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# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN ASSESSING EMPOWERMENT

SALIL SHETTY

SOCIETY FOR
PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH RESEARCH IN ASIA
42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area,
New Delhi - 110062

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# MEASURING CHANGE

## Conventional Monitoring and Evaluation

The impetus for ensuring that development projects are efficient, effective and, increasingly equitable comes from different constituencies-international donors (multilateral, bilateral and private), national governments, project implementing agencies, pressure groups like the media and advocacy lobbies, and occasionally from the "beneficiary" communities themselves. This demands has elevated the performance assessment or the monitoring and evaluation phase to acquire the status of an independent discipline in the conventional project cycle i.e. identification, design and pre-appraisal, implementation, and evaluation-*(Baum, 1982).*

The conceptual basis for the idea of "Monitoring and Evaluation **(M & E)"** can be found in the Logical Framework Approach **(Logframe);** arguably, the most widely used project planning methodology to date. The project matrix in the Logframe is made up of inputs, activities, outputs, immediate objectives and development objectives*(NORAD, 1989).* Monitoring is defined as "the continuous or periodic surveillance of the implementation of a project" *(Ibid, pp. 88).* Evaluation are considered as "independent assessments of the impact and relevance of the project, undertaken by external collaborators" *(ibid, pp. 90).* Casley and Lury see monitoring as the process of tracking inputs, outputs and initial effects- primarily a function of internal management. Evaluation is described as an ex-post study of the intended and unintended effects and impacts of a development project, based on a quasi-experimental design and primary meant for an outside audience *(Casley and Lury, 1982).* Evaluations are also conducted to study the economic and financial efficiency of programmes *(Murphy and Marchant, 1988).* Monitoring and evaluation are, therefore, understood to be two distinct activities (in terms of time, scale, scope and object) which need to be treated separately.

However, the actual **M & E** is carried out not against objectives and inputs but indicators which are "specific (explicit) and objectively verifiable measures of changes or results brought about by an activity" *(IFAD, 1985; PP.37).* These indicators correspond to the level of inputs, outputs, effects and impacts; they signify performance standards and are distinct from targets and objectives. It must be added that the terms "variables" and "indicators" are used interchangeably but, occasionally, an indicator is defined as a derived ratio of variables. **Table 3.1** attempts to present the **M & E** process in the Logframe scheme.

**M & E in the Logical Framework**

| Project Matrix Elect | Indicator | M & E |
|---|---|---|
| Inputs | Input Indicator | M |
| Activities | - | - |
| Outputs | Output Indicator | M |
| Short-term Objectives | Effect Indicator | M/E |
| Long-term Objectives | Impact Indicator | E |

Project evaluations have been classified into different categories depending on the stage of the project during which the evaluation is conducted. Evaluations during the project's life cycle have been called on-going, formative and process evaluations. Evaluations carried out after the completion of the project have been described as ex-post, summative and impact evaluations. The project appraisal phase is also sometimes called ex-ante evaluation *(ODA, 1988).* Evaluations have also been classified with respect to the purpose of the investigation :

a) project effectiveness vis-a-vis objectives;
b) project efficiency viz. cost effectiveness, cost benefit analysis and ;
c) project impacts *(Cracknell ed., 1984).*

The evolution of the field of **M & E** provide a valuable historica perspective for the rest of the discussion. Formal **M & E** mechanisms are said to have been set up in the **UN** system, for example, only in early 1950s. The rapid growth in international development assistance in the 1970s saw the shoring up of **M & E** systems as the need for control and accountability increased *(Ahmed and Bamberger 1989).* Additionally, until the end of the 1970s, most projects concentrated on large scale economic development and **M&E** efforts were focussed on physical inputs and outputs and financial expenditure against capital items. The failure of many development projects, the shrinking resource base, and the emergence of the Basic Needs movement *(especially after the WCARRD, 1979),* led to a new understanding that rural development is a complex "trial and error" process and that **M&E** of crude indicators of economic growth like per capita income alone were inadequate *(IFAD, 1985).*

With the new-found emphasis on distribution rather than growth, satisfaction of human needs rather than production, and development of human resources rather than technology, new management tools were put in place to supplement traditional economic project appraisal and evaluation techniques. Appraisal methods like Social Cost Benefit Analysis of public sector projects came into **use** *(Dasgupta & Sen, 1972).* Particular reference needs to be made to Environment/Social Impact Assessment, an "anticipatory research" methodology concentrating on ex-ante evaluation studies *(Derman and Whiteford, eds., 1985; Hindmarsh et al, 1988).*

