

UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**Primary School Supervision in Pakistan:  
Practice, Purpose and Potential**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**  
in the University of Hull

by

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**October 1999**

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## List of Terms and Abbreviations

BCEW	Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing, Jamshoro.
BRIDGES	Basic Research and Implementation in Developing Educational Systems, Harvard.
DEO	District Education Officer
DFID	Department for International Development, London, (formerly ODA)
DPE	Director of Primary Education
GNP	Gross National Product
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate, UK.
HST	High School Teacher
HT	Headteacher
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
JST	Junior School Teacher
LC	Learning Coordinator
MT	Master Trainer (trainer of primary teachers under SPEDP)
NWFP	North West Frontier Province, Pakistan.
ODA	Overseas Development Administration, London, (now DFID)
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, UK.
PC1	Project Cycle 1
PEP1	First Primary Education Programme (Pakistan, 1980-1985)
PEP2	Second Primary Education Programme (Pakistan, 1985-1992)
PIU	Provincial Implementation Unit
PST	Primary School Teacher
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RP	Resource Person (trainer of master trainers under SPEDP)
RPMS	Resource Person of Mosque Schools
SAP	Social Action Programme
SEMIS	Sindh Education Management Information System
SDEO	Sub-Divisional Education Officer
SPE	Supervisor of Primary Education
SPEDP	Sindh Primary Education Development Programme (1992-1996)
SPEDP2	Second Sindh Primary Education Development Programme (1997-1998)

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TADA	Travel Allowance and Daily Allowance
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Notes on the Text

### Supervisor

Throughout the text I use the word 'supervisor' as a generic term for any person whose professional role entails supervising the work of primary schools. In Sindh this currently includes supervisors of primary education (SPE), resource persons of mosque schools (RPMS) and learning coordinators (LC). It might in future include, for example, headteachers, education officers and members of community organisations, if their roles were so defined. When SPEs alone are referred to, either the full title or the initials are used.

### Quotations

Every attempt has been made to quote accurately from texts, but this in itself produces inconsistencies in spelling. Names, from Pakistan, are only ever transliterations from another language with a more extensive alphabet. Spelling conventions do vary, so, for example, 'Sindh' and 'Sind' are used by different authors at different times. The usual distinctions between American and British English are also sometimes blurred in English language texts originating from Pakistan. Although, as a writer, I have endeavoured to stay within the conventions of current British English, I have retained the original spellings where they occur.

Written English in Pakistan also has a richly varied syntax and vocabulary which can, at times, sound surprising to an untrained ear. Again I have retained the original without comment, except where I believe a typing error or word substitution has occurred which could endanger the transference of meaning. At such points I offer an alternative reading in square brackets. I have thus avoided the use of sic to indicate questionable text, and leave comprehension to the reader's good sense.

Double quotation marks are used to distinguish spoken sources of evidence from written ones. Some pauses and hesitations have been edited out of the interview data to preserve the flow of the text.

## **Gendered Language**

Several of the earlier texts use the pronoun 'he' for any supervisor, in line with writing conventions of the period. The reader should, however, be aware that there are particular difficulties of gender interpretation in Pakistan which go beyond the usual problem of pronouns and generic terms. I have come across several instances where common nouns that I would expect to include both genders are used exclusively. For example, people who send their 'children' to school, may only in fact be sending their sons, not their daughters. 'Parents' may similarly designate 'fathers' alone and 'supervisors' may be used as a collective term for supervisors of girls' schools or of boys' schools, rather than of both, depending on the speaker. There is a further confusion in that it is only recently that statistical analyses have distinguished the number of boys and girls in every school. Formerly, all the pupils of a boys' school were recorded in the statistics for boys' education even when a sizeable proportion might, in fact, be girls.

## **Principle of Anonymity**

This thesis is based on the study of two particular areas in Sindh. The urban area is divided into four sub-divisions denoted A, B, C, and D and the rural area into sub-divisions X and Y. People are usually distinguished within the text by their gender, location and, where relevant, their particular supervisory role. Names are used only in the life stories, and these have been selected arbitrarily in order to preserve anonymity.

## Acknowledgements

My first thanks must go to the subjects of this research - the supervisors themselves. I am extremely grateful to everyone who took the trouble to talk to me in English, never their first language, even when it sometimes robbed them of their expressive powers. I am also deeply grateful to those who acted as interpreters over many long hours to ensure that everyone was heard. I should also like to remember two supervisors, who died during the course of the project, by name: Gul Hassan Bahrani and Mohammed Siddique Memon. Each one, in his own individual manner, made a significant contribution to the project and a lasting impression on a number of teachers and schools. Some of their words and actions are contained within this text.

Friends, colleagues and supervisors have been invaluable: challenging my ideas and encouraging my work over the years. In particular, I should like to thank Liz Ashforth, Mike Bottery, Barbara Gray, Angela Leighton, John Menendez, Jeff Moore, Marian Parkes, John Simmonds, Liz Thomson and Jan Wilson.

Finally, I should like to thank Eileen Baker, Principal of Bishop Grosseteste College, who proposed a period of study leave which has enabled me to complete this thesis.

## Abstract

The system of supervising government primary schools in Pakistan is a matter of continuing debate. The performance of supervisors is frequently criticised, and their ability to improve the quality of education in primary schools is questioned. Periodically it is suggested that improvement requires a completely new supervisory cadre.

The aim of this research is to clarify the purpose of primary school supervision, and to present evidence of both the practice of individual supervisors and their potential for achieving improvement in primary schools, in order to suggest ways in which the impact of supervision can be enhanced. Models of the supervisor as guardian, guide and innovator are distinguished and used to explain some of the conflicting demands made of supervisory personnel. The potential and limitations of work within each model are explored.

Central to the research is a study which took place within the Sindh Primary Education Development Programme 1992-96, an internationally sponsored programme which included extensive training opportunities for supervisors. Questionnaire responses were collected during this training programme from ninety-one supervisors covering one rural and one urban district. Analysis focuses on the supervisors' perceptions of patterns of influence and achievement within their own work, using data from the questionnaires, interviews and seven individual life stories.

The findings of this research challenge some influential assumptions about the centrality of primary teaching experience and specific training to ensure effective supervision. Instead, *sincerity* and *respect* emerge as key concepts of particular importance for sustaining professional endeavour. The results suggest that reforms of the selection and training of supervisory personnel are unlikely to influence practice permanently in Pakistan, unless accompanied by greater clarity about the precise role required, together with a revisioning of the relationships between the people within the education system as a whole founded on mutual *respect* for each others' work.

## Introduction and Background

### Sindh Primary Education Development Programme

In 1992 the University Sector College where I work was invited to tender for part of the Sindh Primary Education Development Programme (SPEDP) - an education project in Pakistan jointly funded by the World Bank, Overseas Development Administration (ODA), and the Government of Sindh. The invitation to tender specified:

The purpose of the project is to increase the level of participation in primary education in rural and urban slum areas in Sindh Province, particularly for girls; improve the delivery of primary education and increase student learning and achievement. This is to be achieved through strengthening the planning and management capabilities of staff within the education system and upgrading the skills of teachers and supervisory staff. The physical environment will be radically improved by building new classrooms, providing sanitary facilities and boundary walls. Extensive work with learning textbooks and learning modules, and their storage, will also be provided.

(British Council 1991: §1.2)

Bishop Grosseteste College tendered for the part of the programme aimed at 'upgrading the skills of teachers and supervisory staff'. The structure of the project entailed staff from the College working as consultants to the Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing, Jamshoro, which administers initial and in-service teacher training throughout the province. There were two specific tasks to be achieved. One was to devise, establish, monitor and improve a one month's in-service training course for all primary school teachers in two pilot areas to be taught by local supervisors. The other was to devise, run and evaluate a sequence of three separate in-service courses for all the supervisors of primary education in these areas. The urban area involved was one district of Karachi, and the rural area, over 200 miles away in interior Sindh.

SPEDP was a development from two earlier Primary Education Programmes in Pakistan, both involving World Bank loans (PEP1 1980-1985 and PEP2 1985-1992). The evaluation of these programmes identified the role of primary supervision as influential in improving quality in education, but castigated the locally arranged in-service courses as a lost opportunity 'in need of the most radical reappraisal' (Government of Pakistan 1983:44).

The structure and scheduling of the training programme for SPEDP, based on a cascade model, was already delineated in the project description (PC1) which accompanied the formal agreement, but the content and conduct of all the training was to be the focus of consultancy support. A long-term consultant from Bishop Grosseteste College was seconded to the project for two years and additional short-term consultancies were scheduled for a total of 22 months. Study fellows from Pakistan were also timetabled to work in the College at different times during the pilot for periods of 5 weeks, 3 months and 1 year.

Inevitably, perhaps, the original schedule could not be adhered to exactly. Many delays were caused by difficulties in securing the cash flow of project funds through the Government of Sindh, the Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing, and the Colleges of Elementary Education which monitored local training. At one point SPEDP was designated a 'problem project' by the World Bank, and all further consultancies were cancelled by the ODA until more counterpart funding from the Government of Sindh was forthcoming. Even when the money was apparently in the correct account, delays seemed endemic at a national level. Yet it is worth noting at the outset that, despite some initial surprise, course participants have at times worked long days through Ramadan, without weekend breaks and throughout the sweltering holiday month of June, in order to make up for time lost by bureaucratic problems. The full projected training of supervisors was eventually achieved on schedule, and the course materials have been fully revised for use in new areas, in consultation with those who were part of the pilot programme.



## The Training of Supervisors within SPEDP

In the earlier PEPs supervisors had received exactly the same training that they were later expected to deliver to teachers. In some cases the same people received the same training in each of three successive years (Government of Pakistan 1983:44). SPEDP adopted a new model in which the supervisors were to receive additional training specifically focused on the generic skills of primary school supervision.

The initial plans also indicated that supervisory training should take place after the primary teachers' courses were established and running. However, in fact the two training threads were interwoven from the start. In part this was a deliberate pro-active strategy to support the supervisors in following up the the results of their training of teachers through visiting schools. Early contact with supervisors on the first master trainers' course indicated that many would need to develop their own knowledge of the primary curriculum and their view of their own professional role, if they were to support methodological changes in the primary schools. Hastening their specific training seemed highly desirable. Bringing forward the training of supervisors was also a strategic response in reaction to perpetual difficulties in securing a steady flow of money from the Government of Sindh to fund the training programme. Supervisors' courses involved only about 100 people and few material resources, whereas primary teachers' courses might involve up to 750 teachers and 175 master trainers at any one time and require extensive supplies of expendable materials for the construction of teaching and learning aids. Supervisory courses therefore provided a tactical means of both maintaining the momentum of the training, and increasing the effectiveness of supervisors' visits to schools, even when financial constraints threatened the objective of providing training for every primary teacher individually.

Supervisors who also worked as master trainers on the primary school teacher courses would thus have had 10 weeks of training and contributed to 8 courses for primary teachers in just over 2 years (see figure 1:1). In addition to these specific training events, supervisors were also supported in their work through consultancy visits to schools and courses, as well as intermittent meetings, seminars and one day workshops.

Date	PST course	SPE training	other related activities
<b>1993</b>			
January			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK training of RPs (12 people for 5 weeks)</li> <li>• writing PST course and training 35 RPs (2 weeks)</li> </ul>
March			
April		MT training course 1 (175 people for 2 weeks)	
October		<b>SPE course 1 'The Curriculum'</b> (100 people for 2 weeks)	
<b>1994</b>			
January			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK fellowship on the supervisors' role (2 people for 3 months)</li> <li>• consultancy tour to explore the supervisory role in different provinces</li> </ul>
February	1st cycle	MT training course 2 (175 people for 2 weeks)	
March	2nd cycle		
April	3rd cycle		
June			
August	4th cycle	<b>SPE course 2 'The Advisory Role'</b> (100 people for 2 weeks)	
September			
October	5th cycle		
November			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK study fellows for BPhil in primary education (8x12 months)</li> </ul>
December	6th cycle	<b>SPE course 3 'School Development'</b> (100 people for 2 weeks)	
<b>1995</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local development of SPE manual</li> </ul>
March	7th cycle		
May	8th cycle		
October			
<b>1996</b>			
November		Further impact review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop HT course and materials with SPEs</li> </ul>

**Figure 1:1 Schedule of Supervisors' Training in SPEDP, 1993-6**

The content of the courses for supervisors was designed on the basis of a needs analysis of the supervisory cohort at the end of each consultancy period. While the supervisors were being introduced to their role as master trainers for the primary school teachers' course it soon became apparent that few had a secure grasp of the full primary curriculum or of varied teaching methodologies for pupils of all ages. Consequently the first supervisory course provided an overview of every area of the primary curriculum, focusing on the opportunities for developing interactive styles of teaching and learning. Demonstration lessons in the training centre and on video were used to introduce skills of positive appraisal of teachers at work. The second course developed observational work, including observing actual lessons in local schools. The college-based part of the second course focused sharply on the skills needed to inspect schools and advise teachers how to improve standards. The final course introduced an annual cycle of school development planning through which supervisors could guide and support continuous whole school development in schools within their beat. As part of this course target schools were designated for particular attention in each sub-division where a supervisory team could meet regularly to evaluate progress.

Follow-up consultancy a year later allowed us to evaluate the impact of the original work through interviewing supervisors and visiting target schools. This time was also used to revise the original courses. In the second version, the same three themes of 'teaching and learning', 'the role of the supervisor' and 'school development' were used but developed simultaneously on each course. The key change was that individual and group target schools were to be identified in the first course, and the actual effectiveness of the supervisors' actions within the target schools could then be tracked throughout the training period. In this way the new course design seeks to encourage the application of ideas directly into schools. It is thus intended to reproduce and extend the success of some of the most assured supervisors in the original areas, one of whom concluded:

"We succeed because we see the results of what we say. We see children working with understanding and we see teachers taking interest. We have worked together and we have worked with others. Especially we work with HMs [headmasters/

headmistresses] and also with our SDEO [sub-divisional education officer]. Each school is different one and we do not try to make it same.”

(SPE interview 1994)

The pilot project was extended for one year with the intention of achieving the goal of training every primary teacher in the two designated areas. Between January 1994 and June 1995 over 4600 (77%) of the teachers in the pilot areas did receive training. However, at this point funding problems seemed insuperable and so no more courses could be run. Instead, time was used to help consolidate the gains in the initial areas through supporting initiatives developed by the supervisors themselves. These have included setting up their own in-service courses, writing support materials for headteachers, following through school development plans, and extending work with local communities and alternative providers of education.

An expanded programme, SPEDP2, eventually began in 1997. This included a two-year project extending the training courses into three adjacent districts while also supporting the inception of school development centres as focal points for continued work in each sub-division of the original districts. The school development component of SPEDP2 was closely linked to other components including work on developing teaching support materials, community participation in education, and sound management and monitoring systems.

### **Research focus**

I have been involved in this project since January 1993 spending up to half of each year fully timetabled to SPEDP, and at all times ensuring continuity and development of the project from the UK institution. To date, I have spent sixteen months working in Pakistan on eleven separate consultancies. Except for one journey to North West Frontier Province (NWFP) to compare primary education management structures developed from the initial PEP programmes, all my observations are taken from Sindh and most are from the project areas themselves.

The role of the supervisor in primary education was instantly fascinating. Here was an ever-changing group of people from diverse backgrounds with no job description, no training or induction, and often no recent primary school teaching experience, who were, by the fluke of the area in which they worked, suddenly charged with acting as change agents who would instigate and nurture a radical shift in the organisation of teaching and learning in local primary schools. How did they view their initial and changing roles? What factors hindered or helped them in fulfilling the new roles assigned to them under SPEDP? What training and support did they themselves need? Can supervisors actually be, or become, the key to the development of primary education that Pakistan needs? These are the questions I sought to answer practically and pragmatically through every aspect of the work in which I was involved and from which this research study grew.

At the end of the first PEP programme in Pakistan the evaluation of primary school supervision was optimistic, if equivocal:

Here again the evidence of the P.E.P. is conclusive. Supervision is a success. It remains limited, imperfect and partial in its evolution, but it promises to be just what schools, the teachers and the children need.

(Government of Pakistan 1983:41)

My early consultancies in Pakistan provided a less encouraging picture. Discussions with a number of senior officers and educationalists gave rise to a grim consensus summarised below.

- Most supervisors are merely high school teachers unwillingly transferred into these posts. They have good qualifications, but they have no experience of primary school teaching.
- Supervisors do not influence primary education positively. They do not even try. If they did, they would be prevented by the teachers' associations and perhaps transferred to a worse post even than that which they now hold.
- Supervisors just do what their commanding officers tell them

to do! They collect data from schools and do other general administrative chores. If they were not given work to do, they would pursue their own private interests instead. They visit schools only to collect data, to drink chae and to leave their name in the visitors' book. Some may even expect gifts for a favourable report.

David Pennycuik, writing a summary of recent research evidence for the ODA, states that:

... little or no empirical evidence is available to judge the impact of inspection and supervision. It appears that evaluation research in this area is desirable; it is possible that appropriate training measures would be effective.

(Pennycuik 1993:15)

As SPEDP developed it became apparent that little evaluation of the supervisory work was planned in this project either. Both the mid-term review (Penny 1994) and the final evaluation report (Prenton 1995) focus almost exclusively on evaluating the effectiveness of the primary teachers' training course and its influence on teaching styles and teachers' beliefs. The attitudes, understanding and achievements of the supervisors are scrutinised only in so far as they reflect their work as master trainers for the primary teachers' courses.

It is my aim, through this study, to write a new chapter in the story of the on-going evolution of supervision in Pakistan. I shall explore how far the vignette I was first offered mirrors both the practice and the potential of supervisors in Sindh. Through challenging this prevalent stereotype I hope to provide some 'desirable evaluation research' and elucidate aspects of the 'training and other measures' which have helped, and could continue to help, supervisors to realise the promising signs observed within PEP and further developed during SPEDP. It is my intention to focus particularly on the supervisors' personal perspectives and reflections on their work so that their own voices can be heard in the continuing debate about ways and means of improving the quality of primary education in Pakistan. This research attempts to provide an illuminative evaluation of the developing

role of supervisors, not a specific evaluation of a particular training programme.

## Research Questions

My initial research questions are thus simply stated in terms which seek to check and challenge the initial caricature of supervisors, as described above:

- Who are the supervisors?
- Why are they rarely effective?
- What is it that they themselves want to do?
- What has the training achieved?

This group of questions specifically explores the practice of supervision in Sindh and will be answered with reference to a study of the supervisors who took part in the training under SPEDP.

Answers to these specific questions will lead to discussion of more far reaching questions concerning the purpose of supervision in general, and its potential within the education system of Pakistan in particular:

- How can supervision influence school improvement?
- How can supervision in Pakistan be made more effective?

This research therefore aims to provide an initial study of supervisors in two districts during a period in which they were involved in a programme of training and development. These empirical findings, together with an analysis of the theoretical background of supervision and school improvement, will then be combined to suggest how future programmes of sectoral reform and training might seek to increase the effectiveness of supervisory personnel.

## The Supervision of Primary Education in Pakistan

### Introduction

This chapter provides the background to the study. It begins with a brief sketch of the achievements and problems of primary education in Pakistan and outlines the history of the emergence of specific supervisory personnel. The primary education projects developed in Pakistan since the early 1980s are introduced, focusing on the role that each has envisaged for supervisory staff. Previous research into supervisors and their work is outlined with particular reference to Pritchard 1975; Bhutto 1979; Government of Pakistan 1983; Warwick and Reimers 1995.

In development terms, Pakistan is an enigma which defies external expectations. The economy has burgeoned, while education has lagged behind, thus confounding both those who claim economic development demands an educated populace, and those who believe it presages social progress. The country as a whole has enjoyed good economic growth, with income per capita comparable to that in India and Sri Lanka. However, social indicators are weak and improvements very slow. In terms of social achievements, including education, Pakistan is more readily comparable to far poorer countries in the region: overall literacy rates are similar to those in Bangladesh and primary school enrolment has remained almost static between 1985 and 1990, a time when most countries recorded significant expansion (see figure 2:1).

Weiner and Noman (1991) summarise, but do not explore, the distinctive situation for Pakistan:

The broad contours of Pakistan's socio-economic development are well known. High and impressive growth rates of GNP have been accompanied by an embarrassing performance in the social sphere. This lop-sided development is brought into sharp focus by the contrasting fact of Pakistan having the seventh highest growth rate in the world, whereas it remains near the bottom of the social



indicators league... Among 150 nations, Pakistan ranks 130 as far as school-age children attending school, 120 in literacy rate, and 118 in per capita expenditure on health. There is, in brief, a wide gulf between Pakistan's economic growth and social development performance.

