

**Bureaucrats, Development and Decentralisation in India: The
Bureau-Shaping Model Applied to Panchayati Raj in Karnataka,
1987-91**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D

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Abstract

The thesis has three objectives: to assess the experience of decentralisation in Karnataka to answer questions about the relationship between decentralisation and development; to test the validity of Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model; and to make recommendations about how development planning and administration can be made more effective.

The thesis analyses the responses of state government bureaucrats to decentralised rural development planning and administration in Karnataka, South India, from 1987 to '91 within the parameters of Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferred work conditions.

The thesis presents the benefits and short-comings of decentralisation identified by (A)control agency officers and (B)delivery agency officers from different departments and ranks at both state and district levels.

The thesis hypothesises that if the distinction drawn between agency types and ranks of officer under the bureau-shaping model holds, delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be (1)unrelated to changes in their agencies' programme budgets; (2)closely correlated with rank, with senior (state-level) officers greatly in favour and lower (district-level) officers averse; and (3)similar to those of control agency officers of similar rank. The thesis findings disprove all three hypothesis threads. The analysis concludes with modifications to the bureau-shaping model required to make it fully descriptive of decentralisation in India, and an evaluation of the extent to which a decentralised system of rural development planning and administration can be made more effective.

The thesis concludes development needs to bring together two elements: (1)the organised expertise of the bureaucracy and (2)the consent, support and participation of the people. Both democracy and bureaucracy are essential to development. The Karnataka experiment with decentralisation from 1987 to '91 was of a particular type, teaching important lessons.

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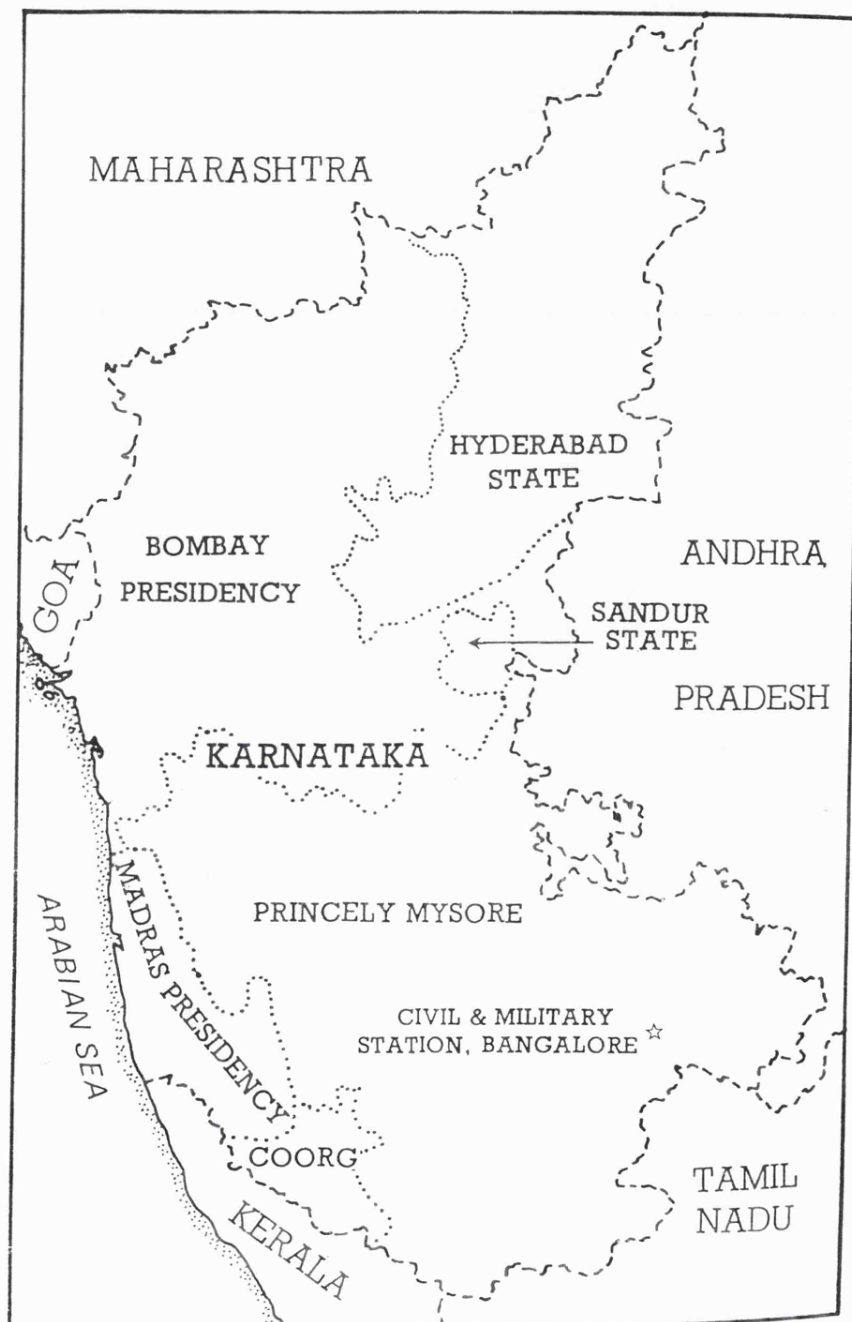
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To my sister Amanda and Grandfather E. E. F. Perry

Glossary

BDO	Block Development Officer
CADA	(Irrigation Project) Command Area Development Authority
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DHO	District Health Officer
DLDB	Dry Land Development Board
DRDA	District Rural Development Authorities
ESCOR/ODA	Economic and Social Committee on Overseas Research/(British) Overseas Development Administration
Gram Sabha	Biannual village meetings convened to identify beneficiaries for government grants and resources as part of the decentralised plan process
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
KAS	Karnataka Administrative Service
KEB	Karnataka Electricity Board
MADB	Malnad Area Development Board
MLA	Member of the (State) Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
PR	Panchayati Raj
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PWD	Public Works Department
SC/ST	Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
TA	Travelling Allowance
ZP	Zilla Parishad (District Council)

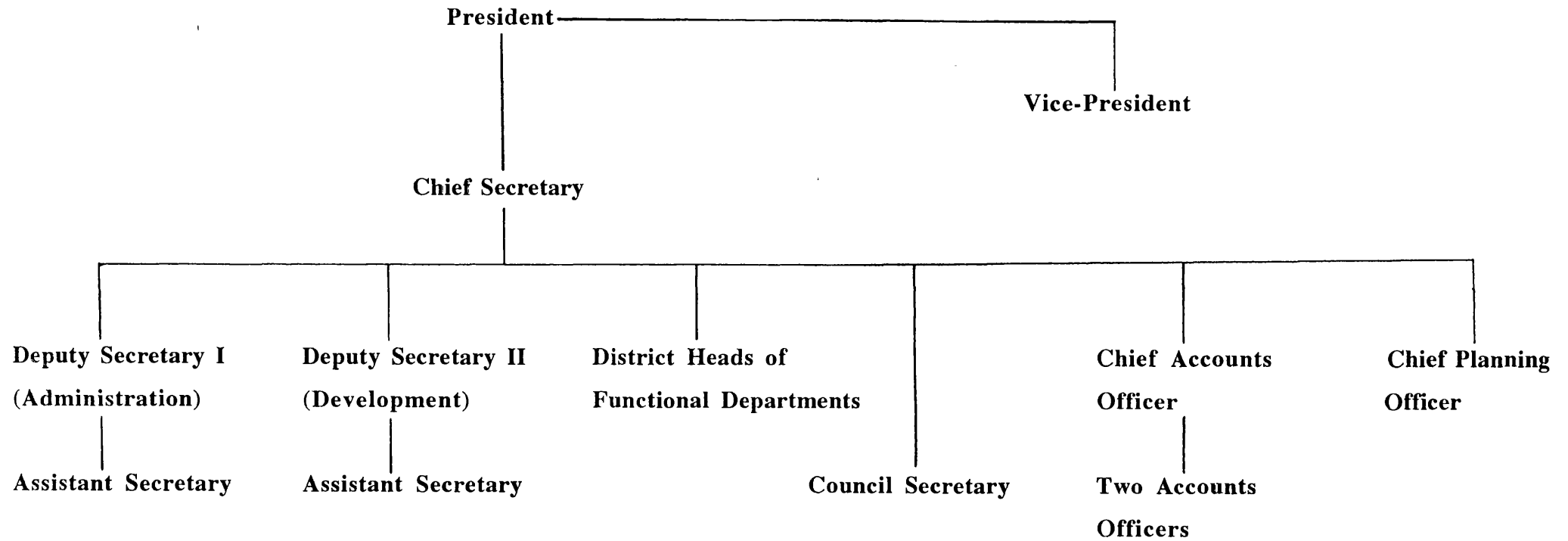


Map of Pre-independence Karnataka

(J. Manor in F. Frankel and M. Rao (eds), 1990:324)



The Structure of a District Council



(Government of Karnataka, 1989:147)

Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1993 the Indian Parliament passed the 73rd and 74th Amendment Bills binding the state governments to establish decentralised government institutions within one year and to allocate them responsibility and adequate funds for local development activities. This research is exclusively concerned with issues flowing from the 73rd Amendment which addresses decentralised government in rural areas, and does not consider the separate 74th Amendment which deals with urban areas.

Although most states were slow to meet their constitutional requirements, many have now held elections to at least the lowest-tier institutions. In states such as Karnataka with experience of a relatively successful system of local government from 1987 to '91, the progress of devolution is of particular interest. However, Karnataka's problems with decentralisation are experienced by many states and countries in the course of decentralising development administration and planning. Research in Karnataka permits an analysis of a population with experience of a once well-established system, but one that was eventually disbanded. Issues that were of concern even where a system seemed relatively stable can therefore be explored so they can be addressed in the course of current efforts to decentralise.

Several studies of decentralised government in India have indicated that critical problems in its operation arose from bureaucrats' attitudes to working within a system of devolved decision-making. During the 1987-91 system of decentralised government in Karnataka officers were deputed by the state government to local institutions which had administrative authority over them, while technical control over the deputed officers remained with the line-hierarchy of the relevant department at the state level, leading to

confused lines of command. As a result some heads of technical departments in Bangalore who were reluctant to cede control to the local level continued to issue instructions to their officers or withdrew altogether from their role as technical supervisors of deputed officers, and deputed officers similarly resisted subordination to local representatives.

An important finding of recent research conducted for ESCOR/ODA by Richard Crook and James Manor ("Enhancing Participation and Institutional Performance: Democratic decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa) is that the effective implementation of rural development programmes through decentralised government institutions requires that the accountability of elected councillors to voters be supplemented by that of bureaucrats to elected officials. There is therefore an urgent need to assess and make suggestions as to how the crucial relationship between state government bureaucrats and locally elected officials might be made more creative and properly democratic, despite officers' lack of experience of and reservations about decentralised planning and administration, and about accepting policy leadership from local politicians.

Research Objectives

The thesis has three objectives. First, to assess the experience of decentralisation in Karnataka to answer questions about the relationship between decentralisation and development; second, to test the validity of Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model; and third, to make recommendations about how development planning and administration can be made more effective. Part One analyses the history of decentralisation and development in India. Parts Two and Three present elaborations to the bureau-shaping model suggested by the research. Part Four tests the thesis-hypothesis on the basis of officers' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka and presents recommendations for the more effective management of decentralised rural development planning and administration in India.

Dunleavy's discussion of bureaucratic decision-making typologies centres on the net utilities, influence probabilities, advocacy costs and alternative rates of return to various levels of officer in proposing budget increments. The thesis adjusts the focus of the bureau-shaping model of official motivations to consider the effect on officers' preferences of changes necessarily linked to, but not entirely comprising, budgetary reallocations, in

the course of decentralising development planning and administration in Karnataka to elected local institutions.

The thesis analyses the system of decentralised rural development planning and administration in Karnataka from 1987 to '91, and the behaviour of bureaucrats within it, using Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model to structure the analysis and help extract insights into the system. The outline of bureaucrats' preferences to which the research findings are applied is modified and agency sub-types identified which allow the bureau-shaping model to illustrate more completely the case of decentralisation in Karnataka. The model is applied to the results of interviews with officials and others to determine the comparative utility of decentralisation to different ranks of officer in both control and delivery agencies. The thesis then modifies the bureau-shaping model to allow it better to describe decentralisation in India, and concludes with recommendations to improve the management of rural development planning and administration.

Research Problems

The thesis presents and relies on a substantial amount of information collected from interviews with bureaucrats. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted from one to two-and-a-half hours. Two key problems presented themselves. The first was a small sample size for some groups. For example, the state-level head of the departments of agriculture and animal husbandry remained the same before, during and after decentralisation. The individual heads of these two departments therefore constituted the sample population of their sub-set. The second research problem is common to all qualitative research: that is, issues "dodged" by interviewees or presented in a light favourable to them, and stems directly from an attempt to present *officers'* experiences of decentralisation.

Both research problems were addressed by triangulating officers' responses with those of non-officers, other officers and official and non-official written material. In this way, both numerical and substantive bias, from officers' incomplete or "suspect" responses, was countered by a broader analysis of decentralisation in Karnataka. A list of those interviewed is presented in Appendix 3.

Novelty, originality and relevance of the research

Research into the impact of development strategies on various population groups rarely considers the effect of a new approach to rural development on the government officials responsible for its implementation, or the effect that their attitude to a strategy will have on its success. Where reference to bureaucrats' perspectives and influence is made, it is cursory - an indirect discovery following from other lines of enquiry. However, establishing decentralised government institutions in India threatens a dramatic shift in bureaucrats' work conditions: devolving many state government responsibilities to the local level means heads of department face losing full control over their officers, while field-level officers frequently dislike the prospect of working under local politicians in outlying areas and fear disruption in their avenue of promotion. As a result bureaucrats are expected to resent and resist the devolution of responsibilities to lower levels while, with limited trained personnel available at those levels, decentralised institutions remain dependent on the technical and administrative support offered by these same state government officials.

The resources available to raise the living standards of the huge number of poor in rural India will always be limited. It is therefore essential that a rural development planning and implementation process is evolved that makes the most of available resources and expertise. Policy-makers advocate the establishment of local government institutions to serve both democratic and economic development: the democratic process is primarily important in as far as it can facilitate an effective and efficient use of the substantial local knowledge and technical expertise available to rural development initiatives, and it is in the interaction of state government bureaucrats with local elected officials that local knowledge and technical expertise are brought together. A concerted effort must be made to maximise the utility of the interaction between bureaucrats and local representatives.

Bureaucrats' ways of expressing dissatisfaction can have a critical effect on the success of a new strategy. The problems experienced by officers offering crucial technical and administrative support to decentralised elected institutions must be addressed at an early stage in the decentralisation process to ensure a sound basis for relations between the state and decentralised government structures, without which local-level participation in

development planning and administration cannot be effective. The thesis explores bureaucrats' salient experiences of decentralisation at the state and local levels from original interviews in order to ascertain in what ways decentralisation affects the technical and administrative support structures essential to rural development.

A large number of less developed countries with different financial resources at their disposal are currently taking steps to decentralise the political and administrative processes. The economic condition of countries has some impact on the success of attempts to decentralise; however, the most critical resources required for successful decentralisation are not financial but rather those resources countries possess in their bureaucracies and elected politicians whose interaction is crucial to the success of their decentralised political and administrative processes. Two resources are critical: (1) the skills and (2) the attitudes of bureaucrats to their interaction with elected politicians.

Bureaucrats' skills fall into two sets: the first designate their administrative and technical expertise. In some less developed countries bureaucracies are substantially generalist with officers in development departments such as Animal Husbandry, Education or Health drawn from a national administrative service, while in others they are substantially specialist with development departments staffed across the ranks by professionals from relevant disciplines. However, as in India, state-government bureaucracies usually comprise a mix of the two with administrative officers drawn from generalist administrative services working with specialist officers recruited by technical departments. To understand how a bureaucracy works, one needs to understand the mix of generalist and specialist officers and the prevailing concerns of each.

The second set of bureaucrats' skills even more important than their generalist/specialist nature designate their expertise in working with politicians and their responsiveness to individuals and groups of citizens: "[a]s an institutional arrangement, the bureaucracy has to bear the greatest strain of converting political and social demands into program[m]es and actions" (C. P. Bhambri, 1971:57).

Particularly in many African countries bureaucrats have had no experience of

making an elected system work: of allowing elected politicians to make decisions and guide bureaucrats' implementation of policy. In other systems some bureaucrats have had some experience of this role, but democratic decentralisation means that still more will be drawn into a working environment that entails interaction with local politicians who decide upon policy to a degree to which many bureaucrats find it difficult to adjust. Nonetheless, attempts to decentralise are easier where lower-level bureaucrats know that their senior officers have had to respond to and interact with politicians, albeit at the state or centre rather than the local level - where a concept that bureaucrats can or should be subordinate to politicians is current. Where an autocratic regime decides to decentralise, the idea of working with local politicians will be new and more radical than in more democratic countries, but in either case lower-level bureaucrats in particular will have had little or no experience of interacting with politicians.

In India district and sub-district bureaucrats have had some interaction with representatives in state legislatures (MLAs), but usually in the form of fairly limited and intermittent written exchanges every few months, rather than regular meetings to discuss a policy. This experience contrasts sharply with that of bureaucrats working in constant and intimate contact with decentralised elected institutions. Nonetheless, an intermediate level of working association with politicians, consisting of prior experience of contact with MLAs and of senior officers' interaction with politicians at the state level, means that bureaucrats in India have already developed many of the skills essential to the success of attempts to decentralise rural development and administration. These bureaucratic skills encompass an ability to provide elected politicians with an objective description of problems, which includes highlighting the illegality or likely impact of policy on popular opinion, as well as executing decisions with which bureaucrats may not agree. The evolution of bureaucrats' skills of interaction with politicians depends on officers' confidence in their understanding of rules and procedures: "[a]ny successful political administrator must bend to some extent when dealing with politicians, must be resilient and accommodating while holding firmly to the law and basic principles" (D. Potter, 1986:229).

Bound up with bureaucrats' skills are a set of attitudes that ensure bureaucrats

accept and implement the decisions of elected representatives. Bureaucrats in many less developed countries hold politicians in low esteem as less sophisticated or informed than officers. However, an attitude amongst bureaucrats and politicians that acknowledges the legitimacy of the democratic process is essential both to the properly creative interaction of bureaucrats and politicians, and to the effective decentralisation of government.

In India the idea that government has an obligation to the people has been widely internalised amongst bureaucrats and politicians as a result of half a century of sustained electoral politics: as Potter quotes an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, “political participation in administration is inherent in the democratic political system that we have adopted for the governance of our country” (ibid:221-222). But studies of other Asian, African and Latin American countries would reveal that the idea of government’s obligation to the people is far less accepted amongst both bureaucrats and politicians. The “problem of bureaucrats’ compliance” is a classic obstacle to government in many countries where regimes do not enjoy the respect and confidence of bureaucrats. A weak relationship between bureaucrats and their political executive results in high levels of absenteeism and bureaucrats unwilling to execute political decisions, with significant implications for government in general and efforts to decentralise in particular.

In many less developed countries the governing regime is frequently viewed with great cynicism by civil servants both because their pay and working conditions are poor and because the government has neither elected legitimacy nor mechanisms to control or discipline bureaucrats. Without an idea of government obligation prevalent in the minds of bureaucrats and politicians alike, it will be hard to make democratic decentralisation work: the attitude of officers to government is itself a resource that facilitates political and administrative decentralisation and any system must be assessed by the extent to which there is a problem of compliance within the bureaucracy.

Finally, as well as the skills and attitudes of bureaucrats, studies of decentralisation in any given country must examine the relationships between levels at which elected institutions are established and those levels at which the bureaucracy operates. Three possibilities exist: elected councils may be established at levels (1) where the bureaucracy

has previously operated, (2)where it will operate or (3)where there has been and will be no bureaucratic structures.

In Karnataka prior deconcentration to the district level meant the experience of bureaucrats working at that level was different from that of officers working at the sub-district where there had been almost no bureaucratic structure, and a whole new administrative structure had to be created at the same time as elected councils. An important aspect of efforts to decentralise is therefore whether bureaucrats will have simply to adjust to decentralisation or whether they will have to develop completely new routines, or indeed will be new to the job entirely. The bureau-shaping model outlined below provides a framework within which to analyse bureaucrats' skills and attitudes and their interaction with district elected councils, to discern the wider implications of decentralisation on rural development planning and implementation in Karnataka.

The Bureau-Shaping Model

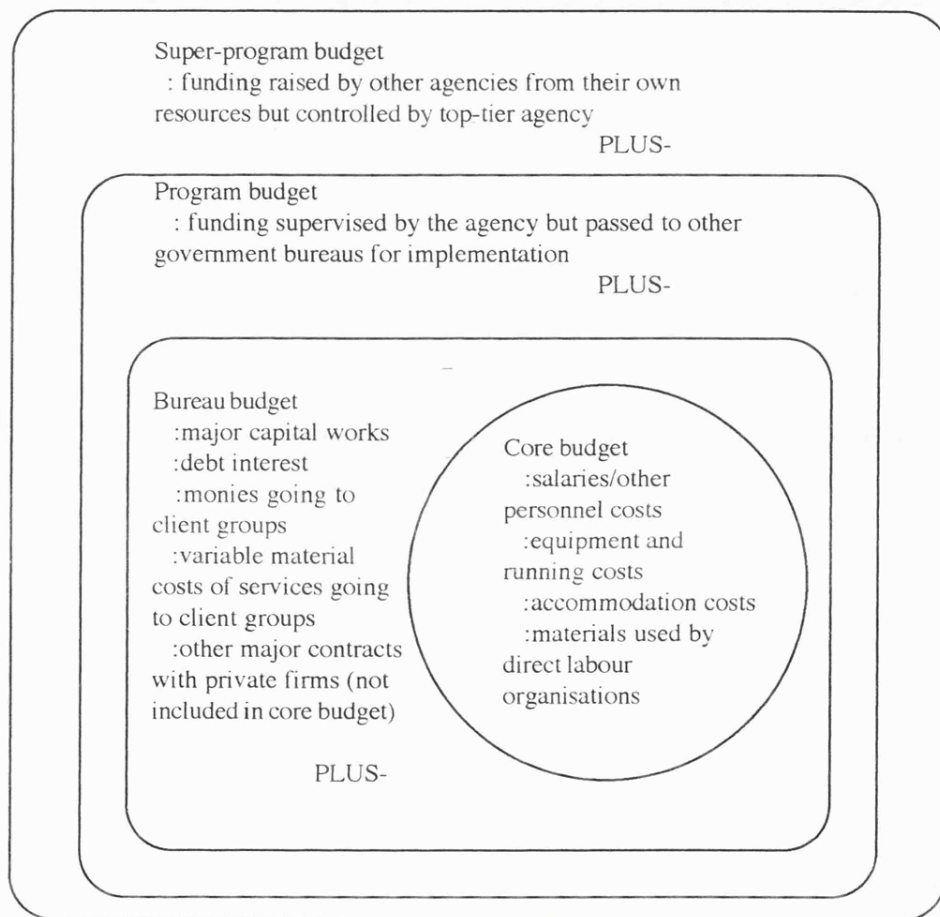
In "Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice" Dunleavy notes most public choice authors describe bureaucratic work conditions as calculated to lead to cooperative behaviour amongst officials (1991:177). He quotes Axelrod:

Hierarchy and organisation are especially effective at concentrating interactions between specific individuals. A bureaucracy is structured so that . . . people working on the same task are grouped together [W]hen an issue requires coordination between different branches of the organisation, the hierarchical structure allows the issue to be referred to policy makers at higher levels By binding people together in a long-term, multilevel game, organisations increase the number and importance of future interactions, and thereby promote the experience of cooperation among groups too large to act individually (1984:130-1, quoted in Dunleavy, 1991).

However, Dunleavy contends that the ranked nature of a bureaucracy "changes the basic collective action problem in . . . a way which is likely to more than offset these influences fostering cooperation" (1991:178). His discussion of bureaucratic decision-

making typologies centres on the net utilities, influence probabilities, advocacy costs and alternative rates of return to various levels of official in proposing budget increments.

The following diagram outlines the components of agencies' core, bureau, programme and super-programme budgets:



Components of core, bureau, program and super-program budgets (ibid:182)

Dunleavy argues rational top bureaucrats “pursue a *bureau-shaping* strategy designed to bring their bureau into a progressively closer approximation to ‘staff’ (rather than ‘line’) functions, a collegial atmosphere and a central location” (1991:202-3), and

outlines five bureau-shaping strategies: (1)major internal reorganisations, which may include geographical separation; (2)transformation of internal work practices, tending to “change the balance of bureau personnel towards more high-level, skilled or professional staffs, improving existing bureau members’ status and work content, as well as their career advancement prospects” (ibid:203); (3)redefinition of relationships with external ‘partners’; (4)competition with other bureaus in which an agency “may want to export troublesome and low-grade tasks to rivals, especially where doing so carries no major implications for a reduced program budget” (ibid:204); and (5)load-shedding, hiving-off and contracting out, whereby central government departments may be able to legislate for the transfer of more “complex and troublesome” bureau functions to sub-central governments (ibid:204).

Dunleavy identifies eight main agency types: delivery, regulatory, transfer, contracts, control, taxing, trading and servicing (ibid:183-7). The successful implementation of the bureau-shaping strategies outlined above means that “delivery agencies in particular become transformed over time into control, transfer or contracts agencies. . . . As a reshaped bureau takes on more of the small, central, elite character - becomes more of a control, transfer or contracts agency - then the budget constraint is eased. Senior officials’ utilities become progressively unlinked from dependence on a high absolute level of program or bureau budget” (ibid:202-3).

Dunleavy maintains Niskanen makes a fundamental error in evaluating bureaucrats’ work preferences exclusively in terms of efforts to maximise their agency’s budget. Dunleavy proposes bureaucrats have a wider range of work preferences, revolving around their work functions, atmosphere and location. These work preferences are associated with the *shape* of the bureau in which officers work. According to Dunleavy, “[r]ational officials want to work in small, elite, collegial bureaus close to political power centres[. . . , rather than] heavily staffed, large budget but routine, conflictual and low-status agencies” (1991:202). Bureaucrats enjoy being close to political masters, giving advice and shaping policy. Bureaucrats seek to shift work functions they do not like through load-shedding to separate boards, privatised companies or local government, retaining the functions they enjoy. In this way bureaucrats can be expected to shift their agency’s delivery functions and to retain functions associated with control, regulation, contracts and the allocation of

resources. The three aspects of bureaucrats' preferred work conditions identified here are presented in Table 1 (page 24).

First, the bureau-shaping model hypothesises senior bureaucrats place less emphasis than lower-ranked bureaucrats on the "pecuniary or near-pecuniary components of their utility function (such as income, job security or perks). Instead, higher-ranked bureaucrats place more emphasis upon non-pecuniary utilities: such as status, prestige, patronage and influence, and most especially the interest and importance of their work tasks" (ibid:200). The bureau-shaping model identifies the following series of bureaucrats' preferred *work functions* : individually innovative versus routine work; longer- versus shorter-time horizons; a broad versus a narrow scope of concerns; a developmental versus a repetitive rhythm; a high versus a low level of managerial discretion; and a low versus a high level of public visibility.

Second, the nature of public sector organisation itself constrains bureaucrats' "ability to increase their pecuniary utilities . . . , whether budget-maximisation strategies or the discretionary ability to divert resources to personal welfare-boosting" (ibid:200). The public sector is structured to "displace senior officials' energies and efforts into work and policy-related aspects of their career rather than into feathering their own nests" (ibid:201). By providing centrally for personnel and administrative support, and by establishing fixed and clearly identifiable pay-scales, public sector organisation reduces officials' opportunities to obtain additional perks or financial gain and "sift[s] out from promotion people anxious to maximise pecuniary utilities" (ibid:201). Dunleavy therefore proposes that "a realistic individual-level model of why people enter career paths leading to senior positions in public agencies . . . is likely to emphasise non-pecuniary utilities related to the intrinsic characteristics of the work involved" (ibid:201). The bureau-shaping model identifies a series of elements constituting officers' preferred *work atmosphere* : a small-sized work unit versus large-sized work units; a restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel versus an extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel; cooperative work patterns versus work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance; and congenial versus conflictual personal relations.

Third, Dunleavy proposes bureaucrats have a preferred work *location*, with a central location comparing favourably to a peripheral location. According to the bureau-shaping model officials value a work location that is: proximate to political power centres versus remote from political contacts; metropolitan (capital city location) versus provincial; and that confers, rather than is remote from, high-status social contacts.

However, bureaucracies are not homogeneous units but consist of different ranks and departments, each of which has different problems and preferences: decentralisation offers some changes to bureaucrats' work environment that officers may prefer. Research conducted by Manor and Crook indicates between 1987 and 1991 in Karnataka many officers developed an affinity for working with local institutions whose proximity to relevant population groups provided greater returns on development initiatives and improved the quantity and quality of information available to officers.

Although devolving the decision-making process gave greater power to elected local government representatives, it also allowed for greater autonomy at the district level from which deputed officers gained, and encouraged an interdisciplinary perspective on development planning that bureaucrats do not usually experience until later career postings to the interdepartmental work atmosphere of the state capital Bangalore secretariat. Similarly, senior bureaucrats in Bangalore were better able to evaluate the performance of their department on the basis of district council representatives' networks of information from the field and were freed from many administrative tasks to concentrate on developing departmental strategy.

Table 1 outlines the three sets of bureaucrats' work conditions - functions, atmosphere and location - Dunleavy argues is related to the *shape* of the bureau in which officials work, and is more important to them than the size of their bureau's budget. (The codes before each work condition - e. g. PV1 (positive value number one) or NV1 (negative value number one) - will be referred to throughout the thesis analysis of officers' responses, and are intended to make easier the link between those responses and the outline of bureaucrats' preferred work conditions.)

Table 1

<i>Positive and negative values ascribable to bureaucrats</i>	
<i>Positively valued</i>	<i>Negatively valued</i>
<i>Staff functions</i>	<i>Line functions</i>
PV1 : individually innovative work	NV1 : routine work
PV2 : longer-time horizons	NV2 : short-time horizons
PV3 : broad scope of concerns	NV3 : narrow scope of concerns
PV4 : developmental rhythm	NV4 : repetitive rhythm
PV5 : high level of managerial discretion	NV5 : low level of managerial discretion
PV6 : low level of public visibility	NV6 : high level of grass-roots/public visibility
<i>Collegial atmosphere</i>	<i>Corporate atmosphere</i>
PV7 : small-sized work unit	NV7 : large-sized work units
PV8 : restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel	NV8 : extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel
PV9 : co-operative work patterns	NV9 : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance
PV10: congenial personal relations	NV10: conflictual personal relations
<i>Central location</i>	<i>Peripheral location</i>
PV11: proximate to the political power centres	NV11: remote from political contacts
PV12: metropolitan (capital city location)	NV12: provincial location
PV13: conferring high-status social contacts	NV13: remote from high-status contacts

(P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Applying the bureau-shaping model to decentralisation in Karnataka

A central element of the bureau-shaping model is the varying cost across ranks of advocating budget change. The hypothesis of the thesis shares the bureau-shaping model's emphasis on the varying costs of change across ranks of officer, but takes issue with the contention that "external changes hardly affect the attitudes of lower staffs" (ibid:180).

Dunleavy maintains “alternative rates of return on individual welfare-boosting efforts are much higher for senior officials (with multiple opportunities to better their positions) than for rank-and-file workers (for whom other options are foreclosed or ineffective)” (1991:180). However, taken in reverse this statement indicates the welfare of lower officials is immediately dependent upon a few, easily altered, aspects of their work conditions, and they therefore have much more to lose from organisational changes than top officials. It is therefore hypothesised that if top bureaucrats face a degree of disutility in advocating (or resisting) a particular budgetary (and organisational) realignment, it is unlikely to constitute as great a proportion of their overall utility function as any similar disutility felt by lower-ranked officials.

The bureau-shaping model describes top bureaucrats as interested in hiving-off responsibilities so as to reduce their staff’s numbers and profile to that of a control agency. In decentralising administration in India, this “hiving-off” involves the transfer of officers to local elected institutions. For the rational top bureaucrat such a shift would be in keeping with a preference to head small bureaus close to political power centres. Top bureaucrats in delivery agencies may therefore be expected to have a distinct utility in endorsing the creation of hived-off agencies, in contrast to lower officers whose work preferences are not supported by decentralisation.

The bureau-shaping model can be applied to explore decentralisation in Karnataka even though officers are hived-off to elected institutions, because control over funds and officers transferred by department heads in Bangalore to district bodies ultimately remained with department heads: funds for responsibilities transferred to the newly-elected district institutions were sometimes withdrawn by departments, and technical authority over officers remained with the line-hierarchy of the relevant department, including promotions and transfer of the more senior officers (Groups A and B Karnataka state government staff) whose experiences are considered by this research.

The decentralisation of rural development planning and administration in India affects the state government control agency responsible for the administration of state- and district-level government, consisting of officers from the all-India (Indian Administrative

Service or IAS) and Karnataka state government administrative services (Karnataka Administrative Service or KAS), and the delivery agencies responsible for rural development activities. The thesis therefore compares the response of different ranks of control and delivery agency officers to decentralisation in Karnataka from 1987-91. For analytical purposes delivery agencies are grouped into one of four agency sub-types according to the average real percentage change in their programme budgets over the period: delivery agency sub-type 1 programme budgets reduced by 10-20%; sub-type agency 2 budgets remained the same; sub-type agency 3 budgets increased by 10-20%; and delivery agency sub-type 4 programme budgets increased by more than 20%.

Research Hypothesis

If the distinctions drawn between agency types and ranks of officer under the bureau-shaping model hold, delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be (1)unrelated to changes in their agencies' programme budgets; (2)closely correlated with rank, with senior officers greatly in favour and lower officers averse; and (3)similar to those of control agency officers of similar rank, as delivery agencies' tasks are hived-off to sub-units of government leaving at the state level a structure more closely approximating that of a control agency.

Research Method

The thesis analyses the responses of officers from different agency types and ranks to decentralised rural development planning and administration in Karnataka from 1987 to '91 within the parameters of the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferred work conditions.

The thesis presents the benefits and short-comings of decentralisation identified by the following ranks of (A)control agency officers: (i)senior state-level (Secretaries to Government and Secretaries to the Chief Minister; Development Commissioners, Planning Commissioners and Finance Secretaries; and Secretaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj); (ii)senior district-level (District Council chief secretaries); and (iii)junior district-level (District Council deputy secretaries of development and administration, chief accounts officers and chief planning officers); and of (B)delivery agency officers: (i)state

and (ii) district-level heads of the departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Education, Engineering, Forestry and Health.

Officers' responses are presented by rank and agency type on transparencies in Appendices 1:1 - 1:11 and 2:2 - 2:11. The first set outlines officers' responses in terms of Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences and the second set outlines officers' responses in terms of the additional and modified preferences identified by research into Karnataka state bureaucrats' experiences of decentralisation from 1987 to '91. The transparencies within each set can be superimposed upon one another to facilitate a comparison of various groups' responses.

Preliminary field visits to Delhi and Bangalore were made in December 1992 and January 1993. Extensive in-depth interviews were conducted with officers as well as former representatives elected to decentralised institutions, members of the Karnataka state legislative assembly (MLAs), journalists, non-government organisation (NGO) representatives, academics, and unofficial advisors to the state and central governments in Bangalore, Dharwad, Mysore and Delhi from April to July 1995 (see Appendix 3 for names, positions, dates and places of interview. See Appendix 4 for questions around which interviews were conducted).

Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into four parts. Part One sets out the context for the subsequent analysis, outlining theories of development and decentralisation and the history of decentralisation in India and Karnataka. Parts Two and Three apply the bureau-shaping model to the Karnataka state control and delivery agencies respectively, to determine the comparative positive and negative aspects of decentralisation to officers by rank and agency type. Part Four concludes with (1) modifications to the bureau-shaping model and (2) recommendations for the more effective management of decentralised rural development planning and administration in India.

Part One

Development and Decentralisation: Theory and Practice

The following chapters place the thesis research in theoretical and historical context. Chapter 2 reviews the literature analysing the relationship between development and decentralisation. Chapter 3 outlines the history of efforts to establish local government in India and the key problems faced in the course of those attempts. Chapter 4 describes the system of decentralised rural development planning and administration established in Karnataka from 1987 to '91.

Chapter 2

Development and Decentralisation: A theoretical context

The debate over what politico-economic structures will ensure the development of less developed countries (LDCs) continues to absorb policy-makers and academics in developing and developed countries alike. Over the decades since former colonies gained independence, this debate has moved from a context of super-ideologies closely correlated with prevailing superpower philosophies, to one ostensibly based on the search for a development strategy suited to the individual requirements and histories of various countries.

The economic development of less developed countries is administered by large, centralised bureaucracies, usually modelled on or the same as those inherited from colonial periods. Colonial administrations were designed primarily to extract resources and maintain control over indigenous populations, rather than respond to the development needs of local communities characterised by inequality, poverty and differing cultural and environmental constraints. As a result, it is argued, bureaucracies in developing countries today are incapable of flexible response to the varying requirements of different rural areas.

The following chapter outlines theoretical threads central to an analysis of development and decentralisation, and to an evaluation of the extent to which decentralisation provides an effective framework for rural development. Section one considers the nature and causes of underdevelopment. Section two provides an overview of the literature on decentralisation. Section three considers the arguments advanced in support of decentralisation as a strategy for rural development.

Section One: The Nature and Causes of Underdevelopment

For several decades, developing countries have sought rapid economic growth in the image of developed countries, measured in terms of per capita income and the average rate of growth in national income (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:24). As a result, developing countries have emphasised the role of “capital-intensive industrialisation under a free market capitalist system, combined with heavy infrastructural investments” (A. Hall in J. Midgley, 1986: 90) along lines prescribed by (Western) economists such as Rosenstein-Rodan (1943), Lewis (1955) and Rostow (1960).

However, policies aimed at rapid industrialisation have tended to overlook the part played in Western economic development by an expanding agricultural sector, to provide both food to and markets for the products of industrial areas. But in an attempt to protect and encourage emerging industry, developing countries have enforced tariff walls, exchange rate policies and public utility prices that are unfavourable to the agricultural sector. In a departure from the (relatively) established economic philosophy of development, Lipton referred to this preoccupation with securing industrial growth at the expense of the agricultural sector in developing countries as an “urban bias” which in fact militates against economic growth by restricting the capacity of the agricultural sector to support the industrial sector (see M. Lipton, 1977).

Conyers and Hills identify three factors contributing to the earlier “oversight” of the agricultural sector in favour of broad economic indicators: (1) the fact that “some of the most obvious differences” between developed and underdeveloped countries lay in the comparative size, structure and rate of their economic growth; (2) the rise of economists in academic and policy-making circles, and their conviction “that economic change must precede any other form of change and should, therefore, be regarded as the most important indicator”; and (3) colonial powers’ interest to promote economic growth to provide revenue for the administration of colonial territories (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:24).

However, an historical preoccupation with changes in developing countries’ broad economic indicators shifted from the 1970s to an emphasis on measuring and improving

the provision of basic needs, defined in terms of access to food and shelter; primary health and education facilities and clean water; and to a means of “self-development” (see D. Ghai, 1977). But it is important to note this shift in emphasis from a concern to industrialise to meeting basic needs has been prevalent more amongst international agencies and Western academics than policy-makers in developing countries (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:30).

The debate as to who or what is responsible for underdevelopment extends from reference to an international economic system, controlled by developing countries who pay unfavourable rates for the commodities and labour-intensive products such as clothing exported by developing countries, to criticism of the inappropriate replication of a (Western) capitalist system in developing countries. It is argued that in pursuing rapid industrialisation and the creation of Rostow’s “high mass consumption” society, the governments of developing countries have paid inadequate attention to agricultural sectors and the poor. Developing countries are now characterised by an increasing internal differentiation between elite, urban groups that have assumed “Western” norms, and the urban and rural poor. Writers refer to the “widespread impact on poor countries of increasingly inappropriate salaries, consumption patterns and technologies” that plays its part in restraining economic growth and continued underdevelopment (D. Seers, 1972:34).

However, a preoccupation with the history of economic evolution in the West is unhelpfully narrow. Some observers offer a more fruitful, broad analysis of underdevelopment that extends to find its causes and/or sources of perpetuation within developing countries themselves. “Institutionalists” stress the part played in low levels of development by prevailing land tenure systems and inequalities in income and access to education (J. Toye, 1987. See also Myrdal). They argue that “internal contradictions” are central to a lack of development: cleavages along caste, tribal, linguistic and religious lines in developing countries result in such a panoply of interest groups that development strategies and the allocation of resources are decided according to overwhelmingly political rather than economic considerations (D. Seers, 1972:31).

- Indeed, Duhs maintains “a balanced understanding of development policy issues

requires careful attention not just to market forces but also to questions of political philosophy and philosophy of science. Careful attention is also required to the benign, predatory or rent-seeking behaviour of the State in recognition of institutional realities and the way power affects the market opportunities and social welfare prospects of various groups" (L. Duhs in K. Roy et al (eds), 1993:17).

The interplay of strategies for economic development pursued by governments in developing countries and the social backdrop against which they are undertaken is important. Conyers and Hills observe economic strategies aimed at rapid industrialisation in developing countries have been "accompanied by a variety of social and political problems, including the breakdown of traditional social and political institutions - which in turn results in increases in crime, deprivation and dependency, . . . and, perhaps most important, increasing inequalities between individuals, groups and regions" (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:25). However, increases in inequality have frequently not precluded improving living standards for the poorest. And an analysis of cultural norms in many developing countries would anyway reveal inequality and dependency ingrained in the "traditional" social and political structures that in turn frequently frame a community's economic life.

Cultural norms play a part in development, but it is hard to evaluate to what extent and in exactly which ways this is the case. Bailey introduces "The Peasant View of the Bad Life" with the observation: "For a number of reasons, tracing the cognitive map of a culture not one's own is difficult" (in T. Shanin (ed), 1987:284). Nonetheless, many attempt to do so. Sahlins describes Western observers of developing countries as consumed by a "compulsion to make a practical "sense" out of an exotic custom that is both intricate and not *prima facie* a matter of practical necessity" (M. Sahlins, 1976:75). The interest of (Western) scholars to explain and integrate culture in an analysis of underdevelopment is linked to the debate over causes of underdevelopment that assigns responsibility to a world economy as dominated in modern history by the West. To some extent Western analyses of underdevelopment in terms of the cultural norms of developing countries reads as a "politically correct" attempt to give control over the causes of underdevelopment to developing countries, while accepting responsibility in the West for having "imposed" an economic system inappropriate to those norms.

But in a very practical sense culture - “[i]ntangible influences . . . - on attitudes, values, perceptions, tastes” - plays an important part in the economic strategies pursued by a community (D. Seers (ed), 1975:1). To the extent culture is “an aggregation of past decisions made by people in something like the same circumstances” and development refers to (positive) changes in the socioeconomic structures of developing countries, studies of cultural norms have some explanatory power and are valuable tools in the design of appropriate development programmes (J. Adams, 1986:279). For example, Maddick refers to the experience of education officers working with the Hadendowas in Kasala Province, Sudan who did not adequately familiarise themselves with the cultural norms of the community and “forced the children to register their mothers’ names thus transgressing one of [their] few taboos” (H. Maddick, 1963:45).

“Culture” determines the broadly accepted norms of behaviour within a given society. For the purposes of development studies, culture is especially significant where it extends to the political and economic domains. Cultural institutions such as the extended family and caste systems impact upon and frequently determine the boundaries within or pace at which change can occur. For example, Bruton refers to the extended family as a possible obstacle to economic development under a Western approach to national economic organisation. In so far as the function of the extended family is to guarantee economic survival in the framework of a traditional economy, it comes to have “negative effects on incentives to work and to accumulate” according to the needs of an industrialised (or industrialising) society (H. Bruton, 1985:1106).

Similarly, “tribal and religious loyalties” can limit corporate decision-making to a concern to favour or protect a particular group rather than maximise profits (ibid:1106). In most developing countries group loyalties determine social and political organisation and, particularly in rural settings, economic systems of community interaction between, for example, landlord and tenant. In India, caste is an important social unit determining the nature of political and economic development. Bruton writes “though in many respects a source of great evil, [the caste system] was, and is, also an institution that gave order and cohesiveness to the society, and order and cohesiveness are important sources of utility”

(ibid:1106). However, caste loyalties also limit the economic strategies available to individuals. Under a strict analysis and in most rural areas, the caste into which individuals are born determines their occupation. A social structure arranged around caste ties members of different groups into relationships of dependency where each requires the other to perform the work to which their caste ascribes them, and any change in this relationship is resisted.

But even within as traditional and rigid a form of social organisation as caste, there is room for an individual member to decide to what extent to take their membership of the group. Rudolph and Rudolph describe the political manifestation of caste, caste associations. They observe "Membership in caste associations is *not* purely ascriptive; birth in the caste is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for membership. One must also "join" . . . through some conscious act involving various degrees of identification - ranging from attendance at caste association meetings or voting for candidates supported by caste association leaders, to paying membership dues" (L. Rudolph and S. Rudolph in C. Welch (ed), 1967:129).

The relationship between caste associations and the nation-state has a broader significance to India's political and economic development than do tribal, religious and linguistic groups:

Tribal, religious and linguistic groups on the Indian scene represent *potential* political communities, which may claim (and often have claimed) a separate political identity, either in the form of a sovereign state or an autonomous unit in a federal system. Caste and its political expression, the caste association, have no such aspiration. Caste is a part of Hindu society; its meaning as a social institution is found in the values of Hindu culture. In this sense, all castes share a common culture, purpose and identity. The caste association is concerned with the distribution of values, status and rewards within a larger unit of action (ibid:134).

Caste association is perhaps the only form of "natural associations" whose interests have been absorbed by, rather than themselves subsuming, political parties.

The agricultural sector is of particular significance to an analysis of

underdevelopment because developing countries are predominantly rural, both in terms of population numbers and economic activity. The literature considering the nature of the “peasantry” and peasant cultures therefore provides a useful base from which to consider the process of political and economic development in less developed countries.

Agricultural communities in developing countries are variously described. For example, Ortiz refers to agricultural communities determined by a “culture of repression”; Scott describes a “rational peasantry”; Adams refers to a demerational and frankly “indifferent, inefficient” peasantry.

However, a theme running through all descriptions of the agricultural sector in developing countries is the close-knit socioeconomic structure of rural communities dominated by a dependency of the poor on the less poor, and the difficulty of integrating into farming practices “outside” official skills, resources and technologies. Social norms in rural societies have evolved in response to subsistence-level farming which holds the poor majority hostage to the “primacy of survival”, such that farmers’ “avenues to pursue risky self-aggrandisement [are] few and narrow” (Adams, 1986:278). Poor farmers cannot afford to deviate from long-established relationships of patronage between tenant and landowner to explore different crops and farming techniques proposed by outside authorities.

Ortiz observes peasants in Peru demonstrate a (rational) fear of authority, hunger and the possibility of losing land. Children are taught to avoid contact with strangers. Social change is discouraged. “Poverty is accepted as inevitable and innovation is regarded as pathological behaviour. . . . [Peasants’] perceptions become internalised and institutionalised and constitute the lens through which they view the real world, even when the real world changes and offers them more rewarding opportunities” (Ortiz in T. Shanin (ed), 1987:301). In order to develop, these protective mechanisms “must” change.

Scott describes a “rational” peasant culture based on securing a minimum for survival. Under this analysis, cultural norms determine modes of agricultural production: notions of individual rights are subsumed by considerations of the economic community. The pre-capitalist peasant society described by Scott revolves around a relationship between landowners and tenants designed to guarantee subsistence. This relationship includes

labour exchange, money-lending and “favourable” terms in the event of crop failure. According to Scott, the basic principle guiding rural relations is “all should have a place, a living, not that all should be equal” (J. Scott, 1976:40, quoted in R. Wade, 1988). Scott observes: “Although the desire for subsistence grew out of the needs of cultivators - out of peasant economics - it was socially experienced as a pattern of moral rights and expectations. . . . The violation of these standards could be expected to provoke resentment and resistance not only because needs were unmet, but because rights were violated” (J. Scott in T. Shanin (ed), 1987:307).

The ways in which peasants perceive their situation and respond to outsiders is important to development given the “guiding” role assumed by government and aid agency officers in rural areas. Bailey describes peasants as testing outsiders’ cultural credentials in order to determine which persons to respect, avoid, ignore or outwit. This “test” includes an evaluation of dress and speech in the context of a community’s cultural norms. “Suggestions or commands to assume modern political and economic roles come from outside the moral community; they are therefore automatically categorised as dangerous and sinful, and those villagers who adopt the new roles run the risk of being marked as deviants and punished. Equally, if any innovation does in fact turn out to be harmful (for example, the improved seed that fails) the villager does not feel obliged to search for what he would regard as a rational scientific cause; he finds a perfectly satisfactory explanation in the fact that it came from outside; and he also finds confirmation of his perception that external things are evil and dangerous” (F. Bailey in T. Shanin (ed) 1987:285-6. See also J. Kautsky (ed), 1962).

Poor farmers’ “resistance to innovation” (I. Roxborough, 1979:103) is now recognised as a logical reaction to the “high element of risk attached” to adopting new techniques at levels of production close to subsistence which, should they fail, incur “the real risk of starvation” (ibid:103).

As Adams observes, “innovation in . . . agriculture is more than a simple matter of getting prices right . . . [E]conomic resources, communication and cultural factors all ha[ve] to be given weight” (J. Adams, 1986:276). Some writers (see, for example,

Schultz, 1964) have attempted to extrapolate from theoretical constructs of the peasantry as rational allocators of resources one of peasants as rational innovators, who can move between the traditional and the modern according to price advantage. However, Adams asserts peasant farmers are “in a particularly poor position to acquire information about future prices of products and inputs. With reason, [poor farmers] are dubious about the advice of authorities who trumpet the virtues of new crops or techniques. They cannot know whether their crops will be affected by pests, diseases, or shortcomings of the weather. . . . Peasants lack information and when they have information they cannot be certain about its validity. They simply cannot be allocatively or axiomatically rational under such conditions” (ibid:277).