The "Social Indicators Movements" also gained in strength in the 1970s and has now been institutionalised in several large international development agencies *(Imboden, 1978).* The World Bank, for example, now monitors "Social Indicators" in the World Development Report" World Bank, of-arts "Human Development Index" on which countries of the South And North are ranked is quite unique **(UNDP, 1991).** The publication of the "Indicators of Sustainable Development " has added an ecological dimension to the growing collection of macro-level social indicators *(Holmberg,J. al, 1991).*

The World Band's recruitment of a full-time sociologist in 1974 for the first time, the recognition of "human factors" in projects (1980) and "Policy Guidelines for forced resettlement" (1990), USAID,s **"Social Soundness Analysis"** (1978), and the U.K. ODA,s "**Social factors in project work**" (1982) could be classified in this genre for introducing "social" investigation checklists. However, through the struggle for

integrating "social" knowledge into project planning continues to be waged in the corridors of most official aid agencies, the debate is largely confined to the project appraisal and design stage (Cernea, 1991; Hall, 1988).

In spite of the growing priority that is being attached by the major official aid agencies to community participation (even if it is of the instrumental kind), an area which has been grossly under-researched is the assessment of such work.the oft-quoted reason for this neglect is that the "process" nature of participatory elements in development project defies quantification.

The **"M&E** Guiding Principles" book used widely in the **UN** system has a short section on the M&E of target group participation divided into quantitative and qualitative assessments. The quantitative indicators are once again focussed largely on efficiency issues (e.g., frequency of member's attendance at formal organisation meetings, total man days of labour contributed by project group members to project activities, etc.) and a few equity indicators (e.g., socio-economic composition of groups.) The qualitative section is dismissed in a brief paragraph which states that topics like "organisational growth, leadership structure, project group activities and outputs and the institutional impact of these groups can be studied" *(IFAD, 1985; PP. 53).* An additional section is presented on **WID** which has a more substantial checklist of items to study the differential impact of development projects. On the whole, these issues are treated as "Special Topics"- an appendage to the main **M&E system** *(Ibid, 1985).*

## The Critique

The conventional **M&E** model has come under severe attack from different quarters. The major criticism has come from scholars and practitioners who have recgnised the experimental nature of development projects and the need for traditional "blueprint approaches" to be replaced by a "learning process" approach, and rational-comprehensive planning and evaluation models to be substituted by adaptive planning and evaluation systems *(Rondinell, 1983; Chambers, 1983).*

The example of monitoring growth in under-five's describes the liner and restricted perception of conventional **M&E:** concept (physical growth)- variable (body weight)- measuring instrument weighing scale )- units of measurement (kilograms). But the basic problem is that there are no truly standardised scales and measures available in social and behavioral sciences (Dixon et al, 1987). As Paul Streeten has commented: "The danger of social and behavioral research that attempts to emulate the 'hard' sciences is that it focuses on the measurable and neglects the rest. Some of the most in which measurement is still very difficult or perhaps impossible" *(Reilly, 1985; pp. 37-38).*

The conventional **M&E** system has gained a pre-eminent position on the strength of three important claims. The first is that of "reliability and validity". But the recent study by N.S. Jodha (1989) in rural Rajasthan, India, shook the confidence in questionnaire surveys and their validity. The longitudinal study, carried out at two points in time (1964-66 and 1982-84), using per capita income measures showed that 38% of the sample families had become poorer over the period. However, qualitative

indicators and perceptions of the community which were also assessed showed trends to contrary. The second claim of the conventional system pertains to "objectivity". But the idea that there is a social world which exists independent of people's subjectives awareness of it has been seriously questioned.

Rahman (1984) is of the opinion that information gathered from communities is necessarily objective if it passes through social verification -"the dialogical process of collective reflection".

Eichler (1988) has pointed out that scientific objectivity in male-centered research simply means using a male frame of reference. Use of rigorous sampling and hypothesis testing techniques cannot substitute a first hand knowledge of the community. The third and, perhaps, the weakest claim is that of 'causality". The concept of a causal model in social science research where **Y=f(x)** and the direction of influence is from 'x' to 'y' has been completely rejected *(Richards, 1985).* Attempts to model community participation and behavioral change as shown in Annexure 2 have not met with much success *(Cochrane, 1979).* The use of baseline studies, control groups, and sophisticated statistical analytistical analysis have not been able to discriminate between gross and net impact of development projects.

