarded as not conducive to modernization. The transportation system is in its early infancy in Nepal, and air services are usually out of reach of common rural people. Therefore, its effect on behavioral change is still very limited.

Marketing in rural Nepal is mostly conducted through the barter system. Although a monetary form of exchange is slowly penetrating the rural communities, in the near future barter will continue to dominate the market.

Small marketing centers scattered throughout the countryside definitely have important socio-economic impacts. Such centers serve as sources of commodities from the outside-system that are not locally produced. At the same time, locally produced commodities often go outside of the community through these points.

Marketing centers in addition to economic exchange serves as the locus of political decision-making, as the site for social gatherings and exchange of ideas, and as the contact point with the outside-system. The development of such centers is stimulated by the physical presence of the various branches of government and semi-government

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agencies. Such centers experience the visits of passersby, outsiders, and occasionally even foreign tourists. By and large, the marketing function in the rural community caters to the needs of outsiders.

As more activities infiltrate the rural areas and as more and more of such marketing centers develop, a gradual process of cultural assimilation can be expected to take place. It will provide an opportunity for selective contact of individuals. Although limited in scale, these centers initiate a process of exploiting "economic niches" instead of or in addition to the traditional way of subsistence farming, as farmers become involved in catering services to urbanites and tourists.

However, as Schwarzweller and Brown note in their study on eastern Kentucky, market linkage has to be well-developed in order to influence, to any large degree, the integration of the rural community with the outside-system. By and large, it depends upon "the expenditure of much time by individuals in the contact situation, a large turnover of goods and commodities and, more important, the necessity of making choices and planning specific marketing strategy."<sup>26</sup>

Small marketing centers, therefore, sporadically scattered in the hills of Nepal, may give rise to isolated pockets which might show the characteristics of a transitional stage. But taking the rural area as a whole, its influence at best is only peripheral.

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### Agricultural Extension

Agricultural Extension has a different orientation from formal schooling. It is more largely specific task-oriented. It is also implicit that the accomplishment of the specific task, and even more important, the involvement in the process of getting the task accomplished, provides exposure to and interaction with the outside system. Therefore, focusing at the material level, Extension's orientation is from the specific to general as compared with the general to the specific in the case of education.

Functionally, Agricultural Extension occupies an intermediate position between the source of knowledge, on the one hand, and the target group or the rural social system on the other. Therefore, this linkage infrastructure has to be understood as a part of the background of the two systems that it connects. Having already analyzed a typical rural social system in the previous chapter, we shall now briefly discuss the source of knowledge, that is, the content that the Extension system has to deliver to the farmers.

Traditionally, the cultural practices of the progressive farmers were considered a source of knowledge. The system functioned to help diffuse that knowledge among other farmers.

The fundamental starting point of agricultural development is the breakthrough made in agricultural

technology, the application of which brought about two basic changes. The first is the substitution of capital for land to achieve increased productivity, and the second is the substitution of capital for labor, that is, mechanization.<sup>27</sup>

The knowledge function is mainly derived from the basic sciences. The abstract knowledge of basic sciences then has to be translated into practical agricultural innovations for non-scientist consumers. Here is where the role of the applied scientists comes into play. The knowledge of basic sciences is universal in nature and has cross-cultural validity. However, the applied aspect of that knowledge is less universal and hence has less cross-cultural application. Logically, therefore, the best course of action for the developing country like Nepal is to emphasize the applied aspect of the basic sciences, which is less transferable since it is less universal in nature.

At present, both agricultural research and agricultural extension functions in Nepal are under the Department of Agriculture within the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Irrigation. The research function is divided into two divisions, namely the Plant Research Division and the Animal Research Division. A Research Co-Ordinating Committee, headed by the Director General of the Agricultural Department, is responsible for major national policies and in giving the research a direction. Under these two divisions, other research centers are located at different

places in Nepal. The major goal of these centers vary from a single commodity orientation to a multiple cropping orientation.

There is only one Agricultural Institute in Nepal offering up to a bachelors degree in Agriculture. Although, at present, the research activity of the institution is limited in comparison with that of the Department of Agriculture, its share in research can be expected to increase in the future.

The trained manpower in Agriculture is classified into two broad categories, namely high level and low level. Under the first, all the graduates holding a bachelor degree and above are included. Those personnel holding less than a bachelor degree are bracketed under the low level category. As of 1972, there were 463 persons in the high level category and 1768 in the low level. The availability of trained manpower in the Agricultural sector of Nepal with projections to 1975 and 1985 is given in the Annex 3. This figure includes persons in both research as well as Extension. Almost all of the high level personnel is trained in foreign countries while the low level manpower is trained in Nepal itself.