(Weiner and Noman 1991:209)

Countries	\$ per capita GNP 1987	education spending % GNP 1985	gross female enrolment % 1985	gross primary enrolment %		adult literacy 1995
				1985	1990	
Afghanistan	--	--	19	20.7	24	31.5
Bhutan	--	--	12.8	18.8	25	42.2
Nepal	160	2.8	50	66	82	27.5
Bangladesh	160	1.9	49.8	47.6	77	38.1
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>37.8</b>
India	400	3.3	79.3	80.8	--	52
Sri Lanka	400	3.0	101.5	100.1	--	90.2

**Figure 2:1 Social and Economic Indicators for Selected Countries in South Asia<sup>1</sup>**

### Popular Opinion of Education in Pakistan

“TEACHERS ? CHEATERS! It is the same word, yes? That is what they taught me. I can read. It is the same letters that make the words, and the words fit the same people. Teachers - cheaters.

They cheat you of time. They say when you go to school, but they themselves are not there. If you are late you are beaten, if they are late nothing happens, or maybe you are beaten for missing your lessons.

<sup>1</sup> The figures for GNP are taken from King and Hill (1993) derived from World Bank *World Tables* (1989). All other figures have been drawn from UNESCO database sources to ensure comparability. Figures for 1985 are taken from Lockheed and Verspoor (1991); figures for 1990 from World Bank (1995b); and figures for adult literacy from [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (July 1999).

They cheat you of money. If my child misses one day of school the teacher says he must give 2 Rs - 2 Rs! - to come back into class. When the exams are coming you must give presents. My daughter went to school in a blue jumper. The teacher said 'That is good jumper, where you get it?' She said 'My auntie made it'. Then the teacher said 'Tell your auntie to make one for me!'

They cheat you of learning. What I learn in school, what use is it to me now? I speak good English, yes? English I learned myself, talking in this taxi. What I learned in school, I cannot say."

(Taxi driver, Karachi, 1993)

This vivid, witty diatribe was one of my earliest indications of the popular view of the state of government primary schools in Sindh. It is a view often reflected by those who work in and for government schools, as well as those who choose to have nothing to do with them. Thus one of the most senior educationalists in Karachi, sometime minister of education for Sindh, corroborated the taxi driver's view in an article for a popular newspaper, although it is noticeable that she apportioned less blame to the teachers themselves:

The government schools are in a state of decay. The teachers are left to cheat or die of unrewarded dedication and neglect; the students are left to the vagaries of the surrounding stench in the slum areas, to traffic around the school, and traffickers in the alleys, river beds and hawkers between school and home.

(Anita Ghulam Ali 1994 "Teaching Those that the Government Won't" The News International, Karachi 21.1.94 pVIII)

## **Enrolment and Achievement**

All who write about primary education in Pakistan agree that the situation is both dire and intransigent. Enrolment and retention, particularly for girls in rural areas, are amongst the lowest in Asia, while achievement, in terms

of adult literacy, is virtually static. Public confidence in the state educational system is minimal and anyone who can afford to do so will seek alternative methods of educating their own children. Exclusive, expensive private schools have always catered for the children of the wealthy elite but increasingly, small, inexpensive, private establishments run by non-governmental organisations are beginning to provide alternative access to education for larger numbers of children. Recent estimates (World Bank 1997) suggest almost half (49%) the primary school students in urban Sindh in 1996 attended non-governmental schools with the average fee being just 100-150 Rs per month (£1.20-£2.00). Access to alternative education is more rare in rural areas where only 4% of children in primary school currently attend non-governmental establishments, although this figure too is rising.

The statistics available are often partial, conflicting and difficult to interpret. The situation is graphically illustrated in an extract from a recent article in an English language newspaper published in Karachi which casts doubt on the validity of any estimate of literacy:

The rate of literacy is questionable and inaccurate official statistics is barely 36% which includes semi-literates and even those who can only sign their names, instead of using thumb impressions. Actual state of affairs is far more distressing. The situation, purported to be existing ... is that only 12% of Pakistanis can be called literate, and out of these, only 5% can be called educated and about 1% highly educated. With the standards of education falling over the years to such an extent that now it is only a matter of conjecture that we call our graduates, educated.

("Literacy Campaign: Message of the Movement" Dawn, Tuesday Review, Karachi: December 22-28, 1992)

The census of 1981 assessed adult literacy at 26.2%, a modest increase from 19% in 1961. No census was conducted in 1991 because of the unstable political situation, and attempts to hold one each year thereafter were thwarted until 1997. Following the 1997 census, literacy has been estimated at 40% (Government of Pakistan 1998) which suggests a substantial move forward. However caution is urged in interpreting, or comparing, literacy figures unless both the method of assessment and the population included

is made clear. Not only may the 'literacy' recorded be less than fully functional, but the practice of including all people over 10 years of age as 'adults' means that the figure may be further inflated (as noted in UNICEF 1993). An even more worrying observation is that both the total and the rate of increase still lag behind figures from countries in the same region or the same income level, as indicated in figure 2:1. This slow progress towards universal literacy must be a matter of particular concern for Pakistan.

Any overall figures also mask considerable variations between sub-groups of the population: urban and rural; male and female; rich and poor. For example the World Bank (1991) contrasts an urban male literacy figure of 55%, with rural female literacy of just 5%. It also quotes the gross participation rate in primary education in Sindh as just 35%, while commenting that the figure of 50% for the whole of Pakistan is still one of the lowest in the World. The goal of universal primary education, accepted as a basic principle for national planning in 1947 and featured in every five year plan since then, remains as elusive as ever (Bray 1983). Both the National Education Policy (1992-2002) and the Eighth Five Year Plan (1993-99) share common goals for 2002 including universalising primary education, removing imbalances in achievement due to gender and location, and raising the adult literacy rate to 70%. Not one of these goals would appear to be attainable given current figures and past rates of progress.

Since 1991 the annual school census for the collection of data from all government schools has been computerised in each province using a similar Education Management Information System (known as SEMIS in Sindh). There have been considerable problems with the verification of data, however trends are beginning to emerge. The actual number of children in primary schools is rising steadily. Although, with annual increases of 3-4% from the mid 1980s matching almost exactly the current estimates of population expansion, it is difficult to justify the rise in estimated participation rate, quoted as 71.3% in 1991 by Farooq (1993).

An additional concern is the claim by Jayaweera (1987) that any rise in numbers is predominantly due to male enrolment. Her figures indicate that the number of girls in Pakistan's primary schools, as a percentage of the

number on roll, is unique in Asia in showing a steady decrease from 35% in 1970 through 30% in 1975 to 26% in 1980. Even Farooq's more optimistic estimates show no increase in the overall percentage of girls in the school population indicating a static, and possibly inflated, 33% from 1987 to 1991.

This meagre level of female representation is at least stable throughout classes 1, 2 and 3 with the same proportion of girls and boys dropping out of education. In most other Asian countries, even Japan and South Korea (the only two that can claim universal primary enrolment) the proportion of girls in school drops sharply in those earliest years. However, World Bank figures (1991) suggest that only half the children of Pakistan enrolled in class 1 will complete their primary education through to class 5. Calculations based on UNESCO figures indicate a third is a more accurate estimate (in Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). Again, any overall figure masks the fact that the retention rates are lower amongst the poor, the rural and the female school populations and can also vary with the different cultures and ethnic groups. In rural Sindh a mere tenth of the children reaching class five are female.

As if enrolment and retention rates were not low enough, there is also little guarantee that the children on roll are actually being taught. Absenteeism amongst both pupils and teachers is rife, though often unrecorded. Reimers' research (1993) included a spot check of 1000 classrooms which found 9% of teachers and 20% of pupils absent. In my own work one village girls' school I visited recently had 190 on roll and just 19 present. Visiting a series of schools in Karachi during the summer term, after the end of year exams, I saw occasional impromptu classes established for minute groups of children but many schools contained no pupils at all. Of all the classes I have visited in Sindh most have had fewer than 30 children present, though sometimes 80 or more on roll. Reasons given for absenteeism have included poor transport, lack of parental support, children's domestic or economic duties, local or religious holidays and also, intriguingly, a lack of authority in the school to 'remove' children from the roll, even if they are known to have moved elsewhere or opted out of education altogether.

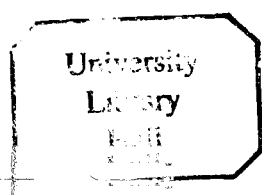
Other schools I have visited have had pupils in plenty but too few staff, resulting in children being sent home or monitored by older pupils - each,

in one school, carrying a large stick to maintain discipline. The reasons given for the teachers' absences include casual leave, long leave, sick leave, pregnancy, attendance on training courses for census duty and the presumed unwillingness of certain teachers to work in distant schools or unsettled areas.

There are even schools which permanently have too many staff for the number of pupils on roll. The overall student teacher ratio of 20:1 in Sindh masks enormous variations. In the collection of data for SEMIS (1997) some schools declared a staffing ratio of 5:1. Teachers tend to congregate in convenient safe city schools, leaving less accessible or less comfortable schools chronically understaffed. A transfer order for a member of staff to attend another school in need of additional staffing may be countered by absenteeism or contested by the teachers' association. Finally there are a number of 'ghost' or 'on paper' schools which seem to exist solely for the purpose of allowing staff to draw salaries, and which do not even pretend to be functional. SEMIS 1997 reported 7% of all Sindh's primary schools were closed (21% of girls' school), yet still employed some 1423 teachers.

For those children actually attending school with a regular teacher the prospects are still poor. The mid-term evaluation of the first Primary Education Project (PEP1) was categorical, stating that: 'There is no doubt though that what is offered to the children [in school] is largely irrelevant, highly ineffective and extremely inefficient' (Government of Pakistan 1983:5). Actual achievements assessed against the curriculum at the end of every year were slightly improved in project schools, but remained shockingly low, confirming that the quality of education received in primary schools is very poor indeed. The report quotes from the World Bank mission of October 1983:

With reference to the quality of the educational product most of those associated with P.E.P. had no illusions about the standards being achieved, but few were prepared for the actual findings: Even the select few who stay in school through Classes 4 and 5 (and are the elite of rural students) acquire only a smattering of the material in the syllabus. The large numbers who drop out in the initial years presumably learn less. The return on the



investment in rural education (on the part of both the children and Government) appears to be effectively nil. Drastic improvements are needed.

(cited in Government of Pakistan 1983:44-45)

## **Primary Schools**

The conditions within schools vary enormously. Some are housed in spacious, though sparsely equipped, rooms, in buildings with electricity, latrines, drinking water and a perimeter wall. Others are crowded into any available space including decrepit buildings, building sites and corridors. 'Shelterless' schools, 27% of the total in Sindh, hold lessons in katcha rooms built of unbaked mud bricks or simply in the shade of a village tree. The newest buildings are not always the best, with modern materials often providing little insulation from the intense heat which regularly exceeds 50°C in interior Sindh during the summer. In urban areas, school buildings are often used for two separate schools, working in shifts, with completely different staff. A school site in Karachi typically holds eight to twelve schools in two storey buildings around a central, dusty, quadrangle. No resources can be left in place as one school gives way to the next. Any materials must be taken home or securely locked away.

Lockheed and Verspoor summarise research studies to assert that: 'The single most important determinant of primary school enrollment is the proximity of a school to primary-age children' (1991:146). In consequence, the World Bank has had a major school building programme in rural Pakistan since the 1980s with over half the original budget for the first Primary Education Programme (PEP1) allocated for 'physical facilities' including new schools and additional classrooms (Government of Pakistan 1983:37). Only in the late 1990s has a detailed school mapping system been undertaken to ascertain the actual needs for additional provision. The Social Action Programme 1992-3, coordinating development throughout the country, set an ambitious objective of establishing over 55,000 new schools in a six-year period.

Mosque schools were introduced into mainstream education in 1987 as a

development of the traditional Maktab and Muhalla schools which have provided religious education to young Muslims for centuries. Their purpose was to extend educational opportunities, especially in rural areas, and they currently serve some 12% of the primary school population in Sindh. Such schools were originally intended to provide the full curriculum up to class 3, with additional religious teaching from the local imam, and depended on community support to provide the building, books and a novice teacher. Using local resources efficiently has been both the strength and the weakness of the system which evolved. The quality of instruction from the imam has varied even more than that of other teachers (Warwick *et al.* 1992), and community support has not always been most forthcoming where there was least access to other schools. Thus, for example, in one village where we work there is both a fine, newly built mosque school and an expanding shelterless mosque school in addition to the boys' and girls' schools already in existence. In contrast, a neighbouring village with a similar population has no school at all. The significant difference seems to be that the local zamindar (landowner) of the first village firmly believes that mass education is socially beneficial but, he claims, his neighbour believes it is essentially subversive and could destabilise the working population - so the opening of any school at all is effectively forbidden.

Mosque schools have always had their own system of supervision provided by young male primary teachers promoted to be resource persons of mosque schools (RPMS) but paid on a lower scale than supervisors of primary schools (SPE) because of their more modest qualifications. Initially these men were charged with the task of instigating local support for a building and pupils and then finding and training a suitable young man in the village, educated to matriculation level, to act as teacher. The administration of mosque schools has now been absorbed within the mainstream of government schools. The title of the post of RPMS remains, but the duties now appear to be exactly the same as that of SPE in servicing already established schools.

As co-educational schools, mosque schools have been particularly successful in providing increased access to education for poor rural girls. Traditionally schools are nominally single sex, though many of the new schools are being opened as co-educational. However, parents may prefer to send all their



children to the same school in the same shift. So, in many urban schools, and some rural ones, girls and boys are educated side by side. Indeed in one of the project schools of Karachi, a boys' school in name, 90% of the children and all of the staff including the headteacher, are female. SEMIS figures for January 1997 show that, while only 0.5% of boys are in girls' schools, 17% of girls are currently in boys' schools. In addition 40% of boys and 30% of girls are in officially mixed schools. Thus almost half the primary school population is now in schools which are effectively, if not officially, co-educational.

This blurring of the distinctions between girls' and boys' schools has increased the access of girls to school places, but it may not have increased their access to education as much as expected. For example, in one private school I visited which had recently admitted girls to the secondary sector, the girls were sitting on one side of the room behind a curtain from where they could neither see the blackboard and demonstration bench nor be seen by the teacher conducting the lesson. In primary schools there is no physical barrier between the boys and the girls, but Dr. Muhammad Memon, conducting research within the Primary Education Programmes (unpublished), cites girls' passivity and teachers' attitudes in schools as two significant factors influencing the poor record of educational achievement for girls in Sindh.

### **Curriculum, Text Books and Teaching Styles**

Primary education extends from class 1 to class 5 with children enrolling at six years old. Younger children, however, are sometimes catered for in 'kachi' classes, or classes for the 'unadmitted', though there is no specific curriculum for them. Secondary education begins, for some 15% of the population, at class 6 and is examined through matriculation in class 10 and intermediate in class 12. End-of-year exams were formerly used to determine which pupils could progress into the next class, and which should repeat a year. Recently, promotion through classes 1, 2 and 3 has been made automatic with the explicit aim of reducing the drop-out rate amongst children who are required to repeat a year.

The curriculum is centralised. The last major revision took place in the

early 1970s when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was prime minister and, rhetorically at least, it marked a westernisation of current practice with a strong swing towards empirical science and active learning. The Education Policy of 1972-80 stressed the need to revise the curriculum in order to 'eliminate overloading, to emphasize learning of concepts and skills, and to encourage observation, exploration, experimentation, practical work and creative expression' (quoted in UNESCO 1973). By 1975 the resulting curriculum included language, Islamiyat, mathematics, science, social studies, health and physical education and art and craft. It has since been supported by brief teachers' notes, written in the 1980s, and by more frequently updated, prescribed, textbooks for each province. Not all pupils have access to text books and another means of targeting rural girls' achievements has been to provide them with text books free of charge.

A teaching kit of one hundred items varying from models and masks to candles and counters, all made of indigenous materials and stored in a termite-proof, metal box, was widely distributed to help teachers in their task of realising the new curriculum. These items were designed to make 'abstract ideas more concrete' and to encourage pupils to 'think and reflect' because, as the accompanying manual continues:

Thinking begins when something is incomplete or unfulfilled. We think in order to reach a conclusion. When conclusions or answers are already known, we do not think. There is no genuine need for further thinking in such a closed situation. Thinking is a search for answers. Thus, it is through the involvement of the learner in the activities, seeking to identify problems, searching for their solutions, trying to interpret in one's own way, that a proper climate for understanding can be developed. Learning by doing is, therefore the basis of all learning.

(Government of Pakistan 1976:6)

However, though over 55,000 kit boxes were distributed, Warwick *et al.* (1992) found, on interviewing 100 teachers, that only half had a kit box available to them and only half of these teachers had used any items from it, while only a quarter had had training to do so.

Nonetheless, reading the curricula and textbooks, or watching lessons in progress, it is difficult to justify those initial claims of 1973 for an active learning approach to a reasonable and relevant curriculum. The curriculum itself is vast. By class 5, for example, children are expected to study not only atomic structure and energy transfer in science but also mental development in health education while solving problems involving all four arithmetic operations on both fractions and decimals for mathematics. The curriculum involves many concepts, particularly in science and mathematics, that primary teachers have not necessarily mastered through their own limited secondary education. Indeed, in the Primary Education Project of the early 1980s, it was found that only 25% of the teachers on the training had an 'adequate' grasp of these subjects (Government of Pakistan 1983:31). It is not perhaps surprising that the dominant mode of instruction remains didactic and involves teachers, and then children, learning passages from the text books by rote while the teaching kit box remains locked away in the headteacher's room for fear that use will damage its contents or provoke unanswerable questions. One lesson I observed recently involved the teacher drilling pupils to remember that the Earth's surface is ' $\frac{4}{3}$ ' water - a simple visual slip for the intended fraction,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , but no one challenged the nonsense it made: neither the headteacher, supervisors and lecturers who accompanied me nor the pupils in the class. Another lesson involved pupils deftly solving problems with fractions. Impressive, until I discovered that this was the fourth time during the term that they had completed this very exercise in their books.

As early as 1983 it was proposed in the sixth five-year plan to integrate most of the curriculum in the first three classes in order to make it more relevant and more achievable. Ten years later the first integrated textbooks were available in Sindh for classes 1 and 2 covering all subjects except mathematics and English. The exercises had, however, simply been culled from existing texts and, while they may reduce the physical load and financial burden through combining language, social studies, science and Islamiyat in one book, they do not increase the relevance of the material for the learner. A teachers' text of additional activities is being produced through the Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing, but it is still not generally available. Thus neither teachers nor supervisors have access to the rationale to enable them to make best use of this innovation. Our courses

have shown that many did not even know of its existence in 1993. Indeed the front cover of the early editions proclaimed that it was an Urdu language textbook, not Integrated Studies at all. This error, which should have been removed at proof-reading stage, caused considerable confusion to buyer and vendor in the bazaar, and to teacher and supervisor in the classroom.

There have been other changes in the curriculum since 1975, though few of these are fully documented. The Islamization movement of the late 1970s affected curriculum delivery, without resulting in explicit curriculum reform. For example, the curriculum guides prescribe participatory study of local songs and dances, but current practice prohibits both singing and dancing. Art and craft, too, have almost disappeared from the primary timetable. They do now have a place within the aims of the integrated curriculum, though not within the textbook itself where an observational drawing activity is reduced to joining together dots which form the outline and veining of a stereotypical image of a leaf. The most recent curriculum change was to introduce English as a foreign language for all primary classes from 1992. New textbooks have been produced for this subject which attempt to integrate teachers' notes alongside pupils' exercises.

Benavot (1992), studying the curricula of 130 developing countries commented on the remarkable consistency of content, weighting and methodology. The most significant difference is, he claims, the number of languages studied for 35% of school time. For the children of Sindh this number is currently four. Initial teaching takes place in either Sindhi or Urdu with English introduced from class 1, Arabic from class 3, and Urdu (or Sindhi) from class 4. Thus by the end of primary school, pupils are expected to have gained literacy in a local language, the national language, an international language and a religious language - each with its own distinctive script. This is no mean feat of intellect, memory and fine motor skills! But it is also one that, for boys in the city at least, provides possibilities for instant application and practice - in contrast with much of the rest of the curriculum.

## Primary School Teachers

Primary school teachers are criticised from all sides. Parents, supervisors, the government, the press and teachers themselves all contribute to the vilification. The seventh five-year plan (1988-93), claimed 'most teachers lack enthusiasm, motivation, dedication and preparedness' while the press add the taint of corruption to the charge of indolence:

However, most parents find the standard of education in the government schools very low. The teachers appointed have come to this profession only as a matter of securing a job, since no other was within their reach. These also they acquired on recommendation, and as such they are without commitment and dedication towards their profession ...

(Mozafer Islam 1992 "Literacy Campaign: Message of the Movement" Dawn, Tuesday Review, Karachi: December 22-28, p4-6)

TFT [The Friday Times] has acquired a list of over 16,000 appointments made so far in the education department under the 'relaxation' policy. The vacancies available were around 7,000. The figure of illegal appointments, however, is said to be around 22,000. In many cases, not only the rules, but also the qualifications required have been 'relaxed'. 'Teachers' are being appointed who are only able to affix their thumb-imprints on their salary tabs. While a majority have been posted in different grades at various schools and colleges in the province, many simply collect their salaries every month while waiting for a vacancy to crop up. ...