In practice, it is found that most **M&E** systems are neither cost-effective nor of real use for the management in decision-making. This happens because of poor and top-down M&E system design coupled with a lack of interest in this task among line managers *(Feuerstein, 1986; Hulme & Turner, 1990).* But the fundamental problem has to do with the issue of paradigms -the philosophical underpinnings of conventional **M&E.** Competing world views also lead to competing forms of social knowledge-each with its own hierarchy. The status hierarchy of methodology interprets hard data to be superior and scientific, i.e., the danger to which numbers can be assigned to the **M&E** process. The production and dissemination of knowledge based on the positivist paradigm (also referred to as traditional, orthodox, mainstream, systems, empirical-analytical or classical paradigm) trusts only objective facts and observable phenomena and is "uninterested in the ultimate origins of these facts" *(Maguire, 1987).*

This has given rise to the "alternative" research paradigm (also called symbolic, hermeneutic, cultural inquiry, local theory, critical knowledge paradigm), which relies on naturalistic inquiry techniques and a "subjectivist epistemoloty". This paradigm is based on what has been called a "transaction model" *(Rossi and Freeman, 1987; Patton, 1990; Robson and Foster, 1989).* The alternative paradigm is understood to be holistic, responsive, heuristic, and clearly skeptical of the attempt to free data and findings from their socio-historic context *(Altrichter, 1991).*

The contrast between the two paradigms are summarised as being objectivity vs. Subjectivity, researcher distance vs. Closeness to subject, generalisations or universality vs. Uniqueness, quantitative vs. Qualitative, social control vs local self determination, impartial advice vs. Solidarity and action *(Maguire. 1987).* Some of the important qualitative evaluation models based on the "alternative" paradigm are shown in Table 3.2.

## Table 3.2

## Qualitative Evaluation Models

| Model | Description | Key proponents |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Goal- free evaluation | unencumbered by logic of preordinate objectives | Scriven |
| 2. Responsive Evaluation | Personalising and humanising with stakeholders | Stakes |
| 3. Illuminative Evaluation | Looks at underlying causes within local context | Parlett, Richards |
| 4. Utilisation focussed Evaluation | Based on needs of users | Patton, Rossi |

The major stream of evaluation research which has looked into the political aspects of supposedly value-free paradigms and come up with alternative methodologies is that of participatory action research. It is based on the premise that evaluation is a political exercise and the evaluator, knowingly or otherwise, is in collusion with either those who have power or those who do not. But it was only in the **1970s** that this developed into "participatory (action) research" and the yardstick for judging the quality of research was understood to be empowerment or social justice rather than efficiency or academic knowledge. A Bawden(1991) claims, the process of evaluation can be an emancipatory one only if the community feels a sense of ownership of the data.

The fact that participatory action research was itself steeped in patriachy was forcefully brought home by Maguire: "While Freire stresses man's alienation in the world, feminist research includes women's alienation from a man-made world" *(Maguire, 1987; pp. 84).* It is heartening that mainstream research in social science is now waking up to intra-household asymmetries with Sen's "cooperative conflict" view of the household gaining acceptance *(Wilson, 1991).*