Scott rejects “the profit maximisation calculus of traditional neoclassical economics”, suggesting instead “the study of the moral economy of the peasantry, while it begins in the domain of economics, must end in the study of peasant culture and religion” (quoted in J. Adams, 1986:277). The economic activity of the rational peasant is circumscribed by his social circumstances.

As may be expected, economic, political and social elements are closely linked in development studies, and all are similarly affected by prevailing cultural norms. According to Bruton economic development occurs in a sociopolitical structure impacted by broader considerations than the purely economic:

[T]he market mechanism - the economic system - functions in a larger environment; and this larger environment has consequences for the way the market functions. . . . The explanation of how it functions is found in part by examining the market mechanism itself and in part by an examination of the nonmarket institutions and rules that have a bearing on the way the market performs. . . . What then is do-able in the economy is circumscribed by this social environment, as well as by the conventionally defined economic constraints (H. Bruton, 1985:1107-8).

Bruton warns of the dangers of sacrificing indigenous cultures in the establishment of Western-style institutions. Political structures in developing countries must not detract from “national” cultures which provide “the variety and diversity that . . . is a major condition for the long-run resolutions of continually surfacing problems” (H. Bruton,

1985:1102). Sacrificing cultural diversity “removes or narrows the possible sources of new insight and understanding” of national political, economic and social problems (ibid:1102).

In his discussion of modernisation and political development, Huntington maintains “[r]apid increases in mobilisation and participation, the principal political aspects of modernisation, undermine political institutions” in developing countries by making increasing demands on the political system at a rate it cannot absorb (S. Huntington in C. Welch (ed), 1967:208). He suggests an analysis of political development should be focused on the “reciprocal interaction between the on-going social processes of modernisation, on the one hand, and the strength, stability, or weakness of political structures, traditional, transitional, or modern, on the other” (ibid:214). Indeed, Bruton maintains “traditions and practices having to do with religious and family matters . . . may be looked upon as fixed, . . . and development is intended to take place around them” (H. Bruton, 1985:1108).

There are therefore a variety of political and philosophical elements as well as economic issues impacting development and development studies. Duhs states “development and the advancement of social welfare are not simply value-neutral concepts, analytically approached by objective, “scientific”, theory; . . . value judgments are essential as a basis for policy aimed at improving social welfare” (L. Duhs in K. Roy et al (eds), 1993:16-17).

According to Seers, states are “developed” once “conditions for the realisation of human personality” prevail (D. Seers, 1969:21). However, measuring such conditions and identifying when indeed they have been achieved remain problematic. A dependence on economic indicators such as the reduction of inequality may obscure the analysis, but it seems undeniable that the soaring birth rate in many countries combines with a highly unproductive agricultural sector to restrain growth, and sometimes further diminishes the incomes and quality of life of the poorest.

The search for “appropriate” development strategies depends on identifying and

improving national social indicators such as birth and death rates, nutrition, and the provision of basic health and education in the context of great poverty. However, improving levels of nutrition, the provision of primary health and education facilities and increasing employment opportunities often depends more on the ability of national political structures to direct, rather than to generate additional, resources.

Roxborough suggests “underdevelopment is largely due to *misallocation*, rather than the absolute absence of resources”. He argues “it should be possible to reallocate existing resources so as to increase the rate of growth without severe sacrifices on the part of any sector of the population” (I. Roxborough, 1979:115). This contention implies the capacity to develop is within the internally-contained means of less developed countries. Further, it implies economic development can be achieved with a minimum of protest from powerful interest groups. Governments, rather than the external economic environment, are increasingly held responsible for low levels of economic growth and agricultural production. Less developed countries have frequently pursued urban-based, politically--motivated economic strategies that increase the cost of agricultural inputs and decrease the amounts paid to farmers for their produce, to the detriment of small farmers in particular and economic growth overall (see M. Lipton, 1977).

Faced with continued underdevelopment following decades of failed development strategies, the international donor community has adopted decentralisation as a central tenet of a condition that developing countries demonstrate “good governance” in return for aid (see World Bank, 1989 and 1991). The term good governance bears some relation to Western concepts of democracy - to the “diffusion of power [that] is a necessary aspect of development [and] can bring about that degree of meaningful participation which enlarges choice and experience, develops responsibility, and enhances human dignity” (R. Braibanti (ed), 1969:48). This wholehearted support for democracy and participation is extended by Western observers with the warning “efforts to sedate, repress or delay such diffusion [of power] should be regarded with some wariness since they may be subterfuges for authoritarianism” (ibid:48).

In most developing countries it remains to government agencies to encourage or

actively establish participatory structures in rural areas. In his 1988 study of village organisation in South India, Wade observes “no clearly defined social domain or institution separate from state authority where choices of a “public” nature are organised; no centre of community management other than the bottom levels of the state apparatus; no administrative staff; and no machinery for raising resources for public purposes other than through state-sanctioned taxation” (R. Wade, 1988:4). He quotes Marx: the “prime necessity of an economical and common use of water, which, in the Occident, drove private enterprises to voluntary association, as in Flanders and Italy, necessitated in the Orient where civilisation was too low and the territorial extent too vast to call into life voluntary association, the interference of the centralising power of Government” (quoted *ibid*:5). Wade continues that, “[g]iven all this, the absence of a concrete political realm in Indian villages, autonomous from the state, comes as no surprise” (*ibid*:5). In this context, local government institutions assume great significance as the only formal locally-based political structure with a role in rural economic development.

The British colonial administration of South India provided the ““thinnest” administration of any area of British India”, with large districts, sometimes twice the size of those in North India, and a small number of officials (*ibid*:26). “As long as the revenue flowed out of the localities and order was maintained, the British government left its officials alone” to create their own empires based on existing village power structures (*ibid*:28. See also Washbrook, 1977). This intensely politic approach to government adopted by the British inclined leaders of the struggle for freedom from British rule in India to an argument that “self-government is better than efficient government” (J. Heaphey (ed), 1971:26).

In many developing countries, “experienced administrators have often been regarded with distrust because of their former loyalty to the colonial regimes. Furthermore, it was not unusual for those who learned administration from colonial tutors to look upon their jobs as nothing more than trading services and loyalty for more money” (*ibid*:26). This trend has been extended to a general corruption of politics and administration and an exploitative nexus formed between the two, particularly over the transfer of officers and the award of construction and supply contracts for rural development projects.

Summary conclusions

A variety of factors contribute to the nature and extent of underdevelopment in a given country. The predominant social, political and economic structures observable in less developed countries both determined and are influenced by colonial history and a country's position in the world politico-economic system. The ways in and extent to which social, political and economic elites have evolved, overlap, interact or compete are complex, interrelated elements determining the nature and pace of change in developing and developed countries. But in developing countries elites have access to and control over a larger proportion of social and economic "goods" than they do in developed countries. However, these elites frequently operate within fairly clearly defined boundaries of influence.

Wade observes governments in developing countries have a "limited ability to reach into villages and push aside or absorb systems of rule that stand in [their] way; that is a limited ability to control or meddle" (R. Wade, 1988:36). To the extent some states are interested to "control or meddle" in rural areas to promote more appropriate and efficient rural development programmes by establishing local institutions, it is worth considering theories of local government.

Section Two: Theories of Decentralisation

Mort and Studenski assert excessive centralisation "(1)promotes the rule of an irresponsible national bureaucracy and destroys democracy; (2)results in a neglect of local needs; (3)destroys local civic interest, initiative, responsibility, individual freedom and self-reliance; (4)results in the instability of governmental policies, and of the government itself; (5)results in inefficiency and waste; (6)produces a congestion of business, industry, arts and culture in the capital and the economic and cultural decay of the rest of the country; and (7)weakens national unity and national security" (P. Mort and P. Studenski, 1941:52).

Local government is proposed to counter excessive centralisation and hear and meet local needs. However, in order to meet local needs a decentralised system must include the provision to elect and empower local representatives. Where central government is

considered always to have the last say, the result, “even in England where the modern concept of democracy has developed”, is local government with less able or apathetic representatives (S. Sadek, 1972:274). The significant and convincing decentralisation of government functions and resources to local government institutions are therefore required to attract the “high calibre” representatives that are crucial to ensuring local needs are identified and met, for which decentralisation is frequently proposed.

However, excessive decentralisation has shortcomings comparable to excessive centralisation: “(1)it results in an inefficient and uneconomic management of local affairs; (2)it fosters local autocratic rule by petty officials and powerful minority groups; (3)it breeds narrow parochialism, and produces national and regional disunity and disorganisation; (4)it results in extreme inequality in the standards of public service and protection of civil rights throughout the country or region; (5)it produces inertia and extreme rigidity in the organisation and operation of the government; and, finally, (6)it lessens national security” (P. Mort and P. Studenski, 1941:21).

Authors outline a variety of definitions and categories of decentralisation. Maddick refers to several terms in his discussion of decentralisation and development:

deconcentration - “the delegation of authority adequate for the discharge of specified functions to staff of a central department who are situated outside the headquarters”;
devolution - “the legal conferring of powers to discharge specified or residual functions upon formally constituted local authorities”; and *decentralisation* - “embracing both processes of deconcentration and devolution” (H. Maddick, 1963:23).

Macmahon identifies two factors which influence the nature of decentralisation: “the basis of division (which may be territorial or non-territorial) and the source of power (which may be derived from the centre or be attended by some degree of self-direction)” (A. Macmahon, 1961:20). The political philosophy attending decentralisation is also significant. Heaphey notes an important difference between the French and British approach to colonial administration, although the British colonial system was based on the Napoleonic system in France: the British worked through traditional authority structures, while the French “sought to match colonial governmental structure with typical French

structures” (J. Heaphey (ed), 1971:19). Under the Napoleonic system in France, a territory is divided into departments, each with a Prefect appointed by the central government. Specialist technical officers work under the Prefect, to whom central government instructions are issued (see H. Machin in J. Lagroye and V. Wright (eds), 1979).

Three patterns of decentralisation emerge from Macmahon’s analysis: constitutional devolution, statutory devolution and administrative deconcentration (A. Macmahon, 1961:20). These forms of decentralisation are, in turn, manifest in a decentralisation of functions to separate field services, or to prefectures - decentralisation to a local administration under an appointee of the centre (or state/province) (ibid:31-35). But even within any one classification of decentralisation, variations may occur over time or space. Heaphey notes the history of British colonial administration through the district officer “could be written as a movement back and forth between the doctrine that indigenous people have extensive political rights and the doctrine that they are “the white man’s burden” to be led by the district officer” (J. Heaphey (ed), 1971:18).

A distinction is drawn by some writers between autonomous and semi-autonomous devolution (G. Cheema and D. Rondinelli (eds), 1983:22). Cheema includes in his definition of decentralisation the delegation of responsibilities to semi-autonomous public corporations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (ibid:203). However, because the distinction between autonomous and semi-autonomous devolution relies upon relations between the central government and local units which will always depend to some - usually a financial - extent on that central government, it is impossible to describe a subsidiary unit of government in any system as “autonomous”.

Within any state, higher, legislating bodies always ultimately determine the prevailing style of and resources made available to a decentralised administration, even if the functions it performs do not require direct supervision by higher levels (see G. Cheema and D. Rondinelli (eds), 1983:21). Indeed, Fesler refers to a total political backdrop against which decentralisation is undertaken, allowing for the possibility of “illusory decentralisation” whereby functions and powers that appear to be assigned to lower levels

of government continue in fact to be substantially exercised by a central authority (J. Fesler 1965:550).

Mawhood's definition of decentralisation requires "the creation of bodies separated by law from the national centre, in which local representatives are given formal power to decide on a range of public matters" (ibid:1-2) - democratic decentralisation. Mawhood maintains representative institutions are required at local levels whose "political base is the locality and not - as it is with the commissioners and civil servants - the nation. Their area of authority is limited, but within that are their right to make decisions is entrenched by the law and can only be altered by new legislation" (P. Mawhood, 1993:2).

In a paper prepared for the World Bank, Tanzi draws a distinction between fiscal and administrative decentralisation. "Fiscal decentralisation exists when subnational governments have the power . . . to raise (some) taxes and to carry out spending activities within clearly established legal criteria. Administrative decentralisation exists when much of the money is raised centrally but part of it is allocated to decentralised entities that carry out their spending activities under close guidelines or controls imposed by the central government" (V. Tanzi, 1995:4-5). However, local level institutions in developing countries rarely collect taxes, because of political and administrative constraints.

The success of decentralising initiatives depends upon the powers and resources allocated to decentralised institutions by higher levels of government. Sadek refers to a number of elements reducing the inclination to decentralise: (1) Political: "political parties or organisations dominated by the top cadres of the executive . . . [who] have the power to legislate and to allocate funds for various purposes and to different recipients"; (2) Sociological: "the rise of the bourgeoisie . . . [who] prefer to live in the capital or in large cities. . . . This all helps to weaken the position of the rural areas and increase their dependence on central government"; (3) Administrative: "the rickety local government structure, erected on out-of-date foundations (preserving the same tiers, the area size and concept of central control) and woven from contradictory elements, i.e. the imbalance between the demands made on local authorities and the means permitted to them in terms of equipment, funds and experts, causes most units to be so weak that they provide central

government with an excellent pretext for taking over, or at least for interfering in the most minute local affairs” (S. Sadek, 1972:275-6).

The “overextension” of the state in many developing countries, manifest by inappropriate development strategies that have failed to reach and improve the lives of target groups, prompts many observers to advocate community participation in rural development. Hall contrasts “official policies [which] tend to be predicated on the assumption that peasants are incapable of defining their own development path” with non-governmental projects which start “from the opposite premise that only the beneficiaries themselves know what is the most appropriate course of action” (A. Hall in J. Midgley (ed), 1986:102). However, given past and current relations between the more and the less powerful in rural areas, it is impossible to argue that, left to themselves, rural communities would hear and meet the needs of the poorest. Outside intervention, in the form of rules governing the membership of local elected institutions and the resources to be allocated to specific groups is essential to protecting the weakest sections of rural communities whose voice is rarely heard in local elected institutions. Some national sectoral priorities such as forest protection are also difficult to ensure unless higher authorities retain some control over local-level patterns of development spending.

As Midgley notes “most definitions of community participation are distinctly Utopian”. Some writers claim community participation raises popular awareness, increases access to services and reduces inequality (J. Midgley (ed), 1986:26). But community participation depends on the access of poor groups to organisations representing local interests, from which they are frequently excluded, or limited in their ability to present their needs, by elite groups who control the rural economy and upon whom the rural poor depend for access to land tenancy, agricultural employment, loans and even their personal security.

When the British and French respectively promoted community development and *animation rurale* in their former colonies “to assist rural reconstruction and nation-building”, the assumption was that “governments and rural populations would unquestioningly pool resources, united in the common purpose of promoting overall

economic growth” (A. Hall in J. Midgley (ed), 1986:93-4). But both the British and French approaches to local participation were overwhelmed by the role of the bureaucracy and central ministries in guiding rural development, and did not provide adequate “voice” to disenfranchised rural populations.

An important distinction is drawn between state-directed participation and participation encouraged by non-government organisations. State-directed participation in rural development has frequently been nothing more than “useful for making the pursuit of pre-established goals more efficient”, including using cheap local labour (ibid:99). The examples of Chinese rural communes and Tanzania’s *ujamaa* policy of rural mobilisation “really leave little room for doubting what most governments understand by participation. It is useful only as long as it serves to help achieve national economic and political objectives but it is not valued as an end in itself” (ibid:99).

– On the other hand, popular participation through the activities of non-government organisations is limited to particular projects, and by the demands of the funding agency, which are “hardly conducive to the promotion of self-reliance and national autonomy [or] authentic participation” (J. Midgley (ed) 1986:156). As a vehicle for popular participation, non-government organisations are further limited by their inability to mobilise and reallocate resources on a scale and in as broad a context as national governments.

Indeed, projects sponsored by non-government organisations are as dependent on outside bodies - for funds and expertise or project-design - as those sponsored by the state, and are often less permanent (A. Hall in J. Midgley (ed), 1986:104). However, where a state-sponsored system of community participation in rural development is established through (relatively) independent local government institutions, the dialogue and democratic decision-making some observers hold to be representative of non-government organisations’ projects can be replicated in official systems of community participation, and local knowledge combined with official skills (see B. Galjart, 1981). Furthermore, state-sponsored systems can ensure decentralised decision-making does not preclude the implementation of important schemes that are not local community priorities, such as forest protection, while community participation in project design can improve the implementation

of those (government) priority projects.

Hollnsteiner argues “participation” refers to the access of the poor majority to services rather than a local elite who “already have a strong voice in decision-making” (A. White, 1982:19, quoted in J. Midgley (ed), 1986:25). Given a rural economy that integrates various groups in a dependent relationship, community participation exists “if the poorest groups in the community have an effective role in choosing social development programmes, if they contribute together with the rest of the community in the implementation of decisions and if they derive equitable benefits from these programmes” (J. Midgley (ed), 1986, 26). Local bureaucrats can play an important role in helping to ensure the participation of all community groups in the planning and implementation of rural development schemes.

However, the perceived lack of interest of bureaucrats to participate in rural development merits closer attention. Officers posted to rural areas frequently find themselves in a difficult and “foreign” work environment. Hardiman refers to auxiliary nurse midwives in India posted to remote villages who “have found their position intolerable, and have spent most of their time away from their station on various pretexts” (M. Hardiman in J. Midgley (ed), 1986:53). The difficulty of integrating outsiders, particularly women, into remote communities to work in social development projects is an additional, even alternative, reason to promote community participation. Local people can be trained to assume many responsibilities essential to providing for basic rural health services, which better integrates both the needs of rural communities and the programme itself in the overall development of an area.

Hardiman maintains community participation in the delivery of official services requires “a good system of training; there must be constant supervision, follow-up and encouragement” of local trained community members (ibid:54). That is to say, whatever the theoretical and actual short-comings of a national bureaucracy, it provides skills and resources to the rural development process which cannot be otherwise provided, with or without community participation. The efficient (because appropriate) delivery of rural development services depends on the appropriate (because efficient) location of experts in

the field. "The more highly trained, the more experienced, and the more able the officer, the more important it is for him to be so placed as to have the maximum "spread effect" - that is for his knowledge and ability to be used as widely as possible" (H. Maddick, 1963:41).

People's participation receives undue attention as an isolated element by many authors examining decentralisation and development. As highlighted by Braibanti, "power diffusion quickly leads to a second stage in which political behaviour becomes formalised and channelled into institutions and structures" (R. Braibanti (ed), 1969:50). Most proponents of community participation incorrectly imply something exceptional in communities acting to provide for themselves and, by extension, give a *prima facie* significance to decentralisation. In fact, there are many examples of local communities mobilising and organising themselves to provide and control the delivery of crucial services such as irrigation, of which central administrators are sometimes not vaguely aware (see, for example, R. Wade, 1988).

In short, supporters of decentralisation who emphasise the importance of encouraging community participation in rural development are inclined to present decentralisation as a means to "enlighten" and democratise rural communities, rather than to improve and better coordinate rural development. However, decentralisation is more usefully proposed to promote "efficiency by allowing a close match between public services and the multiplicity of individual preferences" (IBRD, 1988:157).

To implement policy central authorities need to "acquire the support of political elites, and the compliance of implementing agencies, of bureaucrats charged with carrying out programmes, of lower level political elites, and of intended beneficiaries. They must turn the opposition of those who may be harmed by the programmes into acceptance of them, and they must keep those who are excluded, but who wish to acquire benefits, from subverting them" (M. Grindle, 1980:12). Integrating the different interest groups affected by and involved in the implementation of development schemes requires a balance between community participation in, and the administration of, rural development, that can in theory be found in local elected institutions with the authority and resources to plan and implement

rural development schemes. However, Smith observes in many countries “approaches to decentralisation, contrary to official rhetoric, have tended to be highly paternalistic and elitist” and have not made great efforts to establish elected local institutions with significant resources and authority. As a result most decentralised systems have been characterised by “mutually reinforcing” low levels of autonomy and participation had made little contribution to improved rural development planning and implementation (B. Smith, 1985:189).

However, the World Bank observed in 1975: “The manner in which early participation is to be achieved and balanced with the need for overall guidance and control from the centre, is a problem which can only be resolved within each country” (quoted in A. Hall in J. Midgley (ed), 1986:100. See also J. Heaphey (ed), 1971). Indeed, Hadden presents the concept of “controlled” decentralisation in providing rural electricity in Rajasthan, India. Her study observes “higher administrators established enforceable criteria for programme participation that ensured that programme goals would be met by not allocating funds to projects that did not fulfil the criteria” (S. Hadden in M. Grindle, 1980:172).

So defined, controlled decentralisation runs against the notion that decentralisation should be promoted because it introduces and maintains flexibility, from the field up, in the rural development process. However, controlled decentralisation has a counterpart in the outline for successful community development evolved by Mayer in his pilot project for the Indian Community Development Programme, established in 1948 in 64 villages in Etawah District, Uttar Pradesh. This outline is rigid to the extent that it demands a built-in administrative flexibility to decentralised rural development. Mayer’s project set the following objectives:

1. Personnel were to be meticulously selected and given adequate training.
2. Once the staff were in position, the meaningless tradition of personnel transfer was to be avoided.
3. Project workers would accept their task as being in the service of the people, and avoid traditional domineering behaviour.
4. Relations between field workers would be “open”, allowing for feedback of problems from the field on the effectiveness of suggested remedies.
5. Targets would be based on a proper understanding of the conditions in the field,

- rather than imposed from above, and then time-tabled to serve as guides for action.
6. Projects would build on self-reliance and local sources of supply when possible.
 7. The staff would strive to obtain the fullest cooperation from other government departments at the district and local levels.
 8. An essential element was the involvement of the village leadership in initiating and organising the work to insure continuity and viability in the programme.

(Quoted in G. Sussman in M. Grindle (ed), 1980:111)

However, once extended to the national level and decision-makers were faced with the question not “What is the *best* way of doing community development? but, What is the most politically and bureaucratically *feasible* way to do community development?” India’s decentralised system of Panchayati Raj quickly lost sight of the pilot project objectives (ibid:115). Sussman highlights the importance to the pilot project of centre- and state-level political support, which provided “a protective environment [in which] a talented management could both develop and implement its programmes to their maximum potential”, but was hard to replicate nationwide (ibid:115).

However, some observers are wary of professional authority in rural development management structures. Chambers argues this professional authority is “supported and reinforced by several forces: the manifest power of modern science; the close fit between level of educational qualification and seniority of position in a bureaucratic hierarchy . . . ; specialised knowledge and skills; and the social distance between professionals and others” (R. Chambers, 1988:69). He calls for a “reversal of learning” by which bureaucrats learn from rural communities and a “reversal of management” by which bureaucracies function to allow for more local autonomy over rural development planning and implementation (R. Chambers, 1983).

However, several features of bureaucracies militate against “reversals” of learning and management. Bureaucracies are characterised by “[s]pecialisation and narrowness [which] are reinforced by three factors: professional preferences; personal satisfaction; and propriety” (R. Chambers, 1988:69). This specialisation has a further significance: it results in a bureaucracy’s internal differentiation by professional discipline (department) - and

rank. But decentralisation to elected local institutions can significantly improve rural development planning and implementation by bringing officers from various departments into closer contact with one another as well as local communities, integrating both local needs and the various activities of the many departments involved in rural development.

Heaphey notes bureaucracies in developing countries lack certain features enabling decentralisation such as “value integration” and “professionalism”. Value integration supports decentralisation to the extent that superiors can expect officers in the field to make the same decisions they would. Professionalism refers to the links formed between members of an organisation “more knowledgeable about the tasks [they carry out] than their organisational superiors” (J. Heaphey (ed), 1971:26) and other professionals. In the Indian context an absence of “professionalism” can be represented by the distinction (specialist) technical officers draw between their knowledge and that of members of the generalist Indian Administrative Service who hold the majority of senior positions in state and central government bureaucracies.

For some observers a central obstacle to decentralisation is poverty. Sussman notes a “[l]ack of resources severely limits the options available to a developing country for pursuing policies whose goals stress social and economic change. Each choice of a national programme must be carefully weighed; any new programme that deviates substantially from established practices may involve considerable risk of failure and loss of resources” (G. Sussman in M. Grindle (ed), 1980:103).

Leys refers to the frequently inadequate resources made available to local government units (Leys, 1967:41). However, local institutions’ shortage of resources is usually more a problem of higher level political resistance to losing control over sources of patronage than an absolute lack of resources. In any case, the success of decentralisation may depend more on the skilled staff than the financial resources made available to local institutions: if decentralisation is held to promote greater efficiency and if local institutions are adequately staffed, then financial constraints (to a point) make unconvincing culprits in the event of decentralised systems’ failure to carry out or improve rural development planning and administration.

Summary conclusions

Theories of decentralisation vary to the extent they present rural problems in less developed countries as the justification for or the main obstacle to establishing local institutions. It is on the basis of this broad distinction that observers place different emphasis on the comparative advantages of local institutions that are elected versus appointed; state-financed versus self-financing; and given free-rein over versus predetermined rural development responsibilities.

However, the success of a decentralised system is not only nor - perhaps - even mainly determined by the nature of the rural socio-economic environment in which it is established. The broader economic, political and administrative environment of the country (or region) as a whole plays a far greater part in determining the sincerity, appropriateness and so likely success of attempts to decentralise.

Section Three: Decentralisation and Development in Theoretical Context

This final section considers the broad arguments advanced in support of decentralisation for rural development. The themes highlighted here will recur throughout subsequent chapters which explore in depth the decentralised system implemented in Karnataka from 1987 to '91 and its contribution to improved rural development planning and implementation.

Decentralisation is proposed by academics, politicians and policy-makers on the basis of arguments framed in terms of economics, political science and public administration, and in response to different goals. However, the economics, politics and public administration of any society are intertwined and a decentralised system proposed from any one perspective necessarily overlaps with the others.

There are both macro- and micro-level justifications for decentralisation. At the macro-level some observers claim decentralisation supports a “smaller public sector and a more efficient economy” (V. Tanzi, 1995:10. See also G. Brennan and J. Buchanan, 1980 and J. Ehdaie, 1994). This justification for decentralisation revolves around a territorial or

spatial concept of development administration that seeks the most efficient service delivery on the basis of its location (see J. Heaphey (ed), 1971). Oates refers to the varying “spatial dimensions” of public goods, such that they are required in different forms and amounts from area to area, and are better identified and delivered at either the local, state/provincial or national level (W. Oates, 1972. See also D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984).

The first argument in support of decentralisation is therefore an economic argument for delivering public goods in “the jurisdiction that determines the level of provision of each public good [that] includes precisely the set of individuals who consume the good” (W. Oates, 1972:34 quoted in V. Tanzi). Decentralisation can favourably exploit the comparative advantage of different levels of government “in accounting for the diversity of preferences in its choice of service delivery” (Cremer et al, 1994:5, quoted *ibid*). According to a paper prepared for the World Bank, the “main *economic* justification for decentralisation rests largely on allocative or efficiency grounds” (V. Tanzi, 1995:5).

The economic argument for decentralisation converges upon a second, political argument. There are three threads to this argument. First, decentralisation is proposed as an alternative means of integrating disparate communities, encouraging them to identify with government structures more relevant to them than those of a state whose boundaries do not correspond with those of the group. It is therefore suggested one could advance “a *political* argument for decentralisation” if a country’s population “is not homogeneous, and if ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic, or other relevant characteristics are regionally distributed” (V. Tanzi, 1995:5).

Heaphey notes in Yugoslavia under Tito, local level participation in development was propounded in the search for “a perspective in terms of which the Yugoslav economy [could] be integrated in some framework other than the nation or the state”(J. Heaphey, 1971:24). Because “workers in production know no boundaries”, their organisation for self-administration through local participation would “deliver the country from the probable negative results of excessive nationalism on the part of the five cultures in Yugoslavia” (J. Heaphey, 1971:23). According to Tanzi, in democratic societies “the economic and the political arguments for decentralisation tend to converge” because, it is argued,

“decentralisation strengthens democracy” (V. Tanzi, 1995:5).

Contributing to the second thread of a political argument for decentralisation, many observers maintain decentralisation is an important tool of popular education because it encourages participation. The political argument advocating decentralisation to increase participation revolves around the idea that where a local community has been involved in the selection and design of a project, the project will be more relevant to their needs and conditions. Local communities will then be “more likely to accept [a project] when it is introduced and sometimes even to make a contribution to its establishment or maintenance through some sort of self-help effort because they will identify with it” (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:222. See also D. Conyers, 1981).

However, as shall be shown later in the case of Karnataka, mobilising community contributions in cash or kind is extremely difficult. Indeed, where government representatives have for years moulded themselves in the popular eye into an image of providers, decentralising funds for rural development to elected institutions may still further reduce self-help initiatives as communities expect relationships of political patronage between elected and elector to be extended to the operation of local-level institutions. However, a second element of political education encouraged by decentralisation is the greater responsiveness of (local) elected representatives to their constituents in a decentralised system, helped by the fact representatives live in or near the communities that elect them.

A corollary of political patronage is the tendency for local politicians to emphasise the provision of highly visible, structural projects, “rather than smaller, less obvious forms of development” (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:194). These projects are criticised by observers as primarily established to give local politicians a clear marker of their “work” for a constituency, as well as providing politicians and bureaucrats alike with opportunities for kick-backs from construction contracts. However, infrastructural projects such as the construction of schools, roads and primary health and veterinary services are frequently local community priorities, and easier for both local politicians and communities to conceive of as “development”. Political patronage, too, is an accepted and expected part of

government in most developing countries.

The third thread of a political argument for decentralisation emerges where central political powers propose to decentralise because it will win political kudos for the party in power and extend party political networks to the grass-roots. This third thread is linked to the first and second in that where effectively implemented, democratic decentralisation will be popularly appreciated and its political proponents rewarded (see B. Smith, 1985 and H. Maddick, 1963).

A third argument for decentralisation comes from a public administration perspective. Some observers see in decentralisation an opportunity for the more appropriate design and sustainable implementation of rural development projects. Establishing elected local institutions can be part of an explicit attempt to make rural development planning and administration more responsive to local needs by involving the community - whether for economic, political or public administration reasons, or some combination of the three. The public administration argument for decentralisation revolves around the economic and political utility of extending control over rural development planning and implementation to local communities: it seeks to make technical and administrative support for project selection, design and implementation locally available and accountable.

Heaphy maintains the contradiction of development lies with prevailing administrative structures in so far as “[c]ontrol is necessary for development, yet development is opposed to the current order” (J. Heaphy, 1971:29). Bureaucracies are “both detrimental and vital to development. Development requires innovation and the power to innovate. It suggests a societal need to innovate and a societal ability to control, simultaneously” (ibid:29). For example, following Indian independence in 1947 “[t]he generic question faced by the leadership . . . was how to go about implementing policies of social and economic change at the grass roots level . . . [where] the machinery to deliver services and mobilise community support was lacking” (G. Sussman in M. Grindle (ed), 1980:103).

Traditionally, policy-makers in developing countries responded to the problem of reaching the grass roots through the existing bureaucratic machinery. But this structure tended to consist of “centralised, vertical, sectoral institutions, each with its own narrowly defined area of activity” and each with an autonomous organisation extending from the capital city to the field (D. Korten, 1976:5, quoted in G. Sussman in M. Grindle (ed), 1980). “New alternatives were needed that would break with traditional and undynamic implementing strategies” (G. Sussman in M. Grindle (ed), 1980:103-4).

According to Wade, “[g]overnment, whether electoral or administrative, is for most villagers another world” (R. Wade, 1988:31). Depending on a villager’s position and influence, it is possible to access government services, but officers “are seen and see themselves as dispensers of favours” (ibid:31). However, this problem is not insurmountable. Decentralised systems can integrate bureaucrats, as well as communities, as sources of both innovation and control. “[W]hen local officials have direct responsibility in the provision of a public service, and can thus be praised for success and blamed for failure, they will have a greater interest in succeeding” (V. Tanzi, 1995:10).

Decentralisation improves the communication of developments in the field: “First, the knowledge of the central department is vastly increased by having out-posted officers. Second, the people themselves are bound to find that communication with the field officers, rather than the central department, is likely to be more practical, quicker, and more understanding” (H. Maddick, 1963:47. See also J. Samoff, 1979). Maddick asserts the flow of information from the field “allows the central departments to realise the difference between areas and their needs. Policy can be varied in accordance with traditions and the needs of the community” (H. Maddick, 1963:47).

By extension, however, unless a decentralised system bestows sufficient authority on local institutions for them to respond to local information, the utility of decentralisation to rural development planning and administration cannot be guaranteed. Arguments for decentralisation are therefore strongest where they propose to establish *democratic* decentralisation because “development [requires] a measure of political autonomy to be devolved to local institutions which local people may participate in and control” (B. Smith,

1985:185). There is a “close association between democratic decentralisation and community development which tries to harness a capacity for self-help to the aim of improving the economic and social well-being of “communities”” (ibid:188).

Democratic decentralisation introduces a two-way flow of information. Where local communities are actively involved in the rural development planning and implementation process, the observations of field officers is reinforced by local communities’ opportunity to voice less obvious information about their priorities and cultural norms, to be included in and increase the impact of rural development planning and implementation. “A two-way flow of information is invaluable. To the villager there can be no meaning, no significance in national plans and policies unless someone can translate them into actual examples locally. To the official planner it is a great temptation to ignore diversity and assume homogeneity and unless he has the eyes and ears of a field service open for him, what is the alternative?” (H. Maddick, 1963:47)

However, proponents of democratic decentralisation must also beware of the temptation to see rural communities as homogeneous entities, downplaying the extent to which local institutions are often controlled by dominant groups and give the poorest no voice. Observers maintain: “Decentralisation is especially needed to enable the rural poor to participate in politics” (B.Smith, 1985:186. See also D. Rondinelli in D. Rondinelli and G. Cheema, 1983). But women, the poor, landless and lower castes often stand little chance of “participating” in rural politics, or of having their needs met where plan priorities are decided by local institutions dominated by the same male, landed, higher-caste groups that dominate rural social and economic structures (H. Alavi, 1971; J. Fesler, 1965; R. Kothari, 1988).

Decentralisation is held capable of reducing the nexus between powerful client groups and the central or state government by introducing a route by which a broader range of local community needs can be identified, appropriate projects designed and implementing officials held accountable. But just as there exist “unhealthy” relationships between powerful interest groups and central political and administrative structures, so too can dominant groups exert disproportionate influence or control over local government

institutions. Ensuring the needs of the weakest sections of a community are reflected in the activities of local institutions is a serious problem affecting the decentralisation of rural development planning and administration in developing countries.

However, Montgomery argues the “very permanence of bureaucratic institutions” frees bureaucrats to plead for the special interests of minorities where (local) politicians do not (J. Montgomery, 1988:33). Primarily, bureaucrats can protect against “acute localitis”, manifest by (1) local institutions dominated by local elites or (2) “majority discrimination” of the moderately prosperous against the very poor; (3) local leaders incapable of mobilising and providing for “economies of scale and spatial linkages [which] require links to other villages and technologies” to provide for more than “simple felt needs”; and (4) local institutions’ limited financial and administrative capabilities which require “external supervision or review” (ibid:32-3). Bureaucrats’ provide services “even more important” than their daily responsibilities of supplying information and catalysing or accelerating local responses to development programmes, acting as a link between governmental activities and villagers and managing and coordinating public and private inputs to local community development (ibid:34).

But democratic decentralisation may not solve problems inherent to the hierarchical and centralised nature of bureaucracies, especially in the early stages. “The dependence of local authorities on secondments from higher levels of governments for their administrative personnel has often led to conflicts of values between officials stationed in the localities and local politicians” (B. Smith, 1985:190). It is hard to secure a shift in the value system of a centralised, hierarchical structure that emphasises the role of superiors at the centre, to one based on the judgment and information of officers based in the field. The “status hierarchy built into bureaucratic structures impedes the flow of information upward” (ibid:190).

For local information to be given greater weight by official technical and administrative support structures, the prevailing value system of bureaucracies requires time to change, and depends upon the type of decentralised system implemented. Where a system of democratic decentralisation is introduced that gives bureaucrats in the field a degree of autonomy, bureaucrats at all levels can benefit from the increased information

available from local participation in rural development planning and implementation (see R. Crook and J. Manor, 1994).

Bureaucrats' receptiveness to local institutions "seems to result not from reforms but from a recognition on the part of administrators themselves of the potential value of local participation" (J. Montgomery, 1988:40). This "recognition" comes "from experience . . . or in a system that creates incentives to respond to the local environment", such as managerial accountability to consumers (ibid:40).

Accountability also has economic benefits: "when the cost of providing a service is borne by the local jurisdiction, there will be more guarantee that the provision of the service will be cost efficient and will not be extended beyond the point where marginal benefits equal marginal costs" (V. Tanzi, 1995:10). Decentralisation can "become a competitive surrogate" to the public sector by allowing consumers to choose between alternative providers, following a comparison of taxes paid for services provided (V. Tanzi, 1995:9. See also Israel, 1992:76). However, this scenario is problematic in the context of developing countries as it assumes (1) local institutions are collecting taxes, which they rarely do, and (2) a mobility that (poor) agriculturalists cannot frequently indulge.

In a broader sense the political and administrative accountability of decentralised institutions - to local communities and tax-payers generally - depends on establishing effective public expenditure management (PEM) systems. These systems must be "capable of making good forecasts of expected revenue and anticipated spending". Regular accounting and auditing are required to ensure expenditure as budgeted and "provide some controls over other commitments, even when these commitments do not contribute to additional cash spending [or income from investments] in the current fiscal year" (V. Tanzi, 1995:17).

Decentralisation also provides a more appropriate environment for integrating the activities of various disciplines involved in rural development. Decentralisation, "while not guaranteeing coordination or integration, does at least allow the various agencies to make their own decisions and so to cooperate with other agencies if it is in their interests - or they

can be persuaded - to do so" (D. Conyers and P. Hills, 1984:222). Where decentralised systems include "measures to actually enforce coordination" by appointing an officer "with formal coordinating powers" (ibid:222), a multi-sectoral, integrated and more efficient rural development process can be established. In the 1987 to '91 decentralised system in Karnataka, this coordination of rural development activities was effectively established by appointing a senior administrative officer as chief secretary of each District Council.

Braibanti quotes former Indian minister for planning Ashok Mehta on leaders of administration in developing countries, who "must learn to operate at two distinct levels - the levels of sophistication and of somewhat primitive preoccupation. . . . [S]pecialisation is necessary but it is even more necessary that all specialisations are related to each other. The need for an integrated approach [to administrative reform] demands that all specialisations must be subordinated to a larger whole" (R. Braibanti (ed), 1969:40. See also A. Mehta, 1965).

Inherent to arguments in support of democratic decentralisation is the idea that those administrative leaders must also accept the "somewhat primitive" as a level which contributes information essential to an effective and efficient rural development process. Rural development is facilitated by local institutions which supplement bureaucrats' support with services that are "most difficult for career administrators to perform" (J. Montgomery, 1985:39). The services local institutions can provide include (1) detailed information of local environmental problems (floods and droughts) and social customs (such as land and water rights); (2) mobilising local labour and investment; (3) assuming collective responsibility for some functions such as credit repayment and the operation of common-use facilities; and (4) articulating local needs (ibid:39-40).

Democratic decentralisation provides bureaucrats as well as local communities with "political education" by exposing bureaucrats to extensive interaction with (local) politicians. As Jones and Stewart note, local government confers executive power "on the council as a whole, a corporate body . . . [and] each councillor can be directly involved in policy-making and in the control of policy-implementation" (G. Jones and J. Stewart, 1983:20). This stands in stark contrast to the "long bureaucratic hierarchy" (ibid:21) that

dominates the work experience of officers working in a central secretariat, where specialist opinion is presented to political representatives by generalist officers at the top of the administrative hierarchy, whose political exposure in turn is limited to the minister responsible for their department. However, in a decentralised system officers are in contact with a large number of people - local populations and their political representatives. For specialist officers in particular, decentralisation provides an opportunity to present their opinions directly to politicians without their being “filtered and adapted, distilled and perhaps distorted, by the generalists” (ibid:21). For officers generally, democratic decentralisation greatly increases the information available to them and the opportunities for coordinating the rural development initiatives of various departments.

According to Tanzi, “under the right conditions, decentralisation might be expected to lead to *improved management, information, and accountability*” (V. Tanzi, 1995:20). A formal, high-level political commitment to local government (such as a constitutional amendment) is an essential foundation for an effective system of decentralised, democratic rural development planning and administration. Political support for decentralisation is crucial to the design of convincing, viable units of local government, and to ensuring financial and administrative decentralisation sufficient for their support. However, where national governments are uncertain of maintaining power, “decentralisation enterprises are likely to be undercut by the very governments that propose them” (N. Kasfir in P. Mawhood (ed), 1983:24).

Summary conclusions

The economic, political and public administration arguments for decentralisation can overlap and reinforce one another, but their practical representatives can also conflict with and undermine attempts to decentralise. Decentralisation poses a serious challenge to established groups and control structures. The complexity of giving a durable foundation to local government institutions cannot be overestimated. But unless local institutions are established in an atmosphere which (ostensibly, at least) emphasises their permanence, it is inevitable that the worst-case scenarios of local institutions and the resources devolved to them being manipulated and abused are brought to fruition.

The broader economic, political and public administration *systems* determine the nature and success of decentralising initiatives as much as the rationale and considered construction of arguments from each of these perspectives.

Conclusion

Political systems are reflective of the society in which they operate. In the abstract, no political system is “good” or “bad”; it either meets or fails to meet the basic needs and aspirations of the people in whose name it exists. Developing and developed countries differ in the type of problems in most need of urgent attention. The nature and causes contributing to any one country’s “underdevelopedness” encourages further differentiation between the types of solutions required to reverse extreme economic, political and social imbalances. Decentralising rural development functions and responsibilities to local elected institutions may meet the needs of groups of the population previously ignored or missed by development initiatives. But the appropriate structure of a decentralised system depends upon the context in which it is established.

Smith notes “the roles described for local-level democracy [in the literature] constitute expectations, objectives and aspirations rather than outcomes” (B. Smith, 1985:185). Decentralisation can provide for the flexibility and responsiveness frequently lacking in higher-level political structures. But local-level elected institutions can also be dominated by local elites with weaker groups reluctant or unable to determine any more than usual the allocation of resources.

However, with adequate political and administrative support, democratic decentralisation should improve rural development planning and administration by providing for (1) regional diversity and (2) the interests of weaker sections of the community; and be (3) administratively flexible and (4) financially efficient. The following chapters examining Karnataka’s experience of decentralisation from 1987 to ‘91 explore the themes presented here in a practical context.

Chapter 3

The History of Local Government in India

For centuries panchayats have played a central role in the administration of rural areas throughout the Indian sub-continent. Literally a "council of five", the panchayat traditionally represented the most powerful elements of village society, whose judicial and administrative decisions enjoyed an authority unrivalled at the local level, and have therefore been used by a succession of central powers to administer and mobilise the resources of a large, predominantly rural nation. However, dominant figures in rural communities have a strong interest in maintaining their authority and have resisted external manipulation. As a result, significant political and economic resources have been required to extend the influence of central political structures directly into India's periphery to pursue central goals.

V. K. Chopra refers to the modern-day interaction of Members of (state) Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) with two distinct types of political structure: the centre and the 'peripheral' state (unpublished Phd 1994:36-42) and argues MLAs must be politically bilingual to communicate at the two levels. This assertion builds on W. H. Morris-Jones' contention that MLAs had to be politically bilingual to communicate successfully at the levels of state and constituency (1967:70). But state and centre legislators' constituencies and the functions performed on their behalf are similar, especially compared with those of local-government elected representatives. Given a constitutional amendment establishing local government as a third tier of government, the proposition that MLAs operate at the periphery now seems untenable: the periphery is in fact located below the state at the district level.

Regular elections to the national and state governments have ensured that a

relatively sophisticated notion of politics extends to most of India. Popular interest in politics in India is in part because of the patronage candidates in state and national elections can extend to supporters through their access to government resources, and, where patronage falls short of outright corruption, it may be considered a generally legitimate means of including a large section of the rural population in a political process that would otherwise be of little initial interest to them. However, a political system based on patronage has tended to confirm the authority of dominant caste groups with long-established links to state and national ruling groups. Recent attempts to establish local government have sometimes explicitly challenged the control exercised by dominant castes by reserving seats in local institutions of government for lower castes. The failure to establish local government in India has therefore been to some extent reasonably explained by the resistance of dominant caste groups in rural areas.

Others have argued that a major obstacle to establishing local government in India has been the reticence of state government bureaucrats to devolve administrative structures and decision-making processes to the local level. This thesis explores this contention in depth through an analysis of Karnataka state's experiment with decentralisation during 1987-91.

The British administration of India

Under the British systematic attempts were made to undermine the autonomy of Sir Charles Metcalfe's "little republics", initially without great success. Administrative headmanships were established for villages or localities, but they did not much improve imperial influence in rural areas, particularly where "it was the practice of local notables to ensure that this office went to a junior person" (F. G. Bailey 1970:74), over whom they exercised authority. This strategy maintained the local power balance by determining that "no notable gets an edge over any other notable through monopolising new resources. It [was] also a way of expressing contempt for the imperial rulers and of ensuring that men of consequence do not have to get too closely involved with the foreigners. The junior appointee serves as a long spoon" (E. J. Miller in Srinivas (ed) 1960:51, quoted in Bailey 1970:84).

Gradually, however, the authority of local figures was somewhat reduced as "[p]opulation growth, price rises, and the expansion of a wider money economy began to sharpen divisions in rural society and to create new connections between people and groups based on achievement and contract, rather than on ascriptive and more traditional bonds" (J. M. Brown, 1985:151). A gradual shift in India's rural power structure was helped by limited land reforms in some areas, creating individual Ryotwari (land-holdings), but perhaps more by the introduction of organised revenue-collection, a police force, and local civil and criminal courts across the sub-continent (S. S. Meenakshisundaram, 1994:1).

Following the uprisings of 1857 the British took steps to involve Indians more in their government. The Viceroy's Legislative Council and provincial legislatures were established under the 1861 Indian Councils' Act to advise the government. However the majority of its members were officials, and only in 1892 was provision made for (indirect) election rather than appointment of the remainder, on the basis of recommendations by municipalities and district boards (J. M. Brown, 1985:142).

The British administration of India was governed at all times by a concern to avoid incurring substantial costs or causing social unrest and political upheaval. In the 1870s measures were taken towards financial decentralisation by extending powers of taxation to provincial governments which included Indians. "If Indians at this level could be induced to tax themselves it would lighten the load on government and draw the fire of anti-British criticism" (ibid:126).

Beginning in 1882 there were efforts to establish a uniform system of local government with Lord Ripon's Resolution of Local Self-Government. The act aimed to encourage self-government "not, primarily, with a view to improvement in administration, [but] as an instrument of political and popular education" (M. Shiviah 1989:65) and an outlet for Indian political aspirations. The British maintained "We shall not subvert the British empire by allowing the Bengali Baboo to discuss his own schools and drains. Rather we shall afford him a safety-valve if we can turn his attention to such innocuous subjects" (J. M. Brown, 1985:127). As a result the initiative established comparatively weak institutions, elected by a small number of older, male, land-owners, and responsible

for few functions, delegated by the provincial governments (S. S. Meenakshisundaram, 1994:1-2), and Lord Ripon's system of local government did not in itself represent a substantial advance in democracy.

However, as attempts to contain increasing opposition to British administration by coercing (i.e. imprisoning) campaigners for self-rule failed, local government structures came to assume increasing significance as elements of a more accommodative strategy that provided for Indian participation within the system. Initially this approach seemed to have some success, for by 1906 the Indian Congress under Dadabhoy Naoroji was calling for (an ill-defined) "self-government on colonial lines" (N. Mukarji, 1993:1).

Under the 1909 Minto-Morley reforms there was "considerable liberalisation of the consultative process" (J. M. Brown, 1985:142). The Viceroy's Legislative Council was expanded, although officials continued to form its majority, and the provincial legislatures were enlarged and reconstituted to comprise a majority of non-official members, most of whom were directly elected (Muslims and land-holders) or nominated by "recognised local interest groups such as trade associations and universities" (ibid:142). The "rationale behind this method of election remained the representation of distinctive interests rather than the right of all citizens to be represented as in a simple territorial franchise" (ibid:142).

In 1919 the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms established village panchayats, district boards, town municipalities and city corporations as part of a gradual development of local self-governing institutions; but substantial powers remained with the governors. However, by the 1930s demands for autonomy coming from the provinces were making India's administration much more complex than such relatively minor shifts in policy could accommodate. In creating "distinctive consultative structures, particularly the local, provincial, and central councils, whose entrances were patronage and election, [the British] generated and encouraged distinctive and novel styles of politics. Imperial structures and categories not only influenced Indian responses to their rulers, but became a significant factor in Indians' relationships with each other. They were therefore a major determinant of the dilemmas which British dominion posed for Indians" (ibid:145).

In Parliamentary debates preceding the 1935 Government of India Act the Secretary of State for India noted that Lord Curzon's reforms a generation earlier had established a kind of

glorified county council government, under which the centre maintains a considerable measure of control over the provinces, . . . makes grants-in-aid to the provinces, and . . . is ready to intervene when things go wrong in the provinces. . . . [S]uch a type of provincial autonomy in a country as great as India, with all its multiplicity of conditions is totally impracticable. Any system of grants-in-aid and inspection from the centre will not work. . . . Even Lord Curzon, with his great driving force and administrative ability, failed to make it work. The only wise form of provincial autonomy is . . . a form . . . clearly marked out, and in which field the provinces are free from interference from the centre;[one] that is based broadly on a wide franchise, in which the agricultural classes, the women and the depressed classes can make their voices heard; a system . . . that is not dependent upon grants-in-aid from the centre, but subsists upon definitely allocated taxes[; and in which] law and order should not be reserved but should be transferred (quoted in N. Mukarji 1993:3).