("PM's Education Plan for Sindh Spells Disaster" The Friday Times, Islamabad: April 8-14, 1993)

The standard qualification for primary school teachers is matriculation and a primary teaching certificate (PTC) gained through following a one-year course of further secondary school studies and pedagogy, including a modest amount of teaching practice. However, high school graduates may be appointed directly as assistant teachers and, in rural areas, take on the running of a newly opened girls' school with no direct training or support at

all. A recent 'crash' programme of three months initial training has been introduced for serving teachers in rural areas and organised by the BCEW. These courses have contributed substantially to a drop in the number of unqualified women teachers in rural Sindh from 60% in 1993, to 36% in 1996 (SEMIS 1997).

Typically, teachers once appointed will then continue to study for further qualifications while in post with the aim of being promoted out of primary education and into secondary teaching. At about Rs 2000 a month (c. £25), the salary of a primary school teacher is low, and few earn as much as the average salary achieved in manufacturing (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). As one teacher on a SPEDP course explained: "Three or four thousand, I could live on that, but two thousand is very difficult for a family." Of economic necessity, therefore, many teachers take on second jobs. It is illegal to have two jobs in government schools, even though teaching in shift schools would make this possible in some areas, so the additional work is likely to be in the private sector or outside education altogether. Thus teaching may not be the sole professional concern of all primary teachers. Closed schools in rural areas provide evidence that, for some salaried teachers, their chosen 'profession' is of no concern at all.

Occasionally there are more optimistic sketches of the teaching profession, citing unusually dedicated individuals (Curle 1966, Siddiqui 1987, Farah 1996). These, however, are rare and often juxtaposed with depressing accounts of poor practice:

Although this might seem to imply a criticism of the teachers, it was surprising how many of them had continued their dedicated and poorly rewarded service for many years. These persons had a genuine professional pride, which is perhaps the most creative and sustaining force in any vocational group.

(Curle 1966:151)

I too have seen evidence of primary teachers' diligence and professional pride. For example, attendance on the first SPEDP training courses for primary teachers averaged 98%, and in most centres punctuality was significantly better than on any of the courses we had held involving

supervisors or lecturers. No teacher on any course has yet proved unable to read or write, and many have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment and professionalism under desperately difficult circumstances. It would be naive to suppose that there is no illicit patronage and profiteering but, within SPEDP, this has not yet been made especially apparent by the cohorts of primary teachers themselves. Parents have indeed complained to me that teachers periodically demand 'gifts' of a few rupees from pupils, while teachers say that a transfer of job could cost them several thousand. However, the censorious problems that have occasionally beset the project, including the commandeering of vehicles, charges of sexual harassment and suggestions that privileges and payouts would be in order, have all occurred at much higher levels of the educational hierarchy.

### **Educational Administration**

In the past, priorities within the education sector have tended to discriminate against primary education. In most countries the quantum of resources earmarked for the primary stage is the largest, with decreasing proportions spent on secondary and higher stages. In Pakistan, the pyramid has been inverted.

(Fifth five year plan 1978-1983, quoted in Government of Pakistan, 1991a: 1.2)

Primary education has been slow to gain distinctive identity and status within the education system as a whole. Tensions persist between rival goals of investment in a highly educated elite group to lead the nation and in providing sound education for the mass of the population. Five-year education plans since 1965 have repeatedly insisted that the balance needs to be redressed in favour of providing an extensive and reliable foundation to education, but the lack of status and structure for primary education has meant that, even where funding was allocated, it has seldom been used in full. Since 1988 the proportion of the education budget earmarked for primary has been some 40% of the total, but the actual proportion of expenditure achieved is still estimated at only 27% (Farooq 1993). Education funding as a whole has remained at about 2.2% of the gross national product throughout the last twenty years, despite agreements to try to reach the

UNESCO target of 4%.

Within the agreed national framework, each province, under an educational secretary, has a degree of autonomy and individuality. For the administration of schools, provinces are further divided into divisions and then districts and sub-divisions. In 1995 Sindh, later than the other provinces, introduced specific directors of primary education (DPE) at the divisional level. The first woman was appointed to one such post in 1999 in Karachi, where 69% of the primary teaching force is female (SEMIS 1997). Within the districts, below the level of DPE, all educational personnel are further divided into those concerned with girls' schools and those with boys' schools. Mosque schools and other officially mixed schools are classified under the male section, with girls' schools making up just 15% of the total number of primary establishments. Supervisors are appointed to work in specific sub-divisions, reporting to the relevant sub-divisional education officer (SDEO) who, in turn, reports to a district education officer (DEO). A few women are appointed as supervisors for boys' schools in Karachi, but most of the posts in education are gender specific. Pakistan thus supports a parallel structure for the administration of girls' schools, staffed entirely by women. However with most mixed schools and, in urban areas, many women teachers falling under the male administration, this situation is becoming increasingly anomalous and further distorts the meagre promotion prospects for women in education.

One prevalent and problematic characteristic of all senior educational appointments in Sindh is their transience. There is a rapid turnover of personnel at all levels, which is further accelerated in times of political flux. During the first fifteen months of the project there were no less than four educational secretaries and, in one of the project areas, five sub-divisional educational officers (one of whom held that job for just ten days). In contrast, in NWFP during the same period, several of the most senior officers had been in post for over ten years and demonstrated a clear long-term perspective on the developments achieved and the difficulties faced.

The supervisors' role involves visiting a particular beat of schools. These beats vary enormously in size and accessibility. An urban supervisor may have a few local schools to cover or, in some cases, none at all; a rural



supervisor is more likely to have about twenty-five schools, extending over a considerable area, including several inaccessible by road. Male supervisors have a hire purchase system for motorbikes, female supervisors are expected to use public transport, where it exists. Projects funded by the World Bank have given some women supervisors access to shared jeeps. However such access has proved a source of contention since it is perceived as usurping the proper privilege of higher education officers and has, sometimes, been removed. In addition, travelling in a shared jeep is simply an inefficient way of working in schools arbitrarily divided into individual beats. Transport difficulties have repeatedly formed the most common single complaint made by supervisors to explain their apparent reluctance to undertake school visits (Pritchard 1975, Bhutto 1979, Penny 1994, World Bank 1995a).

### **The Emergence of a School Inspectorate**

Originally the inspection of primary schools was a British import imposed by the East India Company alongside the provision of funds for education. Thus inspection in the Indian subcontinent parallels, and in certain respects precedes, the developments of local boards, and later Her Majesty's Inspectorate, in Britain. One significant difference, however, was that in India the inspectors themselves were often imported too. As early as 1827 the Bombay Native Education Society recommended training British teachers in local languages and employing them as superintendents of education. Later Adam's Report of 1838, which was retrospectively so influential in reshaping the British educational policy to support vernacular primary education in the new provinces that make up the bulk of Pakistan today, specifically suggested employing inspectors to give 'advice, assistance, encouragements' to competent teachers (quoted in Mukerji 1951:124). A national system of inspectors reporting to provincial education departments was not, however, formalised until the Woods Despatch of 1854. This Despatch, attributed to John Stuart Mill who was then a clerk in the East India Office, marked a fundamental shift in policy towards supporting basic primary education for girls and boys, rather than a restricted, elitist, education for the few.

Sindh had been annexed by the East India company in 1843 and the first superintendent of schools was appointed in 1856 'to inspect the schools in winter, to conduct examinations and to reward the best pupils by scholarships or to recommend them for Government service' (Bhutto 1979:4).

Once a supervisory service was established, however, it was never seen as truly effective and later reports frequently demanded more, more sensitive, and in particular, more female, supervisors. The Hunter Commission of 1882 concluded enigmatically that 'in the present condition of female education in India, the visits of [male] Inspectors are sometimes not only futile, but a positive hindrance to progress' (quoted in Joshi and Shukla 1953:111). The imperative to employ more female supervisors was reiterated through the years and resulted in a number of British women teachers travelling to the subcontinent to take up posts as school inspectors. Even today, the appointment and deployment of women supervisors in rural areas remains particularly problematic. The rural district covered by SPEDP has a quota of women supervisors of just 10% of that of the male side, and even so has never been up to strength throughout the whole period of our contact with the area.

During the twentieth century a querulous note has intruded into the reports suggesting that supervisors are, through ignorance or indolence, misinterpreting the 'obvious' nature of their work. The veiled allusions of the Hunter Commission disappear and supervisors are increasingly berated both for what they do, and for what they have yet to achieve. Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Government Resolution of 1904 recommended that:

... inspectors should be more than mere examiners. They should not only judge the results of teaching, but should guide and advise as to methods.

(quoted in Mukerji 1951:183)

While, in a study of education in Bengal in 1920, Evan E. Biss noted with disapproval that the pursuit of quantity in education often took precedence over enhancing quality:

I have come across subordinate inspecting officers who imagined it was part of their duty merely to increase the number of schools, and were much less concerned as to the resulting number of children under instruction, or the efficiency of the instruction given.

(quoted in Huq 1954: 31)

More recent observers, writing specifically of independent Pakistan, suggest that all too often supervisors focus their work on the tediously bureaucratic or the tiresomely tyrannical. They behave as 'a combination of a clerk and a policeman' (Government of Pakistan 1959:316); have become 'almost exclusively bureaucratic and disciplinary' (Curle 1966:151); are 'traditional in practice and unmotivating in nature' (Bhutto 1979: introduction); 'as much as 95 per cent of their time is spent in administration' (UNESCO 1984:55) and they 'do not have the time or the inclination to be managers or leaders' (Warwick and Reimers 1995:92). All these writers assume supervision has the potential to influence the quality of primary education, but that this potential is seldom, if ever, realised in practice.

### **Studies of the Role of Supervisor**

The first specific study of primary school inspection practices in modern Pakistan was undertaken by Mervyn Pritchard (HMI) in 1972. The purpose of his report was to 'find out the real functions and methods of work of the primary school inspectorate in relation to the improvement of instruction' in order to 'make practical suggestions in respect of staffing, operation, recruitment and training' (Pritchard 1975:2). This short study was commissioned at a crucial moment in Pakistan's development in the immediate wake of the separation of West and East Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh. This chapter in Pakistan's history had already begun with a New Education Policy prioritising both primary and science education and advocating a move towards more active teaching and learning methods supported by a radical revision of curricula and text books. There was considerable faith that a revision of teaching techniques and syllabuses in all schools could significantly alter the nation's outlook on education. A government paper reporting to UNESCO in 1975 set out the agenda for

improvement:

The use of modern techniques of teaching in Pakistan will substantially improve the quality of instruction which is the essence of any viable system of education. Qualitative improvement in education would also help quantitative expansion by way of reducing drop-outs, failures and general wastage in the system. It has now been established that qualitative improvement in education are complementary to the quantitative expansion of education. No system of education can effectively expand itself without improving the quality of its teaching.

(Government of Pakistan 1975:87)

Within this context a review of the supervisory service was apposite: supervision itself should reflect the national desire to accelerate development through education.

Pritchard noted that the posts of inspector, high school teacher and teacher trainer were regarded as interchangeable and that few inspectors had extensive primary school experience. The limited statistics available to him showed that only 68% of boys' schools and 44% of girls' schools in Punjab in 1970/71 had been visited at all, although two visits a year were considered to be the minimum. However, he comments that there was 'no up-to-date legal code or set of regulations governing the duties and functions of the inspectorate' and continues:

It was commonly stated by inspectors at different levels, corroborated by statements of senior officials at the Centre and in the Provinces, that they spend between 50 and 60 per cent of their time on administration and that inspection tended to be a bureaucratic rather than advisory or creative exercise.

(Lyons and Pritchard 1976:94)

Throughout his reports, he stresses the need to extend the advisory and creative function of inspectors, involving them in, for example, curriculum development, and ensuring that they have both the skills and the

understanding to stimulate teachers' professional development.

Interestingly, Sindh was observed to be at the forefront of administrative developments at this time through the setting up of a new, decentralised, structure intended to separate primary school supervision from more office-bound administration. The purpose was 'to create a body of men and women supervisors who are expected to spend the major part of their time in the schools, developing their work and assisting the teachers' (Pritchard 1975:41). Pritchard was also able to observe part of a short in-service course for supervisors held in Hyderabad which he found 'was very realistic and useful and deserved to be emulated elsewhere' (Lyons and Pritchard 1976:96), although he regretted that no handbook of guidance nor background reading, was available to inspectors.

Within a few years the same Director of Bureau, who had instigated the in-service training for supervisors witnessed by Pritchard, and who was a former inspector himself, undertook to rectify this omission resulting in the posthumous publication of A Hand Book on Supervision for Primary Schools in Sind (Bhutto 1979). In his introduction he roundly castigates the prevailing situation, complaining that nothing had been done to modernise the service, and that therefore teachers remain 'unvisited, uninvigorated and uninspired'. He sums up the situation:

The traditional role of schools Inspector has been rendered in-operative when the number of schools has increased beyond the capacity of any corps of inspectors to inspect them, and the school programme itself has become so diversified that no single inspector can cover the whole range. Clearly there are two distinguishable functions to perform administrative over-seeing of schools and professional guidance and help to the school personnel. While the concept of supervision as professional guidance is well established in theory, it does not appear to have made much headway in actual practice beyond a change of title from inspector to supervisor.

(Bhutto 1979:254)

As well as useful advice on conduct in schools, this book also includes the

results of Bhutto's own research. With a grant from UNICEF he distributed a questionnaire to teachers, headteachers and education officers in all provinces and conducted group interviews of personnel on training courses. His questionnaires were not a statistical success. Of 1660 teachers in the four provinces only 480 (29%) responded. However, from this limited database he inferred that the average number of visits between 1969 and 1973 was 1.6; that teachers particularly disliked being criticised in front of pupils and colleagues but that they would welcome supervision, whether by headteacher or external assessor, if only it were 'courteous, friendly, considerate, frank and fair' (Bhutto 1979:238).

Questionnaires to 210 education officers elicited an even lower rate of response (21%). Of these 45 respondents, only 3 (6.7%) had worked as primary school teachers; their work loads were uneven, one supervising 10 schools, another 104; and they claimed that school visits were curtailed due to office work and inadequate travel provision.

If the questionnaires showed up the weaknesses of the system, the interviews of about 1000 educationalists allowed Bhutto to present a consensus of opinion outlining a more positive direction for primary school supervision:

In many ways, the thinking of almost all participants was characterized by dissatisfaction and discontentment with the institution of inspection as it exists and operates today. Some people were very critical and considered inspectorates as a vestige of the colonial period when 'the natives' were ministered and ruled by 'the carrot-and-stick' policy. They were of the view that schools needed dynamic type of leadership to meet the challenges of the space-age. In their considered opinion the functions of inspection/supervision whether it came from within the school or from the special agencies, should be:

- i) to enhance the efficiency of every school and the effectiveness of every teacher;
- ii) to help and stimulate every teacher to acquire new knowledge, understandings, skills and attitudes;
- iii) to boost morale of both teachers and pupils;

- iv) to guide schools in achieving the common goals in a better and more satisfactory manner; and
- v) to develop the capacity of school for self-adaptation under rapidly changing conditions.

(Bhutto 1979:248-9)

Both because of the low response rate, and due to his reporting style, it is impossible to say how far the recommendations in Bhutto's book mirrored actual opinion of the day, and how far he was using grateful personnel on rare in-service courses as a resonant sounding-board for his own opinions. Perhaps inevitably, his final conclusion is to reinforce the desirability of the very courses he had initiated:

This handbook cannot over-emphasize the need for providing an intensive pre-job training to the Sub Divisional Education Officers, and Supervisors for Primary Education in the principles and techniques of supervision. These officials are drawn from secondary school cadres. They feel insecure because of their inability to help and guide teachers, tend to engage themselves in routine matters and adopt hit and miss methods.

Three steps seem to be necessary with regard to the appointment of Supervisors:

- a. Selecting secondary school teachers reputed for creative teaching and efficient performance and having impressive personalities and winsome habits;
- b. Giving them intensive training emphasizing the practical aspects of supervision including human relations; and,
- c. Giving them a special allowance over and above normal pay scales, in order to attract persons of outstanding calibre and character.

(Bhutto 1979:261)

This book is written with a rare combination of fervour and empathy for the difficult task facing supervisors, and sketches the possibilities of a radical reform of the supervisory services. It is a testament to one man's informed vision and it is poignant to speculate how it might have been used had he

not died before it was published. As it was, the dominant influence on supervision practices in Pakistan became, not this internal reform, but the externally funded Primary Education Programmes supported by the World Bank.

### **The Primary Education Programmes 1980-92**

In developing countries training for supervisors has certainly not been seen as a financial investment or a priority. Lockheed and Bloch (1990:46) report that from 1981-86 only 4.3% of educational aid went to the primary sector at all, and of this sum the training of all administrative staff accounted for a mere 2%. The Primary Education Programmes in Pakistan (PEP1 1980-85 and PEP2 1985-92) must then be unusual in consistently targeting supervisory training as a means to improve the quality of primary education.

The Draft Comprehensive Report at the mid-point of PEP1 begins with a summary overview of the status of supervision:

The supervisory arrangements are not at all geared to offering any assistance of guidance to teachers on educational matters. Instead, the supervision/inspection is law and order oriented and is generally carried out in response to local complaints. Because of poor means of communication, absence of reasonable facilities of travelling and preoccupation of supervisory staff with such administrative responsibilities as disbursement of salaries, promotion and transfers, no system of school supervision seems to exist to improve the quality of what goes on in school. (Government of Pakistan 1983:5)

Against this background, the PEPs were designed specifically to explore the effects and effectiveness of different inputs into primary education, including new modes of supervision, in order to determine those 'which promise to be most cost effective investment whereby elusive goals related to the universalization and renewal of primary education in Pakistan might be better achieved' (1983:3). In particular, a new stratum of supervisory staff, 'learning coordinators', were to be appointed from experienced and



successful primary school teachers; provided with means of transport; and trained to support teachers in class by giving advice and demonstrating model lessons from centrally developed 'learning modules'.

Even the naming of a new supervisory position is no simple matter. In Pakistan there have variously been inspectors, superintendents, supervisors, resource persons of mosque schools, assistant sub-divisional education officers as well as learning coordinators, each undertaking a supervisory role within primary schools. Elsewhere in the world supervisory personnel have also been called advisors, consultants or critical friends. The choice of name is no mere whim of the legislators but suggests subtle, yet distinctive, attributes of the role to be fulfilled. Thus the Report of the Commission on National Education suggested that a first step in revitalising the role of inspector 'would be to change his designation from Inspector to something that more accurately describes the function he is expected to perform' (Government of Pakistan 1959:316). However, this report forbore to make any more specific suggestions and it was not until the New Education Policy of 1972 that inspectors were generally renamed 'supervisors'.

'Learning coordinators' were established in the PEP to provide specific classroom-based support for introducing new styles of teaching which were intended to have an immediate impact on learning. In different regions the title was sometimes contracted to 'LCO' rather than 'LC'. Even the choice of abbreviation, it was suggested to me, can be a powerful reflection of how the personnel concerned conduct their role:

"The learning coordinator is a guide, not a supervisor. He, or she, should observe and help - not judge and question. In some areas they were calling themselves LCOs. You know what this means? - learning coordinator officers. They thought they were officers and they behaved like inspectors. Here we have been careful. They know what is their title, and they know what is their job."

(senior education officer, NWFP, 1994)

Such clarity of purpose, position and nomenclature is rare. It seems that the first learning coordinators easily became a focus for professional jealousy

among teachers and officers due especially to their perceived privileges which included transport, training and a comparatively small beat of schools. Although some learning coordinators may indeed have been inspirational in the classroom, others were rendered ineffective, especially when faced with more experienced and contemptuous senior teachers. Education officers in Sindh seem especially sceptical of the success of learning coordinators:

“The learning coordinators really don’t do anything. They are supposed to teach in class but they aren’t teaching anything. They are just dictators. They are not under the control of the District Education Officer, so they can do what they want.”

(Interview quoted in Warwick *et al.* 1992: 299)

As per policy, [learning coordinators] should deliver model lesson in the schools of their Jurisdiction, but practically they seldom do it. Their Officers insist that they are delivering model lessons or characting [correcting] the teachers work, but in the field it is regret fully noted that no model lessons is ever delivered by them in a proper shape.

(Nizamani and Zai 1993:3)

The official project evaluations of learning coordinators were more positive, although still somewhat ambivalent. They stated that: ‘Supervision is a success. It remains limited, imperfect, and partial in its evolution, but it promises to be just what the schools, the teachers and the children need’ (Government of Pakistan 1983:41). More specifically, at the mid-point of PEP1, the learning coordinators were claimed to have reduced teacher absenteeism significantly and to be providing a useful conduit for professional dialogue with teachers, headteachers and the local community. While at the end of PEP2 the draft report in Sindh recounted a gain, of up to 46%, in children’s attainment in national tests in all those subjects in which they had experienced the learning modules introduced by the learning coordinators (BCEW 1993:20).