Historically, the introduction of Agricultural Extension in Nepal can be traced back to 1952, enmeshed within the "Village Development Program" and modeled after the "Block Development Program" of India. Since resources were scarce, it covered a few areas in a few regions. This



program was shortlived and in August, 1959, Extension activities were removed from the domain of the Village Development Program and the Department of Agriculture took it over.

Following through the major reorganization in the government in the early sixties, especially with the Panchayat Act of 1962 and the Land Act of 1964, the agricultural sector got more emphasis and reinforcement. At present, Agricultural Extension in Nepal is looked after by the Agricultural Extension and Training Division within the Department of Agriculture.

Nepal is divided into the four development regions and 75 districts. A district is again subdivided into numerous panchayats. The regional director in each of the regions is responsible for Extension activities in the districts falling into his region. At the District level, the District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) is in charge. And at the very grass-roots level are the Junior Technicians (J. T.) and the Junior Technical Assistants (J. T. A.). They are the change agents working at the contact point between the "outside" and the "inside-system."

Research and Extension are the two integral parts of the agricultural modernization program. The content of communication in the Extension system originates in and comes from the research sector. In the case of Nepal where Agricultural Extension has virtually no influence in shaping research, the information inevitably flows one way from the

research sector to the rural social system through Extension agents.

Such a one-way flow of information excludes the farmers' involvement and the articulation of their felt needs in the research responsible for generating technology, be it mechanical, chemical, or biological. Technological determinism propogates the idea that technology is neutral and change in social organization spontaneously emerges solely as a result of change or progress made in technology. This argument has been refuted by some authors. For instance, Dickson argues that, in making decisions of the selection of technology, the type of technology to be developed and the purpose of technology (that is, who benefits from it) and political considerations come into play. Technology itself is biased in favor of the richer and powerful members of the society. The social relations of production, as Dickson argues, "become reflected in the means of production, in other words, that technology and social patterns reinforce each other in both a material and an ideological fashion."<sup>28</sup>

This interpretation also fits with respect to the case of modernization where more emphasis is laid on the selection and adaptation of technology from those already "developed" and resident of the developed countries. In this process of selection and adaptation of technology, existing social relationships between the various social groups or classes involved in the means of production



exert an influence. Therefore, technology cannot be considered independent of the social and political factors inherent in the context in which it operates. This process seemingly is reinforced in Nepal because the urban elites who work in the centralized research centers are those primarily involved in the process of selection and adaptation of the technology. The farmers on whose behalf this selection of technology is made are not involved in it and do not have even minimal control. Furthermore, the feedback of the information from the farmers to the research centers is only given lip service.

Agricultural Extension in Nepal, working in the context of a non-egalitarian social stratification system which is further accentuated by a rigid caste system and the very nature of technological bias in favor of the existing social patterns, cannot be expected to do anything significant other than reinforce existing social relations. Concomitantly, the integration of the few privileged members of the rural social system with the cultural patterns of the "outside-system," facilitated by the Extension system, can be anticipated to be at the cost of dissatisfaction, disaffection and disenchantment of the large, destitute rural populations.

The presence of a dual society is as much an aspect of Nepal as anywhere else in the developing countries. A few urban centers, as showpieces of development, prosper not only by the neglect of the rural sector but

also by getting much of its vitality through syphoning off of rural resources. This can be reinforced if the Extension system is designed to serve the urban interest.

Most of the time, the village elite is considered to be a point of linkage between the government and the village. Stavis points out that the political power of the large and progressive farmers may orient the very technology developed in the research system to suit their needs.<sup>29</sup> This makes it even more desirable for the Extension agents to give Extension services disproportionately to the larger farmers.

Having seen the nature of the influence of research content on the Extension systems' functioning, let us briefly analyze the important characteristics of the change agents affecting the nature of contact with the rural social system. Extension agents occupy a liaison position between the change agency on the one hand, and the rural social system on the other, operating within a cultural context. This dual system of involvement inherently produces role conflict. The conflict avoidance strategy of the change agent, by and large, lies in his subservience to the change agency rather than to his clients. The Nepalese society is ascriptive, where only nominal achievement considerations can enter. Contact with superiors in the change agency not only provides prestige value but is also strategic to enhance one's own future career. It is intrinsic to the bureaucratic system that the change agents are loyal and

sensitive to those who control their day-to-day functioning and professional interests. Apparently, this has to be done at the cost of the rural client system. This phenomenon whereby the change agents are more closely aligned with the change agency than the farmers in the developing countries is widespread, as reported by Rogers and others.