The Government of India Act was passed in response to "the reverberating political consequences of India's sacrifices in the Great War and to the imperial crisis caused by the world depression of the early 1930s. . . . [T]he all-India constitutional solution that it proposed was never a practical proposition, having been designed to solve the problems of the government in London, not the Government of India" (B. R. Tomlinson, 1976:137).

The 1935 Act provided for a "unitary, strong federal centre" (ibid:139) with representatives elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, and could not be implemented until a number of Princely States had acceded to the federation, sufficient to fill half the seats of the upper house and represent over half their populations. However, the structure envisaged by the Act would necessarily result in a Hindu majority at the centre

and was resisted by Muslim leaders, who formed alliances with Muslim princes to discourage them from acceding to the federation and so prevent its implementation. It became increasingly obvious the "growing domestic problem of the division between the Congress and the Muslim League would brake any rapid progress by India towards the full Dominion Status envisaged by the Act" (ibid:141).

In the final analysis the advent of war ensured the Government of India Act was never implemented as intended, becoming instead the blue-print for the government of an independent India:

[B]ecause of the events and developments of the previous decade, the pressures from within India were increasingly expressed through two strong and incompatible vehicles of political mobilisation - the Congress and the Muslim League - so that any attempt by the British to find a short- or long-term political settlement would result in increased divisiveness and tension within India, which would in turn put the Indian war-effort in jeopardy. In order to maintain their Empire in the short term the British had to go back on the system of substituting informal influence for formal rule which they had been evolving in India for the previous twenty years. The inevitable result of this was that in the long term India was lost to Britain and her Empire (ibid:142).

The Constitution of independent India

Post-independence, many observers expected to see greater autonomy for the regions and much less centralised government. However, territorial instability and outside threat that followed partition and the creation of Pakistan meant that much of the pre-independence urge to institute truly autonomous regions was lost. Parliament therefore "constitutionalise[d] a strong centre" (N. Mukarji 1993:3), retaining for the central government the right to intervene in the states wherever it considers developments "unfavourable".

Article 356 of the Constitution of India on "Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in States" allows the Union President to "assume to himself all or any of the functions of the Government of the State", including declaring that "the powers of the Legislature of the State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament" and suspending "in whole or in part the operation of any provisions of this Constitution relating to any body or authority in the State" (Constitution of India 1988:146). As the authority of the President is that of a figurehead directly dependent upon the advice of his Ministers, the constitution in effect gives these powers to the party in control of the central government, and has time and again proved a most effective means of undermining opposition state governments.

However, the constitution reserves a significant number of responsibilities for the state governments in the State List contained in the Seventh Schedule. The states may then select functions from the State List to be conferred upon the panchayats:

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry
5. Fisheries
6. Social forestry and farm forestry
7. Minor forest produce
8. Small-scale industries, including food-processing
9. Khadi [cloth], village and cottage industries
10. Rural housing
11. Drinking water
12. Fuel and fodder
13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication
14. Rural electrification, including distribution of electricity
15. Non-conventional energy sources
16. Poverty alleviation programmes

17. Education, including primary and secondary schools
18. Technical training and vocational education
19. Adult and non-formal education
20. Libraries
21. Cultural activities
22. Markets and fairs
23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries
24. Family welfare
25. Women and child development
26. Social welfare including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded
27. Welfare of the weaker sections and in particular, of the Scheduled Tribes and the Scheduled Castes
28. Public distribution system (fair-price food shops)
29. Maintenance of community assets
(outlined in S. S. Meenakshisundaram 1994:6-7)

These items represent a relatively large number of state responsibilities. However, the states' power is limited by the fact that neither the constitution nor the new Amendments provide for the centre's unconditional surrender of funds sufficient to meet these responsibilities, or prevent the centre undermining a state government by directly funding politically persuasive programmes or by refusing to grant Presidential assent to legislation drawn up by the state assembly.

The relationship between state and centre has two important implications for local government reforms. First, the states' dependence on the centre for funds released in a discretionary manner limits the extent to which even the best-intentioned of state governments may fund and lend political support to the establishment of local government. Second, the centre has shown itself more than happy to intervene wherever developments in the states hold the threat of undermining its status as political innovator - no less where local institutions elect predominantly opposition candidates. Both of these points played their part in the demise of the relatively successful 1987-91 Karnataka experiment with

local government, instituted by the Janata Party at the perceived political expense of the Congress-led centre government.

Panchayati Raj and the Community Development Programme

In the 1950s panchayati raj found new support as a tool of rural development under the influential Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, S. K. Dey. With the launch of the Community Development Programme in 1952 local government was promoted as a means to bring the democratic process to rural areas and provide a structure within which plan priorities and development resources could be evenhandedly determined and administered at the local level. The programme aimed "to raise the standard of living of the under-privileged: to give land to the landless and power to those formerly excluded from village affairs" (F. G. Bailey 1970:205), using local government institutions.

The modern panchayati raj system through which the Community Development Programme was implemented ideally consisted of three tiers at the village, block and – district levels. Theoretically, development priorities are in the first instance determined by popular consensus at the biannual meetings of village members (gram sabha) which are then relayed to the block level to be integrated with the demands of 150-200 other villages in a block development plan. Block plans are then passed on to district level institutions to be matched with available resources in the design of a district development plan.

The successful implementation of such a system relies to a great extent on the democratisation of village politics, as well as on block and district authorities having the technical capacity to integrate identified development priorities in the design and administration of viable projects. However, village India is divided along lines of patronage, faction and caste that do not encourage dissent or even participation in a very localised democratic process. In short, the new resources made available to rural areas under the Community Development Programme were quickly captured by the dominant castes who successfully maintained "the caste criterion for personnel recruitment which operated in the old system but which is expressly forbidden in the new" (ibid:205).

Nonetheless, the introduction of new resources at the local level with an increased

emphasis on the most dispossessed produced a shift of sorts in rural politics. At the very least it changed the prizes involved in political competition: "the contestants seek public office for control of patronage and development monies, and they justify their activities more in the idiom of public service rather than, as in days gone by, in the idiom of honour and [caste] purity. Moreover, these new resources have projected many of the competitors out of the village arena into the wider world of local and state government, and this certainly constitutes a change in the structure of village politics by diminishing its significance" (ibid:205-6).

As Mendelsohn observes in his article on the *Transformation of Authority in Rural India*, "by now the concept of the dominant caste obscures more than it illuminates agrarian social structure in India. . . . The contrary argument . . . is that land and authority have been delinked in village India and that this amounts to an historic, if non-revolutionary transformation" at a pace that quickened after independence. While land still delivered economic, social and political power in India, "[t]he proposition is that this power is not nearly so overwhelming as it once was and that it fails to provide a base for the kind of authority which the local dominants once tended to possess" (O. Mendelsohn, 1993:807).

However, state and national politicians were reluctant to make available to local institutions the resources and powers they required in order to become an effective means of popular expression and rural administration. As a result, changes in the rural political economy that the Community Development Programme helped to bring about were not combined with "an effective institutional mechanism to involve the local communities in the process of development" (S. S. Meenakshisundaram 1994:2).

The Balwantray Mehta Committee

In 1956 parliament under Nehru appointed the Balwantray Mehta Committee Study Team on Community Development. The committee report recommended "a representative and democratic institution which will supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money upon local objects conforms with the needs and wishes of the locality."

The report outlined the structure of three tiers of institutions below the state: a committee of several villages; an intermediate Panchayat Samiti for roughly every 100,000 population; and a Zilla Parishad, or District Council. Under this system the panchayat samiti is the key level of administration, directly elected from an area similar to that of the community development block. The zilla parishad comprises in the chairmen of a district's panchayat samitis and plays a mainly advisory role, chaired by the most senior bureaucrat at the district level - the District Collector/Deputy Commissioner.

Following the Balwantray Mehta Committee Nehru's highly influential Minister of Community Development and Panchayati Raj, S. K. Dey, pushed the states to design and implement legislation establishing suitable systems of local government. Between 1959 and '66, several states enacted legislation in keeping with individual peculiarities: three-tier systems were established in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat; Maharashtra and Gujarat gave greatest powers to an elected top tier; Kerala's long stretches of near-contiguous villages suggested larger (lowest tier) gram panchayats and dispensing with the mid-level panchayat samiti; and some tribal areas of the northeastern states retained long-established systems of government by council.

Following the deaths of Nehru in 1964 and Shastri in 1966 there was a general weakening of national party structures and institutions, and much of the impetus to establish democratic structures in rural areas was lost. Several states withdrew powers previously delegated to PRIs, while in others the opposition of the state government or powerful local figures prevented elected rural institutions of government from taking shape at all. In Bihar little or nothing was done towards implementing panchayati raj legislation passed by the state assembly, while areas of Madhya Pradesh made provision for only a few of the tiers sanctioned by its legislature.

Throughout the 1960s central and state governments (re)concentrated authority and resources within their own structures. This trend was partly a result of the great political uncertainty that followed Nehru's death, compounded by military confrontations with China in 1962 and Pakistan in 1965, and partly a response to the high degree of organisation required to ensure that farmers received the large amount of well-timed

agricultural inputs required by new high-yield crop strains. These high-yield crop strains transformed the rate of agricultural production in several parts of India, particularly the state of Punjab, heralding a "Green Revolution" in rural areas that depended upon the delivery of high levels of fertiliser and water at key points in the crop growing-cycle.

The ease with which powers and responsibilities assigned to panchayati raj institutions were drawn back underlined their fundamental weakness as highly dependent on and legally tentative in status vis-a-vis the state governments. The shrinking power of PRIs was compounded by a move away from the Community Development Programme that had emphasised the role of panchayati raj institutions in rural planning and development to the more centrally-coordinated Intensive Area Development Programme.

The Ashok Mehta Committee

Faced with the system's complete collapse the Morarji Desai government reaffirmed its commitment to panchayati raj in 1978, convening a study committee under the noted economist Ashok Mehta. However, few states took steps to implement the committee's recommendations before the Morarji Desai government lost power in 1979.

In contrast to the Balwantray Mehta committee the report favoured the official participation of political parties in the system, and suggested a basic format of two tiers of elected local government - a district-level Zilla Parishad and a sub-block Mandal Panchayat, with the emphasis on development planning and administration shifted from the block to the district. However, it also emphasised the diversity of conditions prevailing in the states that had to be reflected in the structures adopted. The format discussed by the Ashok Mehta Committee was as follows:

1) At district level the zilla parishad (ZP), composed of elected members; ex officio, Presidents of the panchayat samitis; nominees of the bigger municipalities and the district cooperative federation; two women - coopted if not freely elected; a university or college professor and an individual with a special interest in rural development. The President is appointed on the basis of proportional representation. (The committee was not in favour of including Members of Parliament (MPs), MLAs and Members of the State Legislative

Councils (MLCs) as full-fledged members of the zilla parishad. The 73rd Amendment left this decision to the states, with the provision that where included, they might not participate in elections for chairperson.)

The zilla parishad functions through committees appointed for agriculture, education, small industries, finance, public works and social justice. It is responsible for coordinating the implementation of development plans, as formulated for the district by a Planning Committee composed of MLAs, MLCs, MPs and members of zilla parishads, to which the state must make available the highest order of technical expertise.

In several states the panchayat samiti was established below the zilla parishad. The Ashok Mehta Committee was in favour of completely disbanding this level of institution. However, where they remained, it proposed they consist of ex officio Presidents of the mandal panchayats; members of area zilla parishads; nominees of smaller municipalities and block-level cooperative federations, and one coopted member with a special interest in rural development. Zilla parishad members from the panchayat samiti constituency would elect its president; however, where Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) constituted more than 20 per cent of the population, the Chair of the panchayat samiti was reserved for a member of that group.

2) At block level the mandal panchayat, composed of fifteen directly elected members; representatives of the Farmers' Service Societies; and two women, coopted if not elected. Electoral seats are reserved for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the basis of population, and Women's Committees formed with women members only.

The mandal panchayat coordinates and supervises implementation of the block development plan, and is supposed to match the demands of the village committee with resources available.

3) The village committee, comprising mandal panchayat and zilla parishad members from the relevant electoral unit and representatives of small and marginal farmers. A

member of the mandal panchayat presides.

The village committee is responsible for village welfare, reporting on plan progress to the mandal panchayat, and convening a biannual gram sabha attended by all voting-aged community members. The gram sabha is supposed to provide a forum at which the most needy beneficiaries of development resources are identified. However, in most areas it has proved difficult to ensure that the needs of lower socioeconomic groups are heard and met because of the extent to which dominant caste groups control village decision-making.

Finally, the Ashok Mehta Committee considered the rural judicial institutions - the nyaya panchayat. To improve its performance the Committee suggested the nyaya panchayat should remain separate from village government and that judges should serve districts other than those from which they were elected.

Local government from the late 1970s-80s

During 1977-86 there was a period of relatively rapid economic growth following the introduction of the Green Revolution's high-yield crop strains. However, the new strains required large amounts of expensive and timely inputs that precluded their use by the majority of small and tenant farmers. The levels of economic growth achieved belied a similarly dramatic increase in the gap between rural rich and poor, and rural discontent grew.

Local government institutions were extremely weak by this time. Government and politics had been increasingly centralised under Indira Gandhi's leadership. She led relentless attacks on opposition state governments, dismissing and replacing Chief Ministers with personal favourites, and gained complete personal control over her own party. In this environment the growing unrest in rural areas was seized upon as an opportunity further to undermine local government institutions, many of which were dominated by opposition parties. Under the slogan "Garibi Hatao" (Abolish Poverty) the central government therefore introduced a programme of rural aid directly administered by the central government (M. Shiviah 1989:69).

The G. V. K. Rao and L. M. Singhvi Committees

By the 1980s support for local government was again resurfacing. In 1985 Rajiv Gandhi's government attempted to gain a hold on the political momentum being generated by the renewed interest in panchayati raj by appointing the G. V. K. Rao Committee to review the administration of rural development under the auspices of the Planning Commission. By this time legislation establishing panchayati raj had been passed by all States and Union Territories save Meghalaya, Nagaland, Lakshadweep and Mizoram, but few institutions existed in much more than name. The Rao Committee found that elections in many areas had been superseded or postponed for years, with a substantial number of local government officials simply appointed by the state government.

Figures published at the time claimed panchayati raj institutions represented 96 per cent of Indian villages, 88 per cent of block divisions (4526 institutions) and 76 per cent of district constituencies (330 institutions) (S. Singh 1985). However, the Rao Committee findings point to a significant difference between the types of institution considered capable of carrying out the responsibilities nominally assigned them, and those that would meet the states' constitutional requirement to endow the panchayats "with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government" (Article 40, Constitution of India).

In most states the panchayats were responsible for 1) providing village roads, community wells and public hygiene and 2) maintaining public parks, tanks, irrigation works and drainage systems, while some were also responsible for primary education and health care, agricultural inputs, the maintenance of common grazing grounds, and the welfare of women and children. However, in the 1982-83 financial year PRIs secured just 0.1 per cent of the taxes collected by the states, and four per cent of total state revenues from taxes and central government grants. The G. V. K. Rao report therefore concluded that "the resources of the panchayati raj institutions are too meagre to enable them to discharge effectively the functions which are devolved on or expected of them" (G. V. K. Rao Committee Report **Kurukshetra** 1989:33).

Following these findings a committee was convened under the eminent jurist L. M.

Singhvi in 1986 to prepare a concept paper on the revitalisation of panchayati raj. Its report recommended a constitutional amendment enforcing the status of local government institutions, including a legal requirement for their regular election. Although the concept paper found general support amongst the national political parties, opinions differed as to the proposed structure and powers of local government institutions. As a result, attempts to amend the constitution under the Congress government in 1989 and V. P. Singh's Janata government in 1990 both failed.

In 1991 Narasimha Rao's Congress government again introduced a constitutional amendment bill on panchayati raj and set up a Joint Select Committee for its discussion. After more than a year of consultation between the different political parties and state governments, the 73rd Amendment was finally passed by the Lok Sabha (Lower House) with near-unanimity in December 1992. Presidential assent was accorded in April 1993, requiring the states to draw up similar legislation within a year.

State-level resistance to panchayati raj

The Indian Union is distinguished by the substantial powers retained by the central government over the funding and politics of the states, and although the states are constitutionally responsible for a number of functions and have substantial tax-raising authority over sales and other taxes, the central government maintains control over the release of funds. In 1990-91 the total amount transferred from the centre to the states was Rs. 33,948 crores (Rs. 339.4 billion) (Ministry of Finance, 1990).

Under the constitution the state governments are responsible for establishing appropriate institutions of local government and devolving responsibilities and funds to them. Therefore the reluctance of some states to establish PRIs may be caused by their dependence on grants handed to them at the discretion of the central government. But the problems of centrally allocated funding probably play a smaller part in the poor performance of local government than the activities of state officials attempting to guard their bases of power. Because certain responsibilities for development belong to the states and will not otherwise be undertaken, it is not necessarily in the overall interests of the central government to be seen to have completely withheld funds from its electorate, even

in states that are opposition-controlled. Rather, it may serve the centre in some circumstances to allocate a state fewer resources than required and to delay their release, hampering the implementation of state government projects, some of which may be the responsibility of local government institutions.

The implementation of panchayati raj legislation, however, poses great difficulties to the state governments. MLAs are reluctant to lose powers to other institutions of government; however, MLAs are required by law to legislate and provide for institutions of local government that will implement projects over which they would otherwise have control, and whose leaders represent a serious constituency-based threat to their authority. The development of local government structures places severe limits on the resources and patronage at MLAs' disposal, and leads to pressure on the state government to undermine local government by gross underfunding and postponed or superseded elections.

The power plays between centre/state and state/local levels of government have played an important part in the poor performance of local government in India. However, the power plays themselves underlie a general lack of conceptual clarity as to the precise function and objectives of panchayati raj. Is it a state agency of rural administration or an extension of the local democratic process? These varying conceptions are reflected in its funding and administration, and tend "to militate against each other [and] lead to a crisis of expectations all along the line." (Ashok Mehta Committee Report (**Kurukshetra**) Feb 1989:20)

Local government finances

Panchayati raj institutions are funded from three sources: the centrally funded Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, or village work, scheme and the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP); state grants; and rents and charges levied at the local level. The total grants-in-aid for administering community development are supposed to be automatically transferred to the mandal panchayats or zilla parishads responsible. However, monies are not always transferred and in any case, while the sums involved may be sufficient to fund an institution whose role is mainly advisory, most institutions are also responsible for certain statutory functions that require greater funds than are generally provided. (A. Aziz

1991:57)

In most states the village panchayat may directly levy taxes on buildings, non-agricultural land or forests, and a range of professions and public activities such as village fairs. However, such taxes release meagre sums and challenge the poor collection capacities of local government institutions: the "share of or cess on" certain services allotted to PRIs provide fairly static rates of return and the sheer number of (low yielding) taxes that local, especially village, authorities may levy effectively prohibits the efficient collection of even one (S. N. Battacharya 1986:325). At the same time local elected representatives are reluctant to impose taxes on their (very immediate) constituents. As a result statutory tax collection at the local level is in chronic arrears, with PRIs completely dependent on grants released at the discretion of the state and central governments.

The extent to which local government institutions are strapped for funds was demonstrated in one Karnataka district during panchayat elections held in December 1993. Following a popular vote it was decided to auction off panchayat seats, providing hundreds of thousands of rupees to be put towards community development (**Indian Express**, 16 December, 1993). However, although bids for reserved seats were accepted only from the appropriate individuals - women and members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - and higher rates were set for the positions of President, this capital-intensive foundation for local democracy was not accepted by the courts.

The evaluation and audit of PRIs

State governments are responsible for the periodic "independent" assessment of local government institutions. However, the state is hardly a disinterested observer of panchayati raj: rather, there is considerable rivalry between state and local government representatives about their comparative power and status, and there may be ongoing disagreements between state and local governments over projects that require extensive interaction, such as those involving investment in larger scale road-building, irrigation and power projects, both of which can lead to a biased evaluation of their performance in the development planning and implementation processes.

The Ashok Mehta report proposed that because the central government is more removed from such rivalries it should be made responsible for the assessment of local government. However, this arrangement is no more satisfactory, requiring "a very unhappy mix of two different types of democracy" (S. N. Battacharya 1986:324).

The state governments are also responsible for local government audits; however federal legislation does not stipulate a uniform system to be applied in this process. Some states, such as Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal, use the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG); however, the majority do not, and it is consequently difficult to compare the performance of PRIs within states, and virtually impossible to do so between states. It has therefore been suggested the CAG be given the power to regulate government accounting and budgeting procedures, if not overall responsibility.

The role of political parties in local government

India is an extremely politicised nation with a myriad political parties and a lively press. Elections to its state and centre legislatures are fairly regular and sometimes violent, but India is widely considered "by most conventional measures of political participation, electoral and party competition, and persistence of parliamentary institutions" to have held on to the basic elements of democracy (P. Brass 1990:334, quoted in V. K. Chopra 1994:33). Nonetheless, there has always been a somewhat tentative attitude amongst the political elite to "exposing" local government elections to a competition between well-endowed national political parties that only exploit rural poverty and caste-divisions.

Bailey contests this proposition as one vaguely rooted in some concept of the sanctity of (separate) rural government which he disputes in outlining two linked political structures: the small-scale, face-to-face political community (Structure A), and a larger-scale, more specialised Structure B, with command over greater political resources.

An influential and highly articulate group of Indian politicians, most of whom have retired from politics and become philosopher-publicists and social workers, have seized upon [the] normative rule of consensus in village behaviour, and elevated it to the supreme value of community life.

Their argument is that people who live under the rules of Structure A, if left to themselves, co-operate with one another and reach decisions by the method of consensus: but values injected from Structure B have destroyed this structure by introducing the notion of competition and the procedure of majority-voting (F. G. Bailey 1970:149).

However, considering village politics within such a framework risks giving the intimidation of weaker groups by dominant castes a normative cover "under the guise of consensus. In some states of India consensus was officially encouraged by giving a *per capita* financial reward for uncontested (i. e. consensual) elections" (ibid:183). In 1961 roughly thirty per cent of panchayat seats were uncontested (G. Mathew July 1989:12).

Other observers maintained that PRIs and political parties alike are vehicles of popular opinion, and that each may depend upon and gain from the contributions of the other. The national political parties require popular support just as do weaker groups: the rural majority may require party political support to challenge dominant castes in a local election. As Myron Weiner points out, "who is to say that in this arrangement one is getting a better deal than the other?" (M. Weiner (1962) in R. B. Jain (ed.) 1981:96). In any case most political parties were already represented in rural areas as a result of campaigns for state and national elections, and they were unlikely to pass up the opportunity offered by local government to strengthen these contacts.

In short, "[p]arty politics do now extend into Indian villages, perhaps because no-one could think of a way of keeping them out" (F. G. Bailey 1970:114). In any case, it is likely that the main obstacle to free and regular PRI elections is resistance from dominant groups at the village, state and centre levels, seeking to protect their respective power bases and control over resources, rather than the participation of political parties.

Representing the interests of the poor, women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes

Rural areas comprise many socially and economically disparate groups, whose daily interaction is clearly defined by the power of the rich and high-caste over the poor and

dispossessed. In this environment many observers have questioned the wisdom of giving "unfettered operational powers to the local micro-level" (M. A. S. Rajan 1990:226), where they may simply be commandeered by socially-dominant groups for their own interests. Indeed, the structure of village society is such that the intimidation and non-participation of a significant number of villagers in the gram sabha may be reasonably expected, which, given its role in determining and strengthening local initiatives, constitutes a significant problem for both democracy and development.

PRIs are presumed to give traditionally under-represented groups access to the political and planning processes, and the proximity of representatives to the electorate is thought to exert pressure for more responsive action. However, devolving responsibility for local development from the state and central governments does not necessarily improve social and economic imbalances in rural areas and can even reinforce them. As will be seen later, decentralisation requires that some programmes are institutionalised outside a local decision-making process, or lost.

Research conducted in Karnataka on the 1987-91 period indicates that as the local government process moved from the localised boundaries of village notables towards the district, Scheduled Caste groups enjoyed comparatively greater responsiveness from their representatives (Crook and Manor 1994:20). However, it will be some time before the weaker sections of rural communities are in a position to mount a serious challenge to the authority of dominant groups.

The Ashok Mehta Committee recognised that without certain protective mechanisms, the participation of disadvantaged groups in panchayati raj institutions is unlikely. Therefore, a policy of seat reservation was devised for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs), subsequently extended to include women. Provisions were also made for a Social Justice Committee, chaired by an SC/ST member, and a Committee of Legislature comprising, "so far as possible", SC/ST MLAs and MLCs. The Committee of Legislature is responsible for reviewing programmes directed at the SC/ST communities, and for providing them with political support. However, overall responsibility for minority groups' access to credit, resources and technology remains with the state governments.

The 73rd Amendment Bill reserves PRI seats for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) as a proportion of population, as well as reserving one-third of seats for women. The office of chairperson in each level of local institution is similarly reserved. However, the continued intimidation of SC/ST and women members by dominant groups averse to their participation indicates that seat reservations are insufficient means to ensure their active participation as PRI representatives, at least in the early stages.

Reserved seats are filled from constituencies set aside at each election in which only candidates from the groups concerned may stand. Where no suitable candidates are found, representatives may be co-opted. The system of seat reservations is not without problems: family and community members alike can be averse to the participation of a wife, sister or social inferior, and would-be candidates frequently suffer greatly for their efforts. The provision for co-opted members may complicate the issue, as it offers an opportunity to appoint more malleable individuals, even (perhaps especially) where others are willing to stand.

Seat reservations do not in themselves guarantee that women and SC/ST representatives will be permitted to contribute much to council meetings. However, they ensure their greater number, so that at least on issues requiring a large majority, such as the 75 per cent required to pass a vote of no-confidence in the sarpanch or head of the district board, other representatives must enlist their support.

Several non-government organisations have designed training programmes to help women and lower-caste members participate in local government, including village workshops organised to explain the process, purpose and rights of the individual within the panchayati raj system. Although there are still relatively few such initiatives, discussions between the author and women participants in a series organised by the Institute of Social Studies Trust, Bangalore (December 1991, Bangalore), indicate they are useful, not least to exchange approaches to common obstacles.

Other programmes bring together state and local officials in an informal

environment to discuss their respective roles and responsibilities. Primarily these programmes aim to encourage the co-operation of higher levels of government in the small-scale, locally-initiated development of rural areas that state and national level representatives do not usually associate with substantial political gain, as well as to address the considerable problem of competing claims to superior status between state and local officials.

Local government administration: The interaction of state officers and local representatives

The elite Indian Administrative Service (IAS) has for years attracted its best and most qualified officers to the central and state governments. Rural postings are regarded as temporary tenures with poor pay and amenities, at the outposts of government and far away from the superiors upon whose review an officer's promotion depends. As a result, officers deputed to work with decentralised institutions are frequently more responsive to the line-hierarchy of their department than that of rural government institutions, and may consequently accord less importance to schemes designed locally than to those funded and monitored by the state. This perceived lack of commitment to rural government causes considerable problems in the interaction of deputed officers with elected representatives, but could be addressed by structuring the Indian administrative service to make rural postings more significant.

Following the Ashok Mehta committee the states were to establish two bodies to oversee the administration of local government: a Secretariat Department headed by a Development Commissioner, and a Directorate of Panchayati Raj to which a Minister would be appointed. Technical officers deputed to PRIs from the state government are administered at the local level by the Zilla Parishad Committee Secretary, horizontally coordinated under a Chief Executive Officer with at least three-years' service at district level. This arrangement establishes two chains of command - that of the Chief Executive Officer for the purposes of general administration and that of an outside (state) authority on technical issues.

The report posited that unequal rates of pay, chances of promotion and other

emoluments are the chief obstacles to the smooth integration and interaction of elected and deputed officers at the local level. It optimistically maintained that while the "constitution of elective organisations to supervise and direct development programmes [will] certainly upset the existing administrative routines, the various problems of personnel management and personal adjustment should not be allowed to stand in the way of this changeover; the administrative apparatus [will] have to adapt itself to this fundamental change" (Ashok Mehta Committee Report **Kurukshetra** February 1989:27).

However, the integration of state and local levels of government is complicated by the vertical organisation of the state bureaucracy into departments whose specialised areas are combined within the PR system for more general development planning and administration. As a result, increased demand for agricultural inputs from the local level such as irrigation, agricultural extension, credit, seeds or fertiliser may be met by the state "commandeering all available staff" (**Kurukshetra** Feb 1989:20) to its service to provide the inputs directly. This centralising tendency pulls the decision-making process closer to the influence of secretariat or departmental heads, and removes the staff and resources otherwise available to the local level. As a result, development plans are frequently drawn up by local institutions with few and uncertain resources, and limited access to expert, unbiased technical advice.

At the local level there is a cross-over in the block-district hierarchy that allows district officers to retain some authority over technical decisions. The block is established as the unit of development, but the District Development Officer is given authority over the Block Development Officer, both of whom are state government officers. Nonetheless, some district- and particularly state-level bureaucrats feel that, with the introduction of local government, their authority has been diminished: without the administrative control that enabled them to guide their officers and "pull up inefficient or indifferent workers" (S. N. Battacharya 1986:317), many insist they no longer maintain sufficient control over technical decisions. Concurrently, however, some Karnataka government officers working in the districts during 1987-91 found that decentralisation gave them access to information and greater freedom to act accordingly than they had had working directly under their heads of department.

Conclusion

The history of local government in India reflects the broader debates over the most appropriate levels at which to carry out rural development activities. But it also reflects the different ways in which political structures are manipulated by elites to meet their interests. The British administration of rural India used decentralisation to empower local elites within containable limits. The Constitution of India delimits powers between the central and state governments in such a way as to maintain the federal government's considerable influence over the states, particularly through the allocation of funds. Successive committees convened to review panchayati raj in India have noted that using a control over funds to limit the powers of sub-central units of government has been similarly extended to relations between the state governments and local institutions, and has restricted the freedom of local institutions to fulfil their role as institutions which can be most responsive to local rural development priorities.

Local government institutions depend upon higher levels of government to guarantee their legal status, as well as to provide them with adequate technical and financial resources. The resistance or support of higher levels of government therefore plays a key role in determining the efficiency with which local-level institutions can carry out the rural development functions assigned to them. Before state-level legal and practical commitments to decentralisation, "[t]he bureaucracy, in alliance with local powers, state and central-level politicians" were free to discredit local institutions by highlighting their "domination [by] upper or dominant castes, corruption and total ineptitude" (G. Mathew in Institute of Social Sciences, 1995:8).

But the authority of local elites is a serious challenge to the full participation of rural communities in local elected institutions established to meet the needs of all sections of the rural population. Rarely are rural socio-economic structures not reflected in the make-up and functioning of local elected institutions. Where responsibility for a substantial proportion of rural development functions is devolved to local elected institutions in which women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are unable or unwilling to actively participate in the process of identifying and designing rural development schemes,

decentralisation will make little contribution to the lives of the poorest and most disadvantaged sections of rural communities.

However, elements averse to decentralisation can be effectively co-opted into its implementation by constitutional affirmation of a serious and permanent decentralisation of rural development planning and administration. The following chapter describes the process of decentralisation in Karnataka following the passage of the Karnataka Zilla Parishads, Taluk Panchayat Samithis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats Act, 1983.

Chapter 4

Decentralisation in Karnataka,1987-91: Structure and Practice

Different states have implemented decentralised systems of various structures. However, more important than the number or constituent members of the tiers adopted under different systems is the fact that only a small number of states has ever seriously undertaken democratic decentralisation by devolving significant powers and resources to lower-level councils. In the past Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have all gone some distance towards the generous devolution of powers and responsibilities. But for complex reasons the state governments have either clawed these powers back or prevented elections to successive terms, and decentralised systems stagnated or collapsed entirely.

Only two states have ever substantially devolved powers and resources in a determined effort to promote democratic decentralisation - West Bengal and Karnataka. In West Bengal the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) came to power in 1977 and has been a key player in government ever since. The effectiveness of the West Bengal experiment is attributable mainly to the disciplined and penetrative party organisation of the CPI(M). But in Karnataka there was no such organisation.

The success of decentralisation in Karnataka was because in large part of the vision and commitment of an individual - the Minister for Rural Development, Abdul Nazeer Sab. Nazeer Sab was convinced of the potential for micro-level development efforts and the political kudos they would gain his party, the Janata Dal. Nazeer Sab drove through the decentralisation of resources and authority to local elected bodies and ensured the effective working of the system until his death in 1988.

The distinction between the basis of successful attempts to decentralise in West Bengal and Karnataka is important because most parts of India and the developing world are more like Karnataka than West Bengal in that they lack a strong and disciplined party structure through which to implement decentralisation (see J. Heaphey (ed) 1971:20-1). Both the Karnataka and West Bengal cases are examples of the most successful systems of decentralisation in the developing world. Their only rival may be the current system in the Philippines. The thesis is therefore concerned with one of the two most genuine and determined efforts to promote decentralisation in developing countries and, of the two, the Karnataka case is the more important because it occurred in the absence of a (strong) communist party.

History of decentralisation in Karnataka

Modern Karnataka comprises three regions: Mysore State, Bombay Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka (see map, page iii). Before independence in 1947 the comparatively benevolent Maharaja of Mysore and the British in Bombay Karnataka established from the early 1900s local elected councils with limited powers over an area that constitutes 17 of Karnataka's 20 districts. However, in the area of Hyderabad Karnataka, a Hindu majority was ruled by the more authoritarian Muslim Nizam of Hyderabad who was less inclined to devolve powers to local councils, and did not begin to do so until the 1940s.

In the princely state of Mysore the Mysore Local Boards Act passed in 1902 established a three-tier structure of local institutions with nominated, ex-officio and some elected members. In British-administered territories the Madras District Boards Act and Madras Panchayat Act passed in 1920 established elected district- and village-level institutions with substantial powers over education, public health and the maintenance of roads. In Bombay Presidency the Bombay Village Panchayat Act was passed in 1920 and amended in 1928, 1933, 1939 and 1947 to provide for panchayats' increasing powers and responsibilities, while the Bombay Act 23 of 1928 established district boards with elected Presidents and Vice-Presidents. Under the Bombay Acts responsibility for primary and secondary education remained with the district school boards, composed of members elected from rural and urban local institutions (Institute of Social Sciences, 1995:95). In

Hyderabad Karnataka elected district boards were not established until 1941. Karnataka's constituent territories have therefore had a long experience of local government, albeit of various structures, with different levels and areas of responsibility.

Following independence the Venkatappa Committee (also known as the Integration and Coordination for Local Bodies Committee) established in the old state of Mysore recommended a two-tier system of village panchayats and district boards, and the Mysore Village Panchayats and District Boards Act, 1952, was passed. However, "anomalies" in the system persuaded the state government to appoint the Local Boards Enquiry Committee under Sri Chandrasekhariah (A. Aziz, 1993:35). In August 1954 the Chandrasekhariah Committee recommended a three-tier structure of local institutions to include intermediate-level taluk boards. Pending the states' reorganisation the Chandrasekhariah Committee recommendations could not be immediately enacted. However, following the creation of the state of Karnataka, the recommendations were passed into law in 1959 as the Karnataka Village Panchayats and Local Boards Act.

In the 1950s state assemblies across India passed legislation to establish local government institutions. The impetus to decentralise came in the wake of the 1952 Community Development Programme which promoted local government institutions as a more effective means of determining plan priorities and administering rural development resources (see Chapter 3, page 71). In Karnataka legislation passed in 1959 established a District Development Council (DDC) with a consultative, advisory and coordinating role, and directly elected Taluk Development Boards and Village Panchayats with a Block Development Officer as chief executive officer. However, these bodies were almost entirely implementing rather than plan-formulating institutions. No plan or non-plan scheme staff were transferred to them by the state government, and the long-established structure of district government headed by a senior administrative officer as deputy commissioner, responsible to the state government for district development and the regulatory functions of land revenue administration and law and order, was retained (see D. Potter, 1964).

- However, during the 1983 Karnataka state government elections, decentralisation

assumed a central position in the Janata Dal Party's election manifesto. A commitment to decentralise was effectively used by the Janata Dal to demonstrate a more imaginative approach to government than that manifest by Congress party rule in New Delhi. Following its election to power in the state the Janata Dal accordingly made a determined effort to devolve power and resources to the local level, breathing life into a law framed in 1977 by the Congress party in Karnataka. Under the new government the Karnataka Village Panchayat and Local Boards Act of 1959 was replaced by the Karnataka District Councils, Taluk Panchayat Samithis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats Act, 1983, which received Presidential assent and was passed into law on 10 July 1985.

A "High-Power Committee" under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to the state government was set up in March 1985 to resolve various administrative and procedural problems associated with the new act. This committee continues to be the main authority for resolving differences over the decentralised rural development planning and implementation process between state-level departments and local institutions. The rules governing the 1983 Act were framed in 1986 and early 1987, and elections to District Councils and lower-level mandal panchayats were held in January 1987. In February and March the new institutions elected Presidents and Vice-Presidents and appointed standing committees and their chairmen, and the state government appointed chief secretaries to the District Councils. In March and April the state government finalised the deputation of officers to district-, taluk- and mandal-level institutions. Rural development schemes were transferred to the District Councils and mandal panchayats responsible for planning and allocating funds to rural development schemes with effect from 1 April 1987, along with the requisite staff and budget for their implementation (Government of Karnataka, 1988:4).

Structure of decentralised government in Karnataka

The *gram sabha* forms the base of the decentralised government system established in Karnataka by the 1983 Act. It comprises a "college" of village voters, held at least twice a year to discuss and review village development programmes; select beneficiaries for schemes transferred to local government institutions; plan for local improvements including minimum needs, welfare and production-oriented programmes such as coordinated village agricultural activities; and constitute a Land Army of all able-bodied persons. Senior local

government officers attend each gram sabha to record the discussion and monitor responses to the agreed proposals.

The *mandal panchayat* is the lowest -level institution and first elected tier of the 1983 decentralised system, entrusted with all civic functions and powers about intra-mandal development and welfare programmes. A mandal covers a group of villages with a population of between 8,000 and 12,000 (according to the 1981 census), except in hill (Malnad) areas where the requisite population is less. 2536 mandal panchayats were constituted with one seat per 400 population. Of 55,188 elected members 25% of seats are reserved for women of which at least one per mandal should be from a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST), and at least 18% of seats are reserved for SC/STs. The President (Pradhan) and Vice-President (Upapradhan) are elected by members of the mandal panchayat. Each mandal panchayat has a secretary and village extension worker or agricultural assistant deputed to it by the state government.

The 1983 Act establishes the mandal panchayat with responsibility for functions under the headings Sanitation and Health (including construction, repair, maintenance and cleaning of domestic water sources and the destruction of stray animals and rats); Public Works and Amenities (including building, repair and maintenance of mandal buildings, roads, bridges, tanks and field banks (bundhs)); Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (including developing fishery, poultry and piggery activities, nurseries and granaries); Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes; and Other (including designing mandal development plans, assisting implementation of government soil conservation programmes, developing forests and maintaining statistical records).

The *taluk panchayat samithi (TPS)* is an intermediate-level, nominated body responsible for supervising inter-mandal coordination within the taluk. The TPS - comprises, ex-officio, all Presidents of the taluk mandal panchayats; members of the state legislature (MLAs) representing any part of the taluk (excluding urban areas); members of the District Council representing any part of the taluk; the President of the Taluk Agricultural Produce Co-operative Marketing Society (TAPCMS); the President of the Primary Land Development Bank; and five SC/ST, backward class and/or women

members co-opted with the approval of the District Council.

The *District Council (Zilla Parishad or ZP)* is the second directly-elected tier of the decentralised system established by the 1983 Act in Karnataka. Each of nineteen districts elected 887 representatives - one representative per 28,000 population, except Kodagu district which elected one representative per 12,000 population - with reservations for women (25%) and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (18%) similar to those for mandal panchayats. The District Council President (Adhyaksha) and Vice-President (Upadhyaksha) are elected by Council members. Members of Parliament and the state legislature representing any part of the district are members of, but may not hold any official position in, the District Council.

The 1983 Act assigns the District Council responsibility for the “overall supervision, coordination and integration of development schemes at [the] taluk and district levels and preparing the plan for the development of the district” (Government of Karnataka, 1987: 145). Functions are devolved to the District Council under the headings Agriculture; Animal Husbandry; Welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes; Buildings and Communications; Public Health; Irrigation and Ground Water Resources; Industries and Cottage Industries; Horticulture; Cooperation; Education and Social Education; Statistics; Fisheries; Rural Electrification and Distribution of Essential Commodities.

The District Council President is the executive head of the District Council and has the rank of a state government Minister. The Vice-President has the rank of a state government Deputy Minister. A senior Indian Administrative Service officer serves as chief secretary and administrative head of the District Council, with the status and powers of a head of a major department. The chief secretary is senior in rank to the deputy commissioner who continues to be responsible for the regulatory functions that remain with the state government: the maintenance of law and order and land revenue administration.

The status given to the political executive and administrative head of the District Council was a novel and important aspect of the Karnataka Act, with significant

implications for its successful implementation from 1987 to '91. First, by according the President of the District Council the status of a state government Minister, the government signalled to rural communities and members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) alike the sincerity with which it transferred powers to local elected councils, establishing them as a political weight that required respect and attention from the state government political and administrative structures. Second, the senior-ranked Indian Administrative Service officers appointed as chief secretaries to the District Councils brought with them considerable skill and experience in dealing with politicians and officers from different departments, which generally facilitated the decentralisation process, but was particularly important in the early stages. Third, by making the District Council chief secretary responsible to the District Council political executive, and senior to the deputy commissioner who was responsible to the state government, the state government again indicated the independence and predominance of the District Councils in the districts.

Under the 1983 Act each District Council has a junior administrative staff appointed from the Karnataka Administrative Service to support the chief secretary. The junior administrative staff consists of a chief planning officer; chief accounts officer; deputy secretary I, responsible for administration; and deputy secretary II, responsible for development. The delegation of authority between the chief secretary and his supporting staff is left to the chief secretary. The Act gives the District Council administrative authority over district-level officers and lower-level supporting staff. This provision meant the transfer of more than 50% of almost half a million state government employees to work under the District Councils.

However, the authority of the District Councils over district-level staff under the 1983 Act depends upon officers' rank. Senior district-level staff (recruited from Groups A and B state government employees), including district-level heads of department, chief secretaries and his immediate supporting staff, are deputed to the District Councils by the state government. While the District Council political executive has immediate administrative authority over senior district-level officers, heads of department retain the authority to supervise their technical decisions and to transfer officers. But the Act makes provision for the "permanent" absorption and subsequent recruitment of lower-ranking

district-level staff (recruited from Groups C and D state government employees) which includes teachers, office “peons” and other lower-level positions. Rules governing the authority of the District Council over lower-level personnel and their recruitment were drawn up with effect from 1988.

Under the 1983 Act schemes are devolved from the state government to the elected local institution closest to the area over which they are to be implemented. Schemes for a specific mandal are transferred to the relevant mandal panchayat, while inter-mandal, inter-taluk or district-specific schemes are transferred to the relevant District Council. Inter-district or externally-assisted schemes remain with the state government.

The *State Development Council* comprises the District Council Presidents and six state government Ministers, with the state government Development Commissioner as Member-Secretary and the state government Chief Secretary as chairman. Under the 1983 Act the Council is responsible for the review and direction of decentralisation, “providing a sounding board for policy and procedural formulations” (Government of Karnataka, 1988:6) and a forum for the interaction of the state political executive with local government institutions.

Under the 1983 Act the state government retains the power to dissolve a District Council if it “exceeds or abuses its powers or is not competent to perform or makes persistent default” of its duties; however elections to reconstitute the District Council must be held within six months (Government of Karnataka, 1987:188). The District Councils have similar powers over the mandal panchayats within their jurisdiction, as well as the power to approve mandal panchayat budgets and suspend any order or resolution passed by its representatives or officers.

Decentralised data collection and the Comprehensive Land Use Management Project

The 1983 Act emphasises the role of local institutions in maintaining detailed statistical records. Local elected institutions had access to information which the state government used to improve state-level data collection and to implement the

Comprehensive Land Use Management Project, illustrating the way in which decentralisation was perceived to fit with state-level rural development planning and monitoring. Information on local demographic, agro-economic, socioeconomic, natural resource, minimum needs and infrastructural attributes was collected by district and mandal institutions and presented by family, survey number and infrastructural elements. The micro-level data provided by district and mandal institutions were then collated by a computerised system introduced by the State Directorate of Economics and Statistics to supplement state-level monitoring of rural development planning and implementation that had principally relied on macro-level data (Government of Karnataka, 1988:14).

The Comprehensive Land Use Management Project (CLUMP) was introduced in Karnataka to reduce the agro-climatic effects of erratic seasonal conditions and the erosion of soil, tree cover, ground water, fodder, fuel and other rural energy requirements through over-use and poor management. The basic premise of the project is that the programmes, inputs and outputs of various departmental schemes are interdependent and frequently overlap, and that a coordinated approach to optimal land and water use will forestall rural resource shortages: CLUMP aims to frame land and water use “to meet objectives . . . carefully derived with the foregoing considerations squarely faced” (Government of India, 1988:ii).

The Comprehensive Land Use Management Project was piloted in 15 mandals from five districts, comprising 192 villages. The mandal panchayats and District Councils were actively involved in surveys to determine existing land use; human population (by household, to determine personal, social and economic details of each member, including inputs to economic activity and markets for produce); bovine population (including dung and milk yields and source of fodder); habitat (including roads, sewerage and the extent to which minimum needs are met); and energy (including category-wise requirements and local sources). Projects were then drawn up for watershed management (including improving tree-cover, managing waste-land, and pisciculture); irrigation management (including water storage, managing community and individual irrigation sources and farm ponds); bovine management (considered central to improved land, water and energy use, as well as improved economic status of rural communities); rural energy; habitat management;

and waste-land management, for implementation by the mandal panchayats and District Councils (ibid:29-64). Data on the projects were updated weekly, using the computerised system developed to monitor micro-level data provided by decentralised government institutions.

The state and centre plan process and the devolution of local government finances

Funds for state development responsibilities under the Constitution's Seventh Schedule (see page 64) are provided by statutory transfer according to the recommendations of the central government's Finance Commission, decided in consultation with the National Development Council. Further resources are transferred to the states for the implementation of centrally-sponsored development schemes. The Finance Commission is an "independent quasi-judicial and ad-hoc" body comprising non-political experts consisting of a chairman, member secretary and seven members, set up every five years to recommend to the President the distribution between the Union and states of tax revenue and the principles to govern grants-in-aid to the states from the Consolidated Fund of India (Anand and Kumar (eds), 1990:87). The recommendations of the Finance Commission are not legally binding on the federal government; however, they are usually accepted.

The National Development Council is a political body comprising the Prime Minister, Union Cabinet Ministers, State Chief Ministers, Lieutenant-Governors of the Union Territories and members of the Planning Commission, responsible for establishing guidelines for assessing the resources available to, and evaluating the national plan as formulated by, the Planning Commission. The Council may also periodically review plan implementation and make recommendations for meeting its targets.

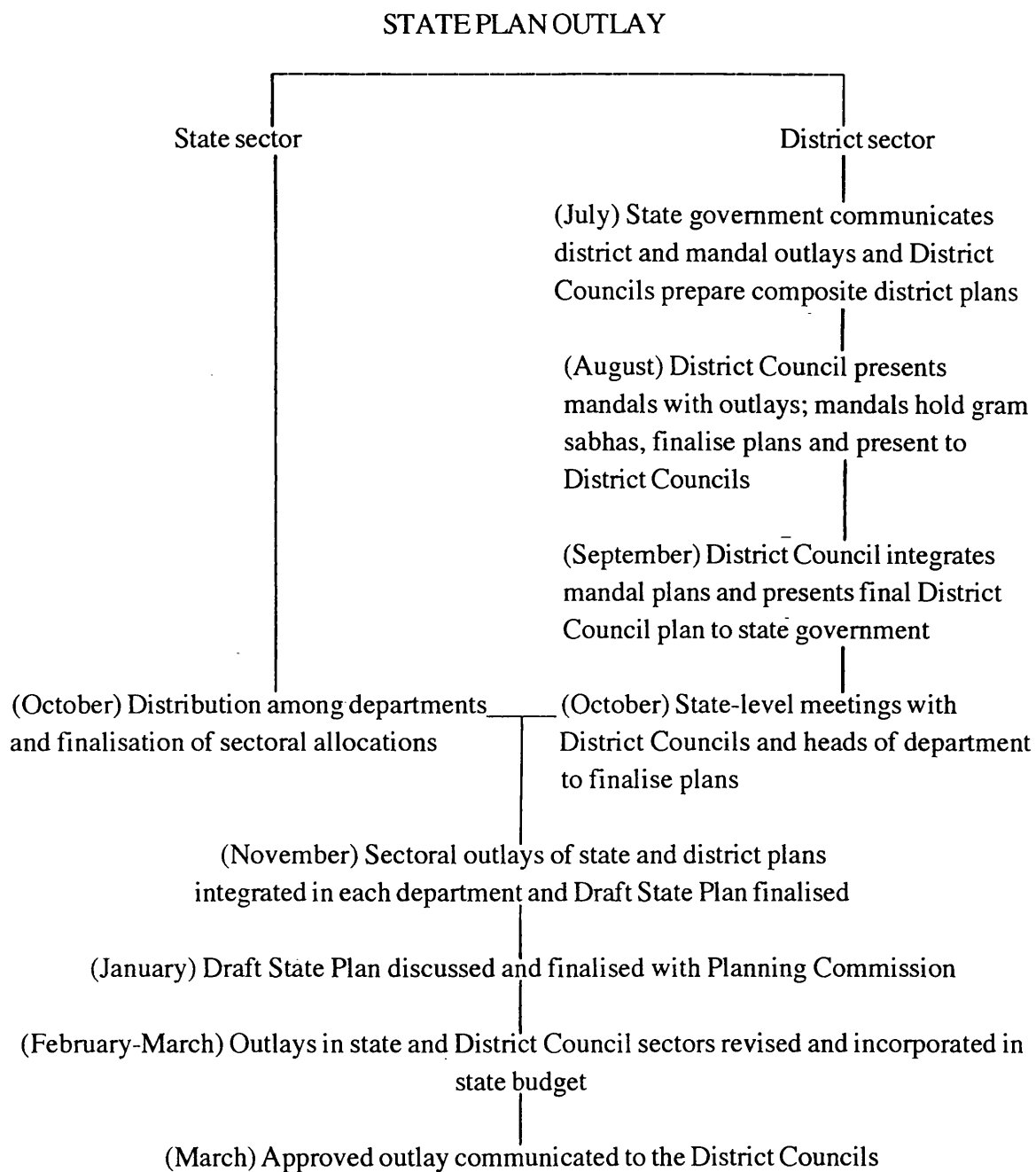
Following the deliberations of the Finance Commission and the National Development Council, the central Planning Commission draws up five-year and annual plans. The Planning Commission consists of expert advisors chaired by the Prime Minister, who offer technical assistance in plan design and implementation to the central and state Ministries. Commission members work with senior government officers assigned as consultants or Joint Secretaries to its general divisions (Financial Resources,

Development Policy, and International Economics; Labour, Employment and Manpower; Statistics and Surveys; State Plans; Project Appraisal; Monitoring and Information; and Plan Coordination) and subject divisions (Science and Technology; Agriculture; Rural Development; Irrigation and Command Area Development; Power and Energy; Industry and Minerals; Village and Small Industries; Transport; Education; Rural Energy; Housing, Urban Development and Water Supply; Health and Family Welfare; Social Welfare and Nutrition; Backward Classes; Communication and Information; Indo-Japan Committee; Western Ghats Secretariat; and Energy Policy).