Warwick, Reimers and McGinn (1992) are critical of the actual design of the original project which kept learning coordinators outside the local

administrative structure and responsible directly to the project itself. This, they infer, fed resentment amongst officials at the time, and may have made it especially difficult for the learning coordinators to be usefully rehabilitated within the standard structure after the end of the project. As a consequence, even though the learning coordinators met an acknowledged need at the time, any potential long-term benefits from introducing a new intermediate tier of school-based supervision were thwarted:

The greatest potential strength of this innovation is that it dealt with a widely recognized need for better supervision in the districts. The initial intelligence in policy design was thus partly correct. But that intelligence failed to consider the difficulties likely to be created by the PIUs [provincial implementation units]. Ongoing intelligence was also flawed. It did not pay enough attention to the negative reactions from government officials to the parallel administrative structure. Another risk is that as the learning coordinators become full members of the district organization, they may be under pressure to become more administrators than innovators. According to a World Bank report 'the sparse documentation available suggests that LCs are being used to monitor student attendance and for record keeping rather than to assess pupil achievement or to introduce qualitative reforms.'

(Warwick et al. 1992:299, citing World Bank 1988:27).

This normative trend away from innovation to traditional styles of working may be inevitable to some extent once the driving force of a project ceases, but such a pattern of regression seems endemic in Pakistan. The Pakistan Office writes:

Administrative preoccupations with misplaced professional priorities at all levels dilutes the integrating qualities which produce a system.... [The state delivery system] has an orientation which is basically maintenance cum administrative rather than one which is geared towards implementing change in an integrated manner.

(The Pakistan Office 1992:6)

A few years later, Warwick and Reimers (1995) were even more outspoken about the degeneration of the learning coordinators' working brief over time, blaming senior education officers for relishing and reinstating the status quo, however inefficient it is seen to be:

Since 1985 ... LCs are spending less time helping teachers to improve their classroom practices and more on routine administration. ... Instead each year more of them seem to be acting as inspectors and checkers rather than the helpful counselors they were meant to be.

One reason may be that district education officers want to convert LCs from leaders to administrators. Working in a system that prizes administration, and faced with a program that they do not understand, district officers can chip away at this innovation until the coordinators resemble the supervisors they already know. Given the pressures on them to carry out complex innovations, the coordinators, too, may find it more comfortable to be conventional supervisors rather than catalysts of change. The system within which they work pushes them away from the role of helper to teachers and toward actions manifesting authority and control.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:97)

The positive public evaluations of the role of the learning coordinator, rather than the more disparaging personal appraisals or sceptical system analyses, have nonetheless become part of the development orthodoxy. 'Intermediary supervision', as exemplified by the learning coordinators of Pakistan, is now regarded as having been 'essential to the success of efforts to improve schools' in World Bank projects (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:130) and features in many new projects across the World.

Subsequent projects in Pakistan (e.g. World Bank 1995a) have been uncompromising in their advocacy of increasing supervision, particularly through learning coordinators, even though the evidence of any profound, or prolonged, positive impact is slender. These new learning coordinators

are intended to provide direct classroom-based 'academic supervision' and also to provide a prospect of promotion for effective primary teachers. They are thus expected to increase both teachers' motivation and their performance at the same time. The only concessions made to sceptics, such as the directors Nizamani and Zai, are to insist that the appointment of learning coordinators should in future be accompanied by an agreed restructuring of the administrative tiers in education, and supplemented by appropriate training for personnel.

During the PEP programmes, each province developed the supervisory concepts in somewhat different ways. In NWFP the learning coordinator cadre developed a clear and defined role within the authority and has since grown in strength to cover all districts. By contrast, in Sindh, the 376 learning coordinators initially employed under PEP2 were later returned to schools, made redundant or promoted to the post of SPE. Learning coordinators are now beginning to reemerge following proposals in the Social Action Programme, SAP-II 1997-2002.

Such diversity of development is also exemplified in the job descriptions created for learning coordinators and supervisors in the different provinces during the PEP2 period (Government of Pakistan 1991b). Scanning these job descriptions reveals how the supervisor of Sindh stood alone in holding an almost exclusively bureaucratic and administrative role. This is in itself a curious reflection on the short-lived reforms which made this a predominately school-based post in the early 1970s. Most of the functions listed begin 'maintain a record', 'collect data' or 'verify' (see Appendix A for the full text). Only 5 of the 33 functions listed in the job description direct the SPE to advisory work within schools, specifically:

- 1.25 Help teachers in planning their schemes of work ...
- 1.27 Observe teachers while they are teaching in actual classroom situations ...
- 1.31 Contact community members ... and attend parent-teachers meetings ... to help build good community relations.
- 1.32 Help teachers in obtaining community support for solving problems.
- 1.33 Organize meetings of heads of schools.

According to the job descriptions, it was the learning coordinator of Sindh who was to take the responsibility for providing 'professional support and guidance to Primary School Teachers' but, in contrast to the multifarious and minutely listed administrative tasks of the supervisor, how this responsibility was to be fulfilled was not specified. Just eight specific functions are listed, of which the following four provide opportunities for such support or guidance:

- 1.2 Observe Classroom instruction in the schools.
- 1.3 To strengthen School Community relationship and persuade parents to get their children admitted in school in order to increase enrolment and reduce dropouts.
- 1.6 To provide on job training to teachers ...
- 1.9 To deliver Model lessons based on Learning Module.

The supervisor of Balochistan, on the other hand, was charged with an all-encompassing mission to 'guide the primary and mosque school teachers in the improvement of the quality of education' while the learning coordinator had the more explicit and restricted role to include delivering specific in-school training and demonstration lessons. With the conclusion of PEP2 and the disbanding of learning coordinators in Sindh, the remaining supervisory staff (designated SPE or RPMS) were left with an almost exclusively bureaucratic job description. Perhaps it is an advantage that very few have ever seen it.

In December 1988 and January 1989, during the PEP2 period, an extensive survey of primary education across Pakistan was carried out under the BRIDGES project (Basic Research and Implementation in Developing Educational Systems) by members of the Harvard Institute for International Development working with USAID. The research employed 100 interviewers visiting 1000 schools. One hundred education officers, 300 supervisors and 1000 teachers were interviewed and 11,000 children in grades 4 and 5 were tested for achievement in maths and science. It is claimed that this involved 'the first nationally representative study of primary schools ever done in Pakistan' (Warwick and Reimers 1995:x). Although Bhutto's study of 1979 might make a rival claim, the BRIDGES

study has the advantage of a 100% response rate to the questions asked. The results, reported in a deliberately popular style without accompanying statistical tables, are used to focus on exploring possible links between children's actual achievement in subject tests, and a range of variables including the gender, experiences, working conditions, methodology and the training of their teachers. The interviews with supervisors are rather more cursorily reported and lead to the now familiar conclusions that supervision is not currently effective, but could become so if only there were additional training.

Of the 288 supervisors interviewed, 90% were educated above a bare matric pass. Sixty per cent held the BEd degree that typifies a high school teacher, and 50% held a master's degree (20% an MEd). Women supervisors had higher qualifications than their male counterparts. The average beat gave a supervisor responsibility for 64 schools. The men claimed to visit each one on average 8.5 times a year; the women only 6.5 times. However, 10% of the headteachers interviewed said they had had no such visit at any time during the preceding year. Asked what they did in schools, most supervisors said they observed classes, advised teachers, checked records and cleanliness. Forty five per cent of the women, but only 5% of the men also claimed to evaluate students' progress. The book, written for a wide, general audience, does not break down these figures any further or comment, for example, on the variations between provinces or urban and rural samples. This is a regrettable omission. Other authors (Bhutto 1979; Nizamani & Zai 1993; Pritchard 1975; UNESCO 1984) have all noted the staggering differences in the number of schools covered by different individuals - a feature which is certain to affect their methods of working. The brief review of job descriptions developed under PEP2 also suggests that differing perceptions of the nature of supervisory responsibilities are likely to affect working practices in each province. Research which explores the differences in supervisory practice across the country could be informative.

Although Warwick and Reimers have to conclude that visits to schools by supervisors and learning coordinators did not directly influence older pupils' attainments in mathematics and science, and had only a limited impact on teaching style, they still maintain that supervision has a central role to play in school development. With almost missionary fervour they

proclaim that specific training of all those involved in supervision could help to create a whole new generation of schools better able to deliver education of quality in a changing world:

Pakistan's primary schools suffer from a stagnant organization built around routine administration. Training for management and leadership can break this stagnation. With a program involving all supervisors, from federal ministers of education to school heads, education officials can create an organizational climate that emphasizes management and leadership in the service of better teaching. The path will be long, the costs high, and the changes great, but experiences of ... other countries suggests that the benefits of learning will make the sacrifices worthwhile.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:102)

The optimism of the rhetoric is stirring but not entirely convincing given the limited success reported up to that point.

### **Sindh Primary Education Development Programme 1992-96 and 1997-98**

Sindh Primary Education Development Programme (SPEDP) followed directly on from PEP2, but was a distinctive programme in its own right and covered different geographical areas of the province. The Wind Up Cell of PEP2 in Sindh made a number of specific recommendations for the structure and content of further programmes (Government of Pakistan 1993). Few of these were taken up in the design of the new project. The report recommended that learning coordinators be regularised and introduced into all districts, in fact they were disbanded in Sindh for the duration of SPEDP and are only now being reintroduced. It recommended that learning modules should replace text books and be supplemented by further educational materials, in fact the learning modules were abandoned and new types of educational and training materials were prepared. It recommended a three-phase structure of experimentation, implementation and an extended evaluation period, in fact the first and last of these were minimal in the overall programme design. SPEDP and PEP do share a



common aim to improve the quality of teaching in the primary classrooms by tasking supervisory staff to influence the way teachers teach. The differences were in the route taken to achieve this aim and, in particular, in selecting which staff were to be used and how they would work.

The SPEDP teacher training component aimed to enhance the quality of primary education through providing a one-month in-service course on curriculum and methodology for all primary school teachers in specific districts. The course was to be led by master trainers drawn from the supervisory staff, augmented by high school teachers and primary headteachers where necessary. These master trainers had a month's training for their task. Furthermore, unlike earlier cascade models used throughout the PEP programmes of the 1980s, the supervisors were to receive extensive additional training in the generic skills of primary school supervision. The aims of this training were specified in advance:

- To appreciate the importance of primary education as a whole to overall development in Pakistan, and in particular, the importance of educating girls.
- To consider the place of achievement testing in reaching the overall objectives of primary education, and be given practice in developing such tests.
- To learn how to conduct in-service courses for teachers.
- To learn and practise classroom observation techniques with a view to helping teachers improve their skills.
- To consider how best to involve the community in the education of their children and the improvement of their schools.

(British Council 1991: annex 4)

SPEDP therefore maintained the emphasis on using supervisory staff to influence classroom practice but, instead of using learning coordinators to demonstrate model lessons from specifically written learning modules,

supervisors were to deliver a long, in-service course and follow this up through active and varied supervisory techniques in their own beat of schools. Instead of introducing a new group of staff and targeting their input, the aim was rather to professionalise the existing post-holders and encourage them to explore and extend their role for the benefit of primary education as a whole.

It was the particular supervisors involved in the SPEDP pilot programme, and their changing perceptions of their work for schools, that became the focus for my empirical research.

## **Conclusion**

Primary education in Pakistan is in a sorry state. Too few children complete, or even begin, primary schooling. Standards of achievement and attendance are poor not only amongst primary pupils but also amongst the teachers themselves. Educational statistics are generally worse than those for countries of comparable income or culture. Worst of all, the rates of increase in enrolment, completion and achievement are minimal.

Supervision has, for more than a century, been cited as a means to improve both the quality and the quantity of mass education in primary schools. Almost as frequently it has been reported as failing to achieve either goal. The last twenty years have seen a considerable investment in expanding, training and professionalising supervisory personnel. Some beneficial effects have subsequently been observed, but these appear to be sporadic and transient. Is the concept of supervision itself at fault? Or have the models employed failed to address the particular constraints of working within primary education in Pakistan? The next chapter pursues these questions further, taking a broader look at the ways in which supervision is intended to influence the quality of education not only in Pakistan but also in other countries.

## Supervision and the Quality of Education

### Introduction

It should be a simple matter to define what supervision is for; how it is best achieved; who should do it and how such people might be trained, and evaluated. In reality none of these issues is simple. Supervision is a puzzle - often seen simultaneously as both the foundation stone and the faltering block to primary school development. The literature is sparse, the research is limited, and the historical development, in other countries as in Pakistan, is fraught with false starts. It is, however, a curious feature of this sporadic debate that there has been a persistent vein of optimism in the power and potential of supervision, even in the face of consistently disappointing outcomes.

In writing a short monograph on training supervisors, Lillis begins:

There has been little substantive analysis of the role of inspection and supervision in developing countries and of the impact of such processes upon educational quality. Major literature on school inspection and supervision in the third world is virtually non-existent ...

(Lillis 1992:1)

The literature on supervision used in this chapter falls into three categories. First there are specific research studies of groups of supervisors in Pakistan and their training. These studies (Pritchard 1975; Bhutto 1979; Government of Pakistan 1983, 1991a, 1991b; Warwick and Reimers 1995) have already been introduced in the previous chapter. Then there are texts which draw out a range of general issues from case studies of supervisory practices in different countries. The ones I have used all explicitly include Pakistan as a source of data (Curle 1966, 1973; Lyons and Pritchard 1976; Lyons 1977; UNESCO 1984; Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). Finally, UNESCO has commissioned a series of monographs specifically to disseminate research on strategies for increasing the quality of basic education and analysis of the

potential of the supervisory cadres in developing countries is an explicit focus of some of these texts (including Pauvert 1987,1988; Lillis 1992).

Historically, supervision has been inextricably linked with the quest for quality in primary education, and the imperative to enhance performance within each and every school. Yet there is a puzzle here too. The 1990s have seen the sharpening of worldwide concern for quality in primary education: the Jomtien Conference of 1990 set a challenging agenda of 'Education for All' to be achieved through the period it dubbed 'the decade of educational quality improvement'; school effectiveness research worldwide has taken on a more specific alignment with achieving school improvement; and in England Her Majesty's Inspectorate has been supplemented by OFSTED inspectors operating under the maxim 'school inspection for school improvement'. Yet, curiously, at the same time that the clarion call for improved quality in schools is heard across the world, the clamour for improved supervision has become more muted. Consequently, just at the moment when the rhetoric of improvement seems poised towards achievement, a distinct lack of confidence in even the potential of supervision begins to be made ever more explicit.

The doubt cast on the long-established assumption that supervision is beneficial is neatly characterised in the conclusion of Hawes' and Stephens' timely and iconoclastic book, Questions of Quality: Primary Education and Development. Supervisors, who have for over a century been seen as the 'obvious' people to enhance primary education, are now just as 'obviously' seen to be the wrong people, acting on inadequate understanding and with suspect attitudes:

#### Received wisdom

Supervision, expert, kindly but firm, must be provided for schools and teachers so that quality may be monitored and improved.

#### Common sense

Supervisors, however kindly and informed, don't know as much as good teachers about local conditions and besides they don't come round very often. We need to re-examine the concept of supervision and the place of authority in our education system,

perhaps through discussing new ways of support and co-ordination where change can be managed rather than bossed, and where leadership doesn't always have to come from the top-down.

(Hawes and Stephens 1990:199)

This chapter seeks to explore the rationale of the rise and demise of supervision as a force for educational quality and to enquire why supervision itself has so often been seen simultaneously as desultory, yet desirable. It seeks to piece together some of the scant references to the purpose, potential and problems of supervision in the broader context of developing countries in order to outline the prevalent models of supervision and thus to elucidate why supervisors have repeatedly been set up as saviours, only to fall from grace thereafter.

Three particular questions underpin the chapter:

- What potential are supervisors believed to have for influencing the quality of primary education?
- What problems are perceived as preventing them from doing so in practice?
- Can they serve any useful purpose in 'the decade of educational quality improvement', and beyond?

### **The Potential of Primary School Supervision**

The purpose of supervision remains indisputably that of increasing quality within each and every individual primary school. Educationalists further agree that the most significant aspect of supervisors' work will be the time spent in 'the field', as work in school is often called. However, supervisors inhabit an anomalous position in which they cannot identify themselves entirely with either the schools in their beat or the formal hierarchy that they report to. Here they stand 'Janus-like between the administrative authorities and the schools, with an obligation to both' (Lyons and Pritchard 1976:13). This analogy with Janus, the two-faced god of war gazing simultaneously inwards and outwards from the threshold, seems aptly to describe the supervisor's uneasy role in an unsettled no-man's land between

office and schools, riddled with pitfalls and problems.

Whenever it is scrutinised, the practice of supervision appears critically flawed, yet the position is still seen as full of catalytic potential. Effective supervision has been observed to have some small, positive, quantifiable, results: reducing teacher absenteeism; raising pupils' achievements; encouraging community support; increasing enrolment (Government of Pakistan 1983). The potential is claimed to be far greater still. Effective supervision should assist the individual teacher in the classroom, increasing motivation, morale, performance and 'professional pride' (Curle 1966:151). It should aid every school in developing a positive, progressive ethos and the capacity 'for self-adaptation under rapidly changing conditions' (Bhutto 1979:248). It should work outwards from each individual school to 'gain the confidence and faith of the local population in the education process ... making it thereby more efficient, effective and relevant' (UNESCO 1984:85). It should link schools across an area to 'help define and implement the national education policy', including introducing and evaluating educational innovations (Pauvert 1988:36). And, almost inadvertently, it should simultaneously transmit data and information from schools to the central authorities, and transmit decisions and opinions from the centre to the schools. One problem with this list of potential benefits is that progress towards them would be difficult to gauge. Achievements would be intangible; experienced, felt or seen more easily than measured.

Perhaps for this reason, supervision is often described in vivid visual metaphors. These include:

- the 'backbone' of educational improvement (UNESCO 1984:55);
- a 'bridge' between school and community (UNESCO 1984:85);
- the 'guardian' of educational standards (Lyons & Pritchard 1976:12);
- a 'watchdog' providing the Ministry with 'eyes and ears' in schools (Lyons & Pritchard 1976:12);
- a 'pivot' of every education system (Pauvert 1988:15);
- a 'key' to the complex issue of improving the quality and

efficiency of basic educational management and the quality of educational attainment (Lillis 1992:1).

Within each of these structural analogies is embedded the concept of a supervisory service that realises the imperative of improving educational quality and availability, through interacting both with those who make the educational policies, and with those who translate these into daily realities for the pupils being educated. The purpose of supervision is to improve quality (although this itself is seldom defined explicitly), and the practice of supervision necessarily involves work with ministerial representatives, with the teachers in schools and with the communities that they serve. Supervision is thus the nexus between a national aspiration for education and the emergence of a more educated nation.

The individual supervisor is also described in powerful terms: a person 'exerting multiplier effects'; 'a catalyst and stimulator' and 'a leader of the educational subsystem in its relationship with society as a whole' (Pauvert 1988), while the act of effective supervision is a 'very potent means for motivating teachers to do better' (Bhutto 1979: introduction); 'just what the schools, the teachers and the children need' (Government of Pakistan 1983:41); 'essential to the success of efforts to improve schools' (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:130).

In all these writings, the terminology is adamant and imperative. The supervisor does not simply act as a conduit for information to flow between the central office and the peripheral schools, but actually inspires and assures effective action within even the most isolated communities and dismal classrooms. Thus supervision is not only desirable; it is crucial. Without it, the authors seem to imply, educational practice will remain inefficient and ineffective, while policies for improvement will be seen as the chimera of political promises lacking both substance and reality.

This paean reaches its peak in a World Bank Policy Paper (Lockheed and Bloch 1990:29) which asserts that improving supervision is 'critically important to the success of sectoral improvement programs.' In this view, supervision not only helps schools achieve quality, but also helps the education system as a whole achieve credibility. To back this assertion the

authors cite, as a strong example of such success, the creation of learning coordinators in Pakistan:

In World Bank education projects, intermediary supervision and support have been essential to the success of efforts to improve schools... Supervision can be strengthened through regular school visit by central office staff and through the establishment of supervisory staff positions at the intermediate level (where they do not already exist). In Bangladesh and Pakistan, for example, new supervisory arrangements contributed substantially to improving school performance.

(Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:130)

Thus the exploratory introduction of intermediate, school-based supervisors in PEP1 and PEP2 has become established as a development orthodoxy, despite the frail evidence of its actual achievements in impacting on teachers and the acknowledged difficulties it caused in disrupting the administrative hierarchy as a whole.

### **Models of Supervision**

A closer look at the descriptors of supervision at the beginning of this chapter suggests three contrasting models of the supervisory role (summarised in figure 3:1). The supervisor can act as an inspector who checks the quality achieved in schools and is a guardian of standards. Alternatively the supervisor can be seen as a pedagogue who models quality in the schools themselves through demonstrating lessons and guiding teachers to emulate them. Finally the supervisor may be seen as a professional educationalist who develops the very definition of quality itself, and who contributes to the both the design and the realisation of policies through practice. While individual supervisors may perform their work well or badly, uncertainty about the purpose of the role itself can lead to inaction or conflict with others.



## **Model 1: The Inspector as a Guardian of Quality**

Some of the figures of speech describing supervision, such as 'bridge' and 'backbone', suggest an inflexible distance from the centre to the periphery. These analogies reflect the first, and most restrictive, model of supervisory work: one that urges rigour, but risks rigidity. Supervisors may span the gap between the educational administration and the individual schools, but they cannot reduce it.