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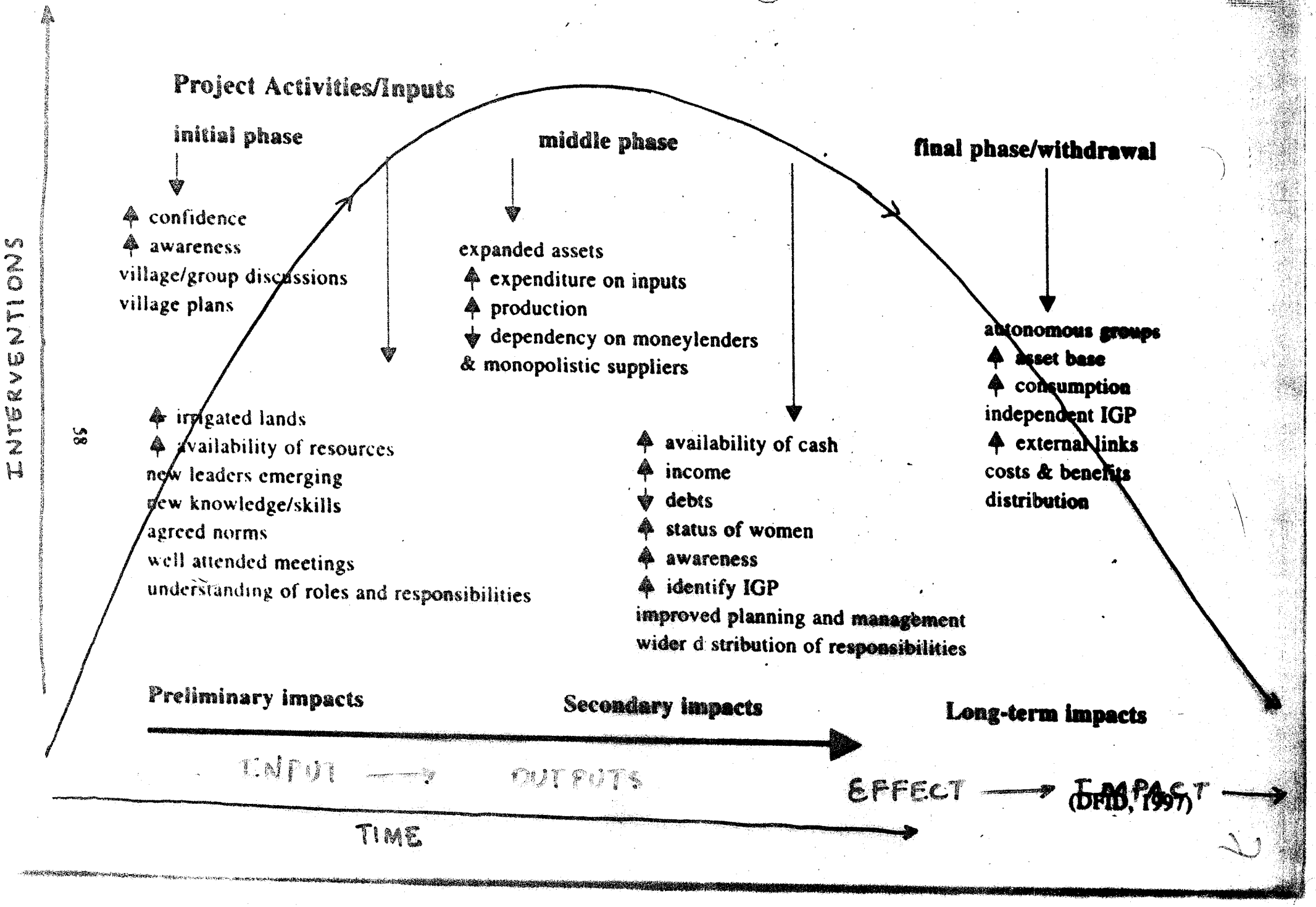

INTERVENTIONS
Project Activities/Inputs
initial phase
middle phase
final phase/withdrawal
confidence
awareness
village/group discussions
village plans
expanded assets
expenditure on inputs
production
dependency on moneylenders
& monopolistic suppliers
autonomous groups
asset base
consumption
independent IGP
external links
costs & benefits
distribution
irrigated lands
availability of resources
new leaders emerging
new knowledge/skills
agreed norms
well attended meetings
understanding of roles and responsibilities
availability of cash
income
debts
status of women
awareness
identify IGP
improved planning and management
wider distribution of responsibilities
Preliminary impacts
Secondary impacts
Long-term impacts
INPUT
OUTPUTS
EFFECT
IMPACT
TIME
(DFID, 1997)

# LOGICAL FRAMEWORK (1)

| Narrative Summary | Objectively Verifiable Indicators | Means of Verification | Important Assumptions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Goal (Overall Objective) | Measures of Goal Achievement | Sources of information to be used | |
| Project Purpose (Specific Objective) | Measures of Purpose Achievement | Sources of information to be used | Assumptions affecting Purpose-Goal linkage |
| Outputs (Results) | Measures of Output Achievement | Sources of information to be used | Assumptions affecting Outputs-purpose linkage |
| Inputs (Activities | Nature and level of resources necessary | Costs of the project | Assumptions affecting Inputs-Outputs linkage |
| | | | Initial assumptions about the project (preconditions) |

Column 1. Hierarchical description of objectives at different levels. Project inputs will produce outputs which should achieve the projects purpose, which in turn contributes to the realisation of the project goal. Performance depends on realising a necessary sequence of causal relationships. If the inputs are realises, then the outputs will be achieved; if the outputs are achieved, then the project's purpose will be reached; if the purpose is realised, then a contribution is made to the project goal.