The Planning Commission formulates its annual plan on the basis of a revenue surplus on its non-plan account and additional revenue generated from new taxes and capital receipts including foreign borrowings. Central assistance to the states is then calculated on the basis of a formula which gives weight to a state's population (60 per cent); per capita income deviation from the all-India average (10 per cent); per capita tax burden as a percentage of state income (10 per cent); continuing plan expenditure on irrigation and power (10 per cent); and special problems such as a high population of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (10 per cent), known as the Gadgil formula. Under the constitution external assistance for state-specific projects are paid to the central government: external assistance provided for poverty alleviation and social-sector projects (agriculture, rural development, sericulture, irrigation, environment, health and family welfare, nutrition, women's development, education, housing, water supply and urban development) is disbursed to the concerned state in its entirety; however only 70% of external assistance for other projects is released to the state and the remaining 30% is distributed to other states on the basis of the Gadgil formula (Anand and Kumar (eds), 1990:16-17).

Annual plans drawn up by the state finance and planning commissions in consultation with state government ministries are approved and integrated with the national plan through extensive negotiations between state government officers and the central Planning Commission, Finance Ministry, and Ministries' Working Groups. The state plans are assessed project by project to ensure state priorities are consistent with the national plan and available resources.

The decentralised plan process during 1987-91 in Karnataka is graphically represented below:



The disbursement of funds within a state depends upon the prevailing government structure. In 1987-91 in Karnataka the Gadgil formula, used to determine the division of Union funds between the states, was similarly used to determine the division of state government funds between the districts, and integrated with the annual plan process of delimiting funds under sectoral headings.

In 1987-88 a total of Rs 951 crores (one crore = 10 million) was transferred to the District Councils: Rs 220 crores from the state plan budget (of a total Rs 870 crores); Rs 597 from the state non-plan budget (of a total Rs 3134 crores); and Rs 134 crores from funds for centrally-sponsored state schemes to be implemented by the District Councils (Government of Karnataka, 1988:7). As well as the sectoral funds transferred to the District Councils the state government provided an untied per capita grant of Rs 10 per year, to be shared between the District Councils and mandal panchayats in the ratio of 1:3 and spent on programmes of their choice.

The sectoral outlays devolved to the District Councils are to “promote sustained growth in the subregions” through rural development. Additional funds were provided to local elected institutions for poverty alleviation amongst the vulnerable groups least likely to benefit from general economic growth. These additional resources come from four main programmes:

The **Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)** scheme provides funds to create “durable assets” whose construction generates wage employment opportunities for the rural poor during the seasons agricultural labour is in least demand (A. Aziz and M. Bamberger, 1993:168). The scheme was introduced in 1989 by merging the National Rural Employment Programme and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, and is sponsored by the national and state governments in the ratio of 4:1. Under the 1983 Act resources from the JRY scheme were transferred to the District Councils to be divided between them and the lower-level mandal panchayats in the ratio of 1:4. Of the total allocated ten per cent may go towards “spillover” works not completed the previous year and five per cent towards administrative expenses, with the remainder to implement new projects. The mandal panchayats are required to spend 35 per cent of JRY funds on

“profitable assets” such as shops and hotel buildings; 25 per cent on roads, school buildings and hospitals; 25 per cent on community forestry projects; and 15 per cent on sites, houses and drainage for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs). The ratio of wage to material costs is clearly stipulated at 3:2, and wages set at Rs 12.80 per day (increased to Rs 16 in April 1991), which includes the value of 1 1/2 kilograms of rice given to each labourer (ibid:168).

Projects are identified by mandal panchayat representatives in consultation with local communities, and a list of priorities drawn up and approved by the mandal panchayat. The construction of approved projects is carried out by labourers drawn from a list of willing participants compiled yearly. The scheme “stipulates that only the poorest of the poor should be drafted for employment”, and requires the work force to comprise 50 per cent SC/STs and 30 per cent women (ibid:168). The implementation of JRY scheme projects is supervised at the mandal-level by its chief administrative officer, the block development officer, with two junior engineers assisting. However, during the 1987 to ‘91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka it became apparent the mandal panchayats were insufficiently equipped in staff and the disposition of elected representatives to select and oversee the implementation of JRY-funded projects.

The **Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)** introduced in 1979 assists rural households below the poverty line (Rs 3,500 at 1978-79 prices). Funds for the programme are transferred to the District Councils who channel them to rural banks in the relevant areas. The programme provides to beneficiaries a bank loan at ten per cent interest and a government subsidy of between 25 and 50 per cent of the loan, shared by the state and central governments. The loan is provided to the beneficiary in the form of an asset, such as a cow, rather than cash.

Under a decentralised system beneficiaries were selected at village meetings (gram sabhas) called by the mandal panchayats once funds had been released by the District Councils to local banks. At the village meeting the “most needy” beneficiaries and the resources required are supposed to be identified, with the provision that 50 per cent of allocations go to SC/STs and 30 per cent to women. However, mandal panchayat

representatives were frequently negligent in their duty to publicise and allocate IRDP funds. Village meetings were not well-advertised so many did not attend, and the poor, lower-caste and women were rarely in a position to make their claims to assistance heard.

The **Special Component Plan** provides state and central government funds to the District Councils for projects targeting Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs). Projects are designed sectorally (by department) and provide, for example, a free supply of agricultural implements, seeds or fertiliser; soil conservation assistance; animals; or wells for SC/ST members. The role of the mandal panchayats in the Special Component Plan is limited to identifying and recommending beneficiaries to the district-level sectoral heads to be incorporated in department schemes under the District Council.

However, the **Twenty Percent Scheme** to “promote the well-being” Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) is funded and implemented exclusively by the mandal panchayats. The scheme is so named because the 1983 Act requires the mandal panchayats to allocate twenty per cent of their funds to SC/STs projects. Twenty Percent Scheme funds were frequently used by the mandal panchayats to establish street lighting in SC/ST neighbourhoods. However, there were many examples of lighting projects so sanctioned running through dominant caste residential areas, with just one or two lights reaching into SC/ST neighbourhoods.

As indicated by the above outline of the process by which central-, state-, and local funds are allocated, local institutions had limited flexibility in the (legal) allocation of resources made available to them. The District Councils and mandal panchayats also operated under a considerable degree of fiscal restriction. Local elected bodies were limited in their capacity to raise funds through local taxes and charges, and were virtually entirely dependent upon funds devolved to them by the state government: District Councils could raise funds from borrowing and investments and retained control over the proceeds of their income-generating schemes, but had no powers of taxation, while mandal panchayats could levy traditional taxes on property and markets although they were poorly equipped to do so.

Some observers refer to the reluctance of higher authorities to extend significant tax-raising powers to local elected councils as indicative of a general reluctance to empower local institutions. Without the ability to raise taxes, it is argued, local councils remain dependent on higher authorities for funds and are thereby more easily controlled (see, for example, N. Ashirvad, 1989; and A. Datta and M Oommen, 1995). However, even with stringent rules, local institutions often do not allocate adequate resources to the poorest, and some control of their spending is therefore required. It is also likely local elected representatives would themselves be reluctant to impose taxes on a close electoral base. Indeed, on the basis of representatives' apparently limited inclination to mobilise voluntary local contributions in cash or labour to rural development schemes during the 1987 to '91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka, the latter argument has some weight.

The funds allocated to the District Council were transferred by the state government under sectoral headings devised in the state budget process which gave the District Councils limited flexibility in rural development spending. First, they could reallocate funds between sectors, but only within the "national discipline" exerted by the central and state plan process which earmarked funds for specific schemes. The District Councils could therefore transfer a maximum of 10% of the funds provided to a given sector to any other sector (Government of Karnataka, 1988: 7). Second, once the District Councils had met their responsibilities for salaries, the state share of centrally-sponsored schemes (CSS) devolved to them, incomplete, "spillover" works from the preceding year, the minimum needs programme (MNP) and other previous commitments to ongoing schemes, a very small proportion of the District Council budget remained for disbursement according to District Council priorities. The following tables reproduce the funds (programme budget) devolved to the District Councils from each of six departments and in total from 1987-91, in the form of the reported (Table 2A), inflation-adjusted (Table 2B), and real percentage changes in (Table 2C) departments' programme budgets.

Table 2A: Reported Programme Budgets, 1987-91

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Agriculture	2440.88	2278.74	3053.67	3238.65
Animal Husbandry	1141.52	1541.17	2119.21	2595.69
Education	36341.89	41980.39	47645.12	53501
Engineering	10681.18	11539.51	9668.83	11919.97
Forestry	1538.9	1149.88	1469.36	1788.56
Health	10498.09	12885.74	14642.67	16532.53
Total available to District Councils from all departments	95091.31	99009.5	111530.93	127568.44

(in Rs 100,000s)

Table 2B: Inflation-adjusted Programme Budgets, 1987-91

Inflation rate	100	105.7	115.31	129.26
Agriculture	2440.88	2155.82	2648.22	2505.53
Animal Husbandry	1141.52	1458.06	1837.84	2008.12
Education	36341.89	39716.55	41319.16	41390.22
Engineering	10681.18	10917.23	8385.08	9221.7
Forestry	1538.9	1087.87	1274.27	1383.69
Health	10498.09	12190.86	12698.53	12790.14
Total available to District Councils from all departments	95091.31	93670.29	96722.69	98691.35

(in Rs 100,000s)

**Table 2C: Real Percentage Change in Programme Budgets,
1987-91**

Agriculture	(base year)	-11.67	8.49	2.65
Animal Husbandry	"	27.73	61	75.92
Education	"	9.29	13.7	13.89
Engineering	"	2.21	-21.5	-13.66
Forestry	"	-29.31	-17.2	-10.09
Health	"	16.12	20.96	21.83
<hr/>				
Total available to District Councils from all departments	"	-14.94	1.72	3.79

(compiled from Government of Karnataka Budget Allotment for District Councils)

As indicated by the figures above, the District Councils had to acclimatise themselves to substantial year-to-year changes in the total and constituent parts of the budget available to them for rural development planning and administration over the 1987-91 period.

The shifting functions and finances of decentralised institutions

The 1983 Act vests the District Council with functions, responsibilities and powers “formulated to render it unambiguously the head of district development and welfare administration” (Government of Karnataka, 1988:6): it administers programmes transferred to or evolved by it; maintains District Council and mandal staff; formulates the District Plan; and designs and approves mandal and District Council budgets. However, rural development functions are transferred to the District Council “[s]ubject to such exceptions, restrictions and conditions as may from time to time be specified by order by the [state] Government” (Government of Karnataka, 1987:145).

The legal qualification of the District Council’s independence meant functions and funds assigned to it could be assigned or withdrawn “by executive fiat” (A. Datta and M.

Oommen, 1995:19), and gave departments unwilling to decentralise rural development activities an opportunity to lobby for a reconcentration of powers in Bangalore. Of the functions assigned to the District Council, schemes under the headings of Industries and Cottage Industries; Horticulture; Cooperation; and Distribution of Essential Commodities were subsequently withdrawn in their entirety for administration by the state.

Summary conclusions

The decentralised system established in Karnataka from 1987 to '91 made substantial progress towards improving some elements of the rural development planning and implementation process in the state. Primary health, education and animal husbandry in particular gained from a localised plan process that responded to local priorities (The Sunday Times of India, 30 May 1993). But groups which control rural socio-economic structures in Karnataka, especially the Vokkaliga and Lingayat castes, secured a disproportionate number of seats in local elected councils. Although women and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (SC/STs) had seats reserved for them in local-level institutions, this legal provision was insufficient to guarantee them more than limited involvement in discussions and decision-making (Institute of Social Sciences, 1995:101).

Financially, the system was not flexible enough to allow local-level institutions free rein over their allocation of funds evolved to them by the state government nor to mobilise local tax sources. Both of these limitations narrowed the extent to which local elected institutions were truly responsible and accountable for the spending they authorised, as well as their ability to capitalise on state government funds.

The 1983 Act established a state finance commission to recommend to the government the pattern and principles surrounding the devolution of funds to the district and sub-district level elected institutions. But the recommendations of the first commission submitted in 1989 were not implemented because of state-level political resistance to decentralisation. By 1988 factional in-fighting in the governing Janata Party gave the substantial number of legislators and Ministers who were wary of decentralising power and authority to local elected institutions room to manoeuvre for the withdrawal of functions and responsibilities from them. The reluctance of state-level elected representatives to

empower local elected representatives also limited the extent to which party political networks were developed at the grass-roots.

Once the Congress Party assumed power after state elections in 1990, the process of undermining local institutions “went much further” (Institute of Social Sciences, 1995:101). Bureaucrats and politicians who disliked the changes brought about by decentralisation took advantage of an election which established in power a party much less committed to decentralisation to encourage a great reduction in the role of and finances available to local elected institutions. Responsibility for cooperatives, horticulture and the public distribution system which provides food for low-price sale from government outlets was removed from the District Councils, and local institutions’ share of government funds plummeted (see Table 7, page 269). When elections to local institutions were due in 1992 the state government “superseded the zilla parishads and mandal panchayats and appointed administrators” from the state government bureaucracy (ibid:101).

Parts Two and Three of the thesis examine the decentralised development planning and administrative process in place from 1987 to ‘91 from the perspectives of Karnataka state government administrative officers, and officers from departments responsible for six of the remaining ten headings transferred to the District Council under the 1983 Act: Agriculture; Animal Husbandry; Education; Buildings and Communications, Irrigation and Ground Water Resources (Engineering); Forestry; and Health which together accounted for two-thirds of the budget available to the District Councils. As will be shown, even some of the schemes implemented by these six departments were subject to pressures exerted to reestablish state-level control over rural development resources, and were gradually withdrawn from the District Councils.

Part Two

The Bureau-Shaping Model Applied to the Karnataka State Control Agency

The following chapters analyse the Karnataka state government control agency - its administrative officers. Successive chapters examine the responses to decentralisation of different ranks of officer within the parameters of bureaucrats' preferences outlined by Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model. Chapter 5 presents senior state-level control agency officers (Secretaries to Government and Secretaries to the Chief Minister; Development Commissioners, Planning Commissioners and Finance Secretaries; and Secretaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj); Chapter 6 presents senior district-level control agency officers (District Council chief secretaries); and Chapter 7 presents junior district-level control agency officers (deputy secretaries of development and administration, chief accounts officers and chief planning officers). The quotations contained in each chapter are from interviews with officers of the category being considered.

Each chapter has two sections. The first arranges officers' responses for analysis under headings and sub-headings taken from the outline of bureaucrats' preferences. The second presents modifications to the outline required for the bureau-shaping model to reflect comprehensively officers' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka. The results presented here will serve as a benchmark for a similar treatment of senior state- and district-level officers from delivery agencies in Part Three.

Chapter 5

Senior State-level Control Agency Officers

Senior state-level control agency officers hold key positions in the state government administration and were central to the implementation of the 1983 Act establishing decentralised institutions of government in Karnataka. Three categories of control agency officer are identified: (1) political administrators; (2) planning administrators; and (3) policy coordinators. Two politico-administrative positions are presented in section one: Secretaries to Government and Secretaries to the Chief Minister; the roles of three rural development planning administrators are presented in section two: Development Commissioners, Planning Commissioners and Finance Secretaries; and section three considers policy coordinators: Secretaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

Each section categorises and analyses officers' responses under the headings *Functions*, *Atmosphere* and *Location*, drawn from Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences. An analysis of senior state-level control agency officers' responses to decentralisation is then completed with the addition of modifications to the bureau-shaping model outline required for it adequately to consider all aspects of officers' observations.

I: Political Administrators

Secretaries to Government and Secretaries to the Chief Minister

The Secretary to Government and Secretary to the Chief Minister are crucial to the interaction of the elected state government and its administrative officers. The Secretary to

the Chief Minister in particular is in constant daily contact with the head of the state political structure, and both the secretary to the Chief Minister and the Secretary to Government offer senior politicians and their fellow officers an invaluable avenue of communication with one another.

In the context of the decentralised rural planning and administrative structure initiated by the 1983 Act, the role of the Chief Secretary to Government as a politico-administrator was still more firmly established by his position as chairman of two key bodies: the High Power Committee set up in March 1985 to resolve various administrative and procedural problems that arose between departments in the course of implementing the new act, and the State Development Council comprised of the District Council Presidents, six state government Ministers and the Development Commissioner, which provided a forum for the interaction of the state- and local-level political executives and was responsible for reviewing the implementation of the 1983 Act.

Functions

Secretaries to Government and Secretaries to the Chief Minister referred to the following positive and negative functions under decentralisation:

(positive)

PV4 Developmental rhythm

The decentralised system established in Karnataka in 1987 was in tune with a decentralising approach to rural development that had begun in the 1970s with a functional deconcentration of some responsibilities to District Rural Development Authorities (DRDAs). These authorities were placed squarely under the senior district-based officer - the Deputy Commissioner. However, he worked in consultation with local bureaucrats and members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) so that once the 1987 system was introduced, rural communities had “become quite used to district-level planning, but through bureaucrats”, and were used, too, to “regarding bureaucrats as reasonably well-informed as to the local context and to deferring to them to some extent, especially on technical matters”.

The decentralised plan process established through the DRDAs “meshed well with that of decentralised governance” established in 1987. Democratic decentralisation “simply formalised” this earlier system, and there was “not much change in the plan priorities drawn up”.

(negative)

NV5 Low level of managerial discretion

However, democratic decentralisation reduced the role of senior officers to decide on officers’ postings. Senior officers’ discretion over appointments has always been limited by the power of state-level politicians to ensure the officer of their choice is punished or rewarded by a transfer. The 1987 system extended power over the transfer of officers within districts to the relevant District Council. A substantial proportion of transfers were therefore decided either by MLAs (between districts) or local elected representatives (within districts), rather than by heads of department.

Atmosphere

Secretaries to Government and Secretaries to the Chief Minister referred to the following positive and negative changes in work atmosphere:

(positive)

PV8 Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

The 1987 system was designed with the clear intention of imparting to the District Councils the status of a third tier of government after the federal and state levels. The District Council President was equivalent in rank to a Minister of the state government and the chief secretary was senior to the deputy commissioner. This provision in the 1983 Act indicated the District Council was a “real and authoritative body”, and enabled it considerable freedom and flexibility to pursue rural development.

(negative)

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

On the other hand, the status accorded the District Council Presidents persuaded some representatives “any decision passed by a majority was therefore valid”.

Furthermore, although most District Council Presidents were aware of the legal provisions establishing local government institutions, they rarely intervened in support of the chief secretary during disagreements between officers and representatives over the legality of a decision because they did not want to “make public statements against their supporters”.

NV10 Conflictual personal relations

Sociopolitical considerations of the comparative status of state government Ministers and District Council chief secretaries, Presidents and Vice-Presidents consumed a disproportionate amount of time and government circulars to the detriment of more significant development work. For example, Ministers protested the District Council chief secretary should not sit on a dais along with the President and Vice-President during District Council meetings.

Location

Senior state-level control agency officers identified the following negative aspects of location associated with a decentralised rural development process:

(negative)

NV13 Remote from high-status contacts

Officers deputed to work under newly-established and comparatively independent District Councils were worried at “being left high and dry with no influence at the state level”. They were not reassured by the attitude of heads of technical departments in Bangalore who “could not have cared less” about decentralisation and the difficulties officers faced in their relations with elected representatives in the districts.

II: Planning Administrators

Development Commissioners, Planning Commissioners and Finance Secretaries

The “plan process” is a central thread running through and bringing together

political, economic and administrative life at all levels of the Indian polity: centre, state and local. State planning administrators are key to the state plan process which depends upon the efficient integration of departments' competing budget demands to form an overall strategy to the state's development, and has in turn a significant impact upon that state's successful negotiations for funds from the centre. From 1987 to 1991 senior planning administrators had to extend their management of a multi-department, state- and federal-level budget cycle to integrate a district-based plan process.

Functions

Senior planning administrators identified the following positive and negative functions associated with decentralisation:

(positive)

PV4 Developmental rhythm

The decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation established in 1987 enhanced the (bureaucratically) popular approach to rural development finance established with the District Rural Development Authorities (DRDAs). The DRDAs had been set up to receive funds already allocated to the districts by the state, channelled through rural commercial banks to avoid their lapsing while in state government hands. This system helped to control unproductive expenditure and fears of a "financial crunch" - money running out before projects were completed, and improved coordination between banks and the state government. These sorts of links were strengthened by establishing strong, elected institutions at the local level.

The District Councils also contributed to a developmental rhythm by highlighting "very realistic priorities" such as providing drinking water and schools, whereas "the state and centre [governments] are looking towards overall growth". Under the 1987 system backward districts were allocated more funds "in an effort to get rid of imbalances and ensure spending there". Officers felt "a balance has to be struck by the state, and [local government institutions] helped to focus attention on people's requirements".

(negative)

NV4 Repetitive rhythm

The flexibility of District Councils to plan and implement rural development projects according exclusively to local priorities was constrained by their dependence on state funds. The state government allocates funds in a budget process that gives precedence to central government sectoral priorities, such as power and major irrigation projects rather than social-sector schemes, and to state government projects that are not frequently district priorities. To some extent the sectoral allocation of funds to District Councils is more constrained by the national than the state plan process. To meet district priorities exactly requires a full-scale change in the state- and federal-level plan process in India which currently holds state and district alike in “a strait-jacket of planning commission priorities”.

NV6 High level of public visibility

An important contribution of the 1987 system was the information on community needs and problems of project implementation provided by District Council elected representatives. However, elected representatives did not always seek information on local needs and problems as often and in the ways they were supposed to. Primarily, the six-monthly community meetings (gram sabhas) which should have been the “bed-rock” of a system of “collective articulation of a community” were rarely convened once representatives realised they could not meet all the demands voiced there and became wary of facing a constituency irritated by failures to meet their raised expectations.

Atmosphere

Senior planning administrators identified the following positive and negative changes in officers’ work atmosphere during 1987-91:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

At the state-level heads of department interacted with the finance department more than they had before decentralisation to ensure funds reached the District Councils on time. Meeting the demands of the “extremely vocal” local government institutions placed “a big strain” on the financial management structure of the state government, and required and induced “some adjustment” within the finance department to manage their funds effectively.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

On many issues decentralisation shifted the emphasis from the state to the district, and from heads of department in Bangalore to those based in the field. However, the decentralised system established in Karnataka did nothing to reduce the authority of “generalist bureaucrats” and emphasise the role of specialist technical officers in rural development. Officers from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) continued to have substantial and undue sway in decision-making in a decentralised political and administrative set-up.

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

At the state-level heads of department were initially uncooperative in handing responsibilities to the District Councils under the aegis of the Planning Department. Officers’ first response was “to think in terms of power”. Those departments with the most power - in budget or staff size - resisted decentralisation most. The engineering department resisted losing control over a proportion of a substantial total budget. The education and health departments resisted losing control over a proportion of substantial staff. In an effort to maintain departmental authority, many officers protested against devolution on the grounds that there was corruption at lower levels.

III: Policy Coordinators

Secretaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

The Secretary of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj is the administrative head of the department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj which plays a coordinating role between different departments and levels of government involved in rural development. Disagreements between departments within a district or between districts over delimitations of responsibilities, funding or general operations referred to the state government in the course of implementing the 1983 Act could be settled by the department

of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. The secretary was a central figure for officers unsure of or discontented with the implementation of the decentralisation process, and an important source of information about the finer points of the legal framework establishing panchayati raj institutions.

Functions

Secretaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj referred to the following positive and negative work functions for officers under the 1987-91 system of decentralisation:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

The authority vested in officers posted to the district and the District Councils themselves gave officers from smaller departments in particular scope to work for proportionately higher budgets through the District Council than they had been able to under the state. The atmosphere of the District Councils was more conducive to allocating funds according to the projects in popular demand rather than the comparative size and strength of departments.

(negative)

NV2 Short time horizons

However, the District Councils did not invest in projects with a view to development over the long-term. For example, local representatives emphasised construction projects, such as health centres. But once they were established and even provided with doctors, recurring expenses for medicines and supplies could not be met by the District Council and “all the infrastructure was wasted”.

NV3 Narrow scope of concerns

In choosing projects representatives were also influenced by short-term political considerations that placed them in “competition with each other” to get projects in their constituencies. As a result rural development was “extensive rather than intensive”. Money that would previously have been spent on one or two projects “at the expense of

others, in order to complete most important ones” was distributed amongst a large number of initiatives. The plan priority of a decentralised system of rural development through the District Councils appeared to be securing a “spread of very visible projects”.

NV6 High level of grass-roots/public visibility

District Councils called frequent meetings with district heads of department “in the name of accountability”. District officers resented exaggerated scrutiny by local elected representatives and were “irritated by a perpetual demand” for project updates. Officers also resented local elected representatives for their “dedicated attention” to development schemes. Engineers, for example, were offered instructions and “guidance” on construction from a local representative who was “unlikely to be an educated man”. However, representatives had often built houses for their families, were elected from the area, and felt in a position to issue officers instructions.

Atmosphere

Senior policy coordinators identified several positive and negative changes in atmosphere brought about by decentralisation:

(positive)

PV7 Small-sized work unit

The 1983 Act placed Groups C and D officers under the direct authority of the District Council, “initiating a total segregation of state and districts”. For the lowest tiers of the state bureaucracy which can be promoted from Group D to C or within the broad Group C category, a full-scale transfer to the district-level did not limit officers’ opportunity for promotion. However, the full-scale transfer to the District Councils of Groups A and B officers was resisted on the grounds their promotion required transfers to Bangalore and other districts. Similarly, creating a common cadre for sub-state administrative units along Nigerian lines was resisted as “less than ideal” because the District Councils would not have full administrative control over even the lowest ranking officer.

PV8 Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

The authority of the District Council and its chief secretary to allocate officers’ posts

reduced the competition in Bangalore between heads of departments and members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) to reward or punish officers through transfers. Devolving administrative powers to the districts made the “coexistence of politician and civil servant [at the state-level] much easier”.

PV9 Co-operative work patterns

In Karnataka the conflict between state- and district-level officers over the redistribution of power required by decentralisation was “substantially less than in other states”, and its advantages were more apparent, for two reasons. First, district-level bureaucrats in Karnataka had been responsible for some rural development plan functions through the District Rural Development Authorities (DRDAs) for some time before the decentralised system introduced in 1987. Resistance from higher level officers to a district-based system of rural development planning and administration was therefore reduced because state-level officers were familiar with some concept of devolved rural development functions. Second, the greater range of authority, responsibilities and personnel transferred to the District Council increased dialogue between departments, and between officers and (local) politicians in the allocation of resources for rural development.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

Decentralisation transferred the power to control and oversee rural development planning, administration and spending to the District Council. This transfer resulted in an “erosion of government authority”, with three major implications. First, the traditional “credibility gap” current in the civil service as to the competence and honesty of the politicians meant “a certain amount of unhappiness that the political executive was in superintendence” of the District Councils.

Second, District Council representatives were non-official and therefore could not be called to account for any illegality. Administrative officers working at the district-level “threw up their hands at mismanagement”, claiming the power to authorise or stop work was with the District Council President, with the net result that “no-one was responsible”. It was anticipated this problem would be minimised under the 1993 Act which gives the

chief secretary a “great deal more direct responsibility”, including the power to withhold authorisation for any decision taken by the District Council pending a decision by the state government.

Third, with “no direct control” over their officers in the District Councils and the distribution and allocation of funds in the districts, the role of senior state-level officers became “only advisory”.

Location

Secretaries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj referred to the following positive and negative aspects of officers’ work during 1987-91 about location:

(positive)

PV11 Proximate to the political power centres

The decentralisation of control over (some) development funds to the District Councils put officers from smaller departments in contact with political decision-makers, in an environment that permitted them greater opportunity to lobby for higher budgets than did a state-level plan process dominated by larger departments.

(negative)

NV12 Provincial location

Under the decentralised system introduced in 1987 the agricultural extension programme rapidly disintegrated. The necessary tight coordination between the universities, agriculture department and agricultural officers in the field which “really required administration by fiat” from Bangalore and the universities could not be maintained under a decentralised system.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model:

The bureau-shaping model’s outline of bureaucrats’ preferences requires several modifications fully to describe senior control agency officers’ observations of the decentralised system in Karnataka from 1987 to ‘91.

Functions

Senior control agency officers referred to the following positive and negative work functions within a decentralised system of development planning and administration:

(positive)

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The 1987 system held district-level officers accountable to the District Councils. The proximity of District Council representatives, and their accessibility to local communities ensured information from the field on the implementation of projects reached the political executive. Decentralisation greatly improved the supervision and evaluation of rural development at all levels and corruption was “reduced drastically” as a result of popular vigilance. “A substantial proportion of the state official machinery appreciated working with what [local government institutions] could offer them”.

(negative)

Inappropriate spending

However, the 1987 system had major implications for the efficiency and effectiveness of rural development spending. First, decentralisation did not greatly improve the efficiency with which development funds were allocated. The state plan process determined the budget available to each sector before funds were devolved to the District Council. As a result, the decentralised plan process was tied to an extent that was “against the spirit of the Act”. Representatives could not therefore plan and implement projects entirely according to local priorities although they frequently tried to do so, taking decisions without the budget available to implement them.

Second, decentralisation did not improve the effectiveness with which resources were made available to the poorest and weakest communities. The District Councils rarely made available to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) the funds legally allocated to them. The influence exerted by dominant castes over the District Councils and the rural socioeconomic structure generally ensure that, particularly in areas with lower levels of education, democratic decentralisation frequently has little significance to the most

disadvantaged.

Atmosphere

Officers referred to the following negative changes in work atmosphere during 1987-91:

(negative)

Politically unstable

The stability of the decentralised system introduced in 1987 was undermined by the relationship between the local, state and national levels of the political system. First, the success of decentralisation depended to a large extent on the “philosophy of the chief political officer”. However, apart from the Chief Minister and the Minister for Rural Development, the Cabinet did not support decentralisation. Although decentralisation gave the state government Janata Dal party a politically practical opportunity to build a network of support below the state through local elected representatives, those same local representatives threatened state-level politicians who took every opportunity to ensure elections to local institutions for a second term were not held.

Second, during the 1987 to ‘91 period relations between the state and national level complicated decentralisation in Karnataka. The broader party political battle between the Congress and Janata Dal parties was played out in the districts with the Congress-controlled national government channelling some development funds directly to local government institutions, by-passing the Janata Dal state government.

Administratively unstable

The decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987 had several administrative weaknesses. First, the system concentrated disproportionate number of staff at the district-level, who found it difficult to provide the lowest (mandal) level institutions with sufficient administrative support. The decision to replace the larger taluk-level as an administrative unit with the mandal had been a “trade-off between accountability and administrative viability”. However, it wasted a “great deal of technical and administrative strength that had been built up at the taluk level” from the 1950s.

Second, decentralisation did not entirely “oust” departmental authority over officers on deputation to the districts and established two hierarchies of control. “No efficient remedy” was found to integrate the administrative authority of the District Councils with the technical authority of state-level departments. The “relationship between the regulatory apparatus and the development apparatus of the government was not sufficiently well-defined” and “friction or conflicts in instructions issued” from the two followed. In response state government department heads “were actively dissociating themselves from and taking little interest in what was happening under the District Councils”.

Similarly, procedures for the administrative and technical control and development of projects were affected by decentralisation. For example, the agriculture department’s extension programme had formed an integrated link from the university responsible for discovering and disseminating new technology, to the extension workers who trained villagers in new agricultural techniques. However, because universities and superintending engineers remained outside the decentralised system, the agricultural extension programme broke down. There was no “clear-cut administrative solution” to ensure the effective control and supervision of officers in the field.

“Ideally, the state and district should have their own [cadres] of officials”. However, local government institutions are currently not enough a “real and strong level of government”, competent to recruit a third tier of officers. The state government therefore issued guide-lines on the technical hierarchy governing projects, with advice that the superintending engineer issuing instructions to an executive engineer under the District Council should copy his problems and recommendations to the executive engineer and the District Council.

Third, each district’s experience of the system varied greatly according to which officers were posted to it at any one time. The effective functioning of the District Council relied on “highly motivated officers and non-officers” and was largely dependent on the relationship of the chief secretary and President, which is an “insufficient basis for a sustained programme”. In several districts where the relationship between chief secretary

and President was particularly problematic, the chief secretary had to be replaced.

Ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility

The 1983 Act establishing local government institutions in Karnataka with responsibility for rural development did not adequately emphasise their legal responsibilities. First, the Act “provided for no corrective action where there was a patent misuse or abuse of [their] authority”. Further, the position of the District Council chief secretary was not accorded the “legal sanctity that is needed to execute directions so that they have force of law, not just the moral authority of office”.

Second, the system permitted District Councils to appoint teachers, according to departmental guide-lines. They stipulated the District Council obtain the department’s approval before teachers were appointed. However, this procedure was frequently not followed, and a large number of posts were sanctioned for which funds were not available, and which “now constitute a lasting liability for the department”.

Location

Senior state-level control agency officers referred to the following positive change in officers’ work conditions about location:

(positive)

Remote from political contacts

Before decentralisation technical heads of department had control over a relatively small proportion of the department’s budget. 60-70% of departments’ funds were spent on salaries, and a large proportion of the remainder were used to complete “spill-over” projects from the previous year. Members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) controlled a substantial amount of spill-over funds because these were often required by the rural employment projects which MLAs supported in their constituency, and which rarely finished on schedule, as well as any remaining funds. However, decentralisation shifted control over rural development funds from MLAs to local representatives.

Conclusion

The three types of officer identified above together represent senior state-level control agency officers. An analysis of their responses within the parameters of the existing and modified bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences permits several conclusions.

Functions

From the perspective of senior state-level control agency officers, decentralisation represented a significantly negative shift in work functions. Officers referred to five of the six negative (NV2-NV6) and only two positive (PV1 and PV4) work functions. However, the negative work functions to which senior control agency officers refer are associated with the increased interaction of the bureaucracy overall with (local) politicians. The positive work functions they identify are more closely associated with the nature of officers' work in a decentralised system.

Similarly, modifications to the bureau-shaping model on the basis of senior state-level control agency officers' responses reflect the distinction between a positive change in functions they identify as associated with officers' actual work, such as the significant increase in information provided by a high level of public visibility in a decentralised system, and the negative changes associated with the authority over rural development spending extended to local politicians which resulted in inappropriate spending.

This distinction between the bases on which positive and negative functions are identified by senior state-level control agency officers is a practical illustration of the bureaucratic aversion to contact with politicians frequently referred to in theory.

Atmosphere

Senior state-level control agency officers also refer to three out of four negative elements of work atmosphere (NV8-NV10) which relate to the increased proximity of officers to politicians. However, the three positive elements (PV7-PV9) officers identify are associated with improvements to the administrative structure of district-based rural

development. Decentralisation encouraged the increased and constructive interaction of officers from different departments.

The modifications to the bureau-shaping model uphold the negative impact of decentralisation for senior state-level control agency officers associated with the increased politicisation of rural development. Officers refer to the political and administrative instability and ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility over rural development spending in a decentralised system all of which are linked to the authority extended to the political executive of the District Council which reduced the supervisory role of the state government. Officers' resistance to the reduced authority of the state government in general is closely correlated with the similar reduction in their own authority inherent in a shift in responsibility for rural development planning and implementation to the district level.

Location

An analysis of senior state-level control agency officers' references to work conditions associated with location reveals the significance of senior state-level politicians' authority to officers. Officers are answerable to the political executive of the state government which ultimately determines virtually all elements of the structure and atmosphere of any government system - centralised or decentralised.

However, the decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987 successfully reduced the inappropriate influence exerted by members of the state legislative assembly over rural development spending by shifting authority to the political executive of the District Council. The bureau-shaping model is therefore modified to reflect senior state-level control agency officers' claim that decentralisation caused a positive change by moving the rural development planning and implementation process away from (state-level) political contacts.

Chapter 6

Senior District-level Control Agency Officers

A senior IAS officer with at least ten years' service experience was appointed to each district as chief secretary and administrative head of the District Council (see diagram, page 11). Under the 1983 Act District Council chief secretaries are given the status and powers of a major head of department and are senior in rank to the deputy commissioner who remains directly responsible to the state government for law and order and land revenue in the district. The President of the District Council is its executive officer, establishing the district as an independent level of representative government. However, the seniority of officers appointed as chief secretary confirmed the District Council as an autonomous unit of development administration with district heads of department answerable to its politico-administrative hierarchy.

The role of the District Council chief secretary combined the three categories of control agency officer identified in chapter 5: political administrator, planning administrator and policy coordinator. The chief secretary was administrative head of a substantial number of departments based in the District Council, responsible for a wide range of issues associated with decentralised rural development planning and administration and answerable to the District Council President. In addition, the chief secretary was an important authority for officers and elected representatives alike over the precise application of the 1983 Act, particularly when government orders about District Council administration were perceived to conflict with its letter or spirit.

The following chapter presents the positive and negative aspects of decentralisation identified by District Council chief secretaries under the broad headings of Functions, Atmosphere and Location. The analysis is arranged under sub-headings first, from

Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model of bureaucrats' preferences and second, modified to make the bureau-shaping model fully descriptive of officers' observations of decentralisation in Karnataka.

Functions

District Council chief secretaries identified the following positive and negative changes in officers' work functions under decentralisation from 1987 to '91:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work:

The system introduced in 1987 devolved significant powers and authority to officers based in the districts, some of whom had had "bitter experiences with their heads of department" at the state-level and enjoyed independence from them. Transfer authority within a district lay with the district head of department concerned, and officers "could do everything (themselves) and had no need to refer to the state".

Before decentralisation officers had been dependent on state-level heads of department to approve even relatively small projects. State-level heads of department were "flooded" with requests which they had little time to evaluate, and projects "were rarely processed on time". Because communication between field officers and the department was frequently inadequate, it was "not uncommon for urgent and useful proposals" from the field to be held up for inordinate periods of time at the state-level, with "little appreciation of field unit work and needs". However, the decentralised system gave the District Council chief secretary substantial authority to supervise rural development and deal with urgent problems in the field. In some districts the implementation of programmes was greatly improved where the chief secretary delegated responsibility for specific areas to the substantial number of officers under him continuously to assess community needs through site visits.

PV4 Developmental rhythm

Decentralisation greatly increased the availability of information essential to the effective and efficient allocation of funds at all levels. Before 1987 the allocation of funds

for rural development was decided at the state-level by a budget process limited by information and time. As a result funds were divided amongst the districts “along pretty mechanical lines”. If a district exhausted its funds, “it would rarely bother asking for more and still more rarely would it get them”. A state-centred process of allocating funds for rural development held the districts hostage to an inflexible budget reflecting state-level assessments of local needs, with “no discretion” to shift funds as required in the field. However, decentralisation gave the District Councils the authority to reallocate (some) funds from one department to another, according to actual local needs and priorities.

Decentralisation made the process of scheme implementation more responsive to local conditions. A district-based system took account of regional variations in weather and farming schedules which encouraged a more effective and efficient use of resources, including redeploying officers to work on other projects when their own department’s projects were at a lull. And the District Council used the information available to it better to target long-established programmes. For example, over a period of fifteen years the National Water Supply Scheme to bring piped water to every village had made “very tardy” progress. However, under the District Councils the scheme was “very effectively” carried out through a Mini-Water Supply Scheme which established silos with ten taps to deliver bore-well water to local communities throughout many districts.

One chief secretary noted that in 1921 the total budget for Mysore state was 2 crore (20 million) rupees, compared to a current budget of 20-25 crores for a single block. The magnitude and quantity of rural development work, which is increasingly “people-oriented”, mean that a system that involves local communities is necessary and an improvement to one that simply provided money for programmes designed at higher levels unfamiliar with local circumstances.

NV6 High level of managerial discretion

Decentralisation extended significant authority to the District Council which had no district-level authority above it to scrutinise its resolutions. Decentralisation therefore increased the flexibility of rural development planning and implementation by improving communication and reducing the “reaction time” between (district-level) decision-makers

and the field. Any problems which could not be solved by the District Council were referred to the state government. To some extent this system reduced the problem of dual lines of control to which officers from technical departments frequently refer in that district-level officers either had their problems settled to their satisfaction by the District Council or referred them to state-level heads of department.

(negative)

NV1 Routine work

Some representatives were inclined to use the authority of the District Council to call unnecessarily frequent meetings with officers. In a decentralised set-up “talking got the upper hand in many things [whereas officers] were used to quiet functioning”. The accountability of officers to the District Council, its elected representatives and their constituents demanded officers spend a large proportion of their time “just listening” to complaints, “knowing nothing would come of it”.

NV2 Short-time horizons

District Council representatives had a very different concept of planning than officers. Local politicians placed a priority on providing their constituents with highly visible construction projects in the short-term. One officer maintained decentralisation can make no contribution to improving the rural economy “unless [District Councils] start thinking of development as a long-term investment and the government directs them accordingly”. Otherwise decentralisation is “meaningless”.

NV3 Narrow scope of concerns

The priority of local representatives to gain political mileage from rural development also limited the extent to which decentralisation mobilised local contributions to development initiatives. Panchayats were “originally conceived to organise voluntary labour and funds” and officers were frustrated and disappointed local government institutions did not “add to the development effort”. However, for over forty years “the popular perception” of politicians and rural development has been inextricably intertwined by a political process that puts “everything in terms of government provision. To shift from this after an election would have meant no chance of reelection”.

District Council representatives did not use government funds as a catalyst to develop resources already available, nor did representatives support schemes unless they provided members with a “symbol of development”. District Councils considered many of the established projects to which it was required to allocate funds as “givens”, and were anxious to see new, visible projects undertaken rather than put funds towards upgrading or rehabilitating and maintaining existing projects. No district organised voluntary labour to build roads; de-silt existing tanks that would have provided both water and silt for fertiliser; or clear rivulets and improve bundhing [field embankments] to make use of untapped water supplies.

The decentralised plan process was also not much more creative than that of the state government. District Council representatives push as hard as each other for funds, with the result their allocation “presupposes everything should be done or given on a proportionate basis”. However, by dividing funds strictly according to the number of District Council constituencies and then into different categories of works, scarce resources were “very thinly spread and thrust areas [state and central government priorities] totally lost sight of”. The District Council was therefore incapable of taking up major works such as roads, buildings and minor irrigation works that are location-specific and require capital input.

NV6 High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The proximity of a decentralised system to rural communities created problems for District Council representatives and officers alike, with implications for the extent to which decentralisation improved rural development planning and implementation. First, an important means by which the decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987 was to be more responsive to local needs was through six-monthly village meetings (gram sabhas). However, by the second year local politicians stopped convening general meeting in the villages once it became apparent they could not meet all the requests voiced: “demands were so high and money so limited”.

Second, field officers complained of too much supervision and too many meetings:

the “poor fellows could not take two steps forward without five fellows breathing down their necks”. Officers resented scrutiny and questioning by local representatives who had once been “petitioners”, but who could now make demands of and had some administrative power over officers.

Atmosphere

Chief secretaries identified several elements of decentralisation with positive and negative effects on work atmosphere:

(positive)

PV8 Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

The decentralised system established in 1987 concentrated significant power and responsibility in the District Councils. Politically and administratively this concentration of authority in the districts helped reduce resistance to decentralisation, and improved rural development planning and implementation. Politically state- and local-level elected representatives and rural communities in general were convinced of the seriousness with which decentralisation was undertaken in Karnataka. The system was particularly strengthened by “clearly indicating” that the District Council President rather than the chief secretary was chief executive of the District Council, and by giving the President the same status as a state government Minister. By “drawing a parallel” between the state and the district, bureaucrats “knew the government meant business”.

Administratively the 1983 Act established a strong administration in the District Councils by appointing senior officers as chief secretaries. The seniority of the chief secretary facilitated their coordination of the various departments based in the District Council, and the nomenclature of their office, again, drew a parallel with the state government and conveyed the importance and sincerity of the transfer of authority to the district.

PV9 Co-operative work patterns

The authority transferred to the District Council and its chief secretary improved the coordination of rural development between departments, and between the state and the

district levels. District-level officers were in daily contact with one another through the District Council which provided for better communication and coordination of departments' respective activities.

The district-level coordination of project implementation was enhanced by the authority of the chief secretary to shift manpower between departments to implement a time-constrained programme on schedule. Rural development programmes with a wide target area such as the Total Literacy Campaign also gained from a district-level launch that involved officers from all departments. By accessing the contacts established by various departments amongst different population groups, a greater proportion of the illiterate community could be enlisted in the literacy campaign, and told about other departments' activities in the process.

Decentralisation counteracted a purely official and hierarchical system which "suffers from lack of supervision and feed-back" and "does not provide a free atmosphere in which to exchange ideas". The District Council provided for constant interaction between representatives, the public and officers, and the participation of local representatives in project design and implementation "often introduced an element of common-sense" to rural development initiatives. Some heads of department made use of the "strength of the District Council" to discipline officers where work was poorly executed, and representatives "always ensured" action was taken against officers who were known to have had an unfavourable review of their work from heads of departments in Bangalore.

While District Council general meetings were frequently aggressive and difficult for officers to deal with, a creative chief secretary could introduce measures to protect officers from unnecessary abuse, place greater responsibility on representatives for decisions taken by the District Council, and so improve the work atmosphere in the district. In some District Councils the norms of the state legislature were followed whereby questions are submitted one week in advance, to be answered by standing committee members or the District Council chief secretary, according to officers' briefings rather than by officers themselves.

PV10 Congenial personal relations

Decentralisation brought lower-level bureaucrats into close contact with rural areas frequently familiar to them. The top levels of the state bureaucracy are “more than likely to have an urban or semi-urban background and are not directly related or connected in any way to the bulk of politicians”. However, out of around 475,000 government servants the vast majority are teachers (about 50%) and 100,000 are health workers, many of whom, like lower-level Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) officers, are from the same groups and background as Karnataka politicians.

“Membership of the dominant caste group, contacts and political leanings play a big part in getting into the KAS, and mean that formally and informally KAS officers frequently interact with rural politicians before and once in service, [such that] there are no major differences in opinion between lower bureaucrats and politicians who look at problems from the same background and in a similar way”. The experience of lower-level bureaucrats stands in stark contrast, it is maintained, to that of top (Indian Administrative Service) bureaucrats who, “fortunately or unfortunately, have a different perspective” on rural politics.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

The significant power and authority vested in the District Council established a “virtually independent body” which integrated local politicians in the administration of rural development. Some district-level officers resented the role of local politicians in supervising their work and felt their “power, responsibilities and authority were diluted by giving responsibility to non-officers”. District-level officers had difficulties with representatives “not because of their different backgrounds, but because they resented sharing power and the feeling that yet another body was overseeing them, asking questions and controlling finances”.

By extending some administrative authority to the District Councils, local representatives in many districts were drawn to concentrate “more on administration,

particularly officers' transfers and postings, than on development." The District Council President was initially given "so much direct administrative power" that he wrote the confidential annual report of the chief secretary: "this little man who has been elected has not the wherewithal to evaluate a bureaucrat - but he has the nuisance power. Mercifully, the government withdrew [this power]" and the Secretary of Rural Development in Bangalore wrote chief secretaries' annual reports.

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

Decentralisation created friction at and between the state- and district-level, amongst and between politicians and officers. At the district-level elected representatives placed great importance on getting "more prominence than officers" rather than on deciding "by consensus". At the state-level heads of department initially resisted decentralisation because it "substantially whittled down their empire" which had included everything from securing funds to designing, approving and evaluating development plans and disbursing the money required for their implementation.

After decentralisation more than half of departments' budgets were transferred directly to the districts, leaving heads with "no role in its expenditure". Once the role of heads of department in Bangalore was so reduced, District Council chief secretaries found it difficult to extract technical sanctions from heads of department "miserable" at their reduced power. Several department heads in Bangalore were not interested in inspecting projects implemented by the District Council over which they had no direct control, and so did not tour the districts offering necessary technical supervision. Some heads of department and Ministers "were definitely hoping that the system would fail so that they could get their powers back".