Embodying these static, structural images, supervisors themselves are likely to remain passive, impersonal and uninvolved. They are required to be simple transmitters of information and policy from the ministry to the schools, and data back from the schools to the ministry. Such supervisors become the ministerial 'watchdogs' of the system, although they are not so much the 'eyes and ears', but rather the mouthpieces of the ministry, people who set out to 'proclaim and maintain proper standards' (Curle 1963:153). At its best such supervision can provide concise, pertinent information to schools, and about schools. A 'good' supervisor in this model would be administratively efficient and justly evaluative of what was visible in school; a 'guardian' of the standards achieved.

It is certainly a commodious model, both for the ministry and for the individual supervisors. It is convenient for the ministry to rely on a small band of people who can be kept informed about policy, and who will then, in their turn, spread the word further afield. It is even quite a comfortable model for individual supervisors, who can claim efficiency through simply telling, and who can enjoy the status of a superior guest in schools without making any very great effort to become more involved. Ultimately, however, the model founders because, although it can help to keep a check on the quality achieved by schools, it does next to nothing to help that quality grow. If this model is favoured, then additional supervision will be desirable to help schools improve on what they do.

The OFSTED model of school inspection in England and Wales is a particularly rigorous example of supervision designed to check quality. Individual inspectors are trained to follow both a code of practice and minutely detailed procedures for observing, evaluating and reporting on the

activities they see in schools. The data collected is used at different levels. It is fed back to schools outlining specific priorities for improvement, and it is fed forwards into the ministry providing a vast database of observational detail. This database can in turn be drawn on to inform national perspectives on a whole range of issues, such as, for example, the teaching performance of newly qualified teachers, the provision made for able children, or the range of practice associated with a specific subject of the curriculum.

To maintain credibility such a system has to be able to underwrite the reliability of the judgements made by each individual inspector. OFSTED endeavours to achieve this through extensive training, agreement trialling within teams of inspectors arriving at a corporate judgement on a school, and random checks on inspections in progress. Even so, OFSTED's evidence, methods, conclusions and implications are still regularly challenged by individual schools and professional organisations. Few other countries devote comparable time and energy to the training and regulation of an inspectorate.

However, there is a danger that school visits which are solely inspectorial can ignore or undermine the very quality they seek to record. Some visits may become token gestures, with inspectors collecting and delivering the minimum of information required and omitting the issue of quality altogether. A further danger is that such visits can degenerate into 'snoopervision' (Lillis 1992:6), and become more punitive than informative. The results can then be devastating for the teachers, leaving them chronically demoralised and no better prepared to tackle the problems that face them. Indeed, according to one writer, the effects of such practices in Pakistan can actually exacerbate the situation they are intended to ameliorate.

In short, the present procedures of supervision are authoritarian and based on mistrust of the teachers; they are demoralizing for the teachers. These practices and procedures are to a large extent, responsible for the current low standards of education in general, and primary education in particular.

(Bhutto 1979:10, emphasis added)

Observers throughout the last thirty years provide glimpses of supervisory practice in Pakistan which conform to such a debased model of punitive inspection. The inspector's role 'had become almost exclusively bureaucratic and disciplinary' (Curle 1966:151); inspection 'is directive: tells teachers what to do, not 'why' or 'how' to do' (Bhutto 1979:246); 'supervisory arrangements are not at all geared to offering any assistance of guidance to teachers on educational matters. Instead the supervision/inspection is law and order oriented and is generally carried out in response to local complaints' (Government of Pakistan 1983:5); 'DEOs and SDEOs tend to treat Supervisors as 'postmen' and 'clerks' who are there to respond to their bidding' (Penny 1994:25); 'supervision of primary schools is generally confined to periodic but infrequent school visits with checks of enrollments, facilities, teacher absenteeism, and other routine information' (World Bank 1995a:8).

Nor are poor examples confined to Pakistan. The drift of time and attention from people to paper, from school-based support to office-based administration, has been noted by observers in many countries. Thus, in their seminal work drawing on the extensive experience of World Bank projects, Lockheed and Verspoor succinctly summarise the practice of supervision witnessed around the world:

Offices at the intermediate level tend to be poorly financed, inadequately staffed, and not authorized to act. Their principal responsibility is to provide professional support and technical assistance to individual schools. Typically, however, the district office operates solely as an inspectorate, linking the central administration with schools and neglecting its own role as a source of professional support.

(Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:120-1)

Such slippage of supervision into administrative inspection that is merely 'bureaucratic and disciplinary' has been blamed on the prevalence of a former colonial model (Bhutto 1979, Hawes and Stephens 1990). But the degeneration of purpose, as sketched by Lockheed and Verspoor, extends far beyond countries with a colonial past. Moreover, as we have seen in the previous chapter, throughout the colonial period of the Indian sub-

continent, successive administrators (Adam, Hunter, Biss *et al.*) repeatedly sought to realign the supervisor's role with a quest for increasing quality and thus to redress the balance from organising paper to interacting with people. Indeed, it is precisely whenever a qualitative improvement in the outcomes of schooling is seen as vital, that the role of the supervisor is once more highlighted as the 'obvious', and consequently undefined, means to achieve it. To blame colonialism for the restricted model we see enacted is to abrogate responsibility for something that persists as a very contemporary, and globally extensive, problem.

If too many a supervisor seeks the security of paperwork rather than the uncertainty of human interaction, is it the supervisors or their superior officers, the particular system in one country or the whole concept of supervision, that is to blame? The slippage perhaps reflects the fact that supervision is persistently seen as a panacea for all ills - but there is no attendant prescription. Supervisors are exhorted to enhance quality in primary education, but it is seldom made clear either what this 'quality' means in practice, how they might act to enhance it, or even how they might recognise if they had done so. In the second model supervisors are expected to demonstrate what is required and thereby to model the desired practice in classrooms.

### **Model 2: A Pedagogue who can Model Quality**

A more invigorating and productive model of supervision is reflected in the use of metaphors that imply movement. Such images suggest increasingly active involvement of supervisors in the quest for quality. As a 'key' or a 'pivot', for example, a supervisor opens new doors and turns education in uncharted directions. Using these more dynamic analogies encourages a sense of informed action and strategic pressure from one who is mindful of the particular exigencies facing individual schools. Such a supervisor might effect change through sensitive, sustained effort to translate policy into practice.

Through such actions, supervisors could begin to realise the objectives framed at the annual conference of member states of UNESCO with the International Bureau of Education in 1956. These objectives are quoted in

full since they provide an unusually detailed picture of the proposed professional conduct for any supervisor:

1 The fundamental aim of inspection should be to promote by every possible means the development and efficiency of educational establishments, and to ensure a two-way liaison between education authorities, and the school and local communities.

2 Inspection should be considered as a service to interpret to teachers and the public the educational policies of the authorities and modern educational ideas and methods, and also to interpret to the competent authorities the experiences, needs, and aspirations of teachers and local communities.

3 The inspector should contribute to ensuring for teachers the necessary means of executing their mission effectively and with dignity, through facilitating further training, precluding their intellectual isolation, and guaranteeing respect of their personalities and ideas, so as to encourage them to take the initiative as often as possible.

4 The inspector should make every endeavour to create among teachers, parents and the community at large, an atmosphere of understanding, sympathy and esteem, such as is essential for the effective accomplishment of any kind of educational work and for the community's moral and material support of teachers' work.

(quoted in Pauvert 1988:48)

In every one of these objectives there is, quite explicitly, a sense of the supervisor acting at an interface between two sets of people, not just two systems of organisation. The very expressions used preempt any retrenchment into distanced, or judgmental, 'snoopervision' through a deliberate use of the language of empathy alongside that of efficiency. Here the supervisor is an 'interpreter' rather than simply a transmitter. He or she must foster 'sympathy' and 'esteem' to ensure that teachers work with 'dignity', 'respect' and 'initiative'. A supervisor following this code cannot merely relay messages from others, but has to engage in the educational enterprise of the school.

Variations of this second model dominate the development literature. Spending time in schools and using this time well have become recurring themes. The purpose of intermediate supervision is 'to combat in-school factors' (Government of Pakistan 1983:5) and 'to oversee and help school teachers in their work with students so as to improve instruction' (Government of Pakistan 1991:2.1). The supervisor must 'work with the teachers on their professional problems' (Curle 1963:153) and 'provide better academic support to teachers' (World bank 1995a:i). Time spent in schools is 'the principal responsibility' (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:120). Providing evaluation and guidance is 'at the heart of [the] work' (Pritchard 1975:34). Through coordinated school visits supervisors should ultimately 'enhance the efficiency of every school and the effectiveness of every teacher' (Bhutto 1979: 248).

'Good' supervisors in this model spend most of their time in schools and can see the effects of their work through directly influencing the style of teaching employed. Their objective is to facilitate 'the needed change from outdated patterns of work to modern techniques' (UNICEF 1984:59). These supervisors are first and foremost itinerant teacher trainers, modelling the desired behaviour in the classroom and community. They thus implement policy primarily through exemplifying and embodying it in their own practice.

The rationale of this model is interesting. It starts from an admission that the quality of education in schools is often so poor that it negates any incentive to gain education. Even simple quantitative goals, such as increasing enrolment and reducing drop-out rates, are thus perceived to be contingent on establishing greater confidence in the outcomes of schooling. The same assumption underpins the challenge of the Jomtien conference to designate the 1990s as a decade dedicated simultaneously to quantitative and qualitative expansion - goals which have often in the past been seen as mutually destructive, rather than symbiotic.

Poor quality learning is in turn blamed on negligent or negligible teaching. Teachers are absent, ignorant or simply out of date in the methodologies they use. Their own inadequate schooling, inappropriate training and

limited professional aspirations are seen as contributing to the perpetuation of low-grade instruction in the classroom. It is here that the supervisor can have an impact. Better educated, more experienced in teaching and preferably equipped with some package of approved classroom materials, the supervisor can provide regular and repeated on-the-job training, guidance and feedback within the school itself and thus begin to change the way that teachers choose to teach.

The supervisor should thus assist in setting up a chain reaction. He or she is the lever to improve teaching in the classroom. If the teaching is better, learning is enhanced. If learning is seen to improve, parental confidence in education will increase. Once parents believe that education is effective, more children will attend school regularly. Regular attendance and better instruction will produce a literate, problem-solving workforce which supports a growing economy and leads, in time, to a healthier, wealthier nation. The whole edifice of improvement is given impetus by the presence of the active, informed, empathetic supervisor in the classroom.

This argument is not without its problems. It sounds plausible and, if valid, it would indeed justify the pragmatic deployment of supervisors into primary classes. Yet there is very little evidence of causal links at the beginning of the chain of events which appears to lead from active supervision towards an educated nation. The phenomenon of supervision is remarkable in that, although often cited as crucial to primary school quality, and often employed as a means to achieve further reform, yet it is seldom actually scrutinised as a factor that might influence achievement in schools. Thus two extensive literature reviews on development issues in education, Fuller (1987) and Lewin (1993), commissioned by the World Bank and ODA respectively, do not mention supervision as a research field at all, while Pennycuik's paper (1993), School Effectiveness in Developing Countries merely comments on the absence of any substantive evidence about its effectiveness and the desirability of redirecting the research focus.

Indeed there is some disheartening evidence that school-based supervision in Pakistan ceased to have any positive impact on classroom interactions even a short time after the intensive PEP1 and PEP2 focus had defined a supervisory role for learning coordinators. Warwick and Reimers, collecting

data in the early 1990s, come to the devastating conclusion that classroom visits by supervisory staff actually make very little difference to teachers' styles or pupils' standards:

Pakistan has spent a great deal of time and money on its system of supervision, and introduced learning coordinators to improve the quality of teaching ... While supervisors and learning coordinators may have accomplished other purposes when they went to schools, they made little difference for student achievement. Learning coordinators, who were supposed to help teachers improve their methods of instruction, had a limited impact on what teachers did and none on what students learned.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:115)

Quite what these 'other purposes' of supervision are, is left to the reader's imagination.

The most often repeated benefit of supervision under the PEP programmes was simply a reduction in the extent of absenteeism amongst teachers. Teacher presence has the advantage of being both easy to assess and of indubitable benefit to pupils' access to education. Any increase in the teachers' presence would be expected to have direct consequences in increasing pupils' learning. The level of success should be measurable even though it might be small. However, such small gains that supervision has been acknowledged to achieve is then, by some perverse logic, translated into blame. Poor supervision is held accountable for all that is wrong with schools. By failing to secure the teachers' presence, supervisors are deemed responsible for pupils' 'indifference' and 'drop out', and the resultant 'phenomenon of dysfunctional schools'. The possibility of deeper, root causes of malaise are not pursued:

High rates of teacher absenteeism, a reflection of lax supervision, contribute to indifference among students.

(Government of Pakistan 1983:5, emphasis added)

This incapacity on the part of supervisors to reach a school is the cause for much absenteeism of teachers in schools. This state of



affairs gives rise to the phenomenon of dysfunctional schools.  
(UNESCO 1984:55, emphasis added)

The root cause for the high drop out rate is attributed to ineffective school supervision, rampant absenteeism of the teachers, the irrelevance of the curricula, and the indifference shown by the community towards the importance of education.  
(UNESCO 1992:68, emphasis added)

A medical parallel to this reasoning might argue that, since prophylactics help reduce the incidence of malaria, a death from malaria is caused by inadequate prophylaxis - ignoring entirely the mosquito bite that transmitted the parasite into the human system and the possible inappropriateness of any later medical intervention for mitigating its effects. Similarly the quotations above ignore the possibility of causes beyond the influence of supervision. For example, some teachers find that they need more than one job just to provide a living wage for their family; they may therefore exacerbate absenteeism through taking 'simultaneous' employment. Also, parental poverty or cultural dissonance between the school and the home could be influential factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism and eventual drop out, and yet may lie beyond the supervisor's remit of influence.

Following from this already flawed reasoning, there seems to be a further suggestion that teacher presence is perhaps all that supervision seeks to achieve and that, since such a monitoring role could easily be taken on by the community or headteacher at far less cost, there is perhaps little need for a supervisory cadre at all.

This second model, of the supervisor as a guide to teachers, is more ambitious than the first. Supervision is intended to impact on classrooms directly through deliberately changing the way that things are done. But just at the moment when supervisory practice is poised to become more purposive, public (or political) confidence in it wavers. The supervisors' success is measured only through teachers' presence, not their performance. Reduced absence is, however, only a tiny fragment of the projected work of the supervisor outlined above. Supervision is intended to transform the

methodology of teaching, not just to make sure that there is more of it. The pedagogical opportunities of the supervisors' visits are not explored further in the literature. If supervision is ever to reach its potential in transforming the practice of individual teachers, there is a need to broaden the research base to scrutinise both its effects and its effectiveness in influencing what happens inside the classroom.

### **Model 3: A Professional Educationalist who can Develop Quality**

There is a third model which is almost wistfully hinted at in the literature, but rarely developed in detail. This final model moves supervisory work from passive to active mode, and from active to catalytic. In this model the supervisor not only translates policy into practice, but also evolves practice into policy. He or she creates a 'multiplying effect' through learning lessons from the very successes (and difficulties) of implementation in the schools visited, and uses these to inform the policy developments of the future. Such a supervisor must become, not only an educator welcomed within the school communities, but a professional educationalist sharing insights with policy makers and defining the quality to which schools should aspire.

This third and final model is most fully delineated in Lyons' and Pritchard's work based on studies of inspectorates in six countries. The authors are explicit about the importance of extending the expectations of supervision beyond the first two models. They urge the need:

to see the inspector not merely as a watchdog of the authority but as an agent of development who, by the quality of the advice and help he gives to schools and teachers and by disseminating good ideas and practices gained from his experience of many schools, can stimulate them to better performance. In short, he has a creative and innovative role to play.

(Lyons and Pritchard 1976:13)

There are glimpses of this more extended role in other writers too. The supervisor's 'essential role is that of a leader of the educational subsystem in its relationships with society as a whole' (Pauvert 1988:6); supervisors

‘develop the capacity of [each] school for self-adaptation under rapidly changing conditions’ (Bhutto 1979:249); they ‘participate in the design of development plans and projects’ and contribute ‘to the training of educational personnel’ (Pauvert 1988:36).

The key difference in this model is that such supervisors have a professional as well as a pedagogical role to play. They are designers, innovators and planners as well as robust exemplars and reliable evaluators of pedagogic practice. Their work is no longer just to remonstrate with teachers urging adherence to standards, nor simply to demonstrate desired performance through providing model solutions. Instead they must extend, evolve and evaluate ideas with and for the teachers in their beat. The position of the external supervisor has always been perceived as tricky, involving a ‘Janus-faced’ attitude with responsibilities to both the individual schools and to the central educational authorities. In this final model such bifurcated vision is no longer a handicap but a necessity: the supervisor is not torn between two loyalties, but poised to influence how education is practised, how it is perceived and how it can be improved.

Lyons and Pritchard explicitly link the ability of supervisors to play this catalytic role to the extent of decentralisation of decision-making power within the education system as a whole. It is the delegation of decision-making to the district level that makes the information gleaned by supervisors in schools vital to the direction of progress:

In all the countries, we found a trend towards greater decentralisation and local participation. Where this is strong and there is a clear increase of powers at the local levels in respect of decisions relating to finance and administration, the role of the field inspectorate can be to work in parallel with these units of local administration as a professional service advising the administrators on the state of education in the schools and seeking to ensure that Ministry’s general policies are implemented. Where, on the other hand, there is a greater degree of centralisation the role of the inspectorate tends to be more administrative in nature and it is expected to carry out a range of managerial duties. Accordingly, the stronger the position of the

regional or local units in respect of the management of their schools the more likely is the field inspectorate to be able to devote its attention to professional and pedagogical duties.

(Lyons and Pritchard 1976: 40-41)

In the rest of the text they sketch some of the possible results of further decentralisations and suggest the potential benefits of involving local supervisors in a range of tasks beyond administration, inspection and advisory work in schools. The activities they indicate include responsibility to the whole district through, for example, establishing teaching resource centres and devising specific in-service training for teachers and headteachers. They also suggest a role for at least some supervisors in contributing to provincial and national strategy through involvement in curriculum development, resourcing and assessment, through initial teacher training or through setting up specific research projects in association with university departments. It is disappointing to note that the text gives no indication that any of these possibilities has been routinely realised, or explicitly envisaged, as part of the supervisory role in any of the countries visited by the authors.

This third model has, then, yet to be implemented. It marks a strengthening of the second model in assuming supervisors will respond to what they find in schools, not just try to reform it. They should take an active part in developing and evaluating new ideas and thus contribute substantially to the development of the education service across a region. If Lyons and Pritchard are correct in asserting that this model gains momentum from decentralisation, then it should be a particularly pertinent model in response to current trends to devolve decision-making and make local communities more responsible for the schools in their midst.

The following figure (3:1) summarises and contrasts key features of all three models of supervision outlined here. We will return to these models again in chapter 9 after surveying the actual work of supervisors within the project areas of Sindh.

	<b>MODEL 1 GUARDIAN</b>	<b>MODEL 2 GUIDE</b>	<b>Model 3 INNOVATOR</b>
<i>Main role</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inspector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advisory teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional educationist</li> </ul>
<i>Impact on quality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check quality achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model quality practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop and extend the concept of quality</li> </ul>
<i>Place of impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• office-based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school-based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• district-based</li> </ul>
<i>Influence on practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observes practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• models practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishes new practices</li> </ul>
<i>Relationship to policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relays policy to schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• embodies policy in practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forges new policies based on best of practice observed</li> </ul>
<i>Analogies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• backbone, bridge, watchdog, mouthpiece, messenger - the guardian of standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key, pivot, eyes and ears, interpreter - the teachers' guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• catalyst, multiplier, change agent and leader an educational innovator</li> </ul>
<i>Style of working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• directive, disciplinary, bureaucratic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supportive, demonstration, assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• innovative, developmental, evaluative, research</li> </ul>
<i>Attitude to teachers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minions to be informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• empathy as co-workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional respect and intent to empower</li> </ul>
<i>Training needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lesson observation, evaluation and report writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional reflection, change agency</li> </ul>

**Figure 3:1 Models of Supervisory Practice**

## Problems in the Practice of Supervision

These models of supervision are seldom clear-cut and defined within the educational system as a whole, although some countries do employ different groups of supervisors with distinctive roles. Often, each individual system, and each person within it, has to decide practically how much of the role is to control or to empower schools. Many supervisors take on the different roles at different times, and tensions arise if they find themselves caught between conflicting paradigms. They must continually balance rival demands for an inspection agency and a service agency (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991); orthodoxy and innovation (Pauvert 1988); organisational requirements and professional needs (Curle 1963). Such ambiguities in the nature and purpose of the role, undoubtedly cause difficulties and result in a range of styles of working. Some of these, like 'snoopervision', are undoubtedly counterproductive. Others, such as ensuring attendance, are minimally effective. Occasionally it is admitted that agreeing an explicit job description for the role might be beneficial. The PEP1 report quotes from interviews held with learning coordinators in Pakistan asking how they learned what to do in their new role. Responses covered the following range of replies:

- 1 With the help of what we were told in the pre-service training ...
- 2 Through our past experience.
- 3 By common sense.
- 4 As directed by PIU/District Education Officer.
- 5 Trial and error and self adjustment.
- 6 By observation.
- 7 On our own.