Column, 4. Defined as the second step, details what assumptions are made -- normally about the external context -- for the cause-effect relationships to hold true.

Columns, 2 and 3. Define the concrete criteria to be applied in determining if the expected results have been achieved at each level.

Alan Fowler

IS THIS CONDITION IMPORTANT?

YES

NO

IS IT LIKELY TO BE REALISED?

- CERTAINLY → DO NOT INCLUDE
- LIKELY → INCLUDE IT AS ASSUMPTION
- UNLIKELY

IS IT POSSIBLE TO REDESIGN CONDITION THROUGH INTERVENTION TO INFLUENCE THIS CONDITION?

YES

REDESIGN INTERVENTION

NO

KILLER ASSUMPTION

MONITORING:

CONTINUOUS OR PERIODIC SERVEILLANCE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

(EX-ANTE)

EVALUATIONS:

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT / IMPACT

· RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

(EX-POST)

FOCUS → OUTSIDE AUDIENCE

QUASI- EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

KEY STRENGTHS:

- RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY
- SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIVITY
- CAUSALITY $Y = f(x)$

SHIFTS →

EFFICIENCY GROWTH

LARGE SCALE ECONOMIC DEV.

⇓

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

EQUITY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

CURRENT ISSUES HIGHLIGHT QUALITATIVE ASPECTS

- POVERTY
- PARTICIPATION
- ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- EMPOWERMENT

PRESSURES → TO EVALUATE EFFECT/IMPACT

- DECREASING FUNDS
- INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING
- SUSTAINABILITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS

## SHIFTS IN M+E

- BLUE PRINT APPROACHES
  ↓
  **LEARNING PROCESS**

- RATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND EVALUATION MODELS
  ↓
  **ADAPTIVE PLANNING + EVALUATION SYSTEMS**

- NATURALISTIC ENQUIRY
  ↓
  **HOLISTIC, RESPONSIVE CONTEXTUAL ENQUIRY**

## NEW PARADIGM:

- OBJECTIVITY VRS SUBJECTIVITY
- RESEARCHERS DISTANCE VRS. CLOSENESS
- GENERALISATION VRS. UNIQUENESS
- SOCIAL CONTROL VRS. LOCAL SELF-DETERMINATION
- IMPARTIAL ADVISE VRS. SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

## CONCEPTUAL BREAK THROUGHS

- GOAL FREE EVALUATIONS
- PARTICIPATORY EVALUATIONS
- SELF EVALUATIONS
- QUALITATIVE EVALUATIONS
- M+E FROM GENDER PERSPECTIVE
- INDIVIDUAL'S PERCEPTION OF CHANGE

# OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES

1. PARTICIPATORY M+E SYSTEMS

- BASE LINE DATA
- STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION
- QUALITATIVE INDICATORS
- QUALITY INFORMATION / ANALYSIS / DRAWING LEARNING

2. FACILITATION (EVALUATION) SKILLS

- RAPPORT BUILDING
- PE IN NON-PE PROJECT

3. EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

- TIME-FRAME
- PRESSURES - NEGOTIATIONS

4. VALUE-BASED ISSUES

- TRANSPARENCY
- MANAGING SUBJECTIVITY / OBJECTIVITY
- STRUCTURAL REGIDITIES

. GOAL ORIENTED PROJECT PLANNING
GOPP

. OBJECTIVE ORIENTED PROJECT PLANNING
OOPP/ZOPP

SITUATION ANALYSIS - PROBLEM/OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

PROJECT DESIGN - STRATEGIC CHOICES OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES
- LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

GTZ EXPERIMENTED IN EARLY 80s

MIX OF TWO DIFFERENT SOURCES

. METAPLAN - METAPLAN COMPANY GERMANY

. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH
USAID IN 1970s

METAPLAN
- IN COMPANY ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS AND FUTURE DIRECTION
. VISUALISATION TECHNIQUE
. ACCEPTANCE BY ALL PARTIES