Also, the organizational pressure to meet the pre-determined goals set by the central authority rationalizes and tempts the change agents to differentially contact large farmers. Clearly, it is easier to work with one large farmer with 20 hectares of land than 20 small farmers with one hectare of land each, if the change agent is to fulfill his annual targets, or if his performance is to be evaluated based on such criteria. Typically, this is what is happening in Nepal. Such organizational pressure in combination with other socio-economic factors is responsible for the differential contact of the large farmers. Stavis communicates similar findings by Joseph Ashcroft in Kenya, James DeVaries in Tanzania, and Peter Mallon in Nigeria.<sup>30</sup>

Based on the cultural context, it is also likely that the change agent might have higher "pay-off" in spending his energy and time in keeping himself on "good terms" with superiors than in achieving something with the client system. This fact is obviously detrimental to effective contact with farmers.

Various research findings have shown that job

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satisfaction in a given position is positively related to general level of morale and job performance. Scaling the determinants of job satisfaction of JTAs of Nepal, Singh and Shreshtha (using the Thurstone's Paired Comparison Technique) identify a number of associated factors. Of these, the top three factors, in order, are: a) the job security (0.502), b) salary (0.318) and c) opportunities for advancement (0.306).<sup>31</sup> In Nepal, once a change agent (J. T. A.) receives a permanent post, his job is secured. The salary level is similar to that of other persons holding similar positions in the other ministries. However, opportunities for advancement are restricted after a certain status level has been achieved. (For example, J. T. A. can never rise to the post of DADO [District Agricultural Development Officer], until and unless he acquires a bachelor degree.) Besides factors endogenous to the Extension system (change agency), exogenous culturally grounded factors highly influence the level of job satisfaction. Generally speaking, at least among educated persons, the occupation of agriculture is held in very low esteem and manual labor is degrading in the Nepalese ethos. Traditionally, incumbency in a government institution whose function is regulatory in nature is considered highly prestigious and furthermore, the sense of controlling per se is thought of as a reward in itself. Also, the virtue of holding this type of job provides associated rewards, symbolic or otherwise, and can be manipulated for

further gains in power, influence, and status. Therefore, a job in Agricultural Extension which does not possess the traditional set of governmental regulatory functions and is primarily service-oriented, has low preference. These cultural factors have a considerable influence in shaping the attitude of a change agent toward his job.

It also should be noted that social status outside the agency has an important bearing on attitudes. A change agent coming from a relatively higher social status background is likely to have a lower level of job satisfaction than the one coming from a lower status background, even though both hold equivalent positions within the change agency. Crozier, with his empirical study of The Parisian Clerical Agency, argues that "status on the job and outside the job makes it possible to predict work satisfaction in 85 percent of the cases."<sup>32</sup>

Secord and Backman report that there has been sufficient research in the past to assert that the effects of a given communication depend upon the place of the communicator and the farmer in a given social structure and upon their immediate relations with other persons and groups.<sup>33</sup> In other words, presenting Roger's view, the greater the level of homophily between the communicator and the respondent, the greater will be the level of social interaction and communication.<sup>34</sup> However, when it comes to the case of a change agent imparting technical knowledge to the farmer, at least there must be a difference in technical expertise

between the two. Hence, it can be stated that the more the communicator and the farmer are homophilous in terms of social status (but with a certain level of difference in technical expertise) the more effective will be the communication of technical knowledge. The research findings of the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, for example, illustrates that the village-level workers with only a primary level of education were more effective in reaching farmers than the high school or the university-trained change-agents.<sup>35</sup> In keeping with this finding, the change-agents in Nepal, on account of being educated, maintain a certain distance in social interaction with the farmers. This inhibits the free interplay of ideas and opinion so important for the diffusion of innovations. This problem is accentuated by the prevailing caste system. The difference in caste between the communicator and the respondent militates against a free exchange of ideas.

Culturally, one of the most ancient traditions in Nepal requires the poor and weak to honor and respect the powerful. The perpetuation of this form of relationship is stifling of individual personality and reinforces the general pattern of making the poor and weak submissive to those who are rich and strong. The seeming concomitant of this fact would be an increase in fatalism and helplessness.

Age also stands as a barrier in effective communication since younger persons are required to exhibit an honorific form of behavior in social interaction with older

persons. Thus, it is also possible that the extra-localite outlook of an individual because of the exposure to the outside system may be neutralized while succumbing to the prevailing social norms of obedience to older persons. This problem is further afflicted with the practice of joint family systems in which many individuals are placed in age hierarchy with corresponding norms of behavior, whereby freedom in behavior of an individual is checked by older members in the age hierarchy. Likewise, sex is also one of the important determinants of communication. Male dominance afflicts effective inter-sex communication. Generally speaking, the interaction of females with the outside system is far lower than that of males.