However, heads of department in Bangalore had an important role to play in obtaining increased state and Government of India funds, and in implementing and improving projects. With so many projects and meetings under the District Council, district officers needed the support of department heads if decentralisation were to make a substantial contribution to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of rural development. The decentralised system introduced in 1987 required specific efforts by the District

Councils to make the role of department heads - and state-level politicians - more meaningful. However, no district made such a conscious effort to do so. District representatives and officers “were on a decentralisation binge met by a sulking, scheming trip from the [state government] Ministers”, while department heads “sulked for a while at their loss of influence and power”. The question was “whether district officers would behave with a degree of maturity, for example inviting guidance from heads on technical issues”. Few did, and some “cooling off in relations followed, requiring time to heal”.

The friction between state- and district-level officers was increased where officers did not maintain a clear distinction between their responsibility to the District Council for day-to-day matters, and to heads of department in Bangalore for technical guidance. Field officers saw themselves as having “one real boss [the District Council] and one boss with the illusion that he was boss [heads of department in Bangalore]”, with the result senior officers who resented the reduction in their administrative role - although “their technical role was in no way reduced” - complained the system was not working.

Decentralisation was more complicated for some departments than others. For example, each district-level executive engineer had “too many vertical bosses” - the minor irrigation, public works and public health engineering wings of the engineering department - and approval for projects costing over 2 lakh (200,000) rupees which required state-level authorisation was “much delayed”. However, this problem was more of “human” jealousies over the devolution of power rather than “a systemic problem”. The engineering department could take up to four months to approve projects, which executive engineers avoided by splitting projects into sections which were each under the cost-ceiling of their authority.

For the forestry department decentralisation represented a substantial change in officers’ work experience. The forestry department had been used to greater independence than other departments because it had always maintained a separate authority over even its lowest-ranking officers. Unlike other departments before decentralisation forestry department officers in the districts were “not really under the Deputy Commissioner”. Forestry department officers therefore resented having to work directly under the chief

secretary, let alone the authority of local elected representatives and, “with no special treatment”, found their department’s image to be “somewhat reduced”.

Finally the cooperative atmosphere and stability of the District Council were undermined by the activities of the state government. First, the state government removed some responsibilities that had been delegated to the District Council, such as food distribution and the licensing and monitoring of fair-price shops, and assigned them for an interim period to the deputy commissioner and Block Development Officers (BDOs) over whom the state government maintained direct control. Some chief secretaries protested against this transfer on the grounds it was outside the state government’s jurisdiction to do so - and were charged with insubordination.

Second, state government circulars to District Council officers frequently contradicted the provisions of the Act establishing local government institutions, presenting chief secretaries with difficulties - especially when they chose to operate according to the Act’s provisions, again, leaving them open to charges of insubordination.

Third, in response to state-level political pressure the departments of Social Welfare, Women and Child Development and Education sometimes transferred officers where it was within the District Council’s jurisdiction to do so, so that chief secretaries reported a “difference of opinion over transfers” - with the state government more frequently than the District Council .

Location

District Council chief secretaries identified the following positive and negative aspects of officers’ location in a decentralised system:

(positive)

PV11 Proximate to the political power centres

The top rank of bureaucrats advises government on policy as chief secretaries to government. These senior administrative officers have “long had the perception that they are the repository of all knowledge, and know what is best for “the people”. However,

they “did not try to change” the new experiment with decentralisation because they were proximate to political bosses who made clear the decentralising initiative was serious and permanent. Officers were convinced it was “useless to resist, and that they would be [redundant] if they did”. Indeed, over the last ten years in Karnataka and five years at the all-India level, officers in general have been “made to understand that they are there to listen to and advise the Minister and to implement his political will - that they are number two.”

(negative)

NV11 Remote from political contacts

On the other hand, decentralisation moved political authority over the distribution of funds from the state to the district, reducing the role of state government Ministers in rural areas. Similarly several Ministers disliked the prospect of releasing officers to the District Councils as “his power and authority would decrease, and he would not be able to maintain his popularity at the District because he no longer would have the power to get things done there”.

NV13 Remote from high-status contacts

Some departments resisted decentralisation more than others. Executive engineers in the engineering (Public Works or PWD) department in particular “resisted deputation” to the District Councils, because they believed the substantial power of their department at the state-level meant they were “better protected from politicians and had more freedom in their work than they would under the District Councils”.

Although all district-level officers in fact found they had a great deal of freedom under the District Councils, the size and strength of the Public Works Department exercised a continued drawing power over engineers, whose “primary concern” was always to get back to and rise within the department. Engineers’ lack of interest in district work led to “instability” in the relations between officers in the District Council. It was therefore suggested that a Rural Engineering Service be constituted under the Department of Rural Development to which engineers would be permanently posted so they would be more committed to the District Council, “instead of always trying” to escape from deputations to it.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model:

To describe fully the experiences of senior district-level control agency officers during the 1987-91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka, the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences requires the following modifications:

Functions

Senior district-level control agency officers identified the following positive and negative functions in addition to those presented above:

(positive)

Appropriate activity

Local government institutions made a substantial contribution to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of rural development initiatives. Several District Councils developed creative approaches to enhancing local resource-generation such as road-side plantations. The proximity of the District Council to local communities developed political sensibilities and broke "the myth of government". Decentralisation encouraged political education in local communities which reduced a traditional reticence to interact with government officers. District Council elected representatives in particular "developed real confidence and became very articulate", with a conscious feeling they were "participating in democracy".

The confident participation of local communities made a decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation more appropriate by introducing:

- i. far greater responsiveness of government functionaries;
- ii. adequate and equal attention to all districts;
- iii. closer scrutiny of officers and their activities, good and bad;
- iv. more appropriate identification of areas of popular need; and
- v. flexibility in spending at the district level.

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The proximity of the District Council to target communities provided a decentralised system of rural development with “continuous vigilance over programmes”.

The result was “a remarkable increase in school attendance” by both teachers and students; more transparent development administration; and less subjective and more even spending across a district.

From a base in the District Council officers had access to information from representatives and members of the community, which gave them an opportunity to see “how the people were reacting to the proposals they put across”, and to hear local community priorities. Programmes were designed and implemented locally and in response to an extensive network of local feed-back that alerted officers to project short-falls. In this way programmes aimed at sensitive social issues, such as family planning, which frequently fail because of insufficient research and assessment of the best approach to their implementation in particular areas, were more effectively addressed by a decentralised system.

(negative)

High level of managerial discretion

Decentralisation transferred extensive authority over the design and implementation of rural development projects to the District Council political and administrative executive. In response to this discretion there were several instances of representatives and chief secretaries attempting to conserve district resources by “trying to participate in the design of lower-cost constructions”. In some districts a relatively inarticulate or unpersuasive technical officer was sometimes “unable to convince an enthusiastic cost-cutter” of the technical merits of a more expensive design better suited to the circumstances.

Inappropriate spending

The decentralisation of rural development planning and implementation to the district level had several negative implications for the more effective and efficient spending of rural development funds. First, planning was “fragmented”. Projects were split into

portions within the District Council's financial jurisdiction to avoid waiting for state-level approval. But the political bargaining between representatives to ensure equal spending in each constituency made it hard to design projects to cover more than two or three mandals, and representatives' competition to ensure their choice of contractor further complicated project planning and implementation. District Council representatives frequently "coerced" lower-level officers to "give tenders to their kith and kin".

Second, financial misdemeanours uncovered at the end of the District Council term indicated that corruption within the development departments, particularly the big "spending" departments (i.e. engineering and irrigation), extended to the District Councils. Officers maintained "up to half the money for a road-building project can be kept by the engineer and spent on favours". Under the District Councils the quality of work "deteriorated" while the number of works taken up increased. "Spending departments' vertical corruption spread horizontally" within a district, moving from one member of the state legislative assembly (MLA) to include District Council representatives. Officers maintain after the first two years of decentralisation there was "a dramatic increase [in corruption], with at least 40% of District Council members expecting an income from work undertaken" in the district.

Third, the District Councils misused their power to authorise funds. Most District Councils failed to maintain adequate records and audits of spending. However, the 1983 Act provided no means "to proceed against such wrong-doings". Over the first two years the District Councils showed they "could operate within the right priorities generally", meeting local needs for schools, roads and drinking-water. However, it then became a case of "the fence eating the crop". Decisions about project location "were largely political": there was a "constant harping" on infrastructural projects and a "horizontal spread of corruption in Karnataka generally".

Inappropriate activity

The District Councils were dominated by the same groups that dominate the rural socioeconomic structure. In several District Councils project priorities and implementation were not satisfactory. In particular, the distribution of funds to the most needy "was not

always correctly executed by representatives”.

Atmosphere

Senior district-level control agency officers referred to several positive and negative changes in work atmosphere as a result of decentralisation:

(positive)

Administratively stable

Decentralisation resulted in several changes to the relationship between officers working in the districts and their superiors in Bangalore. After decentralisation officers based in the districts were subject to a dual hierarchy of control with administrative authority exercised by the District Council, and technical authority exercised by senior officers in Bangalore. This dual hierarchy was frequently referred to as “the problem of friction between lines of command”. However, from the perspective of officers in the districts this problem “was more theoretical than actual”. Under a decentralised system departmental coordination and cooperation between the state and district levels were “greatly facilitated” by the pressure District Councils exerted on department heads to approve projects and to “provide field units with increased financial or technical support.”

(negative)

Politically unstable

The decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987 was pushed through by the determined efforts of the Minister for Rural Development, Abdul Nazeer Sab. Decentralisation was not “wedded to and interwoven with the [government] system” and was dependent on the continued support of the political executive at the state-level. Following the death of Abdul Nazeer Sab in 1988, a supportive political environment for extensive decentralisation evaporated. As a result a major reorganisation of the state bureaucracy to remove several layers of officer, including joint directors and divisional heads of department who were redundant under a decentralised system, could not be undertaken. However, the “biggest problem” for attempts to sustain decentralisation followed state elections that replaced the Janata Dal with the Congress party which had “always been anti-[decentralisation] and preferred to get everything done through district

bureaucrats”.

State-level politicians resisted decentralisation because “they feared they would gradually become redundant and lose control over works of most interest to voters - drinking water, sites for employment generation including road and tank construction, selection of individuals for loans”. Members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) attempted to retain some control in rural areas by “harassing” District Councils controlled by opposition parties, or by developing links with local politicians so as to “favour their fellows” in the districts. State government Ministers found “any small fault” in the implementation of a project to reassume “control from the District Council”. This political resistance gave bureaucrats “from the top down who did not want to share power” the latitude to resist decentralisation themselves.

Administratively unstable

The 1983 Act devolved substantial powers to new institutions established across Karnataka. But despite a goal to improve the responsiveness of rural development by making it more flexible to local needs, the decentralised system itself was inflexible. First, the system in place from 1987-91 concentrated staff and funds at the district-level. Seventy-five per cent of state funds devolved to the District Council should have gone to the lowest (mandal) level institutions which were “best placed population-wise to be responsible for most important schemes”. However, as there was inadequate agricultural, educational and medical support at the mandal level, “the District Councils were instructed to keep the money and spend it on their behalf”.

The lowest level of the decentralised system, the mandal panchayats, were understaffed for the micro-planning and identification of beneficiaries for which they should have been responsible, and relied heavily on District Council staff. “Minor civil servants at the lower levels were at a terrible disadvantage to provide the assistance they thought necessary for the work being undertaken”. Nonetheless, decentralisation brought accountability to the district and below, strengthening a lower hierarchy of administrative responsibility.

Second, the 1983 Act “tried to streamline officer/non-officer relations to an extreme [when] all types of relationship cannot be institutionalised or predicted” in a new system. However, the Act did not undertake the necessary “revamping” of the state bureaucracy to remove levels that became redundant with decentralisation.

Third, the division of the deputy commissioner’s responsibilities for development administration and law and order between the District Council and the deputy commissioner removed a “cohesive civil authority” that had existed at the district-level. Before decentralisation the deputy commissioner of a district could combine his authority over rural development planning and implementation with his magisterial duties to settle differences between communities by using rural development funds as bargaining chips in his mediations. Decentralisation transferred control over rural development to the District Council, removing the deputy commissioner’s “good will image of a giver” in his continued responsibilities for law and order in the district.

However, in Raichur district, a cohesive authority was maintained by the cooperation of the chief secretary, District Council President and deputy commissioner, who “all got on well” and presented a united front in dealing with tensions between communities. But this relationship was not typical. The 1987-91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka “revealed a dichotomy [in district administration] that the government has still not addressed”. It was suggested the deputy commissioner should be assigned a permanent position in the District Council. However incorporating the deputy commissioner in the District Council had negative political implications for the state government which anticipated the move would reduce the popular image of the District Council as a strong and independent unit of government. This image had been carefully constructed by assigning a great range of powers and responsibilities to the District Councils, including the appointment of chief secretaries senior in rank to the deputy commissioners and subordinate to the authority of the District Council’s political executive. Nonetheless, officers maintain decentralisation has “broken” the uniform civil authority in Karnataka, “without any repairs to it undertaken or proposed”.

Fourth, the decentralised system introduced in 1987 provided no means to

counteract a corrupt union between district political and administrative authorities. Where the District Council chief secretary and President “connived, the system was a disaster”. The relationship between state-level political support and the progress of a bureaucrat’s career was similarly unaffected by decentralisation. State government Ministers continued to influence the transfer of top bureaucrats according to a “spoils system”, whereby Ministers appoint to positions of influence officers “who will deliver the goods to [his] people”.

Ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility

The 1983 Act did not adequately emphasise the “true responsibility” of representatives in line with their authority. The decentralised system did not enforce on the political executive of the District Council any equivalent to a state government Minister being called to account by the state legislature. The District Council President was elected by simple majority, but removed by a two-thirds majority, making it “almost impossible to remove the President”. The District Council chief secretary was unable to take action on illegal activity because “representatives would join hands to protect [a fellow representative] from his accusations”. Officers could then only submit a report documenting his disagreement, or resign his post. As a result officers maintain “the role of non-officers must be confined to plan approval and reporting on works, but under no circumstances should they have authority to disburse money”.

Location

Senior district-level control agency officers referred to two additional positive impacts on work conditions:

(positive)

Remote from political contacts

The political and administrative authority vested in the District Councils alienated members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) and senior state-level officers alike. However, state government Ministers felt an even greater loss of power than senior civil servants who were still responsible for overseeing project implementation and officers in the field. MLA grievances at their reduced authority “ultimately led to the many changes in

the system". Under the 1987 system MLAs who had "always meddled in local affairs rather than being terribly busy making policy" lost the ability to "get redress for tiny local problems", both because the Ministers to whom they had access "no longer had such clout", and because these problems "could now be easily sorted out locally".

Provincial location

The authority of the District Councils combined with their proximity to local communities freed rural areas from the "shackles of bureaucracy" in Bangalore, and meant community problems could be addressed locally.

Conclusion

The observations of senior district-level control agency officers lead to several conclusions about their experiences of decentralisation.

Functions

Senior district-level control agency officers identify negative (NV1-NV3 and NV5) and positive (PV1, PV2 and PV3) changes in work functions in a decentralised system on the basis of two competing preferences. Negative functions such as short-time horizons and a narrow scope of concerns are associated with a "(local) politicisation" of rural development planning and implementation that resulted in decisions taken for short-term political gain rather than a district's longer-term development. However, the positive functions identified highlight the extent to which decentralisation effectively brought together officers from different departments to coordinate development activities.

In contrast to senior state-level control agency officers, senior district-level control agency officers associate negative aspects of decentralisation with the general, formal structure of the system itself, rather than the particular increased role of local politicians in rural development planning and implementation. For example, according to the observations of senior district-level control agency officers a high level of managerial discretion is incorporated as a negative function in the modified outline because it

encouraged the political and administrative heads of the District Council to try to design cheaper projects at the expense of quality. Similarly, the inappropriate spending and activity officers note refer more to elected representatives' efforts to get around lacunae in the system, such as the lack of formal state-level supervision of District Council spending and the lengthy wait associated with trying to get state-level approval for projects, than to elected representatives' explicit attempts to undertake illegal activity.

Atmosphere

Decentralisation had a negative impact on work atmosphere to the extent it politicised rural development by engaging competing political interests in a struggle for resources to be disbursed in their constituency rather than identifying and prioritising the most urgently-needed development schemes. However, decentralisation had a positive impact on officers' work preferences to the (considerable) extent it brought officers from different departments together in a cooperative structure.

Again, the observations of senior district-level control agency officers require the outline of bureaucrats' preferences be modified to reflect short-comings of the decentralised system itself more than the activity of individuals within it. According to their observations the system was politically unstable because it did not have the whole-hearted support of state-level politicians; administratively unstable because the deputy commissioner and lowest-level elected institutions were not adequately integrated and supported in a decentralised framework; and presented ill-defined lines of legal responsibility.

However, the decentralised system established in 1987 was administratively stable to the extent district-level officers were empowered by the authority of the District Council in their interaction with state-level officers, facilitating their petitions for additional financial or technical support from the state government.

Location

Senior district-level control agency officers appreciated being close to local political power centres because of the information and supervision of projects they could provide.

Where officers refer to being isolated from state-level political and administrative contacts, this aspect was positive to the extent that many chief secretaries used the authority implied in this isolation to ensure the implementation of District Council decisions they thought appropriate to their district, sometimes in conflict with state government directives. The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences therefore requires modification to present a provincial location and remoteness from (state-level) political contacts as positively valued elements of senior district-level control agency officers' work location.

In summary, while Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model posits bureaucrats want to be close to politicians, on the basis of this research the model is reformulated to indicate the emphasis senior district-level control agency officers place on the general political environment in which they worked. The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences is therefore modified to incorporate a greater emphasis on political aspects of decentralisation.

Chapter 7

Junior District-level Control Agency Officers

Two groups of District Council officers are examined in the following chapter: (1) deputy secretaries of development and administration and (2) chief accounts officers and chief planning officers. In contrast to senior state-level control agency officers but similar to senior district-level control agency officers (District Council chief secretaries), the work of junior district-level control agency officers tended to combine the role categories of control agency officer outlined in chapter 5.

Depending upon the type of work required at the district at any one time, the District Council chief secretary could assign the administrative officers under him to duties constituting the role of political administrator, planning administrator or policy coordinator. The two groups of officer analysed worked in close contact with the chief secretary and each other to communicate information from the district areas, to which they were assigned as nodal officer, and the standing committee meetings they chaired as part of their role in carrying out the District Council's primary responsibility for the development planning and implementation process. Decentralisation gave the rank of junior district-level control agency officers their first experience of work outside the state government Secretariat where they were assigned to various departments. However, the most important factor determining the role of junior district-level control agency officers in the District Council was the disposition of the chief secretary to delegate work to them.

The responses of District Council deputy secretaries of administration and deputy secretaries of development, and chief accounts officers and chief planning officers are presented in two sections below. As in previous chapters, officers' responses are arranged

under headings from Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences. The analysis of junior district-level control agency officers in Karnataka is then completed with the modifications to the outline suggested by officers' observations of decentralisation from 1987 to '91.

I: District Council Deputy Secretaries I (Administration) and Deputy Secretaries II (Development)

Functions

Deputy secretaries of administration and development identified the following positive and negative changes in work functions under a decentralised system:

(positive)

PV3 Broad scope of concerns

Before decentralisation several departments' budgets made mandatory allocations of funds to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) under the Special Component Scheme. However, surveys conducted by the District Councils indicated the scheme's provisions had not previously reached beneficiaries, partly because they did not address community priorities: SC/STs felt unable to participate in income-generating projects until their overwhelming priority and immediate need for a house was met. A few District Councils therefore identified SC/ST priorities and scrapped some departments' Special Component Scheme projects to pool funds and meet these priorities. In Mysore district around 12,000 houses were built for Scheduled Tribes (STs) that had not been specifically provided for under any individual programme.

(negative)

NV2 Short-time horizons

District Council resolutions were not taken from a broad perspective to include all financial, technical aspects of a project, as well as the long-term development of the district. However, the authority vested in the District Council by the 1983 Act meant its decisions

were binding on the chief secretary who accordingly had to “sacrifice” some programmes, sometimes “against state policy”.

Atmosphere

Deputy secretaries of administration and development referred to several positive and negative aspects of officers’ work atmosphere brought about by the 1983 Act:

(positive)

PV7 Small-sized work unit

From the perspective of junior district-level officers the District Council provided a much less hierarchical work environment than departments in Bangalore.

PV8 Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

The administrative authority of the District Council chief secretary had immediate implications for its deputy secretaries. The breadth of functions for which the chief secretary was responsible and the proximity of junior-ranking deputy secretaries to the senior-ranking chief secretary in the District Council established a “very important” relationship between the chief secretary and deputy secretaries, novel to officers of so junior a rank.

In many districts deputy secretaries of the District Council were delegated responsibilities by the chief secretary that gave them an authority they would not have experienced at the state-level. By extension the delegation of responsibilities to deputy secretaries of the District Council in a decentralised system provided a greater number of officers to oversee district development schemes, which improved rural development planning and implementation by ensuring “target periods” were met.

PV9 Co-operative work patterns

The District Council provided an environment for the constructive interaction of district representatives, local interest groups and state- and district-level officers from various departments. First, monthly District Council meetings presented an opportunity for district-level officers’ problems to be discussed and addressed.

Second, the essential interaction of the District Council and state-level heads of department was helped by guide-lines issued to the District Councils from the state government to the effect that “all assistance” was to be provided to state-level heads of department in their tours to oversee work in the districts. The “coordination problems” between the state and districts were gradually reduced as elected representatives came to feel “more comfortable” with their position and authority and “realised [state-level] heads were only helping on technical matters”, and heads made efforts to call on and directly interact with representatives in the course of their district tours.

Third, some District Councils used local non-official and non-elected expertise to identify new approaches to district development. In Mysore district the District Council designed a Five-Year Plan for the district with the help of locally-resident retired university Vice-Chancellors, engineers, ambassadors and professors. However, the plan was not implemented by successive chief secretaries.

PV10 Congenial personal relations

The relationship between the District Council chief secretary and deputy secretaries made a substantial contribution to junior district-level officers’ work environment. Several deputy secretaries felt themselves to be the “eyes and ears” of their chief secretaries. Their experience of work in the District Council confirmed to deputy secretaries that successful administration “depends on [superiors’] faith in [their] subordinates”.

(negative)

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

Decentralisation introduced a significant political element to elected representatives’ interest in officers’ work. In particular there was “some interference” from District Council representatives over officers’ transfers.

NV10 Conflictual personal relations

The decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987 transferred significant responsibilities and authority to the District Councils with serious implications for the

interaction of state- and district-level political and administrative structures. First, state-level heads of department had enjoyed certain administrative powers which were “important to maintain respect amongst officers”. When this authority was transferred to the District Council state-level heads of department “felt substantially less powerful”. In a decentralised system, state-level heads of department felt unable to maintain the personal respect of district-level officers. In the course of district tours state-level heads of department “got little attention and [their district-level] officers did not always show up for meetings”.

Second, the personal relationship between the District Council President and chief secretary played an important part in determining the effective operation of the District Council. Where the two did not get on, the chief secretary could obstruct or “stall decisions the District Council wanted to take by reference to one or another rule”.

II: District Council Chief Accounts Officers and Chief Planning Officers

Functions

District Council chief accounts officers and chief planning officers referred to the following positive and negative elements of their work functions during 1987-91:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

The District Council provided officers with an opportunity to see beyond the departments’ policy-making process to how a rural development programme is “formulated and implemented, if it is useful [and] its short-falls”. Dedicated officers interested in the comparative advantage of different approaches to improving the planning and implementation of rural development had questions that could “only be answered in the field”. Several officers therefore requested their transfer to a District Council to experience first-hand the stages of a rural development process they could not from a base in the

Bangalore secretariat.

In some districts officers posted to the District Council were made a nodal officer responsible for a number of villages. Nodal officers found it “extremely rewarding” to be able to tour the districts, observe the progress of project implementation and discuss local communities’ concerns, as well as interact with field officers and convey information to the district.

PV3 Broad scope of concerns

Officers posted to the District Councils benefited from their exposure to a variety of responsibilities which allowed them to put state-level activities in a broader context. One officer maintained staff working in the Bangalore secretariat are “not exposed to field problems, just to files and paper moving around”. Junior district-level control agency officers maintain state-level officers’ lack of field experience means they do not appreciate the needs of local communities and “hampers” the implementation of rural development schemes, particularly where state-level heads of department are slow to approve projects.

PV4 Developmental rhythm

The decentralisation of responsibility for rural development planning and implementation to District Councils comprising elected representatives was a “major advantage” of the system in place from 1987 to ‘91. The District Council provided for representatives from “different district areas to come together and air difficulties and different views from each”, to be addressed and integrated in the district plan. And representatives were responsive to the overall needs of their district through a decentralised rural development plan process.

(negative)

NV2 Short-time horizons

However, the decentralisation of rural development responsibilities to elected District Councils shortened the time-horizon in which plans were designed. Representatives were eager to implement projects in their constituencies, and district development plans were drawn up quickly and “with little thought for the long-term”.

Officers maintained a state-level philosophy that “generally accepted that if the plan is good, the project is good” was not replicated at the district-level.

At the community-level decentralisation did not encourage local groups to assume responsibility for the maintenance and use of projects. Instead decentralisation compounded a popular tendency to look to the government for assistance rather than develop “their own abilities and skills to solve problems”. District Councils may prove a more efficient and effective means of meeting communities’ rural development priority to increase levels of education by providing schools, for example, but these schools must be locally maintained and parents must ensure their children's’ attendance.

Finally a District Council chief accounts officer lamented the decentralised system established in 1987 in Karnataka was not given sufficient time to evolve and strengthen itself. He maintained if a decentralised system is to make serious contributions to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of rural development planning and implementation, elected institutions must be given “at least one decade” to develop. However, as a result of state-level political pressures, local elected institutions were in place for only one term. Dismantling the system after only five years wasted the significant time and resources invested, for example, in balancing and closing village accounts, to transfer them to the mandal which then had to be separated out again.

NV3 Narrow scope of concerns –

The District Council improved several aspects of rural development planning and implementation, for example by establishing a standing committee responsible for planning. However, a “very big draw-back of the system” was the priority of District Council representatives to establish “very visible” schemes such as road-building projects, in or near their village which would gain them reelection, rather than where there would be a maximum number of beneficiaries. While the District Council “could at least meet immediate requirements”, district-level planning was in general determined by “much politics” that undermined the efficient allocation of funds. For example, the bargaining between representatives during the plan process resulted in “a nice big hospital where none was needed and a small one where one was needed”.

NV6 High level of public visibility

The high level of public visibility in a decentralised system had negative implications for elected representative and officers alike. First, just as local communities came to feel the six-monthly village meetings (gram sabhas) to identify local priorities were “not really a success” because the needs they expressed would not always be met, so District Council representatives were wary of the meetings because they could not meet all the demands voiced by their constituents.

Second, officers’ scrutiny by local communities and their accountability to District Council representatives was felt to be exaggerated. “Most officers” and senior officers in particular “felt that they were made unnecessarily accountable” to the District Council. After the first round of postings “no-one wanted to be posted as chief secretary” because state-level officers had heard about district officers “getting blasted” by representatives and being “carefully watched”, in stark contrast to the earlier experiences of deputy commissioners.

Atmosphere

Chief accounts and chief planning officers identified several aspects of work atmosphere affected by decentralisation:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

Officers deputed to the District Council found a very different work atmosphere than prevailed at the state-level that contributed to cooperative work patterns at the district-level. First, the District Council provided officers with an opportunity to work “with a number of departments” on a daily basis. Chief accounts officers were helped in their transition to a new work environment and hierarchy of control because they were deputed to the District Council from the state accounts department whose fundamental function is to train officers for secondment to other departments. Even before decentralisation accounts officers were used to being responsible to superiors other than their own departments heads. In the initial phase of decentralisation District Council chief accounts officers

(CAOs) met departments' internal financial advisers every one or two months to sort out accounting problems between the state and the District Councils. However, after two years meetings between the CAOs and state-level departments were no longer required and any problems or changes to existing accounting rules were communicated by correspondence. Throughout the 1987 to '91 period "the head [of the finance] department was helpful" to officers based in the districts.

Second, in many districts the District Council chief secretary, chief planning officer, chief accounts officer and President "acted as a team" to establish district priorities. Junior district-level control agency officers were exposed to "all facets" of a district development and played an important part in "synchronising" development efforts, for example circulating amongst representatives a questionnaire to establish and coordinate their scheme priorities.

Officers enjoyed their "direct interaction with the public" which allowed them to highlight the resources available and their limitations, helping representatives to prioritise district development needs. Unlike the relationship between bureaucrats and elected representatives in the state government, officers maintained "district representatives used to meet bureaucrats for clarification, enlightenment and guidance". Representatives discussed their priorities amongst themselves constantly and were often "ready to defer an agreed priority as another appeared".

(negative)

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

However, several state-level heads of department disliked the shift in administrative authority to the District Council. Some state-level heads "hesitated" before calling on (lower-ranking) District Council chief secretaries and rarely toured the districts to supervise and evaluate the implementation of rural development schemes.

State-level resistance to decentralisation contributed more generally to uncooperative work patterns in rural development planning and implementation by establishing or refusing to integrate all structures involved in district development under the District

Council. The Malnad Area Development Board (MADB), responsible for overseeing the development of the Malnad area of the state, was created “extra-constitutionally” and should not have existed where there were District Councils responsible for the “comprehensive development of the district”. Officers maintained “there was no need for a superimposing board over [the District Council] doing parallel work”.

NV10 Conflictual personal relations

Officers maintained decentralisation in India is “very important and must be strengthened”, provided “certain safeguards” to protect officers’ interests in a decentralised rural development process are established. The decentralised system in place from 1987 to ‘91 indicated political and official sources of conflict for junior district-level control agency officers. First, personal relations between officers and representatives in the District Councils were frequently difficult and characterised by a lot of “politics”. District Council elected representatives would “deliberately find fault” with an honest officer who had “not met certain illegal requirements”. An officer could be called in front of the District Council to be “attacked” by 40-50 members who gave him “no time to speak”.

District Council representatives “must have power as people’s representatives, but bureaucrats who have much knowledge and expertise must [be integrated] into the system smoothly - with manners, and not be humiliated”. Officers considered the treatment meted out to some officers, including chief secretaries, inappropriate and aggressive.

Second, officers’ personal relations were affected by administrative structure of the District Council. The chief secretary had “excessive” powers and authority compared to other District Council officers and could “zero [pay no heed to] officers with 15-20 years of experience” who were “important links” in a decentralised system of rural development and implementation. Some chief secretaries were “too young or not mature enough [to] give respect” to other officers’ opinions.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model:

To complete an analysis of the response of junior district-level officers to decentralisation, the following modifications to the outline of bureaucrats’ preferences is

required:

Functions

Junior district-level control agency officers referred to the following additional aspects of the 1983 Act affecting officers' work functions:

(positive)

More appropriate spending

The decentralisation of planning responsibilities and funds for implementing rural development schemes enabled the District Councils to "fulfil" district needs and was therefore more appropriate to the needs of the state. Although the District Councils had control over only 20-30% of the total funds available to the district once district staff salaries and centre, state and World Bank project commitments had been met, this amount was "not inadequate" to meet district needs, particularly if the District Council was "willing to adopt a phased approach" to rural development.

Before 1987 "disparities" in levels of development between different regions of the state were compounded by "administrative unimaginativeness [and] historical and social conditions". State government annual plans "clearly wanted to ensure a greater spread of resources and reduce inequalities" and "would initially see that backward regions got more funds than developed [regions]". However, "short-term [political] considerations often resulted in [resources] getting diverted to a more developed, politically powerful region".

Under a decentralised system funds were allocated to District Councils on the basis of a fixed formula incorporating population and indicators of their comparative development such as levels of infrastructural provision and agricultural productivity, ensuring a much more even and appropriate pattern of spending across the state. Officers observed backward districts have "suffered a lot over the past years, so that a little investment well-spent [brought] a sea-change in [their] circumstances".

At the local-level community participation ensured spending was more appropriate in a decentralised system by reducing the opportunity for officers (and representatives) "to

hide or steal funds". Villagers were involved in identifying development priorities, aware which schemes were to be implemented by each department, and vigilant in their supervision of the implementation of rural development schemes.

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The public visibility of a decentralised system made both a political and an administrative contribution to improved rural development planning and implementation. First, before decentralisation there was no means by which a local community could voice its urgent priorities. In a state-centred rural development process, "unless an enlightened regional representative" took an interest in providing for a particular community, its priority schemes were "unobtainable"

Second, officers recognised District Council representatives had excellent networks of intelligence to the field. Problems of project implementation were "immediately brought to [officers'] attention" by representatives who "knew best if a programme had been implemented, who was benefiting [from it], and who was abusing it". Officers in the field sometimes underestimated the urgency of a natural calamity or health epidemic, partly because local communities "only come to an officer when the problem is [already] serious, not in the initial stages - the official channel is the last channel". However, the District Council provided a good supplement to officers' information. When elections were not held to the District Councils for a second term at the end of 1991, officers noted their "very distorted" picture of the progress of rural development in the district without representatives' feed-back and "a serious communication gap" between officials and local communities.

Third, as a result of decentralisation popular political awareness, including the "structure and functions of administration and how officers worked" greatly increased as local communities assumed a significant role in the supervision of project implementation. Decentralisation successfully addressed the long-standing problem of teachers holding two jobs or rarely attending their schools: teachers' attendance increased greatly and they were no longer free to live in towns far from their post.

(negative)

High level of managerial discretion

The decentralised system established in Karnataka in 1987 replicated the “autocracy of the Indian bureaucratic system” prevalent at the state-level. Significant powers were concentrated in the chief secretary of the District Council, with negative implications for other officers and the District Council political executive. In departments at the state-level “subordinates must agree” and implement the decisions of their superior officers “despite any difference of opinion”. Similarly, in the District Council “if the chief secretary came to an agreement with the elected [representatives], his subordinates must agree”.

The delegation of powers between chief and deputy secretaries, including the chief planning and accounts officers, “was not outlined in the [1983] Act but was left to the chief secretary”, and in some districts there was “no bifurcation of responsibilities at this level”. Some chief secretaries exerted significant control over the District Council President. Although “the President was chief executive”, the chief secretary could “decide everything”. Unless the President was assertive and particularly requested the chief secretary to take a certain decision “not even one file was sent to the President”.

Inappropriate spending

On the other hand, the delimitation of authority and resources between the state and sub-state levels of government resulted in inappropriate spending and waste. First, local government institutions did not have sufficient discipline exercised over them by the state government “especially financial - to reduce unchecked and unaccounted spending”. Second, funds were wasted where there were not enough officers to staff new institutions sanctioned by the District Council.

Inappropriate activity

Under a decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation local communities’ “felt needs were much better prioritised” than under an official or state-centred process, “but not as well as they should have been”. The short-comings of a decentralised system had a financial and an administrative element. First, the underachievement of decentralisation was to some extent because of the limited resources

available to the District Councils that gave them “little scope to take up many new schemes”. However, particularly in the final few months of the District Councils’ term of office, officers noticed elected representatives’ deciding upon rural development schemes on the basis of the opportunity they provided to gain commissions from contracts, with little consideration for a project’s need or likely completion.

Second, decentralisation did not make as great a contribution to rural development planning and implementation as it should have because the formal process of monitoring projects’ location, implementation and progress was not always followed. Projects were supposed to be monitored through regular standing committee meetings attended by officers from departments responsible for schemes under the standing committee. On the basis of information from the standing committee, district-level officers were to conduct necessary site visits and report to the chief secretary any problem requiring his attention. However, in several districts this process was not followed through.

Low level of grass-roots/public visibility

Although decentralisation brought local development priorities to the fore, it did not necessarily increase officers’ contact with non-elected district residents. The majority of visitors to district-level officers were other officers or District Council representatives, not local people who “did not feel comfortable calling on officers”. Officers’ could therefore have direct contact with the local population only if “they went to them” with “the patience and mind to find out” from villagers themselves the effectiveness of projects, on which target groups could provide a great deal of information but which many officers did not access.

Atmosphere

Junior district-level control agency officers referred to several positive and negative changes in work atmosphere:

(positive)

Administratively stable

The decentralised system in place from 1987 to ‘91 contributed to the administrative

stability of rural development planning and implementation in two key ways. First, the accountability of officers was substantially increased. The monthly District Council meetings effectively held district officers accountable for their actions and programme performance, and the accountability of field officers was improved through meetings at the intermediate-level (taluk panchayat). Taluk panchayat meetings were “quieter” than District Council meetings, partly because representatives were all from the same area “and therefore wanted to get on smoothly” and partly because, under the 1983 Act, intermediate-level institutions were responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of development schemes rather than allocating and disbursing funds.

Second, the state government assigned functions to and appointed officers to the “key” post of District Council chief secretary with a great deal of care. Several officers maintained “a lot of thinking and filtration went into selecting chief secretaries . . . and to making them senior to the deputy commissioner”. By vesting significant authority in very senior officers, the interaction between the political and administrative streams of a District Council was greatly facilitated. Although the President of the District Council sometimes had to take a very public stance against his chief secretary to preserve political credibility, the President was invariably “careful with the chief secretary unless they saw a reason or need to attack him”. The chief secretary was therefore frequently available to both officers and representatives to mediate in disagreements between the two.

(negative)

Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

However, the relatively small official cadre of the District Council and the authority of the chief secretary as the head of its short administrative hierarchy also had negative political and administrative implications for decentralisation. First, the system had “no room” for differences between officers and representatives. Second, some chief secretaries “had so much to do that they could not concentrate on priorities”, particularly where they delegated a minimum of responsibilities to their deputy secretaries.

Politically unstable

The decentralised system established in 1987 represented a substantial shift in

responsibilities from the state to the districts, and several observers predicted bureaucrats would prove an “obstacle” to decentralisation. However, state-level politicians who needed to maintain “their position’s viability and their reelection” had “a more explicit concern with decentralisation”. Members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) resented having to request work of the District Council, and were angry and frustrated when it was not provided. As a result, officers observed the system’s “only structural problem was the unwillingness of state politicians and a set of bureaucrats to adjust to that set-up - that is, the bulk of IAS officers and to some extent the engineering services.”

However, officers maintain resistance to decentralisation from senior technical officers surfaced because “the *government* wanted to retain power”. Ministers were anxious to maintain control over the patronage provided to them by the activity of bigger budget departments such as the engineering department in rural areas. According to one officer, “if the political will [to decentralise] is there, talk of official resistance is rubbish”. This point is supported by the fact decentralisation was easily reversed by the new state government elected at the end of 1991.

Administratively unstable

During 1987 to ‘91 several elements contributed to the administrative instability of decentralisation. First, Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, “particularly [former] deputy commissioners did not give their whole-hearted support to the [decentralised] set-up”. Former deputy commissioners had senior positions in the state government and could have a significant impact on the state-level political and administrative decision-makers “if they [went] around saying that the [decentralised] system will not or should not work”.

Second, the state bureaucracy was not reorganised to remove officers whose posts “became practically redundant”, such as joint heads of department at the divisional level, and the District Councils did not have an independent cadre of officers working for them. The districts were dependent on the state government to depute higher-ranking officers to them and were subject to “constant changes of staff” which led to instability in the implementation of district development plans.

Third, there were initial difficulties under a decentralised system as heads of department continued to call their staff for meetings in the divisional or state headquarters. However, “as executive head of the District Council”, the President “wanted to exercise his power and prerogative” to insist heads submit an official request through the District Council to release officers. Some District Council Presidents insisted state-level heads of department on tour in the district stick to “structured, prearranged sessions, rather than the random wanderings and observations [state-level heads of department] often preferred”.

Junior district-level control agency officers felt the District Council had reason in its concern to maintain control over the interaction of district-level officers with their state-level heads of department. For example, the engineering department was represented in the districts by officers from “so many levels and [divisions of the department], if all [its state-level heads] went on tour and required meetings with the same set of district-level officers, no work would get done”. Executive engineers were “unnecessarily” responsible to a superintending and chief engineer from each of three wings of the state-level engineering department - Public Works, Minor Irrigation and Public Health Engineering - although a state government committee had recommended they be brought under one line of technical control.

Fourth, the decentralised system did not sufficiently emphasise the important role of the District Council’s planning officer. Instead the junior district-level control agency post of District Council deputy secretary I (Administration) was emphasised as a higher-ranked and higher-profile post, since it dealt with officers’ transfers and general administration such as providing vehicles to district-level departments.

Fifth, the lowest-level (mandal) institutions were insufficiently staffed. Mandal-level institutions had only one secretary and were a difficult level at which to interact with local communities and coordinate officers’ field-level activities.

Location

Officers referred to the following positive change in their work during 1987-91 related to location:

(positive)

Favourable shift in political contacts

Officers described the 1983 Act establishing local government as “revolutionary” in the power it gave local elected representatives - and the “problems” caused to members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) by an “all-powerful” district body. MLAs lost their power to guide district development through the deputy commissioner, and state government Ministers “lost their glamour” once District Councils were established to meet local needs. As a result, decentralisation permitted a more equitable distribution of funds across a district according to popular demand rather than the pressure exerted by influential state-level politicians who favoured a particular area or village.

Conclusion

The observations of junior district-level control agency officers about decentralisation permit the following conclusions:

Functions

Junior district-level control agency officers gained from a substantial increase in the range and impact of their responsibilities working in the District Council (PV1, PV3 and PV4). However, officers depended on the chief secretary to delegate additional responsibilities to them. Some chief secretaries did not devolve substantial or varied duties to their junior district-level officers, reflected in a modification to the bureau-shaping model to include the negatively valued high level of managerial discretion.

Junior district-level control agency officers also refer to the negative implications for their preferred work functions of the politicisation of rural development through the close involvement of local communities (NV2, NV3 and NV5). However, the structure of the decentralised system introduced in 1987 is criticised for not providing sufficient mechanism of external supervision of the District Councils, requiring an addition to the bureau-shaping model outline of bureaucrats’ preferences of the negatively valued elements of inappropriate spending and activity.

Atmosphere

Decentralisation provided junior district-level control agency officers with a smaller work unit and restricted hierarchy (PV7 and PV8) which put them in close contact with the District Council chief secretary. This atmosphere frequently encouraged a close relationship between the chief secretary and his junior administrative officers which resulted in increased authority and cooperation between the ranks which the lowest level control agency officer had rarely experienced. However, in some cases this relationship did not prevail. The outline of bureaucrats' preferences is therefore modified to include as a negative value a restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel.

The negative aspects of work atmosphere to which junior district-level control agency officers refer (NV9 and NV10) are associated with the resistance of several departments and senior ranks of officer to devolve their authority over rural development planning and implementation, as well as the excessive zeal of elected representatives quickly to implement visible projects. The extent to which junior district-level control agency officers hold state-level politicians and officers responsible for the shortcomings of a decentralised system is reflected by modifications to the bureau-shaping model outline to include the negatively valued elements of a politically and administratively unstable work atmosphere.

However, in as far as the decentralised system established the District Council with (1)sufficient powers to hold district-level officers immediately accountable for their actions and (2)a senior-ranking officer in the important coordinating role of chief secretary, junior district-level control agency officers refer to the positively valued administrative stability of decentralisation.

Location

Junior district-level officers make no reference to aspects of location contained in the bureau-shaping model of bureaucrats' preferences. However, decentralisation shifted authority from state- to district-level politicians in a better position to be able and to be forced to respond to local priorities. The last modification to the bureau-shaping model's

outline of bureaucrats' preferences to reflect the experience of junior district-level control agency officers is therefore to include a positively valued, favourable shift in political contacts.

In summary, junior district-level control agency officers' work preferences about decentralisation revolve predominantly around the political and administrative environment in which they worked. This preoccupation with political and administrative stability is reflected in modifications to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' work preferences.

Part Three

The Bureau-Shaping Model Applied to Karnataka State Delivery Agencies

The following chapters present delivery agency officers' responses to decentralisation. The chapters lay the groundwork to establish if officers' responses to a decentralisation process which brought delivery agencies into closer approximation to control agencies by hiving-off functions to sub-central government bodies are, as posited by the bureau-shaping model, (1)unrelated to levels of programme budget and (2)similar to those of control agency officers.

Before decentralisation officers of the rank sent to the District Council as heads of department would have worked at the district-level, but been directly responsible to a departmental hierarchy ending in the state-level head of department. Many departments had previous experience of the partial deconcentration of some of their rural development activities to the District Rural Development Authorities (DRDAs). However, the DRDA was virtually exclusively comprised of officers, headed by the district deputy commissioner who was responsible to the state government. Officers therefore had little to no experience of working with local politicians. The forestry department did not even have this limited experience of decentralisation, having maintained its historical separateness and tight inter-departmental hierarchy by refusing to integrate any of its schemes with the deputy commissioner's district rural development portfolio.

Once district staff salaries and centre, state and World Bank project commitments had been met, the District Councils had control over only 20-30% of the total funds available to the district. However, this amount was nonetheless substantial for newly-established local bodies, and significantly more than had ever been made directly available

to any body below the state level. In the 1990-91 financial year elections to the state government replaced the Janata Dal party who had supported decentralisation, with the Congress party, which favoured centralised politics and administration and stopped second-term elections to the district bodies. The budgets available to delivery agencies at the district reflected this change in political direction at the state level, immediately reducing by between 30% and 80%.

The delivery agencies selected are arranged for analysis according to the average percentage change in their programme budgets during the 1987-91 period: delivery agency sub-type 1 consists of agencies whose programme budgets reduced by 10-20%; sub-type 2 agency budgets remained the same; sub-type 3 agency programme budgets increased by 10-20%; and delivery agency sub-type 4 programme budgets increased by more than 20%. The responses of officers' from the four agency sub-types are presented from the perspective first of state- and second of district-level heads of department. As in previous chapters, each chapter presents officers' responses under headings from Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model of bureaucrats' preferences, and identifies and analyses responses requiring modifications to the outline. The quotations contained in each chapter are from interviews with officers of the category being considered.

Chapter 8

Delivery Agency Sub-type 1: Departments of Engineering and Forestry

Delivery agency sub-type 1 consists of departments whose programme budgets reduced by an average 10-20% in the course of hiving-off agency functions to district bodies over the 1987-91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka. This agency sub-type is represented by the departments of engineering (average percentage change of -10.98%) and forestry (average percentage change of -18.87%) whose inflation-adjusted and percentage changes in programme budgets over the 1987-91 period are reproduced in Table 3.

Table 3: Engineering and Forestry Departments Programme Budgets, 1987-91

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Inflation-adjusted:				
Engineering programme budget	10681.18	10917.23	8385.08	9221.7
Forestry programme budget	1538.9	1087.87	1274.27	1383.69
Real percentage change in:				
Engineering programme budget	(base year)	2.21	-21.5	-13.66
Forestry programme budget		-29.31	-17.2	-10.09

(in Rs 100,000s)

(compiled from Government of Karnataka Budget Allotment for District Councils)

The 1983 Act transferred from the state-level department a large number of engineering schemes for control and implementation to the District Council: from the Minor Irrigation division, water tanks, construction of canal feeder-channels, World Bank assisted minor irrigation projects, and flood control; and from the Roads and Bridges division, maintenance, survey and building of district bridges, culverts, roads, and buildings required by other District Council departments' schemes such as schools and primary health centres. However, as illustrated by the decrease from 1989-90 in the engineering department's programme budget, the department soon began to withdraw functions from the District Council for implementation from the state level.

Of forestry department functions the 1983 Act transferred responsibilities for buildings and centrally-sponsored soil conservation schemes in the River Valley Project catchment area to the District Council. The Joint-Forest Management Programme and World Bank-sponsored Social Forestry Project was subsequently added to the list of District Council forestry department functions, but all District Council forestry responsibilities were soon minimised as a substantial proportion of funds were withdrawn for disbursement by the state forestry department.

The forestry department is one of the most hierarchical and isolated departments because of its traditional role as a forest police, outside the district administration previously represented by the deputy commissioner, and therefore found it extremely difficult to accept and adjust to the social forestry programme that encouraged local participation in forest management and required the integration of forestry officers in an alternative administrative structure. A distinction was therefore drawn within the department between social forestry officers transferred to the District Council, and territorial officers who remained under the department responsible for "mainstream" forestry activities.

The following chapter is divided into two sections presenting the experiences of (1) state- and (2) district-level heads of officers from sub-type 1 delivery agencies during the 1987-91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka. Officers' observations are initially presented under headings from Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences, followed

by an analysis of officers' responses requiring modifications to Dunleavy's outline.

I: State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies

Functions

State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies identified the following positive and negative aspects of officers' work functions during 1987-91:

(positive)

PV5 High level of managerial discretion

The decentralised system introduced in 1987 devolved responsibility for rural development planning and implementation to the District Councils. However, significant authority was retained by the state as the source of rural development funds. Heads of department at the state level exercised their influence with the state government to ensure adequate emphasis to departmental priorities. Where District Council plans did not reflect the importance of essential department schemes, state-level heads would "naturally try to balance this out" by using "the resource power" of the state government to insist the District Councils implement core department schemes.

(negative)

NV2 Short-time horizons

One state-level head of engineering referred to the decentralisation experiment as "a nauseating experience". First, there was "no policy-making" in support of longer-term district development. District representatives could not "appreciate the long gestation periods" involved in forestry department activities. Second, the District Councils rarely took decisions on the basis of a consensus reached with technical officers, "preferring to take a political decision".

