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II. RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ISSUES

***Recruitment, Technology and Culture**

(a pilot project of the Swedish Research Policy Institute,
Committee for Future Oriented Research)

Researcher: Bengt-Erik Borgstrom (University of Stockholm)

Project:

The intention of this project is to analyze the relationship between technology and culture by studying the process and pattern of recruitment for different kinds of work in two villages, one in Nepal and one in Sweden. By studying the ways in which people have been recruited to the tasks with which they are involved it is possible to describe structural factors preventing or facilitating the recruitment of various categories of people for certain functions. These structural factors are culturally codified, either by being directly tied to cultural concepts that establish boundaries between different segments of the population or indirectly by asking for specific qualifications, mostly educational, that are available to certain groups only. In the two cases studied, recruitment in the traditional society, which was regulated by caste relationship or the inheritance of jobs, has been upset by the introduction of new economic occupations; in reaction to different cultural structures, this change has produced entirely new recruitment patterns.

The questions treated in this project are related to the theoretical issues of technological autonomy and the changes in infrastructures of social units.

***Innovation and Adjustment as Responses to Population Pressure: A Study of a Hill Community in Nepal**

Researcher: Dilli Dahal (University of Hawaii, and East-West Population
Institute, Honolulu)

Project:

This study is intended to examine the interrelationships between: (1) population size and growth, (2) resource availability and (3) community adaptive strategies. A basic assumption of the research is that the social structure of a community is a fundamental determinant of peoples' responses to resource scarcity, and that the social system mediates the response to population pressure. Another important assumption is that population growth is not invariably a hindrance to positive socioeconomic and cultural changes in society.

Primary micro-level data for this research were recently collected during one year's field work in a multi-ethnic community in the hills of eastern Nepal. Macro-level data were also collected through various local public and private organizations. These data provide the basis for a comprehensive analysis of the interrelationships.

The research, sponsored by the East-West Population Institute, is expected to be completed by mid-1983.

***"Tribal Priest and Shaman: The Non-Buddhist Religious Tradition in a Thakali Village, Nepal" (Ph.D. thesis in progress)**

Researcher: Reinhard Grewe (University of Hamburg, West Germany)

The study is based on material collected during three field research stays among the Thakali in the Mustang District of Northwestern Nepal between 1977 and 1980. Under investigation were the duties and the function of the non-buddhist religious specialists of a village of the northern Thakali (Panchgaon):

- Aya Lama or Dhom representing the oral traditions, which combine elements of prebuddhist Bon and the 'nameless religion;'
- Jhankri (Damai caste) representing an indo-nepalese shamanism, who has strongly adapted his buddhist environment.

Beginning with an introduction into culture and milieu of the Thakali people, this study describes the social structure of the village and examines the religious ideas of its inhabitants as well as their concepts of illness. The study then describes both Aya Lama and Jhankri, including their curriculum vitae and historical traditions, their social position, and their relation to the rNyin-ma-pa-and Bon-Lamas, as well as their different rituals.

In doing this, Aya Lama and Jhankri are not only seen as religious specialists, but also as individuals within the more intimate context of their daily living (house, village, etc.). Such an organic reflection takes into consideration not only what are typically seen as the ordinary components and defining elements of non-buddhist religion, such as ecstasy, vocation and equipment, but also the person's "Lebenswelt," as Husserl defines it.

In two supplementary case studies, each involving detailed documentation and analysis -- of an Aya Lama- and a Jhankri-ritual -- the problem of the 'efficiency' of healing rituals is discussed with reference to theories of symbolism and hermeneutics.

The community study of Aya Lama and Jhankri functions as the basis for a regional study of patterns of change in the religious life of the Thakali. Additional material on the religious specialists of the whole region is incorporated.

Both studies show that the traditions of the Aya Lama/Dhom are fading away where they have to compete with elaborate religious systems as Buddhism or Hinduism. On the other hand, the shamans (especially the indo-nepalese 'Jhankri') of the contact situation show a tendency to absorb elements of these religions, if they are not already deeply rooted within one of them. Their domain is, hence, not diminishing with indo-nepalese contact.

***Alternative Theories of Agricultural Contracts and Their Policy
Implications for Analytical Change in Rural Welfare**

Researcher: Shankar Sharma (Department of Economics, University of Hawaii and
The East-West Center)

Project:

Before formulating and implementing any policy in the agricultural sector, one has to have clear knowledge of rural institutions (contracts, tenancy, interlinked factor markets, etc.). The debate concerning the efficiency and inefficiency of rural institutions is not resolved yet. If the rural institutions, as they exist, are efficient, the policy implications will be quite different from those of policy implications which assume the inefficient institutions.

The proposed study tries to find how various contracts differ and why they differ. Also it aims to look at the policy implications by distinguishing models which have different contracting specifications. The claim of this project is that contracts minimize the total transaction costs plus the shirking cost (excess burden). Comparisons of the resource allocation patterns on owner operated land and share-cropped land, cultivated by the same farmer will be done to test different efficiency and inefficiency hypotheses. Field-work is currently being undertaken in Nepal for this purpose.