The nature of contact between the change agents of the outside-system and the farmers also depends upon the level of development of a particular village. It can be safely stated that the higher the level of development of a given village, the higher would be the use of cosmopolite sources of knowledge. For example, Lionberger and Chang found that the use of cosmopolite information was higher at Shangfung than Liupas in Taiwan, where the former was higher in the level of economic development.<sup>36</sup> Similar findings were reported also in a study of one of the villages in India by Sawhney.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, it should be emphasized that conflict in a typical rural social system of Nepal is as common as is consensus. Therefore, if a village is divided into



factions, then the change agent being regarded in a friendly manner by one group may easily have as a corollary the rising hostility of another. In a familistic, informal rural social system, the introduction of a change by formal means only by the outside system is likely to be unsuccessful.



## CHAPTER IV

### Summary and Conclusions

In this study, we identified for analytical purpose two distinct systems, namely the "outside-system" of the government and the "inside-system" of a rural community. It must be pointed out that the latter has developed to its present stage more or less on its own, with little outside influence. The modernization process then, as we have seen, requires effective interaction between these two systems.

This study addresses a rural social system of Nepal typical of the hilly region and is couched in what is hoped to be an appropriate level of abstraction. It depends heavily upon secondary sources of information, personal observations, and supportive arguments drawn from more or less parallel instances from other developing countries.

This study attempts to deal with the theory of modernization in sociological terms and summarized important theories that are concerned with the causes of change rather than the explanation of different forms of social life. In doing so, we attempted to see the practical implications and the elucidations contained in the work of Weber, Hagen, McClelland and Lerner.

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Within this framework, we analyzed the various dimensions of the contact situation between the institutions of the government system (namely education, marketing, and transportation and agricultural extension) and the typical rural social system of Nepal. As to the gross question of which particular institution is most effective in making an entree into the more or less closed community and in bridging the cultural gap, a general answer does not seem possible or appropriate with evidence at hand.

Education brings about change in the general orientations of the individuals which then establishes a conducive environment for specific orientations required in the process of modernization. The traditional approach of education, however, seen as a tool of social control, does not meet the demands that a modernization ideology places upon the community. Modernization requires a certain change in attitude, way of life, and value system. The education system, therefore, should reflect these changes to be effective.

The rise in expectations that the education system inculcates in individuals must be matched with a proportional increase in their achievement level. Otherwise, education can help to increase frustrations among the people, which can be manifested in social disorder.

Education, therefore, has to play a dual role.

On the one hand, it has to impart a change in the general

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orientation and increase the level of behavioral attributes such as aspiration, empathy and cosmopolitaness. On the other hand, education also must balance its role with the provision of specific functional skills.

If education provides opportunities for integration of the rural community with the "outside-system" at the societal level, it will initiate and promote a process of fusing these two systems. On the contrary, if education lends itself to partial integration by the creation and promotion of educated elites, it will simply provide opportunities for individual integration whereby a few individuals, due to their socio-economic status, will assimilate with the cultural patterns of the "outside-system." Others left behind will retain much of the traditional culture.

Transportation and marketing provide a rather indirect means of social change by helping to expose the rural inhabitants to the extra-localite way of life. The development of transportation, however, is a very arduous task, owing to the rugged terrain of the hilly region of Nepal. Marketing, although on a small scale, provides the opportunities for exploiting economic niches other than the traditional subsistence farming. It happens, for instance, in the process of catering to the needs of "outsiders" like tourists, government employees and other urbanites. However, the cultural integration of a rural community at large depends upon the volume of transactions

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made in the context of a well-developed marketing system whereby a large number of individuals are involved in decision-making and in planning specific marketing strategies.

The Agricultural Extension system, unlike the educational system, is more oriented towards ends rather than means. Agricultural Extension obtains the content of what it disseminates from research. And in a situation where inefficiency originating in a given culture afflicts the entire government system, the Extension system alone cannot be expected to be immune from inefficiency.

A highly centralized Extension system is very likely to drift away from the needs of the farmers and may even reinforce the existing pattern of social stratification, thus favoring the urbanites over the ruralites. If the human element is of paramount importance in the process of modernization, as suggested by some sociological theories discussed, then a participatory approach to development must be envisaged. For instance, Lance and McKenna, having analyzed various development projects, conclude that out of various strategies undertaken in the different projects (pressure, participation, education, utilitarianism, placement, empiricism, and hands-off) a participation approach was the only effective strategy.<sup>1</sup> They also conclude that a utilitarian strategy was invariably unsuccessful. Similarly, Jedlicka agrees that the participatory approach is the best organizational strategy for rural

development.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Lionberger attributes the success of Taiwan's information dissemination system to the participatory approach undertaken.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, we deduce the following arguments in favor of a participatory approach by the Extension system in the formation of various farmer's groups. However, it should be reiterated that the very general nature of our study only permits us the presentation of the corresponding general statements and many specific issues will remain unanswered.