District Council representatives identified development priorities in the context of providing their constituents with highly visible construction projects that indicated rapid development. One officer maintained district funds were "simply spent on labour-oriented

programmes, without a view to generating some permanent asset". The overall priority was to establish a project, rather than to ensure the service it provided was sustainable. For example, some water-supply schemes sanctioned by the District Councils provided for a pump that could be quickly established and deliver water to residents in the short-term, but no overhead tank to store water and relieve the pump from constant operation. This approach cut the cost and time required to establish a water supply. But the pumps were designed to run periodically, filling a storage-tank from which water could be drawn, and soon broke down after running continuously. Similarly, houses were constructed for the homeless "to the lowest specifications, for immediate results" but soon cost large amounts to repair.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies referred to several positive and negative effects of the 1983 Act on officers' work atmosphere:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

The District Councils provided a convenient point of contact for officers from a range of departments. Officers of all levels gained from the coordinating role of the District Council. For example, chief engineers based in Bangalore found in their district tours they could coordinate between the District Councils and departments still wholly incorporated at the state level, such as the Karnataka Electricity Board (KEB), to provide power to projects.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

- The authority extended to the District Council over rural development planning and implementation had several negative implications for state-level engineering and forestry department heads.

From the perspective of state-level heads of engineering, District Council representatives wanted projects approved too quickly. Representatives encouraged district-

level engineers to split larger projects into sections costing under the two lakh (200,000) rupee ceiling of their authority, to be carried out over successive years. However, other projects sometimes assumed priority in the following years and split projects were never completed. One head described most projects so sanctioned as “horrible to see, with no proper technical oversight because [District Council representatives] wanted to sanction and implement them immediately”. He suggested that if a project was “beyond the competence of the [district] engineer, [responsibility for] it should not be with the District Council”. However there was “no support” in the state political executive to limit the authority of the District Council in this way.

State-level heads of engineering also maintained superintending engineers had no means to “pull up an officer” on technical grounds, other than reporting poor constructions to the District Council. Several heads felt the District Council was an inappropriate and incompetent authority to take action on technical oversights by their officers.

On the other hand, several District Council Presidents complained that state-level heads of department did not make themselves available for discussions with them. One state-level head responded that cooperation with the District Council could not be “forced on to officers simply by stating that they [were] technical advisors to the District Council”. State-level heads of department “had no stake in or responsibility for [the District Councils’] projects”, and insisted “all departments need a single line-hierarchy, whether in terms of man-power, financial outlay or where activities should take place”. In short, state-level heads of engineering maintained, “the forest, engineering and agriculture departments cannot be district-based”.

State-level heads of the forestry department had similar reservations as to the efficacy of extending responsibility for rural development planning and implementation to the District Councils. First, an evaluation of the social forestry projects under the District Councils conducted at the end of their first term concluded they had not been effective in the micro-plan process central to social forestry schemes. Careful micro-planning to identify and involve suitable participants is essential to social forestry schemes which are supposed to integrate local communities, their income-generating activities and forest

protection.

Second, the District Councils did not help foresters coordinate with relevant departments to the extent possible under the Dry Land Development Boards (DLDBs). The Dry Land Development Boards brought together horticulture, agriculture, soil conservation and forestry officers with the authority to decide upon and implement development schemes for specific areas of land. Although acknowledged to be a duplication of initiatives, the DLDBs continued to operate in a decentralised system, establishing a wing in the District Councils. However, there were no “territorial” forestry officers under the District Councils, only social foresters, and no horticultural officers. The agricultural, soil conservation and social forestry officers working under the District Council worked on different projects throughout the district. A state-level head of the forestry department protested “it was not as if [social foresters] merged plans with theirs”.

The Dry Land Development Boards were also more appreciated than the District Councils by state-level heads of forestry because they were headed by technical officers. One head maintained it is “most important to have non-IAS [District Council] chief secretaries, as on the Dry Land Development Boards. A mere administrative man will not be sufficient” to attend to the problems faced by technical officers in implementing development schemes. The administrative and political structure of the District Councils made excessive demands on the social foresters working under them, requiring them to attend 10-12 meetings per month - “many more than a territorial [forestry] officer [working outside the District Council] who would only have attended one meeting per month.”

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

State-level heads of department maintained relations between the state and district political executives were not as smooth as they may have appeared. Although many state-level politicians “may have said” they supported decentralisation, “what was said was quite different to what was practised, and just as the states feel that more than forty years after independence, the federal system envisaged by the Constitution is not in place and the centre does not decentralise funds and responsibilities to them, so the state did not wish to decentralise to the districts.” As a result, “the philosophy of the system was defeated” and

responsibilities handed over to the District Council on paper were not in fact devolved by the state government.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model (1):

The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences requires several modifications to reflect fully the experiences of state-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies during the 1987 to '91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka::

Functions

(positive)

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

Decentralisation exposed the rural development process to local scrutiny. In a centralised system there was "every likelihood of an abuse" in the spending of development funds because local communities were not widely aware of schemes sanctioned for their area. Decentralisation proved an effective means of publicising development initiatives.

A high level of public visibility gained support for the forest department by increasing popular awareness of the projects it implemented in rural areas. One officer maintained the projects local communities can see, such as road-side or tank (small reservoir) fore-shore plantations, get "more attention" and are better appreciated than block plantations away from the villages. An example is the wood-lots raised by the government over the last decade, which have provided essential wood to local communities and laid a foundation to "slowly involve the people in the process" of sustainable forestry. The District Council facilitated the interaction of forestry officers with local communities to agree upon plantations of tree species, integrating officers' knowledge with local requirements.

(negative)

Broad scope of concerns

Under the decentralised system established in Karnataka from 1987 to '91 district-level engineers were assigned responsibility for the schemes transferred to the District Council from each of the three constituent wings of the state-level department - public

works, public health, and minor irrigation - which had previously been the responsibility of three separate district-level officers. State-level heads of department maintained the number and range of projects under a district-level engineer were so great that he could not address them in any depth.

Inappropriate activity

Rural development planning under the District Council was dominated by elected representatives' political concerns rather than considerations of overall district development. Development schemes were taken up unsystematically by the District Councils, with "no overall planning, only a response to political pressure around each representative". For example, roads were asphalted in a constituency where it was a priority until its boundary with a constituency where it was not.

Projects which were on-going when the District Councils were established were not included in the district plans drawn up under a decentralised system because each representative was anxious to be seen by his constituents as individually responsible for initiating projects in their area, even just laying a foundation stone. For example, one constituency was allocated only Rs 10,000 (about £200) to build a hospital, and the project has remained incomplete for eight years. Sections of roads were sanctioned in 200-, 300- or 400-metre blocks and abandoned before reaching any destination.

One chief engineer suggested a "plan holiday" this year to complete all projects initiated by the District Councils, noting the department would require twice the money annually available to it to do so.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies referred to several additional positive and negative aspects of work atmosphere affected by decentralisation:

(positive)

Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

The District Councils provided state-level heads of department with access to local

representatives and officers from other department. The authority and range of officers under the District Council facilitated a move away from “single-sector development” to a broader and more integrated approach to rural development.

Politically stable

State-level heads of department who regularly toured the districts established a useful relationship with District Council Presidents and Vice-Presidents. The great majority (15 or 16 out of 19) of District Council Presidents was considered to be extremely able, informed, and committed to the development of their districts.

Administratively stable

The decentralised system established in Karnataka was administratively stable from the perspective of state-level heads of department for two reasons. First, officers on deputation to the District Councils made efforts to maintain a good working relationship with their superior officers at the state level. One state-level head commented many subordinate officers “did good work [in the District Councils] because they knew that they belonged to the parent department and that they would eventually be working there again”, under those same heads.

Second, the District Councils were the best level at which to implement the schemes devolved to them from Bangalore. For example, in 1982 a World Bank-sponsored programme established a social-forestry division within the forestry department, to protect reserved forests by providing local communities with access to plantations on communal land. Only forestry officers from the social forestry division were deputed to work under the District Councils. State-level heads of forestry maintained the District Council was an appropriate level at which to base social forestry officers because their work required a great deal of interaction with local people to identify local participants and the type of wood they required, and develop a micro-plan for the development of plantations.

(negative)

Administratively unstable

However, state-level heads of sub-type one delivery agencies considered the

decentralised system administratively unstable for several reasons. First, the District Council was headed by a generalist Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer as chief secretary who had “no experience [of] development activities”. The stability of a decentralised system was further undermined by the office of District Council chief secretary because he was a senior officer who could “be back at the secretariat within six months if he did not think himself suitable” to district work, and who was in any case transferred after one or two years. State-level heads of engineering maintained the chief secretary “should have been an agriculture or engineering man, [posted] for a three-year term, answerable for the good and the bad”, particularly since almost 60% of District Council expenditure was on engineering projects.

One state-level head maintained the chief secretary did not have enough time to address all the issues under his jurisdiction and “just passed the buck to the relevant department”. And because the chief secretary had substantial administrative and financial authority in the District Council, district-level officers “listened to their pay-master with power over transfers, not to the [state-level head of department] with technical control”.

Second, the District Council was administratively unstable because established departmental guide-lines were often flouted in the rush to sanction projects. For example, because executive engineers were under pressure from District Council representatives to design and implement rural water-supply projects quickly, they rarely included a Government of India-sponsored scheme to test the quality of the water available before drilling a bore-well or building a tank. Requesting authority to implement this test was a lengthy process requiring submission to the superintending engineer, chief engineer, state government and central government. If the water were found to be unpotable, the executive engineer would have to design another scheme which would increase the total cost, and further delay the delivery of a community priority. Furthermore, finding appropriate water might require that three or four villages be brought under the scheme, which in turn might cross constituency boundaries and their representatives’ political priorities.

Third, some rural development schemes were funded by the state, centre and local-

engineering department evolved to deal with more money and a smaller number of projects than did the District Councils. One state-level head maintained “1000 [small schemes] required too much paper and time and more supervisory staff than one huge scheme”. Nonetheless, even in a decentralised system, the engineering department remained “top heavy”.

II: District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies

Functions

District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies noted the following positive and negative changes in officers’ work functions under a decentralised system:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

The District Councils were anxious to sanction schemes quickly and start the construction of projects to meet community priorities as soon as possible. District-level engineers were therefore encouraged by representatives to avoid the time-consuming process of referring projects to their superior officers. By splitting projects into sections costing under their two lakh (200,000) rupee ceiling of authority, district-level officers had the opportunity under the District Council to implement schemes of a size and complexity they would not otherwise have had.

PV2 Longer-time horizons

Under a decentralised system some provisions were made by state- and federal-level authorities that ensured longer-time horizons in the planning and implementation of rural development schemes. For example, the Government of India required that the District Councils allocate a fixed proportion (25%) of their budgets for land-based activities to social forestry. This legal requirement facilitated the work of district-level forestry officers, by placing additional pressure on the District Councils to meet their responsibility for forest protection. Many District Councils would not otherwise have maintained forests because it “was not a priority for communities, who have depended for years on the forest

but do not think it necessary to grow them, and are more interested in roads, hospitals and schools". One district-level forestry officer maintained "too much emphasis has been put on agriculture in successive five-year plans, and even more forests would be lost without a [similar] emphasis on forests".

PV3 Broad scope of concerns

Decentralisation provided district-level engineering and forestry officers with a favourably-valued broad scope of concerns. First, a district-level engineer was responsible for the public health, minor irrigation and public works projects transferred to the District Council from three separate divisions of the state-level department. The District Council therefore gave district-level engineers exposure to and control over a greater range of projects than they had had at the state-level where engineers work exclusively in one or another division.

District-level social forestry officers were also in a position to broaden the scope of their work through the District Council. An important resource available to forestry officers in the District Council was access to local communities. Over the years the forestry department assumed a policing rôle to protect forests from encroachment by local communities. As a result, the department has "antagonised" and "had hardly any [constructive] interaction with the people". However, district-level forestry officers used the social forestry programme and representatives' networks to design projects which integrated local communities in the cultivation and sustainable use of plantations, and counter the image of foresters as officers "away from the people".

PV4 Developmental rhythm

The decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987 made a substantial contribution to the rhythm of rural development initiatives. First, the District Councils could reallocate up to ten per cent of funds from one sector to another in response to district needs.

Second, the District Councils could design and sanction projects on the basis of wider considerations as to their impact on the micro-level economy than departments at the

state-level. For example, under a state-centred rural development process the engineering department sanctioned projects on the basis that their “benefit/cost ratio should not be below 1”. However, the District Council sanctioned projects because they required local labour and would provide work for the unemployed.

PV5 High level of managerial discretion

Decentralisation gave officers based in the District Council significant authority. One district-level engineer referred to executive engineers in the District Councils as the “sole authority” of the engineering department in the districts.

District-level forestry officers found the authority of the District Council reinforced their own authority in a decentralised system. Forestry officers based in the District Council had immediate access to its political executive which was quick to decide upon and approve projects. The coordination and speed of interaction between officers and elected representatives in the District Council enabled district-level officers to make full use of their authority to sanction projects costing under Rs 50,000 (around £1,000) without reference to their heads of department in Bangalore.

(negative)

NV4 Repetitive rhythm

The decentralisation of rural development planning and implementation made demands resented by district-level officers for contributing to a repetitive rhythm in their work. First, the District Council endeavoured to keep a tight hold over the district-level officers responsible to it by calling them to frequent meetings - sometimes as many as two every three days.

Second, the District Councils often maintained incomplete statistical records. As a result, whenever the state or central governments requested certain information from the district, a meeting had to be called with officers to ascertain the correct response.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies observed several changes in

work atmosphere as a result of decentralisation:

(positive)

PV7 Small-sized work unit

From the perspective of district-level engineers the decentralisation of rural development responsibilities to the district had a positive impact on their work environment by reducing the size of their work unit. First, the administrative structure of the engineering department was reorganised according to reductions made in the number of some districts' sub-units (taluks) to establish viable District Council constituencies. In Bangalore Rural district eleven engineering divisions were reduced to four, in line with the reorganisation of taluks, making it easier for district-level heads of department to tour and interact with the leaders of local communities.

Second, the District Council brought officers from different departments that had previously operated independently into close contact with one another.

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

Decentralisation contributed to cooperative work patterns in the rural development process in several ways. First, the monthly general meeting of the District Council provided a forum in which officers could settle problems between departments based in the district and dovetail the activities of different departments. For example, opportunities for the forestry department to coordinate with the engineering department in raising plantations on new tank (reservoir) fore-shores were obvious and easy to arrange when development plans were discussed at District Council meetings that combined the political and technical authority to sanction projects.

Indeed, the political authority of the District Council gave district-level officers leverage in their interaction with departments outside the District Council, such as the Karnataka Electricity Board (KEB). It also provided the territorial forestry department officers who remained outside the District Council with access to representatives of the communities they were perceived to police, through the district social-forestry officers working in the District Council.

Second, decentralisation enhanced local community cooperation in the implementation of district development schemes. Before the District Councils were established, villages contributed a proportion of the total cost of establishing a water-supply scheme, giving them a direct interest in its management. Decentralisation reinforced communities' concern to oversee projects to which they made a contribution, because resources allocated to projects by the District Councils were popularly perceived to be community resources, over which local communities had a proprietary interest. Decentralisation supported and made efficient use of community participation in rural development by providing locally-accessible officers to whom problems and shortfalls in project implementation could be reported.

Third, District Council representatives played an important coordinating role in identifying and mobilising sources of local support for a development scheme. For example, elected representatives proved effective in persuading local land-owners to give over land identified as suitable for a social-forestry project, or suggesting alternative land.

PV8 Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

The decentralised system established in 1987 concentrated a great deal of authority in the District Council chief secretary from which district-level officers benefited. Several chief secretaries were held in high personal regard, and were seen as a corner-stone in the successful implementation of the decentralised system generally and in the functioning of a given department within it.

First, the chief secretary represented an immediate authority to solve local disputes over project implementation, for which officers used to rely on department heads in Bangalore. District-level heads of department maintained the chief secretary exercised administrative control over officers from a base in the District Council "in a much better way" than could state-level department heads.

Second, district-level forestry officers appreciated the support of many District Council chief secretaries who were "for afforestation", especially in dry-zone districts

where forestry projects were a particularly low priority.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

However, several district-level heads of engineering insisted a decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation would be improved if the post of District Council chief secretary was held by a superintending engineer. They compared the system unfavourably to the irrigation Command Area Development Authority (CADA) whose administrative cadre is headed by an engineer.

District-level heads of engineering maintained there is an unnecessary “domination” of Indian Administrative Service officers over “technical people” in government. Officers also felt under a decentralised system, the District Council formed “too many standing committees”, including a technical committee whose members “were not all technical people, yet they used to tell [engineers] that work was not being well done”.

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

The District Councils were dominated by the same male, landed, higher caste groups that dominate rural social and economic structures. As a result, women, the poor and lower castes groups often did not report problems of plan implementation to local leaders. The allocation of funds to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) in particular was frequently not correctly carried out by the District Council. However, because weaker groups feared elected representatives would “present [them with] problems” if they reported spending irregularities, engineers’ tours “to directly enquire on the spot” remained an important means of gathering information on project implementation.

Modifications to the Bureau-shaping Model (2):

Aspects of the work environment referred to by district-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies require the following modifications to Dunleavy’s outline of bureaucrats’ preferences:

Functions

District-level heads of sub-type delivery agencies identified several more positive and negative implications of decentralisation for work officers' functions:

(positive)

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The District Councils had extensive networks of information through their elected representatives, including village political parties. In a decentralised system local communities and politicians scrutinised project implementation, and important information from the field quickly fed through to the District Council, both on projects under the District Council and those still with the department.

More appropriate spending

The decentralised system resulted in more appropriate spending than under a state-centred system. Community participation in identifying district priorities and allocating funds made great demands on a limited district budget. As a result, resources were used more effectively by the District Councils because projects had to be chosen and located very carefully. District Council spending was further improved by the authority of the chief secretary who played a crucial part in guiding and advising representatives. District-level heads of department maintained representatives rarely "overlooked [the chief secretary's] recommendations".

(negative)

Inappropriate activity

However, decentralisation led to some inappropriate activities in rural development planning and implementation. First, there was often disagreement between elected representatives and department officers over the award of contracts for the supply of building materials. Some engineers were "harassed by representatives". This friction sometimes led to grudges between officers and representatives, cancelled projects or slowed work, and created an unpleasant work atmosphere.

Second, several District Councils were over-zealous in their attempts to control district-level officers. Representatives in some districts tried "to own teachers and

doctors”, who were numerous and easy targets for representatives who wanted to gain from their influence over officers’ transfers. Belgaum district representatives were referred to as particularly corrupt and as “not serving the people” in their work.

Atmosphere

Officers referred to the following additional negative aspects of work atmosphere during 1987-91:

(negative)

Politically unstable

With the decentralisation of significant functions to the District Councils state-level politicians exerted pressure through state government ministers “to get power back for the department”. The Minister for Minor Irrigation tried to transfer responsibility for projects of less than 40 hectares from the District Council back to the department. However, she was dissuaded by engineers on the grounds “there would not be enough money in the department” to implement these as well as the projects already retained by the department, and that they were being adequately managed locally.

Administratively unstable

Some officers intimated there were differences and power games between officers as well as between officers and representatives. One district-level head maintained some newly-empowered Karnataka Administrative Service officers working as junior district-level control agency officers “wanted everyone working for them”.

Conclusion

The above analysis of officers from sub-type 1 delivery agencies permit the following conclusions as to the key implications of decentralisation for (1)state- and (2)district-level heads:

(1)State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies

Functions

State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies observe decentralisation had a positive impact in giving a high-level of managerial discretion (PV5) to officers. However, they also observe the negative impact of short time horizons (NV2) associated with decentralisation. Both the departments in this category - engineering and forestry - have traditionally enjoyed substantial autonomy. The engineering department is responsible for expensive, technical projects that frequently involve the central government and consultants where external (foreign) aid is provided, and incline the department to a comparatively independent approach to its activities in general. Officers from the engineering department can therefore be expected to value managerial discretion in a new set-up. Similarly, the forestry department has had an independent hierarchy of authority built up around establishing and protecting from local encroachment forestry projects which had always been separate from any district-level authority that existed before 1987.

State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies positively value the high level of grass-roots visibility to which decentralisation exposed field-level officers because it improved the overall evaluation and supervision of their departments, reflected in a modification to the bureau-shaping model' outline of bureaucrats' preferences. However, District Council representatives were sometimes over-zealous in their attempts to oversee district-level officers, reflected in a modification to include the negatively valued work function of inappropriate activity.

From the perspective of state-level heads of department, particularly engineering, decentralisation also exposed district-level officers to too great a range of responsibilities, indicated by their reference to a negatively valued broad scope of concerns.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies draw the same distinction between positive and negative changes in work atmosphere under decentralisation as senior state-level control agency officers, whereby cooperative work patterns (PV9) decentralisation encouraged between officers from different departments is contrasted with the negative impact (NV8 and NV9) of the demands of local politicians on officers' work atmosphere.

However, where state-level heads were able to establish a good relationship with District Council politicians and administrative staff, decentralisation was appreciated for integrating state- and district-level officers from different departments. The bureau-shaping model's outline is therefore modified to include the positively valued elements of an extended hierarchy and political and administrative stability.

But decentralisation was administratively unstable to the extent state-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies resented the dominance of District Council chief secretaries drawn from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the difficulty of maintaining even technical authority over officers deputed to the District Councils.

Location

Location is of little importance to state-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies, and is a significant part of bureaucrats' work conditions only to the extent their departments' projects necessarily have rural locations.

(2) District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies

Functions

District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies gained many positively valued work functions from decentralisation which reflected the greater range and scope of their authority in the district which allowed a better integration of departments' activities. The significant increase in the information available to district-level officers and a decentralised plan process generally from elected representatives and their constituents improved rural development planning and implementation. The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences is therefore modified to include a positively valued high level of public visibility and more appropriate spending.

The negative functions to which district-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies refer are associated with their interaction with and responsibility to local elected representatives, which required they attend a large number of meetings and "narrowed" to

meeting local political priorities the basis on which rural development planning was undertaken. The model's outline is correspondingly adjusted to include the negative work function of inappropriate activity.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies favourably valued the extent to which decentralisation had a positive impact on district-level development administration. The District Council provided a smaller work unit with a restricted hierarchy, and encouraged cooperation between departments. However, district-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies resented the efforts of state-level politicians to regain control over rural development resources, and of some district-level administrative officers to establish their authority in the District Council, respectively contributing to a politically and administratively unstable work atmosphere.

Location

District-level heads of sub-type 1 delivery agencies like their state-level superiors are not concerned with location. Officers of a certain rank can expect to spend a considerable period of their early career in the districts and are therefore prone more to an analysis of their work functions and atmosphere than work location. Decentralisation did not change the location as much as the authority structure and environment of district-level heads of department's work.

In summary, state- and district-level officers from sub-type 1 delivery agencies are substantially concerned with the stability of the political and administrative environment in which they work. The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' work preferences is therefore modified to include additional elements related to political and administrative stability.

Chapter 9

Delivery Agency Sub-type 2: Department of Agriculture

Development departments whose average real percentage changes in programme budget over 1987-91 were approximately zero are categorised as sub-type 2 delivery agencies, represented here by the department of agriculture (average real percentage change in programme budget, -0.18%).

Table 4: Agriculture Department Programme Budget, 1987-91

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Inflation-adjusted Agriculture programme budget	2440.88	2155.82	2648.22	2505.53
Real percentage change in Agriculture programme budget	(base year)	-11.67	8.49	2.65

(in Rs 100,000s)

(compiled from Government of Karnataka Budget Allotment for District Councils)

The 1983 Act assigned the following responsibilities for agricultural activities to the district: fairs and exhibitions, seed farms, plant protection, development of sugarcane, Farmer Training and Education Centres, Bidar District Integrated Rural Development Project, and centrally-sponsored schemes for the eradication of pests and the development of cottonseed, oil seed, and sunflower. Table 4 shows the inflation-adjusted and

percentage change in the agriculture department's programme budget, available to the District Councils to carry out these responsibilities over the 1987-91 period. The sharp, one-off, decrease in programme budget in 1988-89 may be substantially accounted for by the funds for the agricultural extension programme which were withdrawn from the District Councils once it became apparent they were incapable of maintaining the necessary coordination between district- and field-level officers under the District Councils, and the universities and state-level officers outside their administrative control.

Sections one and two below present the experiences of decentralisation from the perspective of state- and district-level heads of department respectively. As in previous chapters, officers' observations are first presented under headings from the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences, followed by an analysis of the observations requiring modifications to the model's outline.

I: State-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency

Functions

State-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency observed a few positive implications for work functions under the 1983 Act:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

The decentralisation of a great proportion of state-level heads of department's former administrative responsibilities to the District Council allowed state-level heads to concentrate on developing departmental policy and technology.

PV4 Developmental rhythm

Decentralisation contributed to the improved rhythm of rural development. The District Councils had the authority and scope to adjust the implementation of rural development schemes in response to local developments, for example, by changing the

cropping pattern of an agricultural project when rains were delayed or crops failed.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of delivery agency sub-type 2 referred to several positive and negative changes in officers' work atmosphere:

(positive)

PV8 Restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

Officers working in the districts gained from the immediacy and authority of the District Council. Officers based in the District Council no longer needed to visit superiors in Bangalore before taking a decision. The authority of the District Council to approve decisions reduced the extra time and work previously required of district-level officers to secure state-level approval for their approach to district problems. District work was undertaken "there and then" - and farmers preferred a system that provided for an immediate response to developments in the field without waiting for approval from the state-level head of department.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

However, from the perspective of state-level heads of department, the authority of the District Council and its elected representatives was a source of several problems. First, elected representatives sometimes exploited "the gap" between state- and district-level officers to cause disagreements and misunderstandings between them. State-level heads of department were particularly irritated where district-level officers were not released to them by the District Council during their district tours, and felt this lack of cooperation reduced departmental coordination between the state and district levels. District Council representatives considered district-level department heads subject exclusively to their requests rather than to those of their state-level heads.

Second, friction between the District Council and state-level heads of department developed over the transfer of officers. Under the decentralised system introduced in 1987, it was within the District Council's jurisdiction to refuse to authorise a departmental

order for officers' transfers within a district. But the District Council also sometimes refused to release an officer for transfer outside the district which was within the department's jurisdiction, particularly where there were "personal differences" between an officer requesting transfer and the District Council President.

Third, the District Council had the authority to transfer resources from one department to another. For example, the agriculture department's 20 or so district jeeps might be used for popular education, family-planning programmes, or in response to an epidemic. While state-level department heads acknowledged this flexibility in the field-level allocation of resources had its advantages, they also felt resources were often transferred without reference to the department's work-load, or to the seasonal and essential nature of timely agricultural inputs.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model (1):

State-level heads of the sub-type 2 delivery agency analysed here refer to several changes in work conditions brought about by decentralisation not encompassed by Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences.

State-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency observed the following additional aspects of work atmosphere and location from 1987 to '91:

Atmosphere

(positive)

Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

The decentralisation of substantial resources and authority to the political executive of the District Council improved rural development planning and implementation. The proximity and number of elected representatives scrutinising and reporting on development schemes meant the President of the District Council was better able to supervise rural development, and maintain control over officers, than heads of departments in Bangalore.

(negative)

Administratively unstable

However, decentralisation did not make any contribution to the improved coordination of rural development planning at the state level. The District Councils gained from substantial interaction between the political executive and its technical and administrative officers in a broadly egalitarian structure. However, the three arms of the state-level bureaucracy comprising planners (Ministers), administrators (IAS officers) and executives (technical personnel such as the chief engineer and directors of agriculture, animal husbandry and medical services) continued to play isolated roles, with any interaction clearly defined by their descending pecking order.

Politically unstable:

Decentralisation was politically unstable in two main respects. First, in some districts there was friction between state government Ministers and the District Council Presidents, who were of the same rank, where the two belonged to different political parties. Second, resolving local political differences in a decentralised system was difficult because “more people [were] directly involved”. Balancing local political interests required great skill on the part of the District Council President, who was sometimes hampered by his lack of experience.

Location

(positive)

Provincial location:

However, the decentralisation of rural development planning and implementation to the district was beneficial overall to the agriculture department. Agricultural projects require the “full involvement of beneficiaries” which was easier to maintain from the districts through consultation with local communities and supervision by elected representatives.

II: District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency

Functions

District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency observed the following positive aspect of decentralisation for officers' work functions:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

Decentralisation had two key advantages for district-level heads of department. First, officers enjoyed their role in the planning and implementation processes as experts in their fields, accessible and referred to by representatives. Second, officers maintained their work was better rewarded in a decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation because the District Councils could allocate more funds to departments whose officers had performed well.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency referred to the following positive implication of decentralisation for officers' work atmosphere:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

The District Council established better communication between departments frequently linked in their development activities. District-level agricultural officers found District Council meetings a particularly useful forum in which to interact and coordinate their work with officers from the horticulture and forestry departments.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model (2)

District-level heads of delivery agency sub-type 2 observed several work conditions requiring modifications to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences in the context of decentralisation in Karnataka.

Functions

District-level heads of agriculture identified two additional positive work functions in a decentralised system:

(positive)

Appropriate activity

First, District Council representatives were anxious to establish themselves politically in the district which required they break the hold over the allocation of funds formerly enjoyed by members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs). From the perspective of a development department officer based in the district, this shift in political power at the district translated into improved planning because the pressure to implement schemes to meet state-level political interests was reduced and replaced by the priorities of district communities.

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

Second, in a decentralised system work was monitored at all levels from the district to the field. This scrutiny by local communities reduced the opportunity for the “improper” attempts of some groups or individuals to divert rural development resources from their allocated source.

(negative)

Inappropriate spending

However, the decentralised system introduced in 1987 did not sufficiently provide and enforce guide-lines to ensure the District Councils did not deviate from a minimum fund allocation to each department, as established during the state plan process.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency observed the following positive and negative implications of decentralisation for officers’ work atmosphere:

(positive)

Administratively stable

Decentralisation relieved the administrative pressure on district-level officers. District-level heads of department were no longer required to make “constant applications” to state-level heads for project approval. The District Council sub-committee meetings and general monthly reviews ensured work was promptly completed.

(negative)

Politically unstable

However, decentralisation did not entirely remove the “improper” involvement of members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) in rural development. MLAs retained a particular hold over the inter-district schemes that remained the responsibility of the state government.

Ill-defined lines of legal responsibility

District-level heads of department also found ill-defined lines of legal responsibility in a decentralised system. District officers were accountable to the Government of India and Government of Karnataka for funds spent by the District Council. However, these funds were not always spent on the projects for which the state or central government had specifically released them, and district-level officers felt greater authority needed to be exerted over the District Councils to ensure they did not deviate from guidelines on the allocation of funds.

Location

(positive)

Provincial location

Finally, district-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency refer to the positive contribution made by a provincial location during 1987 to '91. District-level heads of agriculture maintained agriculture is a “local” enterprise: one that is therefore properly based in the district. The District Councils were more effective than the state-level department in identifying priority projects and securing and supervising local participation.

Conclusion

The bureau-shaping model of bureaucrats' preferences highlights that (1) state- and (2) district-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency are predominantly concerned with aspects of decentralisation relating to their work functions and atmosphere. As with

officers from other delivery departments, whose activities are predominantly rurally-based, “location” is not a significant element in their evaluation of the impact of decentralisation on their work preferences.

(1) State-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency

Functions

State-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency refer to the the developmental rhythm (PV4) and innovative work (PV1) encouraged by decentralisation. The work of the agriculture department gained from the flexibility decentralisation permitted district officers to respond to variations in weather and community cropping-patterns, and heads of department to concentrate on developing “in-house” improvements in technology and agricultural techniques.

Atmosphere

The work of the agriculture department was similarly helped by the restricted hierarchy of the District Council that gave substantial authority to district-level heads of agriculture and the chief secretary, allowing quick decisions to be taken locally and in response to local conditions. However, a hierarchy of authority over development planning and implementation presided over by technically “non-elite” local representatives, who had proved incapable of sustaining the highly-valued agricultural extension programme, was considered a draw-back of decentralisation.

Decentralisation highlighted two further, negatively valued, aspects of the preferred work atmosphere of senior state-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency requiring addition to the bureau-shaping model’s outline of bureaucrats’ preferences: political and administrative instability. During 1987 to ‘91 there was state-level political resistance to decentralisation and insufficient redeployment of staff to sub-state institutions.

However, to the extent decentralisation improved the information available to officers in the course of implementing and overseeing rural development schemes, state-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency positively valued an extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel.

Location

Similarly, a provincial, rural, location of authority over development planning and implementation was positively valued by state-level heads as more appropriate to the activities of the agricultural department.

(2) District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency

Functions

District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency appreciated the individually innovative work (PV1) of the district which permitted quick and varied responses to the needs of the district. This “innovative work” included an autonomy from state-level superiors to approach problems as district-level heads of department saw fit and without waiting for authority from their state-level superiors.

The bureau-shaping model outline therefore requires modification to reflect the positive value to district-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency of a high level of grass-roots visibility which kept them well-informed and monitored the disbursement of development funds as allocated by the District Council, and helped to ensure appropriate activity.

However, the decentralised system did not provide for adequate control over the way in which the District Councils allocated funds to each department. There was therefore some deviation from state government guide-lines, negatively valued by district-level heads as inappropriate spending.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency gained from the cooperative work atmosphere (PV9) of the District Council. Before decentralisation officers had few if any opportunities to interact and coordinate their activities with other departments. The shift in authority to the District Council reinforced the benefits of this cooperative atmosphere by providing for a prompt, district-level, rural development decision-making

process which district-level heads positively valued as administrative stable.

However, negative aspects affecting officers' work require addition to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats preferences. The decentralised system was (1)politically unstable because of state-level representatives' resistance to losing power over the disbursement of rural development resources and (2)did not adequately delimit responsibility for spending decisions taken by the District Council but implemented by district-level officers.

Location

Finally, district-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency refer to the positive contribution to their work of a provincial location requiring addition to the bureau-shaping model's outline. District-level heads found a decentralised system to be more responsive and appropriate in its response to local needs than a state-centred system of rural development planning and implementation.

In summary, the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences requires modification to reflect the importance placed by state- and district-level heads of a sub-type 2 delivery agency on political aspects of their work environment in a decentralised system, including a positively valued provincial location and high level of grass roots visibility which brought the department within easy reach of important information from the field.

Chapter 10

Delivery Agency Sub-type 3: Departments of Education and Health

The departments of education and health fall into the category of sub-type 3 delivery agencies whose programme budgets increased by an average of between 10% and 20% over the 1987-91 period (department of education, 12.29%; department of health, 19.64%). The inflation-adjusted and percentage changes in programme budgets for the two departments from 1987-91 are detailed in Table 5:

Table 5: Education and Health Departments Programme Budgets, 1987-91

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Inflation-adjusted:				
Education programme budget	36341.89	39716.55	41319.16	41390.22
Health programme budget	10498.09	12190.86	12698.53	12790.14
Real percentage change in:				
Education programme budget	(base year)	9.29	13.7	13.89
Health programme budget		16.12	20.96	21.83

(in Rs 100,000s)

(compiled from Government of Karnataka Budget Allotment for District Councils)

The 1983 Act transferred responsibility for primary and secondary education, including school inspection, supply of free books, stationery and uniforms, and buildings, to the District Council from the education department. From the health department the District Council was assigned responsibility for rural and primary health, including centrally-sponsored leprosy, guinea worm, falaria and blindness programmes; blood-banks; mobile health units; and maintaining and upgrading primary health centres and taluk-level hospitals. Both departments have large staffs whose salaries account for a large proportion of their total budgets: by extension the District Councils sanctioned a significant number of posts in schools and health centres under their jurisdiction, accounting for a substantial proportion of the increase in the education and health departments' programme budgets.

The experiences of state- and district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies during the 1987-91 period of decentralisation are presented below within the parameters of Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences, followed by modifications to the outline suggested by their responses.

I: State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies

Functions

State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies identified several positive and negative aspects of officers' work functions as a result of decentralisation:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

Decentralisation conferred significant authority on district-level officers. The district health officer (DHO) was the first technical expert available to the District Council and did not have to refer his decisions to heads of department in Bangalore. Although the District Council exercised immediate and proximate authority over district officers, in an emergency or epidemic in particular, their decisions were not questioned by the District

Council, and heads of department in Bangalore observed officers in the districts developed the confidence to take creative decisions.

In several districts the district health officer managed to obtain three or four ambulances while state-level heads of department working through the state government had “a big problem getting even one”. In Mandhya district the pressure exerted by district-level officers on the District Council ensured all departments’ partially completed buildings were finished, “which would never have happened in ten years”, while rural development planning and implementation was dominated from the state-level.

PV5 High level of managerial discretion

Decentralisation conveyed “an immediate delegation of power” to district-level officers and once the implications of decentralisation for increased discretion in district-level officers’ work became apparent, and after some initial resistance, district officers responded positively to their increased authority. The impact of the department in rural areas was substantially improved by the role officers’ assumed in guiding the District Council in its decisions over the location of hospitals and in identifying priority buildings and purchases.

PV3 Broad scope of concerns

The range of development initiatives under the District Councils allowed a broad base from which to identify local needs. Many District Councils came up with and effectively implemented “good proposals” for rural development.

(negative)

NV6 High level of grass-roots/public visibility

District Council representatives appeared unwilling to explore community needs to the full. After the first two years representatives did not convene the village meetings (gram sabhas), which were to identify village priorities and the beneficiaries of government loans, once it became apparent the resources available could not meet demands. District Council representatives were wary of exposing themselves to extensive contact with the public for fear of community reactions to having their hopes unduly raised.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies referred to several positive and negative elements of work atmosphere during 1987-91:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

Some officers transferred to the District Council found themselves in a more cooperative work environment than the state government had provided. Decentralisation freed some “subordinate” officers who had feared to disagree with department superiors. Similarly, officers who had been unfairly “ticked off or pulled up” by state-level heads of department appreciated a decentralised system in which district officers’ annual evaluation reports were written by the District Council.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

Decentralisation extended significant powers and authority to the District Council and its elected representatives, with several negative implications for officers. First, decentralisation provided local representatives with an opportunity to “make money” and/or political capital from officers’ transfers. There was “unnecessary interference from [local] politicians” in the functioning of intermediate- (taluk) level hospitals under the District Council, and teachers were transferred purely “on the basis of local politics”. Second, district health officers (DHOs), who had had the authority to transfer lower-ranking officers in the district before decentralisation, “felt that their independence was cut” by having to refer proposed postings to the District Council President and chief secretary.

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

State-level resistance to decentralisation from heads of department was a source of political and administrative tension in the districts. First, the interaction of district-level officers with the political executive of the District Council was complicated by department heads who did not “understand the system in its proper perspective”. Some heads of department in Bangalore continued to ask their district officers to submit reports to them,

come to Bangalore for meetings and tour with them in the districts, without reference to the District Council President to which elected representatives took objection. Second, poor relations between the District Councils and state-level heads of department undermined the regulation and supervision of the decentralised planning and implementation process in which heads had an important role.

NV10 Conflictual personal relations

Similarly, the decentralisation of significant powers to the District Council political executive caused tensions in district officers' personal relations with elected representatives. The "negative attitude" of some representatives towards officers had two sources. First, in the first flush of decentralisation many District Councils were anxious to establish their (new) authority over district-level officers. Some District Council Presidents treated chief secretaries with respect, but others treated them as "bonded labourers". Second, many "fundamental principles of administration" had yet to be established in newly-elected District Councils. Representatives were frequently perceived to criticise a department in an "ungentlemanly fashion", using "abusive language" towards officers in public and insulting them "in front of [their] subordinates".

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model (1):

The observations of state-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies suggest several modifications to Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences.

State-level heads observed the following additional aspects affecting officers' work from 1987-91:

Functions

(positive)

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The high level of grass-roots visibility in a decentralised system improved several political and administrative aspects of rural development planning and implementation. First, frequent supervision of district officers by local representatives and standing committee members improved the quality of work where, before decentralisation,

departments had not been “very work conscious”. By extension district-level officers were encouraged by and enjoyed the kudos of local communities’ appreciation for their work.

Second, a decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation was much more transparent. District-level officers had to respond immediately to questions raised in the District Council and therefore made sure they “were alert, understood the department and were well-prepared”. Politically, officers maintained the transparency of the 1987-91 system was similarly significant, as indicated by the fact the “majority of village leaders from 1987-91 have not been reelected” in recent elections.

More appropriate spending

Before decentralisation development assistance did not percolate down to the beneficiaries for whom it was intended. By devolving significant responsibilities and resources to the District Councils development planning and implementation was much more responsive and better-targeted under a decentralised system.

Appropriate activity

Decentralisation had several unanticipated positive implications for rural development for many officers. First, teachers’ “mortal fear that they would have a raw deal under elected representatives, sometimes semi- or illiterate, and that the quality of education would suffer”, were by and large not realised. Second, officers maintained on the basis of their experience from 1987-91 that decentralisation led to an overall improvement in the location of projects: “politicians do know what people want. . . . What cannot be cured [politicians’ influence] must be endured”. State-level heads of department felt that before decentralisation several projects had been sanctioned in areas where they were not most needed. If local representatives are equipped to address administrative issues, they are better placed to supervise and administer programmes efficiently than is someone in Bangalore.

(negative)

Inappropriate spending

The significant powers and resources devolved to the District Councils made it hard

for the state government to maintain controls over their activities. “In the first flush of decentralisation”, District Councils “lost their balance a bit and fiscal discipline was the first to go”.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies also referred to several more positive and negative aspects of work atmosphere:

(positive)

Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

Decentralisation established the predominance of district-level elected representatives in identifying local priorities. This dominance of locally-elected representatives in rural development planning and implementation reduced distortions of development initiatives which occur under systems controlled by bureaucrats. The decentralised system in place from 1987 to '91 inclined officers to agree with local politicians that they could improve the effectiveness of rural development initiatives because they “have felt poverty as [bureaucrats] have not” and “speak [the people’s] language”.

Before decentralisation departments’ reach was limited to official channels. There was no accountability and a significant amount of misreporting about programme implementation. A state-level head of department observed: “What the bureaucratic machinery had failed to achieve in [teachers’] attendance was easily achieved by [local government institutions] - my officers were either timid or apathetic” in their attempts to do so. The participation of elected representatives also improved the monitoring of the non-formal education programme targeted at 15-35 year-olds and 9-14 year-olds who had dropped out of school or were not covered by the formal sector because of their distance from schools.

The District Councils provided departments in the districts with an invaluable frame-work through which to reach rural communities. District-level education officers had access to large numbers of semi-or illiterate people and volunteers to be recruited to the non-formal education programme. Many of these volunteers developed extensive contacts

and organisational skills through the programme, and are now District Council representatives and Gram Panchayat chairmen.

Politically stable

A state-level head of department maintained bureaucrats “may try [their] level best to minimise and undermine [decentralisation] and show that it has not worked, but we must have decentralisation where we are to have a democratic tradition and way of life.” Decentralisation integrated the political participation of local communities in rural development to improve the efficiency with which programmes were targeted and the effectiveness of their implementation.

Administratively stable

The decentralised system introduced in 1987 maintained and improved the administrative stability of rural development in three key ways. First, the information available to local government institutions improved the performance of the education department, providing district-level heads of department with a greatly enhanced capacity to evaluate the performance of his officers and programmes in the field. The information available to district-level officers also improved the implementation of state government guide-lines for opening schools, which required a minimum population in the area and mapping of other schools nearby, so that schools were constructed according to a prioritised list of areas most in need.

Second, District Council Presidents used their authority over staff transfers to refuse to release staff from their posts until replacements had arrived. In this way staff shortages, which arose before decentralisation when state-level heads of department transferred officers without regard to or information on the staff available to the field, were avoided.

Third, the department - “and Ministers and [members of the legislative assembly (MLAs)]” - retained powers to issue transfer orders and regularise posts sanctioned by the District Councils. In this way a degree of state-level control over the shape and growth of decentralised departments was maintained.

(negative)

Administratively unstable

On the other hand, decentralisation in Karnataka introduced several destabilising changes in the administration of rural development. First, the relationship between the district deputy commissioner and the chief secretary of the District Council was difficult, particularly where both had “strong egos”. The deputy commissioner was not formally integrated in the District Council and could be “uncooperative” in identifying land for the construction of houses, irrigation projects, schools and health and veterinary centres.

Second, district-level officers frequently claimed to be required by the District Council when their state-level heads of department were on tour. While some state-level heads of department maintained their officers in the districts were “more loyal to the district than to the state”, others felt district-level officers used a decentralised system in which they had “two bosses [to] avoid both”.

Third, during the 1987-91 “experiment” several District Councils used their authority to sanction schools to create a substantial number of teachers’ posts, which the state government later addressed by requiring state-level “regularisation” of the post before they became valid. However, the posts already created - and some created despite the state government order - constitute a long-term “encroachment on state funds” which must now meet their expense. It was a “blind mockery to give powers to open schools but not over the money [to pay for them]”.

Politically unstable

The decentralisation of rural development planning and implementation in Karnataka was politically unstable in as far as it challenged established sociopolitical structures in rural areas. First, there was no reservation of the posts of District Council President and Vice-President for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs), and these positions were all held by members of the dominant and upper castes. At the same time the reservation of general seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) created tensions in the villages.

Second, local volunteers in non-formal education programmes to increase literacy rates were harassed by elected representatives who felt threatened by “volunteers establishing a second line of leadership at the village level”. In South Kannada district where Communist (CPI(M)) party representatives took an active role in the programme, the Congress party member of the state legislative assembly (MLA) from the area accused the education department of “encouraging communists”. There was also “aggressive friction” in some areas because the literacy programme “vigorously” addressed “underlying problems such as child marriages, untouchability, equal wages for male and female labourers and the equality of boy and girl children”.

Location

State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies identified the following additional aspects of officers’ work conditions about location:

(positive)

Favourable shift in political contacts

The increasing demands made on the limited resources available to rural development underlined the importance of decentralisation. First, local representatives to the District Council became aware of resource constraints through their involvement in the district plan process, and were more effective than official channels in “convincing the people” of these constraints. Second, the networks of information from local communities to which representatives had access provided a more effective means of ensuring limited resources reached target groups.

II: District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies

Functions

District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies observed several positive and negative implications of decentralisation for officers’ work functions:

(positive)

PV1 Individually innovative work

The authority of the political executive of the District Council gave district heads of department an alternative route through which to pursue the needs of the department. Where officers cultivated a good relationship with the District Council President, they were frequently successful in explaining and convincing District Council Presidents of department priorities. In this regard officers appreciated the seniority of the District Council President over the chief secretary.

PV5 High level of managerial discretion

The 1987 to '91 decentralised system devolved sufficient powers and responsibilities to the District Councils to establish their authority in the districts, from which district-level officers gained. Decentralisation gave district-level officers significant autonomy from heads of department in Bangalore because (1) the District Council approved projects, frequently on the basis of officers' recommendations and without reference to state-level heads of department, and (2) many of the day-to-day problems affecting officers' work in the districts were addressed by the District Councils.

(negative)

NV1 Routine work

However, decentralisation and the authority of the District Council also had a negative impact on officers' work pattern. The eagerness of elected representatives to establish and maintain their authority over officers and the rural development process led to frequent meetings called by the District Council for updates on the progress of project implementation. In many districts officers were required to attend 16 to 20 meetings a month, leaving "no time to go to the field".

NV6 High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The decentralised system introduced in 1987 established a sense amongst local communities of their responsibility to oversee the implementation of rural development programmes, and endowed proximate elected institutions with the authority to instruct implementing officers. However, officers "naturally" took time to adjust to a system which

held them responsible to local communities. Before decentralisation officers had been approached by a petitioner with a request; from 1987 to '91 officers were approached by community members "with authority". And district-level heads of department "had to explain everything and render accounts" to the District Council before funds already allocated to the department were released.

District-level officers resented the District Council for not being "more answerable" to them. First, the District Council did not "respond immediately" to requests to release funds the state government used to release "without problem or restriction". Government grants to the District Council were only for current basic salaries and not arrears or extra expenses. The release of the total pay due to officers of all departments was therefore often delayed and contributed to officers' demands that their departments be transferred back to work directly under the state government. Second, officers disliked the (local-level) politicisation of their work. Departments with the most staff at the district-level such as the health and education departments were particularly affected by the proximity and authority of the District Council. Teachers found it difficult to work under the scrutiny of the elected representatives with whom they lived, particularly because, in such circumstances, their political affiliations were well-known. The District Council frequently exercised its authority to transfer officers on the basis of their political affiliation, and local knowledge of officers' political leanings led to their harassment in the course of daily work when the political make-up of a local institution shifted.

Officers contrasted their accountability to the District Councils with a freedom that prevailed once the District Councils were brought under administrators at the end of their five-year term. Under administrators, district-level "interference [in] - or supervision" of officers' work was reduced to district-level officers' interaction with a sole administrator.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies referred to the following changes in officers' work atmosphere during the 1987-91 period:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

The 1983 Act established a decentralised system with opportunities for an increased and creative interaction within and between the political and administrative structures responsible for rural development planning and implementation. First, the District Council provided for the “inter-sectoral coordination” of rural development. By establishing officers from different departments and with a degree of autonomy in their decisions with easy access to one another, the implementation of rural development initiatives was improved. District-level officers from the education and engineering departments worked to resolve differences over the construction and maintenance of schools. Second, District Council standing committees were effective bodies through which to discuss the sanctioning and location of new schools and class-rooms, and to conduct spot-checks on the progress of construction or teachers’ attendance.

PV10 Congenial personal relations

The authority of the District Council to identify plan priorities according to local needs gave several departments a higher profile in the district plan process than they had received at the state-level. Local communities attached great importance to improving the provision of education. As a result district-level education officers found officers from departments which had more influence than the education department at the state level, particularly engineers, more cooperative in their interaction with education officers in the District Council.