(Government of Pakistan 1983:35)

In response to this list, the report concludes that 'much work remains to be done in terms of role clarification and conceptualisation together with appropriate job induction and training'. When looking for causes of the observed, or supposed, inadequate performance of supervisors it is, however, seldom suggested that it is a lack of clarity in the whole system that needs redressing. Instead the people who are in the posts are blamed. It

is suggested that the wrong people are employed in the first place; that once appointed they have no means, and little time, to actually visit schools; and that anyway they have no specific, focused training to help them undertake their new role creatively.

## **Appointments**

The rank of supervisor in the educational hierarchy varies in different countries, and with it the qualifications and experience expected of those appointed. In Pakistan there are different requirements for the different designations. Supervisors of primary education (SPE) have to be 'graduates with a degree in education' and hold either a BEd, or a BA and an MEd. For them there are no requirements concerning experience. These qualifications are, however, also those of a high school teacher, and since both sets of personnel have, until recently, worked for the same directorate the two posts have been considered interchangeable. An individual may be transferred from one to the other without warning or acquiescence, or may strive to gain transfer if the alternative post is seen as preferable. On the other hand LCs and RPMSs (learning coordinators and resource persons of mosque schools) are appointed directly from the primary classroom. For them, experience of at least five years in primary school is essential, together with only the basic teaching qualification of a one-year PTC (primary teaching certificate). The pay of each post is commensurate with the qualifications and SPEs are paid on a grade several points higher than the others.

Many other countries specify experience, rather than formal qualifications, for primary school supervisors. Both strategies have their difficulties. The two-tier system developed in Pakistan is sometimes cited as the way forward, but it may in practice exemplify the problems of both systems. Though an expert in one subject, a graduate may not necessarily have a grasp of the full primary curriculum, let alone understand the learning needs of the very youngest children. Lack of knowledge, lack of experience and lack of empathy are frequently cited as key reasons why many supervisors appear to shun the classroom and abhor the advisory teacher role of model 2. The learning coordinator and resource person, if carefully

selected, should at least understand the work and ethos of a successful primary school, but can seem to lack standing or status in the eyes of older, more experienced, teachers. For this reason they too may avoid direct action in the classroom. Reports on the introduction of learning coordinators in Pakistan through the PEPs recommended that the post be upgraded in order to bestow a sense of authority to the role and provide a promoted post within primary schools that good teachers could aspire to hold (Government of Pakistan 1991a).

Finally however, whatever the official requirements of the post, it is ruefully acknowledged that common practice in many countries is still to distribute posts through patronage and political power (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). In some such cases the new recruit may have no intention of ever visiting schools at all.

Bhutto (1979:261) did not question the appointment of secondary teachers to supervise primary schools, but recommended that they should be selected from those with reputations for 'creative teaching', 'efficient performance', 'impressive personalities' and 'winsome habits'. Since the introduction of learning coordinators, most authors assume that primary teaching experience would be a more secure starting point than subject expertise. However, it could be useful to take up Bhutto's initial attempt at a person specification in beginning to define those desirable qualities of a supervisor which are needed to complement the appropriate experience and qualifications.

### **School Visits**

One is tempted to say that better no inspectorate than one that cannot reach the schools and sits in offices doing administrative work.

(Lyons and Pritchard 1975:52)

Time spent in the office is simply time not spent in schools. In seeking to maximise the time in schools there are, however, two very different issues to tackle: what keeps supervisors in the office and what keeps them out of



schools.

The estimated proportion of time spent on administration can be as high as 90% (UNESCO 1984), and is nowhere less than 50%. Lyons and Pritchard suggest that supervisors should be expected to spend at least 66% of their time in schools, and a further significant proportion of their time on running in-service courses for groups of teachers. To achieve this they would need to cut administrative tasks to the minimum and to delegate these to others wherever possible.

While this should not be an insurmountable problem, it would need an explicit shift in priorities from both the supervisors and their superior officers. Educational officers need both to value the fieldwork of supervisors, and to trust them to do it. An observer, writing about the system from the outside, can maintain that:

‘The inspectorate can remain relatively free of the fetters which impede most administrators, since its work is professional rather than organizational. In this way it can make an enormous contribution to the development of the educational service as a whole.’

(Curle 1963:153)

Until there is greater agreement on a professional rather than an organisational model of their role, ‘can’ will never become ‘do’.

The recent draft job descriptions for senior education officers in Sindh demand that sub-divisional education officers (SDEO) spend a minimum of 200 days annually ‘on tour’ visiting schools (Appendix B). When I asked whether or not this could possibly be achieved I was told, as I expected, that it was impossible, an absurdity, given the administrative burdens of the central education offices. When I asked why, if it could not be achieved, they were not challenging its inclusion in the draft of a formal job description and suggesting a more realistic goal, they responded simply that it was a good thing to stress the value of fieldwork. More senior officers suggested that a high target would at least encourage and ensure some school visits and that, in itself, would be a good thing. Perhaps the very purpose and

value of job descriptions has not been fully thought through and disseminated.

The practical difficulties of transport are cited in almost every reported interview with supervisory personnel. Transport problems are probably the biggest single hurdle supervisors face in visiting schools. Travel in many areas of the world is difficult, and sometimes dangerous. Yet wherever there are children, schools should not be far away and there are consequently classes to visit in the most remote and inaccessible of areas.

Bicycles, and later motorcycles, have been provided for male supervisors in a number of countries, though maintenance and fuel allowances are not always assured. For women, however, the problem is greater still. Travelling unaccompanied or away from one's home village may go against cultural expectations, and specific modes of transport may be completely unacceptable for a variety of reasons. Since motorcycles were inappropriate for women in Pakistan, the PEP aimed to provide female learning coordinators with access to a shared jeep and driver. However, such a mode of transport is a prized privilege of more senior officers who frequently found reason to commandeer the project vehicles for their own use. The mid-point evaluation of PEP cites this as one of the 'major failings or drawbacks likely to adversely effect the efficiency of the project':

Withdrawal of conveyance from the female field staff on one pretext or another was so frequent as to give the impression that what they were supposed to do was not very important. Such a state of affairs is bound to lessen considerably the motivation which one may be generating in the project personnel.

(Government of Pakistan 1983:20)

The latest solution, proposed by the World Bank, is to offer an allowance for women in NWFP to drive themselves, rather than rely on a driver (World Bank 1995a:22). In Karachi itself, I have only ever seen a handful women drivers, each of them harried shamelessly by men - including even my own quintessentially courteous driver. It seems inconceivable that women anywhere in Pakistan would be likely to accept a financial allowance as an inducement to drive themselves to work. Warwick, Reimers and McGinn

(1992) discuss the necessity for innovations to be culturally acceptable, access to transport allocated to a superior officer or allowances to flout tradition and drive oneself, would both seem to be too far from cultural norms to offer as solutions.

Lynn Davies (1990) has written about the benefits of redefining the question 'Why don't women enter management?' into a different query 'How did the management that women don't participate in, come to be perceived?' In this context we can ask why it is assumed that supervisors should travel between 20 or more schools across a vast rural area? A different strategy that might go some way towards assuming 'female as norm', might perhaps locate at least model 2 supervision as a part-time occupation. Thus a skilled teacher might work within a restricted cluster of schools with reasonable access between them.

## **Training**

The function of the Inspector has been frequently discussed and as frequently criticized. The task of the Inspector is to raise the quality of work in the classroom, and this he can do only by bringing in new ideas, encouraging initiative and directing the whole of his attention to content rather than to the external machinery of education. An inspector should not be a combination of a clerk and a policeman, as he is now, but an educationist, and we propose immediate steps to bring us into line with the practice in advanced countries.

(Government of Pakistan 1959:315-6)

Although one should hesitate to seek to apply models from the western world as solutions to problems in developing countries, it is salutary to note here some of the similarities between those very problems. A look at the literature on the theory and practice of supervision in 'advanced countries' also provides a dismal picture of sporadic strategic planning and frequent inaction.

An early study by Ball, Cunningham and Radford (1961) surveyed the situation in eight countries, concluding that, while some (Canada, USA)

expected candidates for inspectorial posts to have undergone specific training in school administration and law, and another (France) made appointments through competitive examinations, only one (USSR) organised regular, compulsory courses for inspectors. They conclude:

The new methods in force today do not give the impression that any preliminary preparation in depth is necessary. ... The omission to provide any wider basis of induction appears to be based on the assumption that the inspector is up-to-date in professional knowledge, and is sufficiently well skilled in the arts of teacher management and guidance, of communication and human relations. Thus, in the purely professional field, the present day practice is to leave the inspector to work out his own salvation.

(Ball, Cunningham and Radford 1961:190)

Some thirty years later, many inspectors are still left to work out their own salvation, but the acceptance of this situation is a little less sanguine. Michael Fullan asserts categorically that 'if any single factor is crucial to change, it is professional development' (Fullan 1982:257), while commenting on the system in Canada where research still indicates that few consultants (supervisors) have any specific training to prepare them for their role.

In England and Wales the 1988 Education Act has been perceived as a catalyst for change, delineating a clearer role for advisors (supervisors) which will make training and appraisal more viable (Dean 1992). However, the most extensive survey of these advisors undertaken during that period of flux (Stillman and Grant 1989), found a perplexing diversity of models used to mould groups into area teams and a persistent disregard for the needs of the advisors themselves for induction, training and mentoring in their new posts. In conclusion they ask ruefully of the UK, as one might ask of Pakistan:

Is it ... because some do not yet rate advisory work to be sufficiently important to spend money on its proper management? Alternatively, is it because there is still a lurking

suspicion that advising is not a real, specialised and professional job in its own right, and as such not only can it be done by non-specialists, but it needs neither training nor management? (Stillman and Grant 1989:148)

There are, then, few examples of supervisory courses to be found at all, and apparently no studies of the actual effectiveness of training on improving standards of supervision. Despite this, the most commonly reiterated solution to apparently poor supervisory practices is the call to provide training for both the new recruits and for those already in service. Training is seen as an essential prerequisite to improved performance. Bhutto 'cannot over-emphasize the need for providing an intensive pre-job training' (1979:260); Lockheed and Verspoor suggest that 'unavailable, inadequate or inappropriate' training is no less than the 'primary reason' for the weakening of education management and administration in developing countries (1991:123). Pauvert is more explicit still and claims that 'inadequate professional training ... often excluded or limited [supervisors'] contribution to ... planning of education programmes, to the implementing of those programmes and to innovations' (1988:7). Training should thus not only support supervisors in using their time in realising model 2 and using time in school well. It should also provide the impetus for realising model 3 and exerting a direct influence on the development of the educational system as a whole.

However, the contents of the suggested training programmes all too often seem to revert to model 1, the most restricted model outlined at the beginning of the chapter. The skills and knowledge listed as essential are in reality restrictively narrow and tangential to the colossal task of qualitative improvement:

Even when action is taken to mount courses or establish institutions to provide training, content still tends to address management as a set of skills and techniques in themselves, divorced from their most important goal, that of achieving desired changes in the behaviour of learners.

The root cause lies in the structure and staffing of the institutions

that train the managers. Until these can be persuaded to take a wider view of management and of quality, the gap between the ledger and the learner will remain unbridged.

(Hawes and Stephens 1990:150, emphasis in the original)

The problem does not only lie with the institutions that might train managers in developing countries. It is also inherent in the limited vision of some of the international community of writers on educational needs. Thus, even Lockheed and Verspoor list a series of potential training topics that emphasise the monitoring duties, rather than the enabling functions, of supervisors. The topics they suggest include 'record keeping, accounting and data collection' which actually support the very administrative tasks that supervisors have been exhorted to shed in favour of pedagogical work out schools. Only the topic of 'personnel management and evaluation' begins to touch on the idea of supervisors as people who might 'rouse interest in new educational developments, discover talents and generally encourage the staff to strive for greater achievements' (Pritchard 1975:54).

... much of that training should echo the basic management training course suggested for higher-level managers. Particularly important is training focused on curriculum objectives and teaching methods, the creation of timetables and the use of school facilities, personnel management and evaluation, maintenance of facilities, student record keeping, and accounting and statistical data collection. Ideally, staff at the intermediate level would be sufficient for supervisors to spend one day in each school every month and to organize at least five days of professional development for all teachers within the area every year. (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:136)

Towards the end of this same paragraph, Lockheed and Verspoor reiterate the intention that supervisors should visit schools regularly and organise in-service training for teachers. Yet there is no consideration that such innovatory 'dynamic supervisory techniques' (Bhutto 1979:10) might also need to be initiated through appropriate training. It is not only the trainers of supervisors who need a 'wider view of management and quality', but the supervisors as potential trainers themselves require this vision too.

Even within the PEP, the element of training, now seen as crucial, was acknowledged as woefully inadequate. Significant fault was found in the practice of using the self-same course at each level of the training cascade, regardless of the different roles and needs of the particular personnel involved, and in the failure to extend the use of trainers into subsequent fieldwork and evaluation. The mid-term report was critical:

One must mention at this stage that there are serious reservations related to the content and the methodology of these training workshops. In all these activities the ritualistic part was always there, but professional substance of it was often largely missing.  
(Government of Pakistan 1983:12)

There is thus a danger that course design, and course organisation, may replicate the very aspects of unsuccessful supervision that the call for training is intended to dispel. As Thiagarajan wrote (1990:113-4):

Confronted with the lack of quality of primary education, planners and decision makers turn to providing more of the training that failed to produce the required performance in the first place. Political expediency and wishful thinking encourage them to handle all primary teacher deficiencies with the shotgun approach of more pre-service and in-service training for more people - regardless of whether the deficiency is caused by a lack of skill, motivation, incentives, supervision or instructional materials.

To be effective, training would need to be fine-tuned to the desired model of supervision. Any model should require the supervisor to have knowledge and understanding of the primary curriculum and to know how to recognise effective teaching and learning. An inspector checking quality needs to be able to record and evaluate lessons observed and to share these judgements with the teacher through constructive discussion. A pedagogue modelling the curriculum needs to be able to plan, deliver and evaluate teaching across the whole curriculum and throughout the age range. An educationalist developing the very concept of quality needs vision and skills

to plan, implement and evaluate innovations at the class, school and district level.

Lillis writes persuasively about the need for training which can precipitate a radical 'change of consciousness' in supervisors and encourage 're-confrontation and re-examination' of fundamental beliefs (1992:21). He insists that successful training will need to do more than refine and extend a teacher's own pedagogic skills. Some new skills of classroom observation, for example, can be explicitly taught and practised in training sessions. The training process itself, however, actually needs to shift each supervisor's perceptions of the interplay of teaching and learning.

The basic skills of supervision (monitoring, observation, analysis, reporting, evaluation) may well be transmitted through initial induction programmes. But the overall change of consciousness ... is a much more problematic curriculum. These higher conceptual areas are more difficult to attain. Experience suggests that a major part of the training problem is to sensitise initiates into new understandings and to build expertise in understanding the organisational and sociological functioning of schools and teachers. This requires in part a suspension of their own inherited experience as teachers, a re-confrontation and re-examination of questions such as what is a good teacher, how are departments to be run effectively and efficiently ... and 'what is a good school'... . It also requires awareness of the change agent strategies ... that can assist teachers to work to improve their own professional worlds.  
(Lillis 1992:21)

His description of the basic and reflective skills required can be applied to each of the different models of supervision. Impassive observers, active reformers and inspired visionaries should all be required to 're-confront', 're-examine' and refine their preconceptions. Experience, however relevant and rewarding, is simply not sufficient to ensure that even good teachers understand enough about their own success to be able to help others teach effectively too.

The suggestions for improving supervision sometimes seem to parallel



earlier, now outdated, patterns for improving teacher effectiveness. That is, there is an over-emphasis on increasing the 'things' that could ease their job (experience, travel allowances, model lessons, checklists and proformas), but an underemphasis on developing the 'qualities' they would need to employ in their role of mediator, problem solver and change agent. What is needed is training or induction that will influence how the supervisors decide on actions, rather than one which schools them to undertake certain specific acts. If they are to professionalise the teachers they work with, they must themselves be trained as professionals, not just performers. They will need to embrace challenges to their own assumptions, and learn how to challenge the assumptions and preconceptions of others with purpose, assurance and sensitivity.

## Conclusion

[Supervision] has already been identified as a weak link in the management of the educational process at primary level.  
(UNESCO 1984:65)

Although the practice of supervision may be degenerate in many areas, the purpose remains unequivocally that of improving primary education and raising its quality so that the next generation can meet the challenges of a changing world. To realise this potential within their role, a clearer focus on work related to schools, more rigorous selection and specific training are suggested as prerequisites.

The effectiveness, therefore, of an inspectorate in improving the quality of education depends firstly on the emphasis placed on its main professional functions of evaluation, guidance and training; secondly on its being well enough staffed and trained and given the right working conditions to carry out these functions; and thirdly on its working in close partnership with all other agencies for reform and development within the educational service.  
(Pritchard 1975:34)

Conflict and tension are recognised as inherent in the post. The supervisor

tries to fulfil a 'Janus-role', facing both the educational authorities and the school communities, but with only limited acceptance in either camp. This Janus-role creates a personal tension for the individual supervisor: should he seek to exert influence in school by peaceful or warlike behaviour? It creates tensions in the perceptions of the supervisor held by others: is she friend or informant; messenger or mediator? It creates tension in the training of supervisors, scarce though this is: should training seek to make supervisors efficient conduits of data and decisions; or powerful change agents and decision-makers realising a country's aspirations through others?

Too often the supervisor fails to become efficient, let alone inspirational, in communicating between the different parties. Lacking transport, time, resources, knowledge and inter-personal skills, the supervisor takes refuge in status and conformity. Lacking understanding of the proposed developments to be implemented, deprived of feedback, or personal aspirations, the supervisor attends to easier tasks. Yet the vision of purposeful and productive supervision continues to haunt the literature, insisting that supervision is itself necessary for the realisation of the imperative to improve primary education.

Thus the literature reviewed here broadly concurs with the prevailing view of supervisors and their work which I first encountered in Pakistan. Supervisors across the world are often inappropriately qualified or experienced, and their main use of time is confined to office chores and data collection. Therefore, it appears that in practice they not only do not, but cannot, influence primary education positively simply because they seldom get in to schools. When school visits do become more regular, supervision may help to reduce teacher absenteeism, but it still does not necessarily improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Changes to the qualifications that supervisors require, increased provision of compulsory training courses, reductions in teachers' absenteeism are improvements that are easy to monitor. However, how the teacher uses the time gained to increase and extend pupils' education; how the supervisor applies such a course to enhance work in schools, communities and the office, seem to be ignored. A shift of paradigm for research into education in

developing countries, away from input-output models and towards a scrutiny of the process of change, has been called for (Pennycuik 1993), but actual examples are still rare. My case study of supervisors within a training programme begins to redress the balance. By discerning how, and when, particular supervisors achieve effectiveness it may be possible to uncover factors that influence the way that supervisors interpret their role. This in turn may suggest whether or not it is possible to transform supervisory practices from the restricted role of an inspector, through advisory teaching, and into work which can move not just individual schools, but the whole education service, forward.

## Methodology of the Micro Study

### Issues Underlying the Research

Working within an educational development programme in Pakistan gave me a prolonged and privileged access to about a hundred supervisory staff in two contrasting areas. Over a two year period, 1993-4, I worked with these supervisors to establish their role as master trainers on a one-month course for primary school teachers. I also ran specific training courses for them in supervisory techniques. In the following year I returned to review the impact of the training and to rewrite the course materials for use in new areas. Between 1996 and 1998 I continued to visit at least once each year to evaluate progress in schools, and to support new initiatives such as a training course for headteachers devised by the supervisors themselves.

Any research I undertook had to complement my work within the training programme as a whole. I wanted the processes of contributing to the research to be beneficial to the supervisors and to encourage them to explain, with self-confidence, all that they were achieving in their work. My intention was to use the supervisors' own analyses and reflections throughout the SPEDP period in order to begin to unravel the mismatches between the images and the realities of supervisory work in Sindh. I thus sought to undertake a form of 'educative research' (Gitlin 1992) in which the subjects under scrutiny, the supervisors, could become collaborative action researchers through articulating the nuances of their changing styles of work. In attending to the individual voices of those involved in school supervision, this research follows in a growing tradition of turning the objects of research into the subject of the research narrative (e.g. Cortazzi 1991; Niaz 1991; Schratz 1993a; Dadds 1995; Hatch & Wisniewski 1995), in order to explore social, emotional and cultural influences on the supervisors' working lives:

All these approaches aim at changing the nature of pedagogical knowledge by allowing the emotive and often disturbing qualities of individuals in their culture to penetrate the research process.