The limited trained manpower in Agricultural Extension in Nepal does not permit coverage of the large number of farmers. This problem is further accentuated by the topographical features and the lack of transportation and communication networks in Nepal. Therefore, contacting the farmers in groups is economical and assures a wide coverage.

✓ The farmers in Nepal have been repressed for generations. As a result, they tend to be submissive to authority and the poor and weak defer to the rich and strong. Therefore, to realize their potential consciousness and confidence, a process involving small group dialogue may be helpful in the long run.

Information dissemination through the trained group leader may reduce the level of heterophily between the change agents and the farmers and thereby increase the free exchange of ideas. Furthermore, in a community

characterized by a familistic, localite orientation with distrust of outsiders and government, informal, personal, localite agents may be more successful in disseminating ideas.

We also discussed the high level of heterogeneity of ethnic groups, groups divided along the caste lines, and ecological zones in rural Nepal. Therefore, as suggested by Norman, disaggregating such heterogeneity into homogenous subgroups may be essential both for the development of a local synthesis of technology as well as its dissemination.<sup>4</sup> In this process of disaggregation, if factors like the size of holding, income level, and ethnic characteristics are taken into consideration, then the number of subgroups formed on that basis will be more or less representative of the actual situation. In other words, if there are large numbers of small farmers, based on a certain classificatory scheme, there also will be the large number of disaggregated subgroups of small farmers. And if the representation of each group in the formation of farmer's associations at different administrative levels is maintained, then it will increase the bargaining power of the small farmers.

Finally, we have already pointed out that the change-agents are more loyal to their superiors in the change-agency than the farmers. Therefore, if their primary responsibility is to the farmer's association, then they might better serve the farmers--those they are employed to serve.

## APPENDICES

REFERENCE TABLES ON STATISTICAL DATA

Appendix Table 1

Changes in the Production of Foodgrains  
in the Hills and the Terai in Nepal,  
1966-1973

Hills	Unit	1966-67 to 1968-69	1970-71 to 1972-73	Annual Change Percent
Area	1,000 ha	626	691	2.5
Production	1,000 M.T.	1,174	1,246	1.5
Yield	Kilograms	1,875	1,803	-1.0
<u>Terai</u>				
Area	1,000 ha	1,241	1,317	1.5
Production	1,000 M.T.	2,046	2,177	1.6
Yield	Kilograms	1,649	1,652	0.1

SOURCE: Communicated by Hagan R. Albert, the agricultural development of Nepal, analysis of the agricultural sector, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Missouri, Columbia, International Series II, August, 1976, Special Report, 189.

Appendix Table 2

Average Size of Cultivated Holding and Percentage  
Distribution of Sample Households and Area  
Cultivated by Them After Land Reform

Variable	Percentage of households to the total	Percentage of cultivated area to the total	Average size of cultivated holdings (ha.)
<u>Class group</u>			
i) Landlord	3.31	26.91	17.67
ii) Owner-Cultivator	55.22	49.11	1.63
iii) Owner-cum-Tenant	20.70	15.36	1.64
iv) Tenant-Cultivator	<u>10.77</u>	<u>8.62</u>	<u>1.74</u>
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

SOURCE: Communicated in Agricultural Statistics of Nepal, op. cit.

Appendix Table 3

Availability of Trained Manpower in the  
Agriculture Sector of Nepal, with  
Projections to 1975 and 1985

Category	Available at present (1970)	To be added by 1975	Required by 1985
A. High Level	<u>463</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>882</u>
1. Ph. D. standard	14	3	12
2. Post-Graduate Standard	106	11	100
3. Agriculture Graduates	249	40	600
4. Agriculture Engineers	17	15	50
5. B. V. Sc. <sup>x</sup>	30	6	50
6. B. E. (Irrigation)	47	10	70
B. Medium Standard	<u>1768</u>	<u>490</u>	<u>5180</u>
1. JT and JTA	1310	300	3000
2. Overseer and Sub-overseer	300	65	600
3. Food Inspector	10	10	40
4. Agricultural Mar- keting Assist.	8	10	40
5. Credit Cooperative Manager	140	105	1500

SOURCE: Communicated in Agricultural Statistics  
of Nepal, op. cit.

## Footnotes

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