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK
- LOGICAL CONSISTENT HIERARCHY OF OBJECTIVES AND RELATED ASSUMPTIONS, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE

- WHAT IS THE OVERALL REASON FOR INITIATING THE PROJECT
- TO WHAT PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE IT WILL CONTRIBUTE (NATIONAL)

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

## PROJECT PURPOSE/GOAL

- WHAT PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE IF COMPLETED SUCESSFULLY

WHY IT IS NEEDED

## OUTPUTS/RESULTS

- WHAT MAJOR RESULTS CAN BE EXPECTED FROM GOOD MANAGEMENT OF INPUTS

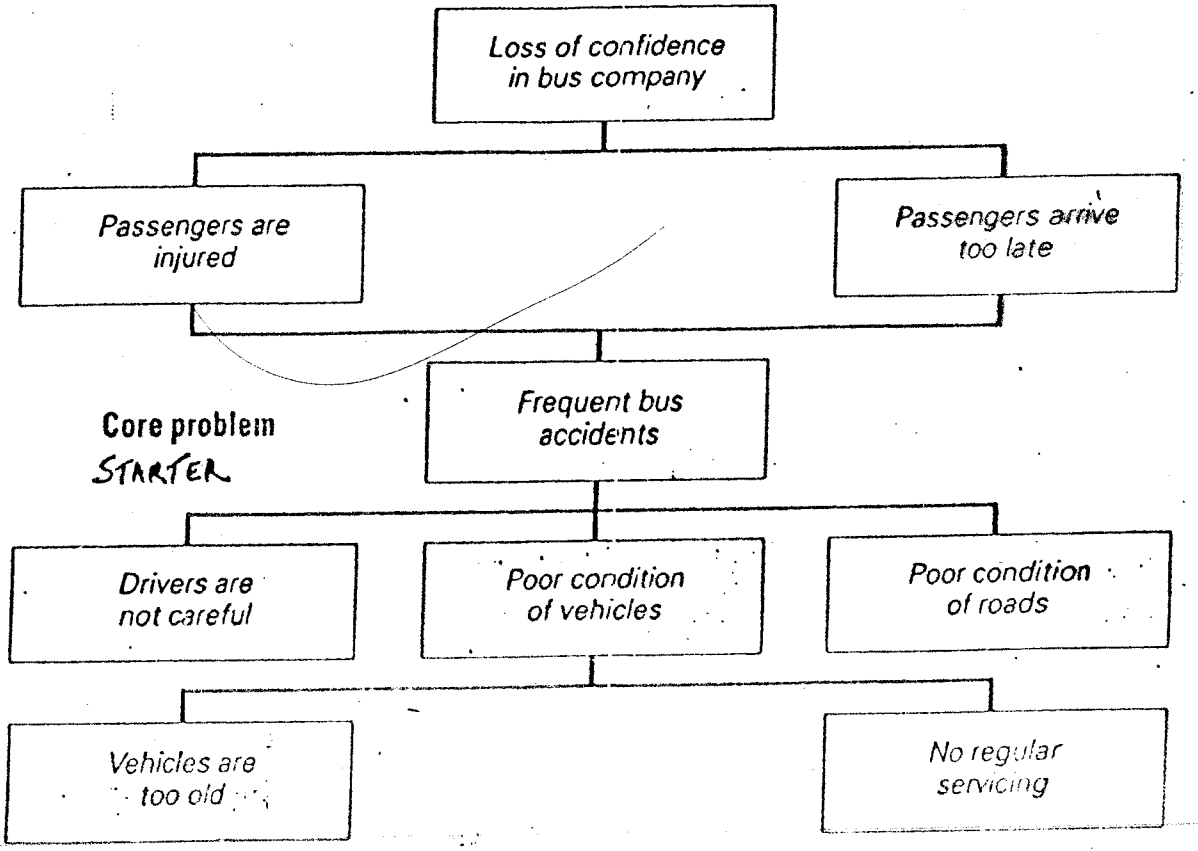
WHAT WE WILL DELIVER

## INPUTS

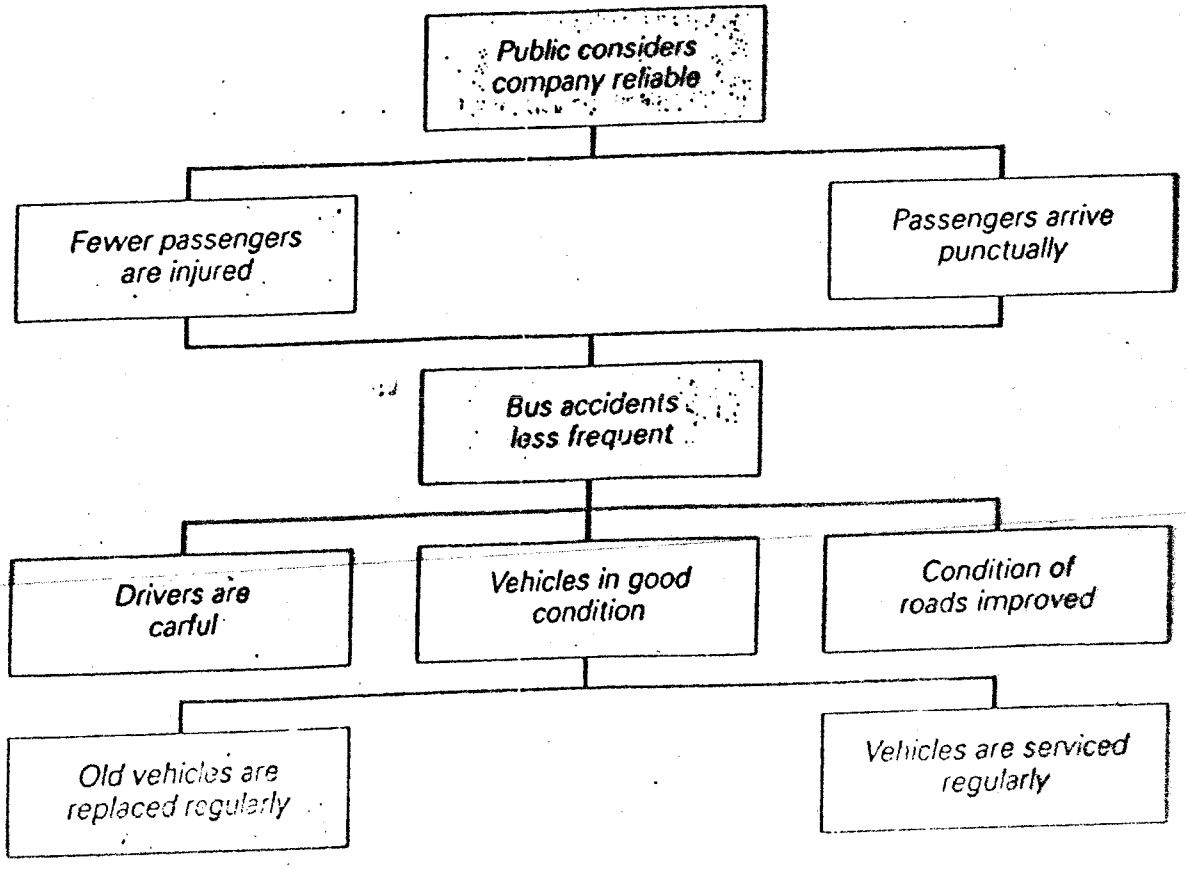
- WHAT ARE THE KEY INPUTS TO ATTAIN THE MAJOR RESULTS

HOW WE WILL DO IT

**Problem analysis**
*(Cause-effect relationship)*



**Objectives analysis**
*(Means-end relationship)*



## Indicators of Social Development

### *(a) Income Indicators*

- increased income in cash or kind
- new sources of income
- greater stability and regularity of income
- reduced work requirement with regard to water, fodder and fuel

### *(b) Consumption Indicators*

- changes in food consumption patterns; quality and regularity
- increased expenditure on education, health and non-food items
- improvements in living environment, e.g. dwelling, sanitation, etc
- acquisition of non-essential items/luxury goods

### *(c) Indicators of Self-Reliance*

- greater independence in economic decision-making
- better knowledge of marketing opportunities
- higher level of household savings
- more use of public and private transport facilities
- reduced debt obligations to moneylenders
- less dependence on and increased bargaining power *vis-a vis* dominant social groups
- reduction in seasonal out-migration
- improved ability to cope with contingencies such as illness

### *(d) Indicators of Social Mobility*

- greater willingness to approach public officials
- breaking-down of traditional caste barriers
- higher level of electoral participation
- increased participation in decision-making by women
- more mobility for women

CASA, INDIA