Therefore researchers direct their studies with a minimum of interference with the authentic situation in their field of study. To achieve this the research instruments have to be tuned to enable the study of educational practices as closely as possible without destroying the authentic meaning for the people involved.

(Schatz 1993a:1)

The demand here for 'a minimum of interference', however, is simply not possible for a foreign consultant within a massive educational reform programme. Achieving the desired fidelity to the voices recorded across the divides of culture, language and expectation was certainly the most pressing issue within this research enterprise. The fine tuning of the strategies employed to resolve the potential difficulties and discords, will be an underlying theme throughout this chapter.

### **Overview of the Research Design**

The empirical research incorporates an eclectic study drawing on both quantitative and qualitative techniques, and using each to enhance the interpretation of the other. In this it follows a small, but growing, tradition of diverse research in developing countries (e.g. Vulliamy *et al.* 1990), where previous research has been almost exclusively within the quantitative tradition.

Some basic numerical analysis ensures that the study can more readily be compared with earlier research on supervisors in Pakistan (Bhutto 1979; Warwick and Reimers 1995). It has also been used to answer the preliminary questions: 'Who are the supervisors?' and 'What is it that they do?'. The use of qualitative data provides further insight into the meaning and interpretation of the reported activities, and highlights supervisors' personal perspectives on their own work. This allows a focus on their own perceptions in answering: 'What is it that supervisors themselves want to do?'; 'Why are they rarely effective?' and 'What has training achieved?'

Finally, in response to both the literature review and the empirical study, the potential impact of supervisors on improving the effectiveness of schools in Sindh, and beyond, will be explored.

The following table indicates the sources of empirical data from this micro study used to address each of these questions.

Questions	Sources of Empirical Data	Chapter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the supervisors?</li> </ul>	Questionnaire Life stories Group reflection	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it that they do?</li> </ul>	Questionnaire Inventory	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do supervisors want to do?</li> </ul>	Questionnaire Interviews Group reflection	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are they rarely effective?</li> </ul>	Life stories Interviews Group reflection	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has training achieved?</li> </ul>	Group reflection Journal and field notes	8

**Figure 4:1 Summary of Sources of Empirical Data Used in the Micro Study**

The need for qualitative evidence to supplement quantitative analysis was pinpointed by an education officer in NWFP reflecting on the effectiveness of learning coordinators in their work:

“Some of the success of learning coordinators can be measured in reductions of teachers’ absenteeism and increase of rolls. These can be counted. But the bigger difference is in attitudes and in motivation. These cannot be measured, but they can be felt.”

(senior education officer NWFP, 1994)

Finding ways to access the nature of such ‘felt’ differences in attitudes and

motivation requires enunciation and articulation, rather than measurement. Thus an evaluation which observes apparent changes over time and seeks to explore the supervisors' rationale for their actions, may come closer to establishing the dynamics of development than a quantitative analysis of what they do at different times. Uncovering the motivations and frustrations of the supervisors in their work may help to suggest potential means to assure further development in educational quality. That is the purpose of this research. It can therefore be seen to belong to the growing tradition of 'illuminative evaluation' as outlined by Parlett and Hamilton (1977:10):

Illuminative evaluation takes account of the wider contexts in which educational programmes function. Its primary concern is with description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction.... It aims to discover and document what it is like to be participating in the scheme, whether as a teacher or pupil; and, in addition, to discuss the innovation's most significant features, recurring concomitants and critical processes.

### **Stages of the Research**

The three characteristic stages of progressive focusing through illuminative evaluation (Parlett & Hamilton 1977) are broadly reflected in the chronological development of my involvement in the SPEDP teacher-training component. These, in turn, are paralleled by my use of different data collection methods: both for immediate use during the consultancies, and for later analysis as research tools.

- i **Observation:** searching for commonalities and relationships and absorbing the interrelationships between the players.

This phase took up the first year of my involvement on the project (January 1993 - February 1994) preparing supervisors for their work as master trainers on the primary teachers' courses and delivering the first supervisory course. The reflections, insights and tensions of this phase were recorded extensively in a research journal and field notes.

ii **Further enquiry:** sustained, systematic and selective.

This phase (March 1994 - December 1994) began with a specific short study comparing supervisory practices in Sindh and NWFP and ended with the third and final supervisory course. During this period interviewing became more intensive and focused. In addition, a specific questionnaire and inventory were designed and used on the third supervisory course to elicit information about how the supervisors perceived different aspects of their work.

iii **Exploring and explaining:** analysing patterns and principles.

The final phase of the SPEDP pilot scheme (January 1995 - December 1996) culminates in this study. In the UK I worked with a small group of study fellows from the project who were on a year's scholarship. This protracted contact with seven individuals provided opportunities for eliciting their life stories and a continuing search for counter examples and conflicting evidence. Field work in Pakistan concluded with consultancies to evaluate the on-going work of supervisors and to negotiate the rewriting of course materials through collective self-reflection. This phase also involved the processing of the data collected, sorting and cross-referencing individual statements into key themes. I have been fortunate to return to Sindh in 1997-98 for activities under SPEDP2. Wherever possible I continued to visit target schools, usually unannounced, to gauge the longer term impact of the original work on the people involved.

The timetable for these research phases is shown in figure 4:1 superimposed onto the schedule of training for supervisors under SPEDP adapted from figure 1:1 in the introduction.



Date	Research	SPE training	other related activities
1993 Jan	<b>Observation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK training of RPs (12 people for 5 weeks)</li> <li>• writing PST course and training 35 RPs (2 weeks)</li> </ul>
Mar	journal and field notes maintained throughout each consultancy		
Apr		MT training course 1 (175 people for 2 weeks)	
Oct		<b>SPE course 1 'The Curriculum'</b> (100 people for 2 weeks)	
1994 Jan			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK fellowship on the supervisors' role (2 people for 3 months)</li> <li>• consultancy tour to explore the supervisory role in different provinces</li> </ul>
Feb	<b>Further enquiry</b>	MT training course 2 (175 people for 2 weeks)	
Mar	interviews		
Apr			
Jun			
Aug		<b>SPE course 2 'The Advisory Role'</b> (100 people for 2 weeks)	
Sept			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK study fellows for BPhil in primary education (8x12 months)</li> </ul>
Oct			
Nov	questionnaire and inventory	<b>SPE course 3 'School Development'</b> (100 people for 2 weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local development of SPE manual</li> </ul>
Dec			
1995 Mar	<b>Exploring and explaining</b>		
May	life stories and group reflection		
Oct		<b>Impact review of SPE training and rewriting courses for SPEDP2</b>	
1996 Nov			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop HT course and materials with SPEs</li> </ul>
	continued observation and interviews	Further impact review	
1997		Continued visits to target schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension project, SPEDP2, in 3 adjacent districts.</li> </ul>
1998			

Figure 4:2 Timetable of Research Phases

## The Research Sample

The main subjects of the research were the supervisory personnel of the pilot districts who took part in the training provided for supervisors under SPEDP. Of these, 91 completed a questionnaire and inventory in November 1994. The pilot areas comprised four sub-divisions in Karachi (A, B, C, D) and two rural sub-divisions (X and Y). The intention of SPEDP was to train all the supervisors of primary schools (SPE) and all the resource persons of mosque schools (RPMS) employed. These particular sub-divisions had not taken part in PEP1 or PEP2 and therefore no learning coordinators were employed as supervisors during the project period 1993-6, although some have been appointed since.

The set of people attending the third supervisory course differed from the set of all supervisors in the pilot areas in two important ways. On the one hand the actual sample was reduced because a small number of supervisors did not attend the training. It proved surprisingly difficult to ascertain the definitive number of supervisors employed in each area. Inevitably some supervisors were absent on leave during any one course, but the reluctance to provide precise figures cannot be explained by this alone. Perhaps there was an apprehension that we might somehow 'take action against' those supervisors who were not attending. Or perhaps, as for primary school teachers, there is an embarrassing number of people employed but not in active service, and so the statistics themselves might be a sensitive issue. Mindful of this imprecision, then, we relied on the senior supervisors to corroborate that the number attending included all available supervisors, and we do seem to have had access to all those who held responsibility for a beat of schools over the SPEDP period.

I did in fact meet two individual supervisors who were not enrolled on the first course: one man in area B and one woman in X. The reasons given for non-attendance were, in both cases, that they were not actively involved in the supervision of schools and were currently fulfilling their posts solely in an administrative capacity: he because of his involvement with the teachers' associations (unions); she because she had a young son to mind while simultaneously pursuing her job in the office. Personally inviting both these supervisors (and the boy as well) to attend the training venues made no

difference. They simply did not see the courses as relevant to their work.

On the other hand, the number of people attending the training sessions also extended beyond the limits of those already working as SPE and RPMS. In each area there are fewer female supervisors than male supervisors. In the rural area the ratio is approximately 1:10. We were aware that the women supervisors in the rural area might feel uneasy to be so outnumbered and, as a consequence, might find it difficult to participate fully in discussions. We also hoped that, by offering preliminary training to teachers who were eligible for supervisory posts, we might actually encourage more women to look favourably on possible future employment as supervisors. Therefore, in the rural area, the female supervisors were augmented by female high school teachers who were already working within SPEDP as master trainers for the primary teachers' courses. The female to male ratio thus became 3:10, and numbers were sufficiently large to allow some use of single sex discussion groups. The questionnaires and inventory surveys of these additional women participants have not been included in the main sample simply because they were not actually supervisors. However, their opinions will have become inextricably incorporated into some of the discussion data. They also provided some unique data themselves in reflecting on the relative status and conditions of service experienced by high school teachers and supervisors.

The survey of biographical details and personal opinions of all active primary school supervisors in one urban and one rural district distinguishes this study from earlier surveys which used larger, random selections of supervisors across all four provinces (Pritchard 1975, Bhutto 1979; Warwick and Reimers 1995). Surveys of primary school enrolment, retention and achievement in Pakistan are always careful to distinguish between the provinces, the sexes, and between urban and rural areas. So too do surveys of primary school teachers' qualifications and experience. It is not unreasonable to expect that the experiences and the views of the supervisors might also vary by gender and location. Although the numbers are small, this case study of 91 supervisors in two contrasting areas does allow these different subsets of the total population to be compared.

In addition to the supervisors themselves, I also interviewed a range of

people with whom they come into contact in their work. This included both their superior officers in the education department, their counterparts in the Bureau (BCEW), and those they sought to influence in schools and communities. These interviews provided some ballast to the supervisors' own opinions of themselves. They thus provide some triangulation of results through suggesting whether or not the people supervisors worked with observed any of the changes in behaviour that they claim to have made.

The group of seven people from the project area who completed a BPhil in Primary Education at Bishop Grosseteste College in the year 1994-5, as part of SPEDP, provided a small core of informants with whom I was able to share emerging ideas, trial the inventory and questionnaire design, and carry out extended life story interviews. This group comprised three supervisors, one education lecturer, one high school teacher, one high school headteacher, and one primary school headteacher.

### **The Choice of Language**

As Rob Walker has written:

A practical research issue which faces us all is the intrusive and imperial nature of the research voice, for as soon as we begin an interview, draft a questionnaire or engage others in conversation, the very language we use creates frames within which to realize knowledge ... there is no doubt that our use of language determines to a large degree what we will learn.

(Walker 1993:73)

The language and the phrasing of any question is crucial - and even more so when either the questions, the answers, or both have to be translated from one language to another. A critical decision to be made at each stage of the information gathering was what language to use. English does remain a very visible language in Pakistan. It can be seen on hoardings, food wrappings and newspapers, it dominates much official documentation and is prevalent in higher education. Thus many of the supervisors, especially

in the city, have developed an ear and an eye for English, even when they do not happily speak it themselves. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan, though the mother tongue of few. In Karachi, the majority of the people we work with speak and work in Urdu. In contrast, in the rural area the predominant language is Sindhi, English is much less apparent and only a few of the participants work in Urdu medium schools. If we were to aim to use everyone's mother tongue we would have to include at least Pushto, Saraiki, Balochi and Gujarati as well as Urdu and Sindhi.

On the courses we chose generally to work in two languages, Urdu and English in Karachi; Sindhi and English in interior Sindh. We have specifically tried to use the necessity of translation as a means of clarification, keeping both languages visible or audible. When we have attempted to remove the English from either a written document or from discussion, it has become apparent that ambiguities in the original or in the translation can distort the meaning. For example, one session require teachers to make a 'log book or diary'. This became, in the written translation, 'logarithmic tables' - and caused consternation among the trainers, who thought they had to hand craft half-remembered pages of four-figure numbers.

### **Research Journal and Field Notes**

My research journal began as a lifeline: an intensely personal reflection intended to help me make sense of the multiplicity of images and confusions of my work in Pakistan. It recorded my first impressions of schools, offices, homes, bazaars; my contradictory experiences of binding bureaucracy juxtaposed with individuals who could cut through a swathe of red tape; my peculiar role as a female consultant in a society where purdah encourages women to assume invisibility. It provided me with space to respond to the challenges of my experiences; to refine my own assumptions and begin to resolve underlying dilemmas: what is the purpose of literacy in a desert community? Is schooling necessarily beneficial? Is it always 'inappropriate' for a foreigner to shake hands with members of the opposite sex?

As time went on, the journal itself evolved and became my mainstay in providing an initial forum for emergent ideas and the links between them. These in turn fed into my external research, particularly in the formation of initial interview questions which endeavoured to seek out positive and negative data to refine preliminary theories.

As a foreigner I am too conspicuous ever to become a participant observer without seriously disrupting the dynamics of the observed. Maintaining field notes did not render me 'invisible', but it did make me apparently 'unavailable' and provided a means to distance myself from the action while absorbing myself in the recording of it. For example, in early attempts to observe others leading course sessions that we had designed, it could become difficult to avoid taking on the leading role. By immersing myself in another task, writing, the nervous resource person would hesitate to 'interrupt' and, as anxious consultant, I could suppress any temptation to intervene!

Both the journal and the field notes were thus begun before I had refined my focus for research. Writing them helped me to do the immediate consultancy tasks more effectively. Reading them again, after the events they record, has other functions. Together they provide a chronology of the time in Pakistan, capturing incidents and highlighting ideas as they first impinged on my consciousness. Several of these initial thoughts have taken on considerable importance as the programme developed and it is useful to chart my growing awareness and to have a temporal frame for any changes and developments in the behaviour observed. For example, on day 1 of the very first course I noted that virtually all the women, but not one of the men, took notes. This provided one of the earliest indications of the different styles of working between the sexes and suggested a level of attention and involvement among the women that was, at that time, belied by their reticence in joining discussions. The use of the journal and fieldnotes was thus formative throughout the research period. Their use in this summative report is more limited to providing a few illustrative examples of speech or behaviour.

## Questionnaire and Inventory

The questionnaire and inventory used were an integral part of the third supervisory course. They were completed on the first day and had the pragmatic function of providing an opening activity which could be worked on, individually or in groups, during a predictable period of delay as the participants arrived late and gave their first attention to registering for the payment of travel and daily allowances (TADA). The papers did have a legitimate heuristic function too. Their purpose was to provide a structure through which supervisors could reflect on their personal values and begin to classify current and future changes in their styles of working. For research purposes they also provided some basic background data on qualifications and experience as well as indications of opinions, behaviour and aspirations.

The design of the questionnaire included a short factual section and a section where supervisors were asked to record diagrammatically how they distributed their time at work. They were also invited to contrast this with a reflection on how they used their time before SPEDP began, and how they would like to distribute their time at work in the future. The final section provided a space for a written answer asking participants to record aspects of their work that they considered they were best at, and those they wished to develop. (See appendix C for the full questionnaire and inventory.)

The inventory asked participants to assess how frequently they undertook particular functions as part of their supervisory work. Its design is unconventional in phrasing all questions positively. The disadvantage of this strategy is that recording a high score might be perceived as the 'best' answer and lead to a trivialisation of the activity. However, direct positive statements are easier to translate accurately, and through this strategy we could be more confident in the match between intended meaning and actual understanding. Immediate analysis of the responses also allowed us to assess how confident the supervisors were in the particular aspects of their work which were a main part of the course programme, and so refine our own planning and preparation. The inventory was also intended to act as a cross-check on the prose responses to the questionnaire where supervisors were asked, without prompting questions, to evaluate the strengths and

weaknesses of their professional profile.

The mixture of numerical, diagrammatic and written answers was designed to give the consultants easy and instant access to some of the results, without the need for translation. This allowed us both to check understanding and to encourage some immediate discussion of the inferences behind the recorded results.

The papers were first trialled with the group of study fellows undertaking a BPhil in Britain. They were then amended, and translated by the fellows themselves into Urdu and Sindhi. The intention was to have these versions produced on word processors in the Bureau (BCEW) before the course began. We hoped to reproduce the Urdu version for the urban area, the Sindhi version for rural Sindh and to keep the English one as a prompt for ourselves. In the event there were technical problems and it was not possible to get the Urdu version produced in time. Karachi participants therefore worked from an English text. Possibly because of this, all the Karachi participants added their own sentences in English, whereas those in the rural area wrote everything in Sindhi and their answers were later translated into English by the BPhil students. Although the questionnaire contained relatively little writing and was introduced orally, the inventory made heavy demands on participants' ability to read and interpret a rather telegraphic and condensed style of English. Resource persons were on hand to help individuals translate sentences, but it is impossible to guarantee that they were called on as much as necessary. This makes the inventory a dubious source of information and limited use is made of it in the analysis that follows.

Throughout the teacher-training programme we have tackled the problems of language in a number of ways - not always successfully. For example, the evaluation questionnaires, used on every course, have persistently caused problems. Some have been specific problems of translation. For example the key word in two consecutive questions 'what was the most helpful part of the course?' and 'what was the least helpful part of the course?' were not always distinguished. Reviewing the scripts at the end of one course showed that several of the respondents had given the same answer to both questions. Were they in fact claiming that the most useful element was, for



complex reasons, also the least useful? Had the repeated sentence structure concealed, rather than highlighted, the key word so that they gave the same answer to what appeared to be the same question? If so, which question was it that they had actually answered? Was there also a danger that those people whose scripts recorded different entries for each question had actually answered them in reverse order through misinterpreting the specific distinction between the two key words? Even having to raise such questions casts doubt on the validity of the data collected.

In the questionnaire included here, the only confusion which became apparent was an initial misunderstanding of the question which asked how much time each supervisor spent 'outside education'. This was intended to mean time spent on directed non-educational activities (e.g. census work or compiling the electoral register) and time misspent on second jobs during the working day of a supervisor (e.g. tending the rice mills or minding the children). One correspondent corroborated this meaning annotating his script "outside of education is totally waste of time", then adding as an appreciative addendum "except for training courses proper". However in Karachi one group of supervisors asked if 'outside education' meant 'environmental education taking place outside the school building'. This was indeed a practice encouraged on earlier courses. However, once this interpretation was voiced, the confusion was soon cleared up. It seems unlikely that any supervisors continued to understand 'outside education' to be a valuable teaching activity, since no script recorded increasing the proportion of time spent on it either during, or after, the period of the SPEDP training.

In earlier questionnaires another problem experienced was the lack of independence in completing them. Sometimes we received responses which appeared to record a block vote from a whole group of colleagues rather than individually considered answers. This made interpreting collated results extremely hazardous since it was possible that only the most confident English writing 'voice' was being heard at all. In this particular survey, however, no two scripts were identical, even for the inventory which, in Karachi, must have challenged some supervisors' grasp of English. The uniqueness of each response makes the results more credible. I believe that this independence may be due to the inclusion of personal

details, giving each supervisor a sense that he or she was creating a personal portrait. In contrast, evaluation questionnaires at the end of a course were always anonymous and known to be used in summative and formative evaluation. In such circumstances there is certainly no personal pride or value attached to individualising the answers and indeed there could be some conceivable benefit to individuals in ensuring that their own views were represented on as many papers as possible and taken forward as the views of the whole group. This incident highlights a problem of research ethics: it is easy to demonstrate that comments will be treated anonymously by using unnamed scripts yet this can actually jeopardise the validity of the responses. The written responses may well have been taken more seriously by the individual participants precisely because each script was named. The supervisors had to trust my discretion in preserving their anonymity. It is as though the element of risk was actually necessary to the achievement of personal responses, rather than tactical statements.

In Pakistan, as in other South Asian countries, there is an etiquette to please, rather than challenge, someone asking questions, and thus to say only what is considered acceptable. By presenting questionnaires within a course that I was also directing, there was a danger that I would learn only how much of the language and assumptions of the course each writer had absorbed. Govinda and Buch (1990:147) commenting on a large-scale study of student teachers' motivation in India, are sceptical about the use of questionnaires for this reason:

... an objective analysis of the responses to the questionnaire would make one feel that the responses were guided more by concern for social acceptability than by real intentions. It would have been more apt to adopt a qualitative approach, involving interviews and participatory discussion, to find out the real motivating factors.