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

Decentralisation extended authority over rural development and implementation to newly-elected District Councils. This shift in control over district administration had negative political and administrative implications for district-level officers. First, decentralisation devolved significant responsibilities and authority to “the hands of people who had not tasted power”. The competition of District Council representatives to establish their positions with each other and with officers politicised many day-to-day decisions and placed officers under “enormous pressure”. There was “political interference” over

teachers' transfers and the location of schools. However, because district-level officers depended on the District Council to release salaries and funds, district heads of department felt they "had to follow [representatives'] instructions".

Second, the concentration of authority and staff in the District Council provided for little coordination between the district- and block-levels. Junior engineers under the Block Development Officer (BDO) were responsible for the construction and maintenance of primary schools. However, there were insufficient lines of administrative and technical support and control to the lowest levels, and BDOs frequently did not submit progress reports to their superiors in the District Council. Where local representatives exerted "pressure" over Block Development Officers to construct school buildings so they could distribute contracts, and irrespective of whether or not teaching staff were available to them, it was difficult for officers to resist.

Third, the administrative authority of the District Council chief secretary was resented by some technical officers who felt he did not have sufficient knowledge and experience to control decisions of district-level officers. Officers maintained District Council chief secretaries could "slow things down" if they were inexperienced or unnecessarily bureaucratic when, "in the health department, one day's delay can spell disaster".

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

The authority of the District Council led to problems in coordination between departments at the state- and district-levels. The state government required that the District Council report to state-level department heads on the disbursement of funds released to them. However, the District Councils were frequently late to submit reports to the state government because representatives did not feel accountable to heads of departments, or because budgeted work had not been properly executed.

NV10 Conflictual personal relations

The District Councils established in 1987 took some time to acclimatise themselves to the authority vested in them. Particularly in the first few years of decentralisation elected

representatives unnecessarily harassed officers and called frequent meetings which could be “very ferocious”.

Location

District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies also observed positive implications of decentralisation about location:

(positive)

PV11 Proximate to political power centres

However, district-level heads of department also gained from the authority concentrated in the District Councils. First, the District Council provided district-level heads of department with a more accessible authority to deal with district problems than heads of department in Bangalore. In Kolar district officers secured a 24 lakh (2.4 million) rupee building and a new vehicle for the department which they “would not have got in time if [they] had had to rely on the state government.”

Second, the District Council sometimes provided an effective barrier between district-level officers and the department in Bangalore. When district officers and representatives wanted more schools constructed but required government sanction to do so, the District Council authorised their construction and sought government sanction after the event. This illegal sanction ostensibly put district officers in a difficult position with their department, but one where they could appeal to superiors who “knew [officers’] difficulties in dealing with non-officers”, in the context of the authority of the District Council political executive.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model (2):

District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies referred to several elements of officers’ work conditions after decentralisation in Karnataka requiring modifications to the bureau-shaping model of bureaucrats’ preferences.

Functions

Under the heading of functions, district-level heads noted:

(positive)

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

Local elected representatives supplemented officers' tours by visiting schools to check on teacher attendance.

More appropriate spending

The District Council had authority over a significant proportion of funds available for rural development in the district and was "in a position to appropriate and reallocate funds to where they were urgently needed". First, the District Council responded promptly to developments in the field and provided a forum to design and implement emergency programmes.

Second, the authority of the District Council guaranteed district-level department heads steady financial and political support for district priority schemes, essential to their sustained implementation and maximum impact. The President of Bangalore Rural District Council actively supported increased levels of education in his district. Because the President "never wanted to hear any complaint from teachers", the release of funds and pay to the department was prompt. Compared to a state-centred system of rural development, the District Council provided the department with an easier route through which to sanction new class-rooms, and work was completed faster.

Appropriate activity

A decentralised system established a flexible system of rural development based on the development priorities identified by local communities and their elected representatives. First, this flexibility was of particular significance to officers from departments whose activities were higher priorities in the District Council than they were at the state level. The District Councils placed much greater emphasis on education and sanctioned many more teachers' posts and school buildings than had been the case at the state level.

Second, the decentralised system permitted district-level officers a considerable role in rural development planning despite, or in conjunction with, the authority of the District

Council political executive. Officers maintained district-level planning was “good”, with “25% of school sitings and postings decided according to politics, but 75% by us [officers]”.

Third, the authority of the District Council to sanction funds and resources was used to good effect to sustain departments’ rural development schemes without interruption. Some District Councils avoided teacher shortages by circumventing a state government order that teachers could be appointed only with state government approval, hiring teachers on an ad hoc basis and paying them a lump sum rather than an official (permanent) salary.

(negative)

Inappropriate spending

The District Council had the authority to decide upon rural development programmes to be implemented in the districts. However, elected representatives operated according to political pressure to establish development schemes in their respective constituencies and the time constraints of their term in office. From the perspective of district-level heads of department there was not “optimal utilisation of limited resources by proper planning and placement” under the District Council because representatives did not “know how to prioritise” in economic terms their disbursement of development funds.

Inappropriate activity

The local-level politicisation of rural development through the District Councils resulted in the sanction of some inappropriate projects. The political clout of particular representatives in the District Council meant some councils sanctioned “developmental activities that may not have been priority projects just because [certain representatives] wanted them”.

High level of managerial discretion

Decentralisation concentrated authority over the responsibilities and resources devolved from the state in the political executive of the District Council. In turn significant administrative authority was vested in the District Council chief secretary as its senior

administrative officer. Several district-level heads of department described the system in place from 1987 to '91 as a "centralised approach to a decentralised system". The authority of the chief secretary "blocked" the full evolution of "a parallel government at the district" in which senior district-level heads of department had similar authority over decisions affecting their departments. In particular district-level officers resented the fact department funds were controlled by the District Council where they were frequently "stuck" until the end of the financial year rather than released directly to the implementing officer .

Atmosphere

District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies referred to several positive and negative aspects of work atmosphere affected by decentralisation:

(positive)

Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

The decentralised system introduced in Karnataka extended significant authority to elected District Councils with three major implications. First, local representatives articulated local needs so that "planning came from the bottom up". Second, decentralisation provided an opportunity for community involvement in project implementation. Third, departmental evaluation of programmes was improved by local information which reduced its dependence on a potential biased or obfuscatory official analysis. Under a decentralised system district-level officers and the District Council "got a lot of feedback" from local communities, and any distortions or poor supervision of work at the village level were reported by people "independent [of] the department".

(negative)

Politically unstable

The authority of the District Council to transfer officers within a district was frequently exercised according to the "local push and pull" of political considerations. The (local-level) politicisation of officers' transfers took little account of the efficient deployment of officers' respective skills, so that inappropriate postings were made and valuable skills wasted.

Administratively unstable

The decentralised system established in 1987 did not adequately integrate the state, district and sub-district levels of government. First, there was a “confusion of state, department and District Council priorities”. State-level heads of department could not request transfers in the course of attempts to streamline the department if the District Council was “following other lines of reasoning”. Decentralisation also did not address the significant overlap of immunisation and primary health services run by the departments of Women and Child Development; Family Welfare and Mother and Child Health; and Social Welfare. The health department remained responsible for training and coordinating these “duplications and triplications”.

Second, district-level officers found under a decentralised system it was “difficult to utilise the rich experience and knowledge of senior people [in Bangalore] properly and efficiently”. Although heads of department in Bangalore had technical authority over officers, decentralisation established the District Council as a “politically parallel administration” with financial and administrative authority over officers creating “confusion”. Because the District Council “was almost independent - financially and administratively - from the department” this division of officers’ responsibilities “did not work” and District Councils frequently “went outside department norms”, for example constructing hospitals where there was not “a geographical need”. Similarly the state government retained the authority to sanction the construction of new schools, which it sometimes did without sanctioning new teachers-posts so the District Council had to depute teachers to them from other schools.

Third, there was insufficient communication with officers working below the district who were not integrated in or supported by a rural development process that concentrated substantial staff and resources in the District Council.

Location

Finally, district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies observed that location had a positive affect on officers’ work during the 1987-91 period in the following way:

(positive)

Favourable shift in political contacts

The political authority of the District Council in rural areas gave their political executive significant weight at the state level and reduced the influence exercised by members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) over district development. State-level heads of department therefore used the backing of the District Council to convince the state government of the need for additional funds for projects they would not otherwise have managed to convey.

Conclusion

The observations of (1)state- and (2)district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies lead to several conclusions about the impact of decentralisation on their work preferences:

(1)State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies

Functions

State-level heads of the sub-type 3 delivery agencies of education and health have large staffs. The range of responsibilities decentralisation provided their district officers improved their departments' ability to respond to local developments (PV1, PV3 and PV5). However, large staffs also meant state-level heads of department had daily problems with local-level attempts to gain political mileage from the control of officers' transfers (NV6). Although the time heads spent addressing these disputes reduced their ability to attend to broader issues, this short-coming of decentralisation is unlikely to have outweighed the positive impact on rural development of a significant increase in attendance amongst their officers.

The observations of state-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies require the addition of three, interlinked, positively valued work functions to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences: a high level of public visibility, more appropriate spending and appropriate activity. Decentralisation better ensured rural

development funds and schemes reached intended beneficiaries through grass-roots networks of information and supervision.

Atmosphere

State-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies acknowledged decentralisation provided some of their officers with an improved work atmosphere by extending their authority, creating a more equal and cooperative administrative environment (PV9). Similarly, the role of local elected representatives in an extended hierarchy of authority is positively valued by state-level heads for its contribution to the political and administrative stability of the decentralised system in that local participation in a democratic system is “correct” and increased the information available to officers in the course of their district work. The bureau-shaping outline therefore requires modification to include the positive elements of an extended hierarchy and political and administrative stability.

However, from the perspective of state-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies the decentralised system was politically unstable to the extent the District Councils were controlled by the same landed, male elements which controlled rural socio-economic structures. And the system was administratively unstable because it did not properly integrate state-level heads of department or the district deputy commissioners in the functioning of the District Council.

Location

As with officers from many other departments, location is not an important consideration of state-level officers greatly affected by decentralisation. However, state-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies note a favourable shift in political contacts under a decentralised system, to be incorporated in the bureau-shaping model’s outline of bureaucrats’ preferences. This shift gave district-level officers significant leverage in their interaction with the state government to secure more funds or resources for the department.

(2) District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies

Functions

Decentralisation provided district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies with

increased opportunities to respond quickly and innovatively to local developments (PV1 and PV5). A high level of public visibility gave officers access to information from the field which was positively valued and requires reflection in a modified outline of bureaucrats' preferences. The local knowledge of elected representatives also resulted in more appropriate development spending and activity through closer supervision of rural development schemes.

However, the "incursion" of local politics into district-level officers' work demanded of them a great deal of routine discussion and explanation (NV1 and NV6) to elected representatives and reduced the amount of time available to field work. Local political bargaining and attempts to secure spending in particular constituencies also led to some inappropriate spending and activity, negatively valued by bureaucrats.

Administratively, district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies resented the dominance of a generalist Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer in the District Council, reflected in a modification of the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences to show a negatively valued high level of managerial discretion.

Atmosphere

The dominance of the District Council chief secretary detracted from the work atmosphere as well as work functions of district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies. There was hostility because a "non-technical" IAS officer had administrative authority, and that a competitive relationship between departments which existed at the state-level continued at the district (NV8 and NV9). However, the immediacy of difficult political elements and the proximity of different departments under one administrative authority reduced the significance of these "traditional" complaints, and began to replace them with more cooperative attitudes amongst officers (PV9 and PV10).

The bureau-shaping model requires modification to reflect the fact an extended hierarchy of authority over rural development planning and implementation to non-elite, local elected representatives, was positively valued by district-level heads for the increased information representatives provided to the rural development process. However, the

politicisation of rural development activities through the District Council also contributed to political instability in officers' work atmosphere, particularly over officers' transfers.

Decentralisation also contributed to an additional negatively valued element of administrative instability. District-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies note the system of rural development planning and implementation in place from 1987 to '91 did not adequately integrate the state, district and sub-district levels of administration to give each full access to the expertise of the other.

Location

Proximity to (local) political power centres was of particular significance to district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies. Decentralisation provided lower-profile departments' officers with a means to secure a more significant proportion of resources from the state and district governments through local political leverage. The observations of district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies therefore encourage a final modification to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences to include a favourable shift in political contacts, identified during Karnataka's 1987 to '91 experience of decentralisation.

In summary, state- and district-level heads of sub-type 3 delivery agencies place considerable importance on the political and administrative stability of their work environment. This concern is reflected in modifications to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' work preferences.

Chapter 11

Delivery Agency Sub-type 4: Department of Animal Husbandry

Sub-type 4 delivery agencies had an average increase in programme budget over the 1987-91 period of decentralisation in Karnataka of more than 20%, represented here by the department of animal husbandry (average real percentage change, 54.88%). Under the 1983 Act the following functions were transferred from the department of animal husbandry to the district: establishing, upgrading and managing rural veterinary dispensaries and hospitals; mobile veterinary clinics; the Artificial Insemination and Cross-Breed Heifer Projects; and pig-breeding stations.

The inflation-adjusted and percentage change in animal husbandry's programme budget from 1987-91 is presented in Table 6:

Table 6: Animal Husbandry Department Programme Budget, 1987-91

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Inflation-adjusted Animal Husbandry programme budget	1141.52	1541.17	2119.21	2595.69
Real percentage change in Animal Husbandry programme budget	(base year)	27.73	61	75.92

(in Rs 100,000s)

(compiled from Government of Karnataka Budget Allotment for District Councils)

The substantial year-on-year increases in programme budget sustained by this small department were in direct response to the pressure exerted by district-level elected bodies, the vast majority of whose constituents owned animals and required increased support in their health and management, and in sharp contrast to its ability before decentralisation to attract any significant increase in department funds from the state government.

The following chapter analyses the responses of (1)state- and (2)district-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency under headings from Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences, and concludes with modifications to the outline.

-I: State-level head of a sub-type 4 delivery agency

Functions

The state-level head of a sub-type 4 delivery agency identified the following positive change in officers' work functions and negative changes in work atmosphere as a result of decentralisation:

(positive)

PV4 Developmental rhythm

Local government institutions provided officers in the district with a highly responsive work environment. With decentralisation the process of implementing development schemes went beyond planning and designing to a constant evaluation of their impact on "grass-roots" beneficiaries.

Atmosphere

(negative)

NV8 Extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

The authority transferred to elected District Councils during 1987 to '91 diluted established administrative procedures and relationships within the state government

bureaucracy, with three major implications. First, the District Council had the legal right to sanction new Groups C and D posts. However, once established these positions became permanent appointments whose long-term costs in salaries and pensions had to be met by the state government and put a serious strain on current and future state-government finances. The state government therefore issued an order that the District Councils must first secure the clear authority of the state finance department before establishing new posts. Of the 500-600 veterinary institutions sanctioned by District Councils during 1987-91 around 200 have yet to be regularised through formal government order.

Second, the authority of the District Councils meant district-level officers' first responsibility was to the President of the District Council. Depending on the demands made by the district political executive, officers were not automatically available to the head of department while he was on tour. It was therefore harder for departmental heads to evaluate and supervise district-level officers under a decentralised system. However, with a primary responsibility to the district, officers had more time available for the beneficiaries of development schemes, such that "farmers were in no way disadvantaged" by this change in officers' hierarchy of responsibility.

Third, the authority over rural development planning and implementation extended to the District Council under the 1987 system was uncomfortable for some technical officers. Older officers in particular felt trapped in a politically-charged work environment where their opinion on technical issues was not given adequate respect by elected representatives, the (generalist) chief secretary or other young IAS officers.

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

Although the District Council brought officers from different departments into close contact with one another and the political executive, this increased interaction did not necessarily result in smooth relations between officers or between officers and representatives.

Sometimes a lack of cooperation at the district-level reflected attitudes at the state-level. The state-level engineering and education departments resisted the devolution of

powers to the District Councils, and District Council Presidents accused the engineering department of refusing properly to accord technical sanction to building works. Similarly, there was a lack of coordination and cooperation between the departments of education and engineering at the district-level over the construction and maintenance of school buildings.

Official value systems anticipated poor relations between officers and a local political executive that may in itself have created a tense foundation for their interaction. Groups C and D officers resisted the full-scale transfer of authority over them from the departmental “main-stream” to the District Councils on the grounds they would be unnecessarily harassed by district elected representatives. Officers took some time to “subordinate” themselves to elected representatives who were generally less educated than officers, and had a “different way of talking” from that to which officers were accustomed which was frequently perceived as “arrogant”.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model(1):

With decentralisation in Karnataka Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats preferences requires several modifications fully to reflect the experiences of state-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency.

The state-level head of animal husbandry observed the following additional positive work functions during 1987 to '91:

Functions

(positive)

High level of grass-roots/public visibility

The proximity of the political executive and constituents of the District Council to district-level officers improved the speed and accuracy of their work. The constant local-level supervision of officers ensured they responded immediately to local representatives' enquiries about programme progress or the management of funds, and were less “lethargic” in their work than they had been before decentralisation.

More appropriate spending

Under a decentralised system rural development funds were allocated with more reference to local needs than to departments' comparative influence at the state-level. The smaller animal husbandry department had been unable to impress upon the state government as local government institutions did its need for new funds. However, as soon as local government institutions were established there was an immediate demand for more primary veterinary centres. This interest was reflected in a (small) shift in the state budget from a traditional emphasis on housing, irrigation, public health engineering (drinking water) and other engineering schemes to increased funds for the animal husbandry department.

Atmosphere

The state-level head of a sub-type 4 delivery agency referred to the following aspects of decentralisation affecting officers' work atmosphere over 1987-91:

(positive)

Administratively stable

The administrative authority of the District Council enabled many problems between departments to be solved at the district level. The politico-administrative structure of the District Council was particularly conducive to settling inter-departmental disputes, combining the administrative skill and authority of the chief secretary with the political authority of the District Council standing committees which he chaired.

(negative)

Politically unstable

The 1987 system vested in the District Councils the authority to transfer officers within a district. However, state government Ministers and members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) frequently exerted pressure on the directors and divisional heads of departments to influence officers' transfers to maintain power and status in the districts, which was severely threatened by local elected representatives. The competition between state- and district-level political entities diluted the impact of decentralisation by reintroducing the state as a political arena of significance to local areas. This extension of local politics to the state level reduced both field officers' "fear" of local representatives

and, more generally, local people's confidence in the sincerity with which the state had undertaken to decentralise political power.

Administratively unstable

Similarly the decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation introduced in 1987 emphasised the devolution of functions and responsibilities, but did not provide a formal structure to ensure the continued and essential cooperation between state- and district-level officers. The efficiency with which a department coordinated the knowledge and skills available to the state and district depended to a very great extent on the informal, personal relationship between officers at the two levels.

Location

State-level heads observed an additional positive element of officers' work conditions about location:

(positive)

Favourable shift in political contacts

Decentralisation provided district-level officers with a more convenient forum in which to voice their concerns. The authority of the District Council combined with the representatives' knowledge of local conditions gave district-level officers confidence their suggestions would be quickly attended to, and improve the efficiency of their work. If representatives agreed to improve essential building and infrastructural facilities highlighted by officers, the District Council could ensure these needs were addressed much more rapidly than would the state government, and so improve officers' ability to provide efficient and effective technical advice.

II: District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency

Functions

District-level heads of sub-type 4 delivery agency observed several positive and negative changes in officers' work functions during 1987-91:

(positive)

PV3 Broad scope of concerns

The range of functions and extent of authority over rural development planning and implementation transferred to the District Councils permitted an integrated approach to district development. The District Council had the power to involve district officers from a range of departments in the implementation of any scheme, with two major implications. First, it increased the man-power available to implement schemes with a particularly wide target area, such as the national small savings scheme, family planning and education programmes. Second, a greater proportion of the community could be accessed and drawn in to participate in a scheme, through networks established by respective departments amongst different population groups in the course of implementing their projects, such as farmers, animal owners, and mothers.

The coordinated approach to district development encouraged by a District Council with significant powers had a positive impact on officers' work experience. First, officers became familiar with the activities of a number of departments. Second, District Councils could gain a bonus "in name and money" from the state and central governments for meeting national and state programme targets, and district officers appreciated the kudos gained for their department and/or as individuals. Third, some District Councils recognised officers' increased responsibilities by sanctioning an assistant for all intermediate (taluka) level veterinary dispensaries.

PV4 Developmental rhythm

Decentralisation improved the implementation of schemes by combining a degree of authority over the allocation of funds with local supervision of rural development. By allowing District Councils to shift up to ten per cent of funds from one sector to another,

rural development was carried out in an environment more responsive and appropriate to the variations in local conditions that determine the effective implementation of development schemes as much as their initial design.

PV5 High level of managerial discretion

The decentralised system introduced in 1987 transferred full administrative authority over Groups C and D officers to the District Councils. This administrative freedom from Bangalore permitted the more efficient allocation of staff within the district, according to local conditions.

(negative)

NV6 High level of grass-roots/public visibility

However, the administrative authority of the District Council and proximity of its elected representatives put considerable pressure on some officers. Many officers worked extremely long hours. This was partly in response to the demands of local communities who highlighted a significant number of urgent needs, particularly in the poorer, “backward” districts that had for decades received less attention from the state government. But officers also worked long(er) hours because of the proximity of elected bosses who “only create problems if they see an officer is not working”.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency reported the following positive and negative aspects of work atmosphere:

(positive)

PV9 Cooperative work patterns

The District Council was an effective institution through which to coordinate the (horizontal) interaction of officers and local communities, and the (vertical) interaction of the state- and district-levels.

First, the District Council was a convenient level at which to bring together and solve problems between animal husbandry officers and farmers. Similarly, the district

head of department and the District Council could frequently solve field officers' problems without recourse to the state government because "the District Council *was* government".

Second, the administrative authority of the District Council over district-level officers inclined state-level heads of department to come to the district every three months or so for meetings with their officers, rather than calling district officers to Bangalore every month. State-level heads of department were also more likely to address technical rather than administrative aspects of departmental operation. As a result of decentralisation, state-level heads of department were relieved of many administrative responsibilities and had more time for, and became more creative in, dealing with requests from their officers in the districts. Schemes requiring state-level sanction were settled well in advance of, rather than after, project dead-lines. Questions sent from officers in the districts to heads of department in Bangalore were replied to immediately. State-level heads of department undertook technical inspections and reviewed officers' work at greater leisure and more effectively.

Third, each state government Minister responsible for a district used the District Council to ascertain relevant issues pending with the state government, and his influence with the state government provided the District Council with a route to take them up.

(negative)

NV9 Work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

However, the atmosphere of the District Council was unfavourably affected by departments' uneven commitment to devolving functions to local government institutions. Some officers resented the departments of horticulture and forestry for their lack of commitment to decentralisation. Many officers found the supervision of the District Council to be an effective control over the (mis)use of departments' resources. Departments who resisted decentralisation therefore limited the impact of District Councils' ability to monitor resources and improve their efficient use. Officers from uncooperative departments were described as lazy and/or corrupt and therefore unwilling to subject themselves to local scrutiny.

Location

Officers referred to the following positive implication of location on officers' work conditions during the 1987-91 period of decentralisation:

(positive)

PV11 Proximate to political power centres

Decentralisation established District Councils, at a more immediate and convenient level, with a political executive empowered to resolve problems that affected district officers' daily routines. Decentralising control over district-level administrative and financial decisions to the District Councils improved the efficiency with which a department could deliver services by making the rural development process more responsive to the needs of implementing officers. Officers' long-standing complaints about the inflexibility of their tour schedules and reimbursement for expenses incurred were settled by the District Council.

To receive any reimbursement for essential tours to review project implementation throughout the district, officers had been awarded a travel allowance (TA) on the fixed and meagre basis of Rs. 2.50 (about 5 pence) for each of ten days touring per month, irrespective of the need for tours and according to a diary kept by each officer as "proof" that he had indeed been on tour for ten days each month. However, because of the complexity and inflexibility of the TA system officers frequently did not go on tour - to the detriment of those areas that needed assistance - or (as with some health officers whose travelling allowance was a little more) they spent much of their time writing up fictitious diary notes. The District Councils abolished this system, and brought animal husbandry and health officers in line with Government of Karnataka guide-lines whereby officers could collect a travel allowance for however few or many days touring were required.

The efficiency with which departmental resources were used was also improved by the proximity of officers to District Councils with the power to allocate additional funds to projects. First, the District Council sanctioned posts to replace veterinary-institution staff who had been transferred to another district. Second, field officers' requests for essential equipment that had been pending with the state government for some time - even years -

were rapidly addressed by the District Council. Telephones were installed in rural veterinary dispensaries and refrigerators were provided to vaccination programmes that had been operating without the facility to store vaccines at safe temperatures.

Modifications to the Bureau-Shaping Model (2):

District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency referred to several aspects of decentralisation in Karnataka requiring modifications to the bureau-shaping model.

Functions

District-level officers identified the following positive and negative changes in work functions:

(positive)

More appropriate spending

The decentralisation to the district of significant powers and resources gave “ownership” of rural development planning and administration to the local level. Democratic decentralisation inclined local communities and representatives alike to be vigilant observers of the project implementation and the use of resources made available to the district. As a result information about the impact of projects and the misuse of departments’ resources was constantly made available to the district administration and its political executive.

Before decentralisation the local-level allocation of resources was notoriously hard to track from Bangalore, particularly where those resources had a short life-span in department hands. For example, fingerlings (baby fish) provided by the fisheries department or saplings provided by the forestry department were frequently reported stolen, or were “forgotten” by subsequent departmental audits and plan allocations. However under the District Council, resources were accounted for, issued to villagers with an elected representative present, and spot-checks conducted by standing-committee members to ascertain they remained in the hands of the individual or community for whom they were sanctioned.

(negative)

Inappropriate spending

However, despite the substantial gains in keeping track of departments' resources under a decentralised system, corruption continued with the pilfering of funds. In some districts the concern of elected representatives for "self-development" rather than the development of the district was considered significant. However, decentralisation gave such a large number of people access to rural development funds in a very transparent system of planning and implementation, it is not surprising some corruption occurred or that it was visible. But it is similarly unlikely the amounts involved totalled more than they had in a centralised system - and the total available to local areas in a decentralised system were significant.

Atmosphere

District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency observed the following negative aspects of work atmosphere and positive aspects of location brought about by decentralisation:

(negative)

Politically unstable

The success of the decentralised system introduced in 1987 depended greatly on the relationships between the District Council chief secretary, President and Vice-President. If the "character" of local politicians was not "good", local control over rural development was likely to make a minimal contribution to its effective and efficient planning and implementation.

Administratively unstable

The decentralised system established in 1987 led to some confusion about the delimitation of responsibilities between departments. Before decentralisation the "regular" (state) Public Works Department (PWD) had been responsible for the building and

maintenance of veterinary institutions. However, this part of the PWD was not transferred with animal husbandry to the District Council. This confusion was eventually resolved by allocating funds to the engineering wing of the District Council to undertake such work.

Location

(positive)

Provincial location

Decentralising control over rural development planning and implementation to the District Councils made rural development in Karnataka more responsive to local needs. As a result smaller departments that serviced local community priorities, such as animal husbandry, attracted more funds than they had been able to secure from the state government. Before decentralisation in Gulbarga District there were only 65 veterinary institutions including rural veterinary dispensaries. However, from 1988-90 the District Council sanctioned 68 more rural veterinary dispensaries and upgraded 22 rural veterinary dispensaries to veterinary dispensaries by sanctioning a veterinary surgeon and Group D employee for each. Similarly, the authority of the District Council combined with representatives' local knowledge to ensure the more effective location and efficient use of resources. Sheep and Wool Development Scheme sub-centres were relocated by the District Council from areas with little or no sheep to areas where the sheep population merited their location.

Favourable shift in political contacts

The District Council established a convenient and authoritative body through which field officers could resolve problems. Decentralisation provided officers in the field with a more immediate hierarchy of authority in their district heads of department and the District Council. Officers no longer needed to waste valuable time and resources seeking state government efforts on their behalf because "the District Council *was* government".

Conclusion

The observations of (1)state- and (2)district-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency lead to several conclusions about the impact of decentralisation on their respective work preferences:

(1)State-level head of a sub-type 4 delivery agency

Functions

The work of the department was improved by a developmental rhythm (PV4) that followed from the proximity of departmental authority to target populations. The bureau-shaping model of bureaucrats' preferences is therefore modified to reflect a positively valued high level of grass-roots visibility which translated into a better and more immediate match of department resources with local needs - more appropriate spending.

Atmosphere

The state-level head of a sub-type 4 delivery agency observed the administrative hierarchy of the department was interrupted by the demands of local politics (NV8 and NV9) in a decentralised system. The local-level politicisation of rural development was not held to influence greatly or negatively the ability of the department to meet local development needs. The disposition of state-level heads to see the positive and minimise the negative aspects of local participation plays a significant part in determining the extent to which a department gains from decentralisation at the state-level.

The bureau-shaping model is adjusted to reflect the positive value officers attach to administrative stability, which the District Council chief secretary played a significant role in maintaining under a decentralised system. However, state-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency refer also to the political and administrative instability of a decentralised system that did not entirely rid rural development of the improper interests of state-level elected representatives, nor provide a strong, formal structure for the continued interaction of state- and district-level officers.

Location

Finally, the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences requires adjustment to reflect the favourable shift in political contacts identified by the state-level head of a sub-type 4 delivery agency in a decentralised system. The District Council provided officers with a responsive and authoritative body through which to take up urgent departmental needs.

(2) District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency

Functions

District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency positively valued the broad scope of concerns, developmental rhythm and high level of managerial discretion (PV3, PV4 and PV5) of their work functions in a decentralised system of rural development planning and implementation in Karnataka. Officers working in the District Council were responsible for a wide range of departmental functions and had access to officers from a number of departments, which encouraged an integrated approach and more efficient response to district development needs.

However, district-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency negatively valued the high level of public visibility which attended their work in the districts and required their constant response to the enquiries of local elected representatives. Modifications to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences highlight that a high level of public visibility contributed to more appropriate spending under the District Council because local communities were vigilant over the disbursement of "their" funds. But the influence of elected representatives over locally-available rural development funds also contributed to some inappropriate spending where they channelled funds to their personal or immediate circle's advantage.

Atmosphere

The District Council improved the work atmosphere of district-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency in as far as officers from departments sympathetic (or resigned) to

decentralisation used the authority of the District Council to coordinate the horizontal (i.e. district-level integration of official departmental functions with community priorities and local developments) and vertical (i.e. interaction with state-level heads of department) elements of their work. District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency therefore refer to cooperative work patterns (PV9) in the District Council.

However, officers also refer to a District Council work atmosphere characterised by coercion and resistance (NV9). The reticence of some departments to devolve powers to or give technical support to the District Council detracted from the overall impact of decentralisation on improving the allocation and delivery of development resources. Modifications to the bureau-shaping model reflect officers' observations that decentralisation was politically and administratively unstable to the extent its efficient operation depended upon the "character" of local politicians and departments' flexible response to unravelling confused lines of responsibility, as and when they arose.

Location

Decentralisation had a positive impact on officers' work preferences related to location. District-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency were proximate to political power centres (PV11) in a decentralised set-up which gave them access to an authority willing and able quickly to address officers' problems. The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences is finally adjusted to reflect the additional positive impact on district-level heads' work preferences of a provincial location and favourable shift in political contacts since under a decentralised system local elected representatives often supported the acclaimed needs of officers providing essential services to their constituents.

In summary, a notable difference between state- and district-level heads of a sub-type 4 delivery agency is that location is less significant to state-level heads while it plays an important role in the work of district-level heads of department. But the political and administrative stability of a decentralised system were important factors in both groups' work preferences. The bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' preferences is therefore modified to incorporate various work preferences associated with political and

administrative stability.

Part Four

Conclusion

The examination of control and delivery agency officers' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka over the preceding chapters has explored the key elements of their respective work preferences within the parameters of Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model. The analysis has established according to agency type and rank the different ways in which officers identify and assign value to various work preferences, and the additions and modifications to the bureau-shaping model's outline of bureaucrats' work preferences required for it to reflect officers' responses. The concluding chapters which follow integrate the analysis so far undertaken. The comparative advantages and disadvantages of decentralisation to officers' work preferences and rural development generally are assessed, along with the overall modifications to the bureau-shaping model required to make it fully descriptive of decentralisation in India.

The thesis maintains decentralisation is an important means of maximising the limited resources available for rural development in developing countries. Decentralisation can introduce a democratic process to rural development that makes more effective and efficient use of the substantial local knowledge and technical expertise available to rural development initiatives. However, integrating local knowledge with the traditionally centralised bureaucratic structure offering crucial technical and administrative support to rural development planning and implementation is a complex undertaking.

The thesis has set out and explored the elements affecting the effective implementation of a decentralised system of rural development. Part One explored the conditions peculiar to developing countries and the arguments advanced in support of decentralisation, and discussed the processes by which these arguments for decentralisation

have been integrated in approaches to rural development in India and Karnataka. Parts Two and Three applied the bureau-shaping model to bureaucrats' experience of decentralisation in Karnataka from 1987-91 to explore the practical dimension of arguments in support of decentralisation.

Part Four draws the thesis to a close with an overall analysis of the findings. Chapter 12 brings together the broad threads of arguments in support of decentralisation for improved rural development planning and implementation with the detail of bureaucrats' experience of decentralisation in Karnataka, to establish the contribution of decentralisation to rural development. Chapter 13 concludes with two sections. Section one summarises modifications to the bureau-shaping model suggested by the research and draws conclusions about the relationship between bureaucrats and decentralisation in India. Section two presents concluding recommendations for the more effective management of decentralised rural development planning and administration in India on the basis of officers' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka from 1987 to 1991.

Chapter 12

Decentralisation for Development

As outlined in Chapter 2, arguments in support of decentralisation are advanced from the three interrelated perspectives of economics, politics and public administration. The following chapter is divided into three sections exploring the extent to which the decentralised system established in Karnataka from 1987 to '91 improved rural development planning and implementation according to each of these perspectives.

Section One: Economic Arguments for Decentralisation

Chapter 2 established that the economic argument for decentralisation revolves around efficiency: services (and so resources) are effectively allocated to meet local needs when delivered at the level at which they are consumed. In this context the term “efficiency” has three further implications. First, where resources are limited, efficiency also relates to the amount of resources required to implement a new system of rural development planning and implementation. Where rural development activities have been previously devolved to lower levels, democratic decentralisation can be more “efficiently” introduced because support structures already exist at the levels to which additional resources and authority are devolved. However, introducing a revitalised, wider-ranging system of decentralised rural development planning and administration requires the efficient redeployment of the state bureaucracy to reflect the shift in authority over rural development activities from the state government to local elected institutions. But officers from several agencies and ranks observe a disproportionate number of staff remained at the state-level during the 1987 to '91 period.

Second, decentralisation results in a positive political and administrative change in

the way resources are allocated to rural development. There are four main ways in which alternative means of allocating resources in a decentralised system were reflected in efficiency gains during 1987 to '91 in Karnataka. (1)The influence of state-level politicians over rural development expenditure in their constituency was reduced and replaced by that of local politicians. Although local politicians as well as state-level representatives endorse projects and award contracts in favour of client groups in their constituency, shifting authority over rural development to the local political arena translates into improved efficiency in the sense that the transparency and proximity of local government structures requires representatives to be (somewhat) more responsive to a broader range of local priorities.

(2)Decentralisation permitted more equitable spending between districts. The total revenue available was divided by the state according to a formula accounting for the “backwardness” in infrastructure and agriculture, and the population of each district. Again, this funding pattern reduced the state-level influence of MLAs from richer and more powerful areas who had previously gained disproportionate resources for their districts.

(3)Rural development spending within districts was less “subjective” when it was decided by bargaining between local representatives than it was under a centralised administrative structure. Before 1987 some rural development initiatives were implemented by the District Rural Development Authorities (DRDAs) under the district deputy commissioners responsible to the state government. As several senior and junior district-level control agency officers observe, without local elected representatives the District Commissioners lacked sufficient information or inclination to be even-handed in their decisions to allocate development resources. District-level heads of delivery agencies observe decentralisation improved efficiency by speeding up the decision-making and implementation process because decisions were taken at the local level.

(4)The budgets for each sector of responsibility devolved to the District Councils were broadly determined by the state budget. This process ensured each sector had funds to implement essential projects, whether or not these projects were priorities at the local level. However, the District Councils were permitted to transfer up to ten per cent of funds

from one sectoral heading to another, according to local priorities. This flexibility ensured greater efficiency in rural development implementation because projects were more likely to have local support. As a result, state- and district-level heads of delivery agencies note smaller departments such as animal husbandry were able to get more funds from a district-level plan process than they had secured at the state-level, because of local community priorities to implement projects from those sectors.

The third element of efficiency introduced by decentralisation relates to the transparency of a decentralised plan process which reduces corruption. Senior state-level control agency officers maintain corruption was reduced “drastically” under a decentralised system. However, corruption is reduced only as long as local politicians are convinced of the permanence of decentralised institutions. If elected representatives know they will not be held to account for their actions because the electoral process is to be interrupted, there is little to limit corrupt activities. This point is supported by senior state-level control agency officers who observed an increase in corruption towards the end of the first and only term of the District Councils, once it became clear the state government was not going to hold elections for a second term.

However, the economic argument for decentralisation is undermined by several observations on the inefficiency of local rural development planning and implementation. First, efficiency itself that needs the contribution of limited technical and administrative expertise is maximised by positioning the most experienced officers at the top of a decentralised system. In Karnataka efficiency was increased by posting the vast majority of staff to work at the district level. Senior district-level control agency officers note the decentralised system established between 1987 and ‘91 provided for insufficient technical and administrative staff below the district.

Second, the efficiency of decentralisation is reduced by the instability of constant changes in the staff posted to local institutions. The unnecessary transfer of officers is also a political and public administration issue, since higher-level political and administrative actors maintain control over officers by extending favours or punishment to them through their postings, and officers themselves are preoccupied with building good relations with

political and administrative superiors at the state-level (rather than the district- or sub-district level) to win favourable posts. The relationship between senior and more junior officers over postings reduces the impact of local-level accountability because the local-level does not have full authority over an issue of priority to officers - their postings.

Third, the efficiency of rural development in a decentralised system is undermined by the priorities of local elected representatives themselves. Junior district-level control agency officers note local-level politicians have short-time horizons, both in the types of projects they are willing to undertake - usually construction - and of maximising the returns on project spending. A senior state-level control agency officer observed “extensive rather than intensive” development projects were undertaken with priority given to a spread of very visible projects. The short-time horizons characteristic of a decentralised plan process is compounded by a political element: local political pressures to distribute works between constituencies fragmented district development planning and project implementation, and meant scarce resources were thinly spread.

Fourth, local elected institutions are not the efficient mobilisers of local resources higher authorities frequently hope them to be. This point has two parts, both of which have links to the political and public administration dimensions of decentralisation. (1) Junior district-level control agency officers note the state government did not allow District Councils to levy taxes, perhaps for fear of their eventually competing for the state’s tax base. (2) As will be discussed below, local politicians are unwilling to ask voters to contribute labour or volunteer funds (as opposed to taxes, which local institutions were not empowered to levy) to establish the services local politicians were elected to provide.

Fifth, the efficiency with which rural development planning and implementation were carried out by local institutions in Karnataka was undermined by the limited financial discipline that could be exerted over the District Councils. According to a senior state-level control agency officer, no-one could be held responsible for District Council mismanagement since elected representatives to whom district officers were responsible were “non-official” and therefore not legally responsible for “mistakes of the system”. From the perspective of senior state-level control and delivery agency officers, the

propensity of the District Councils to appoint teachers beyond the limits set by the state government, albeit in response to local demand, constituted a lasting liability for the state government which must now honour their appointment, at the expense of other projects it may consider a priority.

Finally, senior state-level delivery agency officers note local representatives wanted projects approved and implemented too quickly, and the selection, location and quality of implementation of rural development projects suffered. District-level officers do not share this view, indicating it may simply signal the extent to which decentralisation shifted control over rural development planning and implementation from senior state-level officers, and was resented by them.

Section Two: Political Arguments for Decentralisation

Chapter 2 established the political argument for decentralisation has three threads. First, local-level institutions can integrate disparate communities in “alien” state/provincial or federal political boundaries, by providing political structures congruent with an area with which they identify. Second, establishing local-level institutions encourages “political education”. This political education manifests itself in popular participation in rural development, both through local contributions to rural development and through the accountability required of local elected representatives to their constituents. Third, decentralisation is proposed by political parties to gain popular support and as a means to establish grass-roots party political networks.

The first thread of a political argument for decentralisation is supported by the administrative and political authority vested in the District Councils under the decentralised system introduced in Karnataka in 1987. The District Councils had very senior officers appointed to them as chief secretaries - senior even to the district deputy commissioner who remained responsible to the state government and who had, since British rule, been the symbol of government authority in the districts. This shift alerted local communities, elected representatives and officers alike to the broader political significance of local elected institutions. The powers vested in the chief secretary and, above him, the elected President

of the District Councils gave the District Councils significant leverage in their interaction with the state government, integrating (relatively) autonomous rural constituencies in a wider political system.

The second thread of a political argument for decentralisation maintains decentralisation encourages “political education”. This thread has three parts. The first is that decentralisation enables the development of political skills and awareness at the local level. This contention is supported by Karnataka’s experience of decentralisation from 1987 to ‘91. Senior state-level control agency officers, junior district-level control agency officers and district-level heads of delivery agencies all observe decentralisation gave local elected representatives leadership experience and significantly increased popular awareness of political and administrative procedures. However, district-level heads of delivery agencies maintain the low levels of education in many districts hindered effective planning through community involvement.

The second part of the argument that decentralisation encourages political education revolves around the conviction community participation in rural development planning and implementation extends to encourage local contributions in cash or kind to development initiatives. The third is that decentralisation encourages the accountability of local elected representatives to their constituents. However, evidence in support of these these last two contentions is hard to find in an analysis of Karnataka’s experience of decentralisation.

Senior and junior district-level heads of control agencies observe local institutions did not mobilise local contributions to rural development initiatives. Local communities and their elected representatives viewed the resources made available to local elected institutions as a given and their due from the state and central governments, and decentralisation proved a very poor catalyst for more intensive local development through community contributions. Cost-effective opportunities to exploit locally-available resources using government funds, such as the repair of existing water-storage tanks, were rarely explored in a decentralised system. The capacity of local representatives to mobilise community efforts for rural development is limited by political considerations that make requesting local labour for project maintenance or implementation unattractive. However,

local politicians may be further limited in their capacity to mobilise local resources by their lack of political credibility in the eyes of local communities. This credibility takes time to establish, and is not helped by the actions of elected representatives described next.

All levels of control agency officer observe that after one or two attempts the six-monthly village meetings (gram sabhas) to discuss local problems and needs were rarely convened once elected representatives realised they could not provide for all the demands voiced. This reduced the accountability of elected to electorate, which senior district-level officers observe was further reduced because there was no provision to hold representatives accountable for deviating from state government guide-lines on the allocation of funds, distribution of loans or project implementation. Under a decentralised system Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/STs) were rarely able to gain access to the proportion of funds legally allocated to them. In many districts local elected representatives were more occupied with officers' transfers than development issues.

The third thread of a political argument for decentralisation proposes decentralisation allows higher-level political structures to gain political kudos and develop grass-roots networks of party political support. The evidence for this from Karnataka is two-fold. First, senior state-level control agency officers observe decentralisation gave the state government Janata Dal party a politically practical opportunity to build a network of support below the state. However, a senior district-level control agency officers observes District Councils controlled by opposition parties experienced "harassment" from the state government. Further, senior state-level control agency officers maintain the Congress-controlled central government used local government institutions to by-pass the Janata Dal state government and channel development funds directly to the districts.

Second, a senior district-level control agency officer maintains the decentralising initiative in Karnataka was not "wedded to and interwoven with the [government] system" and depended upon the support of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Rural Development. This is supported by the observation of senior state-level control agency officers that the success of decentralisation in Karnataka depended on the chief political officer at the state-level; the relationship between the District Council chief secretary and the

President and Vice-President; and on the particular officers posted to a district at any given time. Apart from the Chief Minister and the Minister for Rural Development, the Cabinet and members of the state legislative assembly (MLAs) did not support decentralisation and took the first opportunity to move against it.

State-level political resistance to ceding power to the local level is a reaction to the popularity of decentralisation, and so supports the contention decentralisation can gain higher-level actors political kudos. However, the short-time frames that characterised many of the actions of local elected politicians are also found at the state level. Because the popularity of decentralisation threatened state-level politicians with a declined significance, it was not built upon to party-political advantage, and the system was dismantled.

Section Three: Public Administration Arguments for Decentralisation

The public administration argument for decentralisation comprises four elements. First, the rural development planning and implementation processes are made accountable to target communities. Second, the information available to technical and administrative officers is greatly increased by democratic decentralisation. Third, a decentralised system ensures the needs of the rural poor are heard and met by the rural development system established to do so. Fourth, decentralisation enables the variety of technical and administrative contributions to rural development to be coordinated for greater impact and efficiency. As noted in Chapter 2, the public administration argument for decentralisation has an economic and political flavour revolving around the greater efficiency to be gained by higher authorities in extending control over rural development planning and implementation to local communities.

The first two parts of a public administration argument for decentralisation are closely linked. Senior state-level control agency officers observe decentralisation made district officers immediately accountable for their work. Local government institutions offered better project supervision in the field and therefore improved state-level assessment of rural development initiatives. State-level heads of delivery agencies note schemes implemented at the district level could be quickly adjusted in response to locally-available

information, without waiting for higher-level approval. In turn, the administrative work of heads of department was reduced allowing them to concentrate on developing departmental policy and technology. District-level heads of delivery agencies also felt local representatives effectively monitored departments' resources and project implementation and contributed to improved intradepartmental evaluation, and their information networks quickly alerted officers to epidemics and natural disasters.

Senior and junior district-level control agency officers observe democratic decentralisation improved information flows and made development administration more transparent than when district administration had been under the deputy commissioner. Local scrutiny resulted in a "remarkable increase" in teachers' (and so students') attendance during the 1987 to '91 period and improved scheme implementation. State-level heads of delivery agencies noticed rural areas gained from an immediate delegation of power to district officers who were able to respond on their own initiative to local developments, and worked harder because their "masters" were very immediate.

However, the third part of a public administration argument for decentralisation that the rural development planning and implementation processes are made accessible and responsive to the needs of the poor is not upheld by an analysis of the system in place in Karnataka from 1987 to '91. Local elected institutions were dominated numerically and procedurally by local elites. The increased information on local needs made available to officers by decentralisation was accordingly predominantly oriented towards these elite groups. But even where officers received information as to the urgent needs of poorer groups, these were only met where officers had (very occasional) success in persuading local elected representatives to support them. Even a legal requirement that twenty per cent of district rural development funds be allocated to projects for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) groups was insufficient to ensure that proportion of funds was so allocated by the District Councils.

The fourth part of a public administration argument for decentralisation highlights the need to coordinate various rural development initiatives for maximum efficiency and impact. This coordination refers to both a horizontal and a vertical interaction of officers at

both the state and district levels. Senior state-level control agency officers note local government institutions were “extremely vocal bodies” which focused attention on immediate local requirements, whereas the state and central governments tend to look towards overall growth, and ensured heads of department interacted with the finance department at the state-level to obtain District Council funds for departmental sector projects on time.

According to state-level heads of delivery agencies, the District Council put department heads in contact with local representatives and officers from other departments to facilitate multi-sectoral development. And under the chairmanship of the chief secretary the District Council solved inter-departmental problems without need to refer them to the state government. Similar to observations in section two, senior district-level control agency officers found the seniority of officers appointed as chief secretaries to the District Councils, combined with the nomenclature of their office, conveyed to the state-level the importance of the District Council which helped district-level officers and elected representatives when they came together to petition the state on behalf of their district.

However, junior district-level control agency officers maintain too much authority was concentrated in the chief secretary, wasting the capacity of other district-level officers to carry out administrative tasks. In turn, state-level heads of delivery agencies suggest decentralised rural development planning and implementation would be improved if District Council chief secretaries were appointed from the specialist ranks of the state development departments as well as from the generalist Indian Administrative Service (IAS). And in order to ensure and enhance the accountability of district officers to the District Councils, officers should be deputed to them for fixed three- or five-year terms.

At the district-level, district-level heads of delivery agencies found decentralisation brought together officers from different departments frequently linked in their development activities. The decentralisation of rural development planning and implementation to the District Councils provided a forum for greater contact and coordination between departments and strengthened the hierarchy of administrative responsibility below the district. According to senior district-level control agency officers, the progress of rural

development was helped by the authority of the District Council chief secretary who could appoint district officers from any department to help meet another department's project dead-line. Senior state-level control agency officers found the District Council provided an arena for greater dialogue between departments over the allocation of funds. As noted above in section one, smaller departments gained from the opportunity to apply to the District Council for proportionately higher budgets than they had been able to at the state-level.

However, the public administration argument that decentralisation better coordinates the horizontal and vertical interaction of officers at the district and state levels is undermined by several observations. (1) Senior district-level control agency officers felt decentralisation removed a "cohesive civil authority" previously inherent in the office of the district deputy commissioner. (2) Senior district-level control agency officers and district-level heads of delivery agencies note decentralisation resulted in too many District Council meetings and intensified local supervision of officers. Junior district-level control agency officers claim under a decentralised system there was "no room" for disagreements between officers and representatives. (3) State-level heads of departments continued to call meetings with their district officers in Bangalore, and were frequently in conflict with District Council Presidents over their tour schedules and respective administrative powers.

Some senior state-level control agency officers note many of their peers were insensitive to deputed officers' concerns and felt there was poor coordination between state- and district-level officers. However, decentralisation eroded the hierarchy of the state bureaucracy's authority, and the relationship between the regulatory and the developmental apparatus of the government was not sufficiently well-defined. Heads of department had a purely advisory role and had no direct control over district officers or the distribution and allocation of funds. Senior district-level control agency officers confirm some officers did not maintain a clear distinction between their responsibility to the District Council for day-to-day matters and technical heads for technical guidance, which led to friction over lines of authority. Few districts made a conscious effort to involve heads of department in a creative relationship with the District Council.

Finally, senior state-level control agency officers note establishing local government institutions at the lowest (mandal) level wasted much technical and administrative strength that had been built up at the intermediate (taluk) level from the 1950s, and were difficult to supply with sufficient and accountable administrative support from the district. District-level heads of delivery agencies maintain the decentralised system established in Karnataka provided for insufficient communication between officers working at the district and below.

Conclusion

The economic, political and public administration arguments for decentralisation cannot be definitively separated from one another. The efficiency value of a more transparent system of rural development planning and administration which reduces corruption has a political - and public administration - dimension of increasing the system's accountability to the rural development consumer. Similarly, the efficiency with which local institutions meet local needs is enhanced by permitting the transfer of funds between sectoral headings - in response to political pressure exerted by local communities. The public administration argument for decentralisation that supports appointing a (senior) officer with coordinating functions to decentralised institutions improves efficiency by facilitating the work of district officers. However, it also has the political significance of alerting local communities and higher levels of government to the role of the local level as the basic unit of government. The "empowerment" of the local level extends to a conjoint economic/political/public administration dimension of decentralisation whereby local politicians and district officers can together increase the impact of rural development initiatives through a coordinated and therefore efficient approach to inducing the state government to adjust and respond to local problems.

However, the negative as well as the positive elements of one of the three types of argument advanced in support of decentralisation impact one or both of the others. The public administration argument that decentralisation improves the coordination and operation of various bureaucratic elements requires some differentiation between the horizontal - which decentralisation improves - and the vertical - which it sometimes does

not, especially in the early or first phase of decentralising initiatives.

For example, state- and district-level heads of delivery agencies report decentralisation enabled field-level technical and administrative problems that had been pending for years with the state government to be quickly settled by the District Council. However, senior district-level control agency officers report state government circulars frequently contradicted the provisions of the 1983 Act establishing local government and some departments transferred officers when it was within the District Council's jurisdiction to do so, putting District Council chief secretaries in a difficult position.

Similarly, state-level heads of delivery agencies state senior officers in the state government could not exercise adequate control over their officers deputed to the districts. District Council representatives were uncooperative in making district department officers available to meet heads on their tours of the district and wanted projects approved and implemented too quickly, to the detriment of project quality. And district-level heads of delivery agencies observe officers were insufficiently equipped for the planning, accounting and management demands made of them and found it difficult to access from the district the skills and knowledge of senior officers in Bangalore. However, district-level heads of delivery agencies appreciate projects were more quickly approved by the District Council than by heads of department, and junior district-level control agency officers report the District Council dove-tailed development initiatives more effectively than could individual departments.

Nonetheless, the economic, political and public administration perspectives from which arguments for decentralisation are advanced can be distilled to a common theme that decentralisation enhances accountability. In the context of government generally and a decentralised system of rural development planning and administration in particular, accountability has five dimensions. (1) Elected to electorate and (2) electorate to elected: government with elected representatives is meaningless and soon loses authority where representatives do not seek or respond to constituents' problems, and where constituents do not actively seek to lodge their demands or complaints with political representatives. However, the political argument that decentralisation encourages political education and

gives political kudos to the higher authorities that carry it through is undermined by the fact there are no examples of grass-roots protest where a decentralised system is dismantled from on high.

(3)Bureaucrat to elected and (4)elected to bureaucrat: district-level heads of delivery agencies observe the decentralised system in Karnataka was too dependent on the relationship between the chief secretary and the District Council President and Vice-President. However, junior district-level control agency officers maintain local representatives referred to officers' expertise, in contrast to the relationship between elected representatives and officers at the state-level where elected representatives are less inclined to refer to seek officers' opinions. And district-level heads of delivery agencies observe both local and state-level political interference over officers' transfers.

(5)Bureaucrat to bureaucrat: some departments successfully resisted integration with the District Councils causing difficulties and resentment in other departments. And although district-level heads of department had more authority over their department's work in a decentralised system, district-level heads of delivery agencies and junior district-level control agency officers maintain excessive authority was concentrated in the chief secretary, constituting a "centralised approach to a decentralised system".

Under the 1983 Act in Karnataka the delegation of authority between the chief secretary of the District Council and other district-level officers was left substantially to the discretion of the chief secretary, and contributed to the overall autonomy and flexibility of the District Councils to meet local demands for rural development. However, the distribution of authority within a decentralised system is defined by the political and administrative hierarchies - together and in isolation - that establish and are established by decentralisation.

In Karnataka a state government whose administration is controlled by senior (generalist) Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers established District Councils with chief secretaries appointed exclusively from IAS ranks. But in as far as the position of District Council chief secretary was a linchpin of the decentralised system, the state

government established in theory and practice the sincerity with which it decentralised authority to the districts by appointing experienced IAS officers as District Council chief secretaries, senior to the deputy commissioners who had previously exerted significant power in the districts.

The distribution of authority over rural development planning and implementation to different levels of government ultimately depends upon higher-level political support for decentralisation. Only where higher-level political support for decentralisation is lacking or fades can a decentralised system be substantially undermined by bureaucratic resistance to it. Indeed, fading political support for decentralisation reduces the resources made available to local institutions which may itself have a knock-on effect on bureaucrats' - and popular - support for decentralisation.

Bringing together the key elements of arguments in support of decentralisation with the detail of bureaucrats' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka highlights several ways in which theory is qualified by practice. The decentralised system in place from 1987 to '91 was not an example of "full" decentralisation because local institutions did not have their own financial base, nor did they appoint and control fully their own bureaucrats. Local elected institutions also did not fully reflect the needs of their constituencies in order of greatest priority in that the poorest were least well represented. In short, decentralised institutions did not reflect a sense of community identity and citizens therefore developed no commitment to them.

Chapter 13

Recommendations and Conclusions

The thesis applied Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model to an examination of decentralisation in Karnataka to extract insights into the system in operation from 1987-91. This chapter presents two parts to the conclusion of that examination. The first half of the chapter presents elaborations to the bureau-shaping model suggested by the research, followed by a test of the thesis-hypothesis on the basis of officers' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka. The second half presents recommendations for the more effective management of decentralised rural development planning and administration in India.

I Modifications to the Bureau-shaping Model

The broad parameters of the bureau-shaping model proved a useful tool for the analysis of decentralisation in Karnataka. However, on the basis of the analysis presented certain elaborations and modifications to the bureau-shaping model are required for it better to describe bureaucracy and decentralised planning and administration in India. Three main structural elaborations to the bureau-shaping model emerge from an analysis of decentralisation in Karnataka. First, the thesis found the range of agency types proposed by Dunleavy requires adjustment. Two agency types were involved in and affected by changes to the system of rural-development planning and administration in Karnataka: control and delivery.

Second, the control agency category was found to consist of one large structure

encompassing all state- and district-level administrative officers, while there were many distinct and separate delivery agencies. Third, within the parameters of the bureau-shaping model, the thesis hypothesises delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation are unrelated to changes in their agency's programme budget. However, these changes varied greatly between agencies. A balanced analysis of the bureau-shaping model applied to decentralisation in Karnataka therefore required the work preferences of delivery agencies' officers were explored in categories determined by the average real percentage change in their agency's programme budget over the 1987 to '91 period. And the research revealed the work preferences of delivery agency officers were more fully explained when grouped according to the average real percentage change in their agency's programme budget. The thesis-hypothesis is tested in the context of these elaborations .

The thesis hypothesises that if the distinction drawn between agency types and ranks of officer under the bureau-shaping model holds, delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be (1)unrelated to changes in their agencies' programme budgets; (2)closely correlated with rank, with senior (state-level) officers greatly in favour and lower (district-level) officers averse; and (3)similar to those of control agency officers of similar rank, since delivery agencies' tasks are hived-off to sub-units of government, leaving at the state level a structure more closely approximating that of a control agency.

The thesis-hypothesis is assessed below in three sections corresponding to the elements of the hypothesis presented above. Two sets of appendices are provided (1:1-1:11 and 2:1-2:11), which reproduce on transparencies bureaucrats' preferred work conditions on the basis of officers' experiences of decentralisation in Karnataka from 1987-91, within the respective parameters of (1)Dunleavy's outline of bureaucrats' preferences and (2)the additional modifications to that outline extracted by the research. The group considered by each appendix is marked with an asterisk. The reader may find it helpful to provide himself with a graphic representation and comparison of the conclusions drawn by examining in isolation and superimposing upon one another relevant combinations of transparencies within each of the two sets of appendices.

Section One of the Thesis-hypothesis:

Delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be unrelated to changes in their agencies' programme budgets

Section one of the thesis-hypothesis states delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be unrelated to changes in their agencies' programme budgets. This section of the hypothesis therefore depends upon there being no correlation between a change in agencies' real programme budgets and officers' attitudes to decentralisation.

The political and administrative stability of officers' work atmosphere was universally important to officers from all four delivery agency sub-types, as were spending patterns: officers from delivery agency sub-types 3 (DA3) and 4 (DA4) observed both positive and negative spending; DA1 officers referred only to more appropriate spending; and DA2 officers referred only to inappropriate spending. This trend implies an inverse relationship between increases in programme budget and agency officers' concern about how money was spent.

The proposed relationship between increases in programme budget and agency officers' concern over how money was spent is supported by the fact that DA 3 and DA 4 officers, whose agencies' programme budget increased most substantially over the 1987-91, in large part because of the pressure from local representatives to meet community priorities of education, health and animal husbandry, refer to positive work conditions linked to proximity to political power centres and a favourable shift in political contacts. Officers from the two delivery agency sub-types whose activities were not amongst local communities' immediate priorities, and whose average programme budgets did not increase over the period did not report a similar favourable shift in political contacts with decentralisation - indeed, DA1 officers made no mention of work conditions based on location, and agriculture (DA2) officers referred only to the positive aspect of a provincial location which best suited a department whose activities revolve around rural local schemes.

DA3 officers were the only group to refer to the negative work aspect of a high level of managerial discretion: with change, sub-type 3 delivery agencies (education and health) gained substantial numbers of staff from the increase in their programme budgets over 1987-91, but had limited influence over their postings which were usually determined by political “interference” - local representatives’ preferences for individual teachers and health field workers - and were bound more frequently to affect staff-intensive agencies.

Finally, and unrelated to agencies’ budget change, officers from the larger delivery agencies made reference to an extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel that positively affected their work atmosphere. Local representatives provided useful information to help agencies monitor field officers, which was particularly appreciated at the state level, but was less significant for the comparatively small department of animal husbandry.

On the basis of these findings, it is concluded that section one of the thesis-hypothesis that delivery agency officers’ attitudes to decentralisation should be unrelated to changes in their agencies’ programme budgets does not hold. A reformulated section one hypothesis would read: delivery agency officers’ attitudes to decentralisation should be related to changes in their agencies’ programme budgets.

Section Two of the Thesis-hypothesis:

Delivery agency officers’ attitudes to decentralisation should be closely correlated with rank, with senior (state-level) officers greatly in favour and lower (district-level) officers averse

Section two of the thesis-hypothesis proposes delivery agency officers’ attitudes to decentralisation should be closely correlated with rank, with senior (state-level) officers greatly in favour and lower (district-level) officers averse.

Indeed, different correlations between the positive and negative implications of

decentralisation to work preferences is found between state- and district-level officers. The positive work functions identified by state-level heads of delivery agencies broadly overlap with those of district-level heads. However, district-level heads refer to more negative work functions during 1987-91, such as a repetitive rhythm, routine work and a high level of public visibility, only one of which - a high level of public visibility - was among the two negative functions referred to by state-level delivery agency officers.

A further significant difference between ranks of delivery agency officer is found in district-level officers' concern that there was an ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility for decisions taken under panchayati raj and a high level of managerial discretion, both of which are related to their experiences of deputation to local elected institutions and a new authority structure. State-level heads of delivery agencies have reservations about the broad scope of concerns for which district-level officers were responsible. Both of these observations suggest elements of Indian bureaucrats' preferred work conditions that make them reticent across the ranks to cede functions to sub-central units of government.

In work atmosphere there is significant overlap in the values state- and district-level officers' place on their experience of decentralisation. Overall, however, the responses of state-level heads of delivery agencies reflect an overriding conviction that work atmosphere was negatively affected by decentralisation, particularly an extended hierarchy (reported by heads from all four delivery agency sub-types) and coercive work patterns (three out of four). District-level heads of delivery agencies also refer to the negative implications of an extended hierarchy (two out of four agency sub-types) and coercive work patterns (three out of four).

However, these negative work conditions are balanced by unanimous reference to elements of decentralisation establishing cooperative work patterns. This apparent contradiction can be explained by bureaucrats' negative opinion of politicians in general against their broadly positive disposition to fellow officers. State-level officers, used to working in the politically-charged environment of the state government in constant proximity to but, to a greater extent than district-level officers, within a hierarchy separate

from politicians, perceive interaction with local politicians to constitute an extended hierarchy and to contribute to work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance. However, decentralisation also fostered cooperative work patterns at the district, through the increased interaction of district-level officers from different departments, which working in close proximity with one another under the District Council encouraged. State-level officers do not refer to location at all, while district-level officers observe the positive implications of being close to political power centres.

In conclusion, section two of the thesis-hypothesis is correct to anticipate different values dominant in the work preferences reported by state- versus district-level delivery agency officers. However, the relationship is more one of degree between less negative (state-level officers) and more negative (district-level officers). A most notable aspect of these comparative responses is that the two groups have very different conceptions of the effect on work conditions of increased contact with politicians: negatively valued by state-level heads and more positively valued by district-level heads.

So section two of the thesis-hypothesis that delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be closely correlated with rank, with senior (state-level) officers greatly in favour and lower (district-level) officers averse does not hold. A reformulated thesis-hypothesis would read: delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be correlated with rank, with senior (state-level) officers averse and lower (district-level) officers more averse to decentralisation.

Section Three of the Thesis-hypothesis:

Delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be similar to those of control agency officers of similar rank

The third proposition of the thesis-hypothesis is that delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be similar to those of control agency officers at similar levels of government. However, the findings presented here do not support this

contention.

Decentralisation had a different effect on the work preferences of state-level control agency officers as against those of state-level delivery agency officers: delivery agency officers refer to far fewer negative work functions than did control agency officers, who refer to all but one (routine work). Control agency officers also refer to more positive functions, including a high level of managerial discretion, and make no reference at all to location. These findings suggest delivery agency officers are used to and expect to be subordinate to a government structure that favours and is greatly influenced by control agency officers, and provide rural development expertise which is, as several delivery agency officers noted, most reasonably based in rural areas, but requires officers at the state level to interact with and protect the interests of the department in its interaction with politicians and other departments at that level.

Three main differences were observed between district-level control and delivery agency officers' work preferences in decentralisation. First, only control agency officers refer to a positive value placed on a low level of public visibility and to the negative values of work location of being remote from political and high-status contacts. Second, delivery agency officers are uniformly concerned by inappropriate spending and activity and third, by positive aspects of the work atmosphere promoting political and administrative stability, frequently combined in work preferences that favour a hierarchy extended to local representatives who could provide valuable information on department schemes and field officers' work. On the other hand, junior district control agency officers refer to a negatively valued restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel (the chief secretary) with whom they were closely associated in their daily work.

District delivery and control agency officers are similar in their concern for an ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility. However at the state-level only control agency officers express a similar concern. This variation in response perhaps indicates the extent to which state-level heads of delivery agencies were content to release administrative responsibilities to the district, allowing them to concentrate on technical issues affecting their departments, while the delimitation of legal responsibility for decisions is a more

regular work issue for control agency officers who frame and guide the implementation of decisions taken by their political executive.

District-level officers enjoyed individual innovation under the District Council. However, they also said projects should come from the state and be passed to the relevant chief secretary for implementation. This apparent contradiction may be explained by officers being anxious to have their expertise adequately utilised, but only in conjunction with, rather than at the expense of, departmental procedure. That is to say, although the department's rules and guide-lines, and technical supervision by state-level heads of department, limited the freedom of district-level officers, they also provided a means to resist pressure from local elected representatives to execute "political" decisions, with which the district officer was unwilling fully to dispense.

In conclusion, there is no correlation between officers' rank irrespective of agency type and their work preferences affected by decentralisation. Therefore section three of the thesis-hypothesis that delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should be similar to those of control agency officers of similar rank, since delivery agencies' tasks are hived off to sub-units of government, leaving at the state level a structure more closely approximating that of a control agency, does not hold. A reformulated hypothesis would read: delivery agency officers' attitudes to decentralisation should differ from those of control agency officers of similar rank, since hiving off delivery agencies' tasks to sub-units of government does not change the fundamental responsibilities of delivery agency officers to design and supervise the technical aspects of implementing rural development projects.

Summary conclusions

The Krishnaswamy Committee report found considerable "reservations about the scheme of decentralisation" (Government of Karnataka, March 1989:88) amongst legislators, ministers and state government officers. However, political support from the state government was essential to maintaining district bodies as viable units of development administration - with unequivocal political backing, even the most reticent bureaucrats were brought on side. As one former chief secretary commented, "If what bureaucrats thought really mattered, the system would never have come into being because they fought against

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Agriculture	2440.88	2278.74	3053.67	3238.65	1522.26	1698.8
Animal Husbandry	1141.52	1541.17	2119.21	2595.69	1066.05	1234.57
Education	36341.89	41980.39	47645.12	53501	7020.48	8184.18
Engineering	10681.18	11539.51	9668.83	11919.97	9620.82	11293.43
Forestry	1538.9	1149.88	1469.36	1788.56	1589.65	1767.15
Health	10498.09	12885.74	14642.67	16532.53	9509.69	10801.86
Total available to ZPs from all departments	95091.31	99009.5	111530.93	127568.44	67693.62	90833.29
Inflation adjusted:						
Agriculture	2440.88	2155.82	2648.22	2505.53	1036.68	1095.58
Animal Husbandry	1141.52	1458.06	1837.84	2008.12	725.99	796.19
Education	36341.89	39716.55	41319.16	41390.22	4781.04	5278.07
Engineering	10681.18	10917.23	8385.08	9221.7	6551.91	7283.26
Forestry	1538.9	1087.87	1274.27	1383.69	1082.57	1139.66
Health	10498.09	12190.86	12698.53	12790.14	6476.23	6966.25
Total available to ZPs from all departments	95091.31	93670.29	96722.69	98691.35	46100.26	58579.45
Real percentage change in:						
Agriculture		-11.67	8.49	2.65	-57.53	-55.12
Animal Husbandry		27.73	61	75.92	-36.4	-30.25
Education		9.29	13.7	13.89	-86.84	-85.48
Engineering		2.21	-21.5	-13.66	-38.66	-31.81
Forestry		-29.31	-17.2	-10.09	-29.65	-25.94
Health		16.12	20.96	21.83	-38.31	-33.64
Total available to ZPs from all departments		-14.94	1.72	3.79	-51.52	-38.4

(compiled from Government of Karnataka Budget Allotment for ZPs)

Table 7: ZP Budgets, 1987-91

it tooth and nail". Bureaucrats anticipated a loss of power with the decentralisation of development administration that (Janata Dal) MLAs appreciated only after they had legislated for panchayati raj institutions: "political will carried [PR] through and political will removed it - bureaucrats cannot be given responsibility for bringing it or taking it".

In 1990 the Congress party was elected to replace the Janata Dal state government. District coordination with the state disintegrated and several District Councils did not function as well as they had (interview with a district-level head of engineering). From the following financial year (1991-92) a sharp decrease in funds allocated to district-level institutions is observed (Table 7), supporting the claim that state-level political forces most significantly influenced the progress of decentralisation.

Officers drew parallels between the state and centre governments on the one hand and district bodies on the other, claiming "bureaucrats want to interact with and advise politicians" - if only because, in the final analysis, politicians are the source of bureaucrats' authority. This relationship between politicians and bureaucrats constitutes a "creative tension" which helps ensure the efficient integration of technical and administrative expertise with political expediency. If politicians and civil servants can cooperate at the state and centre, officers maintain that, given the pressures of population that are rapidly making the district a unit of government equal in size to some states several decades ago, officers and representatives should be able to interact to make the district a level of government in itself.

The creative tensions that exist between civil servants and politicians at the centre and state levels help ensure political decisions are implemented efficiently, and are equally important at the local level. During 1987-91 inadequate attention was paid to the changes in decision-making processes required by the financial and legal provisions of decentralisation "which created expectations without streamlining the means of providing for them" (interview with a Secretary of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj).

State-level political support for decentralisation was indispensable to ensuring the transfer of responsibilities to the local level. The particular interest of the Minister of Rural

Development and Panchayati Raj to increase rural water supply was required to ensure the state Public Health Engineering wing transferred its executive engineers to the District Council. However, “pushes and pulls at the [state] political and administrative levels diluted the original concept [of decentralisation] to a substantial extent” (interview with a state-level head of engineering), and the cooperatives, horticulture and minor irrigation and public works departments all took back some or all of the responsibilities originally allocated to the District Council.

Dunleavy’s bureau-shaping model provides useful insights into the process of decentralisation in India and can withstand the modifications and additions suggested by an analysis of decentralisation in Karnataka. All of the work preferences attributed to bureaucrats by the bureau-shaping model outline (see Chapter 1, page 24) were referred to by officers in the course of interviews. However, on the basis of this research three main conclusions are drawn: first, the bureau-shaping model’s application to the Indian context is most limited by a lack of reference to important elements, perhaps peculiar to the India, based on the political environment in which officers work. The Indian case requires the model include bureaucrats’ preferences about *inappropriate spending* and *activity*; *political* and *administrative instability*; and *ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility*, each of which has a political dimension.

Second, the model requires some flexibility to encompass the positive or negative value officers can place on a *broad scope of concerns*, a *high level of public visibility* and *managerial discretion*, a *restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel*, a *provincial location*, and *remoteness from political contacts*, depending on the context in which they arise.

Third, as demonstrated by disproving all three sections of the thesis hypothesis, the model has descriptive rather than predictive powers over the comparative utility to officers of a state- versus a district-centred rural development planning and administration process in India.

II Recommendations for the More Effective Management of Decentralised Rural Development Planning and Administration in India

An objective of the thesis has been to understand the mechanics of the decentralised rural development planning and administration system established in Karnataka from 1987-91, using Dunleavy's bureau-shaping model to structure the analysis. By focussing on bureaucrats' experiences of decentralisation, it has been possible to extract recommendations for the improved management of decentralised rural development planning and administration in India.

Three areas of emphasis emerge from officers' recommendations for the improved management of decentralised rural development planning and administration: (i) the structure of administrative and financial decentralisation; (ii) improving officers' and representatives' skills; and (iii) emphasising relations between a range of groups inside and outside government that play a part in rural development. The effective decentralisation of political and administrative functions requires administrative officers, technical officers, state politicians and local representatives be familiar with the nature and purpose of decentralisation and with the new responsibilities it presents, as well as with one another's roles. Interviews with state- and district-level officers and representatives indicate that the major factors undermining the decentralised planning and administration of rural development were preconceptions and a lack of communication between the four groups, as well as weak links between individuals at critical points in the decision-making and implementing processes.

Improving administrative and financial decentralisation

The Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayat Evaluation Committee set up in 1989 referred to institutions whose operations were "seriously circumscribed by administrative and financial restrictions" (Government of Karnataka, March 1989:93). Similarly, officers emphasised the need for several changes to improve administrative and financial decentralisation, centring on the comparative strength of various levels of government administrative structure and financial independence.

Despite decentralisation a disproportionate number of staff remained at the state-level during 1987-91, and the state administrative structure was not reorganised to remove redundant levels. The divisional administrative unit covering three or four districts was not removed following the recommendations of a government committee, nor was it integrated in the panchayati raj system. The mandal level was severely understaffed, reducing its ability to assess the development needs and resources of the most local level which should have been a key source of information to the District Council in guiding district development. The mandal level also had no “operational linkage” (Government of Karnataka, March 1989:32) with District Council officers and representatives. Because the mandal was such a small unit, it was difficult to maintain systematic contact between individual mandals and the District Council.

In some districts each District Council officer was assigned nodal responsibility for a number of mandals. But this process was not replicated to form political links as well, for instance by appointing a District Council representative to each of a number of mandals and by using the taluk panchayat samithi as a coordinating point for District Council official and political links with the mandals. Such additional efforts may better integrate MLAs, who were ex officio members of the intermediate-level taluk panchayat samithi, in the decentralised rural development process.

The stability of the 1987-91 panchayati raj system was also undermined by the administrative structure of the District Council. First, the system constituted a “centralised approach to a decentralised system” with all substantial administrative responsibilities assigned to District Council chief secretaries who had “so much to do that they could not concentrate on priorities” (interviews with District Council deputy secretaries of administration). The delegation of powers between the District Council chief secretary and junior district control agency officers needs to be clearly outlined in legislation establishing decentralised institutions.

Second, staff were deputed to the district for short and indefinite tenures, contributing to bureaucrats’ image as “birds of passage who can make a decision . . . and

then be off” before its implications are felt (interview with a state-level head of education). This perception would be minimised if officers were deputed to the District Councils for fixed three- or five-year terms.

In 1995 the Janata Dal state government again appointed a committee, under the chairmanship of Krishnaswamy, to recommend changes to the 1993 Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act passed by a Congress state government to conform with the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act. A paper presented for consideration by that committee suggests the state bureaucracy should “shrink to look after what remains in the state government’s functional domain”: officers should initially be deputed to the District Councils for a limited period, “during which officers should opt for service in the local government concerned or quit on honourable terms”; the District Council should appoint officers on contract terms rather than as permanent staff; and statutory Zilla Administrative Commissions combining the functions of public-service commissions and administrative tribunals should be appointed (Nirmal Mukarji, June 1995:6).

Third, the administrative structure of district institutions required some adjustment to better integrate technical departments. Officers from several technical departments maintain rural development planning and district administration would be strengthened if a technical officer were assigned as deputy secretary to each District Council along with the deputy secretaries of administration and development and another appointed as District Council chief secretary from the department responsible for the prevailing activity in a given district, for example, agriculture or forestry.

Finally, the advantages of decentralisation to improved rural development planning and implementation were constrained by the District Councils’ limited flexibility in planning and inadequate powers of local resource mobilisation: it could frame a budget, but had to obtain state government approval; it could not reappropriate budgets without government approval; and it could not raise taxes. The state government identified the central- and state-government priority schemes to be taken up in each sector, and the districts could not reject any one of them. Although the effectiveness of rural development schemes was increased through District Council participation in their location, where district and state

priorities were not in line - for example, where the state priority was irrigation but the district priority was education - the District Council was bound by state government preferences, and tension arose between the two levels. The continued role of the state government structure in district planning meant the “hold of the bureaucracy [remained to] tinker with [District Council] decisions” (interview with a state-level head of health).

The provisions made for central- and state-government development priorities play an important part in guaranteeing essential activities, for example, to maintain forests or run family planning education programmes that rural communities might not otherwise sanction. However, district-level institutions required greater flexibility to meet urgent local priorities. To meet both state and central government, and local community priorities, the state government could adopt a “criteria approach” to District Council finances, whereby the District Councils select schemes from a “menu” of programme baskets which offer a combination of schemes from different sectors, each of which would include some mandatory government schemes (interview with a state-level head of education).

Improving officers’ and representatives’ skills

The second set of recommendations for improving the implementation of a decentralised system of rural development planning and administration centre on improving officers’ and representatives’ financial, accounting, budget-preparation and management skills, including purchase rules and inventory control; and developing their familiarity with the legal provisions establishing local institutions.

Panchayati raj institutions made little contribution to increasing substantially the impact of development initiatives because officers and representatives were poorly equipped to evaluate and mobilise local resources. The returns on development initiatives can be greatly increased in a decentralised set-up if local institutions are encouraged and invested with the capacity to identify and optimise local land, water and man-power capacities; invest to generate income, long-term community employment and general economic growth; and seek local participation and mobilisation of resources in both initiating and supporting on-going projects.

While it may not be politically attractive for representatives to invite constituents to contribute labour or funds - voluntarily or by taxation - to an institution they have elected to provide services for them, community priorities usually include securing essential works, in the interest of which representatives should be able to coordinate to secure such contributions. Officers and representatives need regularly to consider ways of integrating community groups such as youth clubs in the maintenance of schools and other buildings, water-storage tanks and land, perhaps as part of a skills development programme. District institutions should also make use of the additional skills and information networks to which local NGOs have access by integrating them in the development process.

Officers and representatives were insufficiently equipped fully to contribute to the district planning and accounting processes, and some officers felt management training would help officers and representatives more efficiently integrate the range of demands made on them in district work. All district representatives and deputed officers therefore require training in basic planning, accounting and finance, including ways of supplementing government funds.

Finally, officers suggest that, as well as District Council Presidents and Vice-Presidents, a number of general members should participate in seminars on the rules governing local institutions to provide a broader base of support for officers, Presidents and Vice-Presidents within the District Council. Seminars should address the roles of individuals within and legal provisions establishing local-government bodies and governing action taken by them, highlighting other routes of officer/representative interaction that previously depended to a great extent on the relationship between the District Council President and chief secretary. Poor relations between officers and elected representatives were a frequent source of concern to officers and would be improved if representatives were better aware of the roles of individual officers.

The District Council system created a popular awareness in rural areas about “the political system, administration, and the people’s role in it”, including amongst women “who had been totally outside the [political] mainstream”. However districts with lower literacy rates amongst representatives were less effective in voicing and achieving their

development goals than those with higher literacy rates, which was felt to contribute to uneven development between districts when “the ultimate aim [of decentralisation] was to see that backward districts get up to forward districts’ levels [of development]” (interview with a district-level head of health).

Strengthening links between groups involved in rural development

The decentralised rural development system established in Karnataka affected all groups involved in rural development, not all of which were sufficiently integrated in the new system. Some departments, state-level heads and NGOs stand out as essential to, but inadequately used by, the 1987-91 system in Karnataka.

The revenue department responsible for identifying and allocating land to district departments for buildings and schemes has always operated separately from other departments. During the 1987-91 period the revenue department remained under the state government and was frequently referred to by district-level officers as uncooperative and insufficiently involved in the district plan process to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to land use.

Similarly, state-level heads of departments rarely took an active part in establishing their department in the district by outlining the department’s aims, priorities and responsibilities of their department for both officers and representatives, including mandatory centre- and state-funded programmes such as literacy campaigns, family planning and agricultural extension schemes. This process would constitute a particularly important source of support for district officers whose departments’ schemes are not local community priorities. By emphasising the essential nature of many department schemes, state-level heads of department help reduce subsequent pressure on district officers from representatives to implement other programmes.

The Krishnaswamy Committee referred to the importance of “developing proper conventions to guide inter-governmental relations” (Government of Karnataka, March 1989:23). State-level heads of department play an important part in determining the nature of inter-governmental relations, not least by maintaining regular contact with district

institutions to reduce representatives' misconceptions and apprehensions of the state-level bureaucracy trying to draw powers back from the District Council. State-level heads of department had a changed but continued and important role in a decentralised system of which few districts made use.

During the period 1987-91 the relationship between state- and district-level development was distant and insufficiently brought together by state-level heads of department. Officers working in the same area on projects coordinated by the state- and district-level should be brought together with chairmen of the relevant state- and district-level standing committees to coordinate related projects, under the chairmanship of the relevant state-level head of department. State-level heads of department should also use their officers in the districts to identify NGOs with relevant areas of expertise, and include these groups in a more coordinated approach to state and district rural development initiatives.

The observations above permit the following summary of recommendations for the more effective management of decentralised rural development planning and administration in India:

1. Improve administrative and financial decentralisation

- a. balance staff numbers at the state, district and sub-district levels with the responsibilities assigned to each level**
- b. design and spell out a spread of authority amongst officers working in local elected institutions to include technical officers and lower-level administrative officers**
- c. require local-level institutions to raise taxes or contributions of labour, cash or kind to development schemes, to be spent according to local priorities rather than state government guidelines**

2. Improve officers' and representatives' skills

- a. train officers and elected representatives in finance, accounting, budget-preparation, purchase rules, inventory control and the laws establishing local institutions**
- b. provide local institutions with information on non-**

government organisations in the area and advice on how to access and use them

3. Strengthen links between groups involved in rural development

- a. provide for the interaction with local institutions of officers from departments not otherwise integrated in a decentralised system**
- b. emphasise the role of state-level officers in a decentralised system**
- c. (as in 2b above) provide local institutions with information on non-government organisations in the area and advice on how to access and use them**

Summary conclusions

The political phraseology in which the process of decentralising rural development planning and administration to elected institutions is couched emphasises the role of local voters and elected officials in the development process, rather than the technical and administrative expertise of state government personnel. However it is critically important a concerted and explicit effort to keep bureaucrats “on side” throughout the course of decentralisation is begun early on.

Development needs to bring together two elements: (1) the organised expertise of the bureaucracy and (2) the consent, support and participation of the people. But the local level alone is not capable of arranging such a marriage. Rather, these two must be integrated from the “outside” (or above). The Karnataka experiment with decentralisation from 1987 to ‘91 was of a particular type, teaching important lessons.

The purpose of decentralisation is not simply to serve a democratic ideal of providing for individual participation in the decision-making process, but to improve the responsiveness of elected to electorate and official to representative, and to integrate the local, state and national levels to develop rural communities in the context of limited resources. Officers provide technical and administrative assistance crucial to rural development, and have had experiences of decentralisation during the 1987-91 period in Karnataka that provide important insights. Their concerns should be addressed by current

efforts to shift the development process to decentralised government institutions.

Appendix 3

Name, Position, Date and Place of Interviews

(NB: Unless otherwise stated, positions were held during the 1987 to '91 period)

1. Gulam Ahmad (Chief Engineer Public Health Engineering)
31 May 1995, Bangalore
2. Nayaz Ahmad (Chief Secretary Bidar; Director of Panchayati Raj)
17 June 1995, Bangalore
3. Mr D D A Arnold (Ford Foundation Representative, New Delhi)
3 July 1995, New Delhi
4. Professor Abdul Aziz (Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC),
Bangalore)
31 May 1995, Bangalore
5. V Balasubramaniam (Secretary to Chief Minister, 1983-85)
6 June 1995, Bangalore
6. V P Baligar (Deputy Commissioner Mysore; Chief Secretary, Dakshina Kannada)
13 July 1995, New Delhi
7. Mr Bassappa (Deputy Secretary (Development), Dakshina Kannada)
22 May 1995, Bangalore
8. N T Bevinakatti (now Deputy Secretary (Administration), Dharwad)
17 May 1995, Dharwad
9. Dr B S Bhargava (Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore)
26 April 1995, Bangalore
10. Mr Chandrashekar (District Education Officer, Bangalore Rural)
24 June 1995, Bangalore
11. Professor B K Chandrashekar (Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore)
23 and 24 May 1995, Bangalore
12. Mr Dubey (now Joint Secretary Panchayati Raj, Government of India)
7 July 1995, New Delhi
13. Madan Gopal (Joint Director Non-Formal Education)
23 June 1995, Bangalore
14. M S Goudar (Deputy Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry, Mysore)
30 June 1995, Bangalore
15. S K Hajara (Secretary Education)

14 June 1995, Bangalore

16. Shyamla Hiremath (Samaj Parivartana Samudaya (SPS), Dharwad)
20 April 1995, Bangalore
17. S R Hiremath (Samaj Parivartana Samudaya (SPS), Dharwad)
11 April 1995, Bangalore
18. Dr A Inbanathan (Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore)
30 April 1995, Bangalore
19. Dr Jayadeva (Deputy Director Animal Husbandry, Gulbarga; Deputy Director
Animal Husbandry, Bijapur; Joint Director Animal Husbandry, Mysore)
2 June 1995, Bangalore
20. Mr Kongvad (Deputy Secretary (Administration), Mysore)
13 June 1995, Mysore
21. Sudhir Krishna (Chief Secretary, Dharwad)
24 June 1995, Bangalore
22. Dr Prasanna Kumar (Joint Director of Health and Planning; Additional Director
Family Welfare and Mother and Child Health; Director Family Welfare and Mother
and Child Health)
30 June 1995, Bangalore
23. Vijay Kumar (Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), Bangalore)
8 June 1995, Bangalore
24. M Madan Mohan (The Hindu, Hubli)
16 May 1995, Dharwad
25. Mr Madhu (Chief Secretary, Raichur)
11 May 1995, Bangalore
26. Mr Maheshan (Chief Secretary, Bangalore Rural)
6 June 1995, Bangalore
27. M B Maramkal (Times of India, Mysore)
13 June 1995, Mysore
28. Dr G Mathew (Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), New Delhi)
4 April 1995, New Delhi
29. Nirmal Mukarji (adviser on Panchayati Raj to Karnataka Government)
8 June 1995, Bangalore
30. Kaushik Mukherjee (Chief Secretary, Mysore)
29 June 1995, Bangalore
31. Srinivas Murthy (Chief Secretary, Mysore)
10 May 1995, Bangalore
32. Dr M V Murugendrappa (District Health Officer, Gulbarga)
19 June 1995, Bangalore

33. Dr Nanjandappa (Planning Commissioner and Secretary to Government)
20 June 1995, Bangalore
34. Mr Narayanaswamy (ZP President, Bangalore Rural)
10 June 1995, Bangalore
35. Professor V K Natraj (Director of Institute of Development Studies (IDS),
Mysore)
14 June 1995, Mysore
36. Dr P J Nayak (Secretary Rural Development and Panchayati Raj)
4 July 1995, New Delhi
37. Sundar Nayak (Deputy Secretary (Development), Chikmagalur; Deputy Secretary
(Development), Mysore)
14 June 1995, Bangalore
38. S M Panchagatti (Superintending Engineer Dharwad; Chief Engineer Public Health
Engineering)
2 June 1995, Bangalore
39. K P Pandey (Secretary Rural Development and Panchayati Raj)
12 May 1995, Bangalore
40. Dr K V Paranikmath (Director of Agriculture)
29 June 1995, Bangalore
41. D R Patil (ZP representative and leader of the opposition, Dharwad)
27 May 1995, Bangalore
42. Mr Prakash (Principal Agriculture Officer, Belgaum; Principal Agriculture Officer,
Chikmagalur; Deputy Director of Agriculture (Soil Conservation), Mysore Division)
28 June 1995, Bangalore
43. Mr Puttubudhi (ZP President, Mysore)
15 June 1995, Mysore
44. A Ramaswamy (Chief Secretary, Mandhya)
22 June 1995, Bangalore
45. Major Ramesh (Chief Engineer Communications and Buildings (PWD))
15 June 1995, Bangalore
46. Dr M K Ramesh (NLSIU, Bangalore)
11 April 1995, Bangalore
47. Sri Kantesh Rao (Assistant Director (Planning) Education Department)
17 June 1995, Bangalore
48. Sankar Rao (Chief Planning Officer, Raichur)
22 May 1995, Bangalore
49. Anur Reddy (Deputy Conservator of Forests, Social Forestry, Bellary)
30 June 1995, Bangalore
50. Gopal Reddy (Secretary Finance Department)

22 June 1995, Bangalore

51. Vijay Kumar Revadi (Deputy Secretary and Chief Planning Officer, Shimoga)
1 June 1995, Bangalore
52. U R Sabhapatti (ZP representative and Planning Committee member, Dakshina
Kannada)
30 May 1995, Bangalore
53. Zafar Saifullah (Development Commissioner and author of Watershed
Development)
12 July 1995, New Delhi
54. T R Satishchandran (Chief Secretary to Government of Karnataka)
9 May 1995, Bangalore
55. Mr Shetty (Conservator of Forests)
21 June 1995, Bangalore
56. Dr Captain S P Shetty (Director Animal Husbandry)
7 June 1995, Bangalore
57. Mr Shirol (Chief Accounts Officer, Raichur)
29 May 1995, Bangalore
58. Chiranjiv Singh (Director ATI, Mysore)
7 July 1995, New Delhi
59. K P Singh (Secretary Social Welfare)
13 July 1995, New Delhi
60. G T Srinivas (Executive Engineer, Shimoga)
26 June 1995, Bangalore
61. P K Srinivasan (Economic Times, Bangalore)
25 June 1995, Bangalore
62. Mr Srivastava (Chief Secretary, Belgaum)
21 June 1995, Bangalore
63. Dr K Subha (now Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), Bangalore)
22 April 1995, Bangalore
64. Meenakshi Sundaram (Secretary Rural Development and Panchayati Raj)
29 April 1995, Bangalore
65. R Suresh (Deputy Commissioner for Public Instruction, North Kannada)
17 June 1995, Bangalore
66. Hanuman Thappa (Deputy Planning Officer, Bangalore Urban)
10 June 1995, Bangalore
67. Mr R Thippeswamy (Executive Engineer, Bangalore Rural)
20 June 1995, Bangalore
68. V Umesh (Chief Secretary, Chittradurga)

20 May 1995, Bangalore

Appendix 4

Questions around which interviews were conducted

1. I am interested in the way the 1987 to '91 system worked. In what ways did civil servants relate to elected representatives?
2. Was there significant interaction between bureaucrats and elected representatives at the sub-district level?
3. What difficulties were experienced by bureaucrats? Were they more significant for those in the field?
4. What schemes were you most frequently asked to sanction? What type did you usually have to turn down? Why?
5. What aspects of the 1987 to '91 system did not work? What changes would you like to see in the new system (training, local government finance, structures of authority)?
6. Was bureaucrats' work made easier by having a Minister in the state government responsible for a district as well as their portfolio?
7. What authority structure would provide bureaucrats in the field with the best work environment?
8. In what ways is a local cadre of bureaucrats being established? Is this a good thing?
9. Training programmes: what combinations of individuals should be trained together?
10. How did the plan process work before 1987 when there was some decentralisation to the districts?
11. How do you think bureaucrats' attitudes to panchayati raj varied according to rank? Was it easier for the top to support?
12. How important is it whether the chief secretary or the President of the zilla parishad is given senior status in legislation (establishing local institutions)?
13. Can you cite some examples to illustrate bureaucrats' concerns about working with PRIs?
14. Did decentralisation make the work of the highest level bureaucrats easier to some

extent? Is the panchayati raj system a better one for them to work within?

15. To some extent were top level bureaucrats leaving lower-level officers to deal with the system, or did they offer support?

16. Who is your superior?

17. How did you interact with the relevant line-ministry?

 Name any heads of ministry

 technical heads

 KAS officers

 standing committee members

18. Who was the most reticent and what obstacles did they present?

 technical heads

 Ministers

 MLAs

 lower bureaucrats

 chief secretaries?

19. How were standing committee members of the ZP chosen?

20. Which other individuals do you suggest I contact?

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Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers*	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

: individually innovative work

: developmental rhythm

Collegial atmosphere

: small-sized work unit

: restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

: co-operative work patterns

Central location

: proximate to the political power centres

Negatively valued

Line functions

: short-time horizons

: narrow scope of concerns

: repetitive rhythm

: low level of managerial discretion

: high level of grass-roots/public visibility

Corporate atmosphere

: extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

: work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

: conflictual personal relations

Peripheral location

: provincial location

: remote from high-status contacts

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers*	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

- : individually innovative work
- : developmental rhythm
- : high level of managerial discretion

Negatively valued

Line functions

- : routine work
- : short-time horizons
- : narrow scope of concerns
- : high level of grass-roots/public visibility

Collegial atmosphere

- : restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel
- : co-operative work patterns
- : congenial personal relations

Corporate atmosphere

- : extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel
- : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

Central location

- : proximate to the political power centres

Peripheral location

- : remote from political contacts
- : remote from high-status contacts

(based on P. Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers*	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

- : individually innovative work
- : broad scope of concerns
- : developmental rhythm

- : low level of public visibility

Collegial atmosphere

- : small-sized work unit
- : restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel
- : co-operative work patterns

Negatively valued

Line functions

- : short-time horizons
- : narrow scope of concerns

- : high level of grass-roots/public visibility

Corporate atmosphere

- : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance
- : conflictual personal relations

(based on P. Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1*
	District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2
	District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3
	District-level heads of DA 3
	State-level heads of DA 4
	District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

Negatively valued

Line functions

: short-time horizons

: high level of managerial discretion

Collegial atmosphere

: co-operative work patterns

Corporate atmosphere

: extended hierarchy and predominance of
non-elite personnel
: work patterns characterised by coercion
and resistance

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1*
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

- : individually innovative work
- : longer-time horizons
- : broad scope of concerns
- : developmental rhythm
- : high level of managerial discretion

Negatively valued

Line functions

- : narrow scope of concerns
- : repetitive rhythm

Collegial atmosphere

- : small-sized work unit
- : restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel
- : co-operative work patterns

Corporate atmosphere

- : extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel
- : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1 State-level heads of DA 2*
Senior district-level CA officers	District-level heads of DA 2 State-level heads of DA 3
Junior district-level CA officers	District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

<u>Positively valued</u>	<u>Negatively valued</u>
<i>Staff functions</i>	<i>Line functions</i>
: individually innovative work	
: developmental rhythm	

<i>Collegial atmosphere</i>	<i>Corporate atmosphere</i>
: restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel	: extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2*
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

<u>Positively valued</u>	<u>Negatively valued</u>
<i>Staff functions</i>	<i>Line functions</i>
: individually innovative work	

Collegial atmosphere

Corporate atmosphere

: co-operative work patterns

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3* District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

- : individually innovative work
- : broad scope of concerns
- : high level of managerial discretion

Collegial atmosphere

- : co-operative work patterns

Negatively valued

Line functions

- : high level of grass-roots/public visibility

Corporate atmosphere

- : extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel
- : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance
- : conflictual personal relations

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3* State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Staff functions

: individually innovative work

: high level of managerial discretion

Collegial atmosphere

: co-operative work patterns

: congenial personal relations

Central location

: proximate to the political power centres

Negatively valued

Line functions

: routine work

: high level of grass-roots/public visibility

Corporate atmosphere

: extended hierarchy and predominance of
non-elite personnel

: work patterns characterised by coercion
and resistance

: conflictual personal relations

Peripheral location

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4* District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Staff functions

Line functions

: developmental rhythm

Collegial atmosphere

Corporate atmosphere

- : extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel
- : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4*

Positively valued

Staff functions

- : broad scope of concerns
- : developmental rhythm
- : high level of managerial discretion

Collegial atmosphere

- : co-operative work patterns

Central location

- : proximate to the political power centres

Negatively valued

Line functions

- : high level of grass-roots/public visibility

Corporate atmosphere

- : work patterns characterised by coercion and resistance

Peripheral location

(based on P.Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* , Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 202)

Appendix 2:1

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers*	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

: high level of grass-roots/public
visibility

: inappropriate spending

Atmosphere

: politically unstable

: administratively unstable

: ill-defined delimitation of
legal responsibility

Location

: remote from political contacts

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers*	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

	: high level of managerial discretion
: high level of grass-roots/public visibility	
	: inappropriate spending
: appropriate activity	: inappropriate activity

Atmosphere

	: politically unstable
: administratively stable	: administratively unstable
	: ill-defined delimitation of legal responsibility

Location

: provincial location
: remote from political contacts

Appendix 2:3

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers*	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

: high level of grass-roots/public visibility

: more appropriate spending

: high level of managerial discretion

: low level of grass-roots/public visibility

: inappropriate spending

: inappropriate activity

Atmosphere

: administratively stable

: restricted hierarchy and predominance of elite personnel

: politically unstable

: administratively unstable

Location

: favourable shift in political contacts

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1*
	District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2
	District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3
	District-level heads of DA 3
	State-level heads of DA 4
	District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

: broad scope of concerns

: high level of grass-roots/public
visibility

: inappropriate activity

Atmosphere

: extended hierarchy and
predominance of non-elite
personnel

: politically stable

: administratively stable

: administratively unstable

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1*
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

*Positively valued**Negatively valued**Functions*: high level of grass-roots/public
visibility

: more appropriate spending

: inappropriate activity

Atmosphere

: politically unstable

: administratively unstable

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2* District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

<u>Positively valued</u>	<u>Negatively valued</u>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Atmosphere
: extended hierarchy and
predominance of non-elite
personnel

: politically unstable
: administratively unstable

Location
: provincial location

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2*
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

: high level of grass-roots/public
visibility

: inappropriate spending

: appropriate activity

Atmosphere

: administratively stable

: politically unstable

: ill-defined delimitation of
legal responsibility

Location

: provincial location

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3* District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

: high level of grass-roots/public
visibility

: more appropriate spending

: appropriate activity

: inappropriate spending

Atmosphere

: extended hierarchy and
predominance of non-elite
personnel

: politically stable

: administratively stable

: politically unstable

: administratively unstable

Location

: favourable shift in political contacts

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3* State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4

<u>Positively valued</u>	<u>Negatively valued</u>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Functions

	: high level of managerial discretion
: high level of grass-roots/public visibility	
: more appropriate spending	: inappropriate spending
: appropriate activity	: inappropriate activity

Atmosphere

: extended hierarchy and predominance of non-elite personnel	
	: politically unstable
	: administratively unstable

Location

: favourable shift in political contacts
--

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4* District-level heads of DA 4

<u>Positively valued</u>	<u>Negatively valued</u>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Functions

- : high level of grass-roots/public visibility
- : more appropriate spending

Atmosphere

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| : administratively stable | : politically unstable |
| | : administratively unstable |

Location

- : favourable shift in political contacts
-

Additional positive and negative values ascribable to:

Senior state-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 1 District-level heads of DA 1
Senior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 2 District-level heads of DA 2
Junior district-level CA officers	State-level heads of DA 3 District-level heads of DA 3 State-level heads of DA 4 District-level heads of DA 4*

Positively valued

Negatively valued

Functions

: more appropriate spending

: inappropriate spending

Atmosphere

: politically unstable

: administratively unstable

Location

: provincial location

: favourable shift in political contacts