In my own research the intention was to make the actual writing of responses participatory too, through encouraging supervisors to reflect and discuss the issues together as they completed the forms. In this respect, I was particularly pleased at the use of the inventory. Not only was each paper different, but only one paper was marked with straight 5s. Achieving a

distinct personal response at this point in the training reinforced just how far the self-confidence and reflectiveness of the supervisory group had evolved over three years. On an earlier course we had presented the supervisors with a similar self-evaluation sheet to use with teachers. This sheet contained questions about punctuality, classroom organisation, lesson preparation, record keeping and professional development. Many supervisors were highly critical of the sheet and derided its intended use. My field notes of that day record a near riot during the presentation:

Ms X takes centre stage behind a chair grasping its back as though to provide the missing prop of the lectern. Also perhaps to quell the visible effects of the nervousness she expressed earlier "Madam, how I do this? - I lecture them, you will do the activity". Fast, fluent, furious delivery - will she pause for breath? X stops, questions, the women respond well. (Is this because she is their supervisor? Because, as headteachers they answer with assurance on school matters? Because the men distrust the complex contradictions of Xs youth, gender, status and privilege?) .... Role reversal, the men are talking now, sceptical, cynical, derogatory and rhetorical. Too many talking at once for Mr Y to translate all. "Why do we ask this? Teachers will say they do these things, but they do not." "We know they do not do, they know they do not do, but here they will say they do it!" "We do not ask them, we tell them." .... X's nervousness gives way to anger, she bangs the chair and calls for attention, five men leave the room and slope off to the verandah to smoke. She can quell a rumpus through status, but she cannot structure a debate or chair a discussion. The other RPs intervene ....

The questionnaire is the main source of information about supervisors' personal details and their professional lives. Every section yielded useful results. At each stage these results were also analysed to consider possible differences between supervisors by gender, location and qualifications. The presentation of the inventory had drawbacks, which will be discussed later, and it is only used briefly to see if it provides any corroborative evidence of the apparent differences between subgroups shown up in the questionnaire.

## Interviews

Govinda and Buch (1990) imply that interviews and discussions might provide a secure source of genuine individual responses. However there are problems of cultural reticence which restrict this methodology too. An external evaluator, assessing the progress of SPEDP after eighteen months, noted the problems he faced in eliciting personal and reflective answers rather than stereotypical responses:

It was evident from discussions held with participants and local stake holders that the majority are not used to being asked for their views and opinions. At the DEO level and below there is a culture of re-activity, with persons at all levels reinforcing this culture in the manner in which they relate to those 'below' them. It is necessary to recognise that roles and status are clearly defined in a system which is based on patronage. Consequently it was necessary to mediate what I was told by many interviewees. In group discussions, I had to guard against creating situations which could expose individuals to professional risk, yet at the same time, move discussions above the banal.

(Penny 1994:11)

Eliciting answers which transcended the politically correct or the politely banal was essential to my purpose of distinguishing between the appearance and realities of supervisory work. It was therefore imperative that I developed a range of strategies to try to reach different layers of the perceived truth within the study group. I endeavoured to achieve this through a variety of interview techniques - each with its own problems and limitations.

In the end my greatest asset was probably my persistence and my observable attention to what I heard! I questioned and probed some people several times on six successive consultancy visits, and found their tone, as well as their actual words, altered discernibly. Initially answers might begin: "Madam, in our country ..."; "All supervisors ...". Later responses changed in register as well as content: "I will tell you frankly ..."; "Because we are talking sisterly ..."; "Look, Harriet, at first we do bend the order ..."; "Shall I

tell you truly? I think, maybe, it is like this ...". In these later dialogues I am appealed to by name not status, and I am referred to as a familiar equal: a friend or sister rather than a prestigious guest. The statements showed a shift from general to particular, from abstract to actual, and from assertion to exploratory tentativeness.

From the start of the work I recorded verbatim answers to key questions in my field notebook. This ensured that I heard what was said, though on occasion this may well not have been exactly what was meant. Recording points from conversations is inevitably a selective process. Tape-recording and transcription, or even a shared interview schedule would have been more accurate and more thorough. However, at this early point in my research, when I was establishing trust and openness between myself and the people I was listening to, taking notes seemed the most appropriate way to collect data. Noting down quotations underlined that I was indeed attending to the detail of what was said, not just seeking an answer that might please me. I realised just how effective this technique was in providing tacit affirmation for opinions when one SDEO stopped talking in order to reiterate a particular point and demanded that it should be recorded in my notebook, even though I felt it bore little relevance to our topic of discussion.

Informal questioning led to more explicit interviews during the second year. One particular consultancy was designed to compare and assess supervisory practices in different provinces, and entailed multiple interviews with people of different ranks in the education system. Specific questions now had to be written into the interview schedules, even though I wanted these to remain semi-structured so that I could follow through any particular points of interest. In these interviews it was also important to gain information and opinions from people who did not speak English. Instantaneous translation has its problems, and requires, not only fluency in two languages, but also an understanding of the subject matter and sensitivity to the people involved. Employing senior educational personnel as translators often resulted in discussions that were censored, first by the participants who wanted to impress their senior officer with the 'correctness' of their response, and secondly by the translator who similarly wanted to control what was heard through the interpretation given. It is a severe

discipline to be an informed, yet non-interventionist, interpreter.

A particular problem was encountered in translating for mixed-gender groups. One able, male, interpreter would neither speak directly to the women (who sat apart on one side of the room), nor willingly accept any comments from them. On one memorable occasion, in order to counter his exclusivity, I ended up with two simultaneous translators, one for each side of the room. The ensuing discussion was certainly noisy, but at least the women were able to hear and to be heard. On another occasion, with a group of women whom I had not met before, one neither spoke nor looked up throughout the entire two-hour meeting in mixed company. However, from her poise and level of attention it appeared that she was following the English as well as the Sindhi. As the group left the room, I addressed her directly in English, whereupon she whisked me away to the women's staff room, removed her burqua, and explained that indeed she had an MA in English literature and was bringing up her children to be bilingual. She had certainly understood all that was said and had much to contribute to the topic of discussion, but was simply not able to do so in mixed company.

Warwick and Reimers (1995) used structured interviews in the local language, training their fieldworkers to administer them and record the results. Such an approach alters, but does not remove, the language problems. Even assuming that the training was meticulous and resulted in common intentions amongst all interviewers, there must still remain some concern that the status and gender of the interviewer could influence the response received, and that later translation of the written text by a separate group of personnel could lose some of the nuances of the original which could be camouflaged by interests, understanding and, indeed, jargon shared by the original participants.

### **Group Reflection**

In teaching on the various courses, we found it advantageous to keep all speeches in any language short and concise, and to support them by a visible written text. Thus consultants rehearsed their inputs with the main translator before each session and kept key points visible throughout on

overhead transparencies or flipchart sheets prepared in the relevant languages. The group discussions that ensued were in Urdu and Sindhi, but also often resulted in a single page agreed by the group, and written in English wherever possible. This summary was shared in the plenary session and remained in the room throughout the course as a permanent record of each group's thinking. On the final supervisory course this technique was used frequently. Each day concluded with supervisors in sub-divisional groups reflecting on the ideas discussed throughout the day in relation to a one particular school which all participants had visited earlier in the course. Although used here to indicate group self-reflection by participants rather than collective self-reflection by researchers, the move towards this form of discussion and reporting does, I believe, share essential features with the technique described by Schratz (1993b:61):

Very often institutional analyses end with a research report based on the findings of self-evaluation without paying attention to the sociodynamic forces steering the evaluative process. Professional and institutional growth and development largely depend on the exchange of interpretations in a multitude of decision-making contexts. Collective self-reflection can help in achieving a better understanding of the shared truths about particular activities, which are often concealed beneath the formal report of research findings.

This method of peer discussion in mother tongue, with reporting back on agreement and disagreement, rather than continuous translation, was also developed, during the courses, as an interview technique. One-to-one interviewing - or two-to-one as a translator was often needed - often intimidated the interviewee into giving the 'correct' answer, regardless of personal experience or belief. Peer discussion, on the other hand, fostered a more realistic variety of views. It became crucially important to watch the body language and interactions of the group, and to intervene to encourage some of the members to speak. This approach allowed me to watch and note the dynamics of the discussion, even when I could not understand many of the words. It also allowed me to intervene at times, through observing body language or cuing in to familiar words. "We have not heard from Shaheeda, what is her view?"; "Akhter looks as though he does not really agree, why is

that?"; "Didn't Neusrat mention the 'integrated curriculum'? What was she saying?". Adequate translation was usually provided by someone within the group itself or, when necessary, by a non-participant peer - someone who had empathy with the group's experiences and would neither intimidate, nor misrepresent.

## **Life Stories**

Towards the end of their year in Britain, I recorded the life story of each of the seven study fellows engaged in a BPhil degree. The function of each account was to retell the key features of a life in education, focusing on decisions made, influences perceived and retrospective evaluations. In particular I wanted, even for a small number of individuals, to chart the actual moves through teaching and into supervision. Throughout these interviews, the study fellow were encouraged to explore their perceptions of how well they had fulfilled each role and how they had developed their own particular style and values. I refer to the outcomes as 'stories' rather than 'histories' since they rely entirely on what the speaker chose to recall and retell as significant (Goodson 1995). There was no attempt to construct a complete chronology which could be checked against collections of external data. Use of life stories is becoming a more frequent form of research in developing countries, both in terms of Pakistan (Weiss 1992) and in terms of teachers and supervisors (e.g. Osler 1997 in Kenya). As Osler claims:

The study of teachers' work and life histories can make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the complex relationships between experience, attitudes and behaviour and may enable us to comprehend more fully the role which tradition continues to play in influencing educational development. By placing educators' own life stories and understandings as the centre we are able to look beyond the barriers to educational development and to identify some strategies which they have adopted to effect change. (Osler 1997:371)

I transcribed the tapes carefully, and have referred to these transcripts throughout. These texts provide my only record of extended speech. I have



used them to consider not only the influential events in the speakers' careers but also to explore the significance given to certain key words which I had heard repeatedly in different contexts.

In writing up this research, I have edited many repetitions, hesitations and pauses out of the original transcripts, except where these delaying tactics are themselves the topic under consideration. In conducting this editing I lose some of the authenticity of the sound of the speaker, but I gain an additional attention to the sense. Nesper and Barber (1995) provide a precedent for such editing in describing their work on collaborative writing with parents of children with disabilities.

We originally used quotes that included hesitations, pauses, false starts, and so forth. We now think that far from being markers of 'authentic' speech, these are artifacts of interview practices. We were forcing people to talk extensively about complex issues (about which they may not have spoken previously), treating what they said as if it somehow represented a trace of some stable internal set of 'beliefs', and treating how they said things as reflections of underlying rules of interactional competencies.

(Nesper and Barber 1995:56)

In recording life stories at the end of a one-year course in which reflection on critical incidents in professional experience was an important tool, I was not requesting discussion of entirely new concepts and issues. I was, however, demanding sustained articulation of these ideas in a foreign language, and this too stretches the interviewees' ability to express themselves as articulately as they themselves would like. By editing the text, my endeavour has always been to remain true to each speaker's intentionality.

### **Provisions for Trustworthiness**

Reliability, validity, the touchstones of trustworthiness in quantitative research, can sometimes seem less helpful concepts in underwriting the significance of qualitative studies. Some researchers have attempted to

redefine the meaning of these words to reflect new circumstances (e.g. Maxwell 1992). Others select alternative words which they deem more appropriate, such as credibility, honesty and authenticity (Mason 1996, Janesick 1998). In this study, the main threats to credibility were the differences of language and culture between the researcher and the researched. I have therefore discussed the strategies evolved for overcoming these difficulties when designing the research instruments and collecting the data. At this point I wish to consider, very briefly, the more traditional aspects of trustworthiness and to alert the reader to some of the particular problems of applying these terms in the context of Pakistan.

### **Validity**

The questionnaires used supplied information about supervisors' professional qualifications and experience. Validity, or whether one is actually recording what one hopes one is recording, is seemingly quite simple at this point. However, although I have no reason to suppose that participants were deliberately misrepresenting themselves, I am still sceptical of the results. In a country riven by 'diploma disease' (Dore 1976) any qualification can be bought or achieved in a variety of ways. Two colleges of education studied by Warwick and Reimers estimated that cheating in the final exams was in the region of 85-100%: 'Lazy students cheated to make up for their ignorance, able students to defend themselves against inflated grades by the lazy' (1995:56). Methods of cheating can be both spectacular and professionally devastating, as described in the following newspaper article.

Copying and the use of unfair means in the Board and Degree level examinations became a big business. Examination centres, till last year were sold to various student unions, who had the contract to supply proper answers within half an hour of distribution of the question papers to the students for copying them onto their answer books. ... a year back when invigilation duties were performed by non-teachers; a merry, free for all in the examination halls was witnessed. Intimidation by the show and use of fire arms like Kalashnikovs, pistols and revolvers etc. was

in free use by different groups of students to settle any disputes.  
(Mozafer Islam 1992 "Literacy Campaign: Message of the Movement" Dawn, Tuesday Review Karachi, December 22-28, p4-6)

Among the cohort of supervisors who took part in the research, no-one boasted of cheating in the exams, although one claimed to have achieved a BEd without ever having taught anything to anyone, while another said he was offered a higher degree for money alone. Several claimed to have witnessed others cheating to gain qualifications and noted the reluctance of the authorities to intervene. One also alleged that he had had his own examination papers torn up by a rival union gang. Thus, although I have little doubt that the denotation of qualifications, and indeed of experience, is accurate in the questionnaires, the connotation of these terms certainly needs to be seen in a Pakistani perspective. The number, extent or degree of qualifications may bear little relation to the extent of study, comprehension and application. 'Interpretive validity' (Maxwell 1992:289) is therefore not straightforward, even with seemingly unambiguous categories such as qualifications.

### **Reliability**

Reliability, or the repeatability of results, is not an easy concept to apply to interview data in Sindh. The conformity, and indeed repetitiveness, of initial responses is marked. The purpose of this research was to try to breach the walls of convention and access alternative truths. The claim for credibility in this research derives from the fact that the easy, instantaneous responses have been gradually expanded, altered and amended over time. In this sense, the success of the research project must in part be gauged by its ability to make audible individual voices which may disturb received wisdom.

### **Triangulation**

Multi-method triangulation enriches this research through providing

corroborative and contrasting perspectives on the objects of study. In particular, the questionnaire, inventory and life stories all provide insights into how supervisors perceive their own use of time. A further method of triangulation was to interview different sources. Specific views on what supervisors actually do were sought not only from the supervisors themselves but also from the primary teachers they worked with, the high school teachers who might be transferred into supervision, and the more senior education officers in the pilot districts. These interviews were intended to clarify whether any changes that the supervisors claimed to have made in their style of working had indeed been noticed by others. The third form of triangulation used was through repeating key questions at different times, throughout the full four years of SPEDP and continuing to check interpretations through two further years of SPEDP2.

### **Generalizability**

The two pilot areas represent contrasting areas of Sindh: the densely urban environment of Karachi and a rural environment with small towns and remote villages. The supervisory staff who form the core of this study are therefore not a random sample, but there is no reason to believe that they are atypical in any way. I believe that they form a sufficiently representative sample to help to inform discussion about the supervisory role throughout Sindh. In focusing on a detailed study of the supervisory cohort in two districts this research may also highlight some important issues for supervisory teams anywhere.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of the Methodology**

In summary, this research sets out to provide an illuminative evaluation of the work undertaken by supervisors of primary education in two districts of Sindh engaged in a development programme. It uses a variety of techniques with an emphasis on qualitative interpretations using supervisors' own descriptions of their work.

Both strengths and weaknesses are apparent in the initial research design.

One significant strength is that the research covered two districts thoroughly, utilising discussions with virtually all the supervisors, as well as people of different ranks and status. This case-study approach provided the opportunity to examine small differences of perception in more detail than other studies which have sought to involve supervisors selected from across the whole province or country. The length of time over which data were collected was also a strength which allowed the process of change to be studied alongside the prevailing situation. The changes noted were not just of actions and attitudes, but of the very language used to describe them. The growing trust and empathy between the supervisors and the researcher resulted in a greater attempt to communicate beyond trite formulas and formalities. A more unexpected, emergent, and indeed debatable, strength, has been my status as foreign, female professional. As a foreign professional I can be accepted in male company as an 'honorary man' and welcomed to social, as well as professional, events alongside my male colleagues. However, being female I have also been allowed access to the women's personal and professional lives in ways that are simply not available to my male colleagues. As gender became an ever more important dimension in the attitudes of the supervisors, this privilege of access to both groups, both sets of voices, became a distinct advantage.

These strengths are counterbalanced by a perpetual problem, described throughout this chapter, of extracting the 'voices' of the supervisors, without sharing their preferred languages. A pressing issue accompanying the collection and representation of data has been that of fidelity: do the extracts from interviews faithfully encapsulate each speaker's representation of the truth? This has been a vexing question throughout, particularly in relation to the language used by speaker, interpreter and researcher. I have always been acutely aware of the distorting power of language and, as outlined throughout this chapter, have evolved a number of strategies to ensure that the research instruments were 'tuned' to their task.

One of the supervisors added a succinct and sensitive postscript to her questionnaire: "Dear, my English is poor. So please never mind, but hear me". Throughout this study my intention has been to do just that. First I have tried to hear the experiences and opinions of individual supervisors, and then to present them in such a way they may be heard by others as well.

## Who Are the Supervisors?

### Introduction

The received wisdom in Pakistan asserts that supervisors are generally high school teachers, often unwillingly transferred, well qualified but with no personal experience of primary school teaching. This view is so frequently repeated by teachers, supervisors, education officers and official documentation, it has ceased to be justified or questioned. At a local level such a view may fuel distrust and disdain between supervisors and those with whom they work. At a national level, it has had a direct influence on the design of educational reform strategies. Thus, for example, the World Bank Staff Appraisal Report, written in preparation for the most recent Primary Education Programme in NWFP, asserts:

The intended academic support function of supervision is neglected because supervisors frequently have no experience teaching primary children.

(World Bank 1995a:8)

The assumed causality between inappropriate experience and ineffective supervision is signalled by the word 'because'. This apparent relationship is then used to justify a move towards appointing learning coordinators, recruited directly from primary school teachers, in place of supervisors, in order to improve school-based supervision.

In this chapter, I introduce the sample of ninety-one supervisors in two districts who completed a course questionnaire in 1994 from which much of my data is drawn (see Appendix C for the full questionnaire). I then use the biographical details collected to analyse their qualifications and experience and to compare these with statistics from a recent, random sample of 288 supervisors throughout Pakistan (Warwick and Reimers 1995). I also use extracts from interviews held throughout the research period to provide more information about how supervisors acquired their jobs and how they, and high school teachers, view transfers from one post to another.

In response to the received wisdom about who supervisors are, I will consider the following questions:

- Are the supervisors well qualified?
- How much experience do they have of primary school teaching?
- What proportion of them were high school teachers before they transferred into supervision?
- How is the transfer from high school teacher to supervisor generally viewed by those involved?

The biodata collected from supervisory staff in two districts corroborate the view of supervisors as well qualified, but challenges the preconception of them as transferring from high schools with no experience of teaching primary children. The interview data serve to highlight some of the tensions inherent in the transfer between high school teacher and supervisor. These tensions were especially acute for the women in the sample.

### **Introducing the Sample**

The total number of responses to the questionnaire and inventory was 91. Returns were received from all the supervisors present on the first day of the course held in each area in November 1994, but it is surprisingly difficult to ascertain exactly what proportion of the total number of supervisors in each sub-division they represent. Each sub-division has a quota for supervisory staff, but not every one has a beat of schools to oversee. Supervisors occupying roles which are exclusively 'desk jobs', without the opportunity for active supervision in schools, would seldom attend our courses. Other supervisors might be granted 'long leave' for a variety of reasons, and disappear from our records for up to a year. When asking for the total number of supervisors in a sub-division, it was not clear whether the answer matched the official quota, the number of employees holding that grade of post, or the number currently engaged in active supervision of schools. On some occasions, the number attending the courses actually exceeded the official maximum total. At the time of the course, a major reorganisation of supervisory personnel into supervisors of primary

education and learning coordinators (SPE and LC) had been planned at federal and provincial level, but had not been implemented locally. The uncertainty about the future of the posts may also have exacerbated the difficulties of defining exactly who holds them, with some supervisory posts being filled temporarily by headteachers on detailment from their schools pending the reorganisation.

On each course I asked the senior supervisors present to confer, and to inform me of the total number of supervisors in their sub-divisions. The numbers given, although not completely reliable, suggest that those present on the first day represented some 80% of all the supervisors in the districts, and over 90% of those actually engaged in regular supervision of schools. Although it would have been informative to survey every supervisor in each district to compile a complete profile of the personnel employed at one time, the smaller sample has the advantage of sharpening the focus on those actively engaged in school supervision and providing a case study of the field workers, rather than the administrators, within the local team.

The biodata from the sample was collected on the following part of the questionnaire.



### Questionnaire for Supervisors

Name ..... M/F sub-division ..... G /B

1 Qualifications .....

2 Experience

Number of years in each job:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

PST JST RPMS LC HT HST SPE other

3 Training

Which SPEDP courses have you attended? Tick the boxes:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

RP MT 1 SPE1 MT2 SPE2 SPE3

4 Are you a master trainer? Y/N subject .....

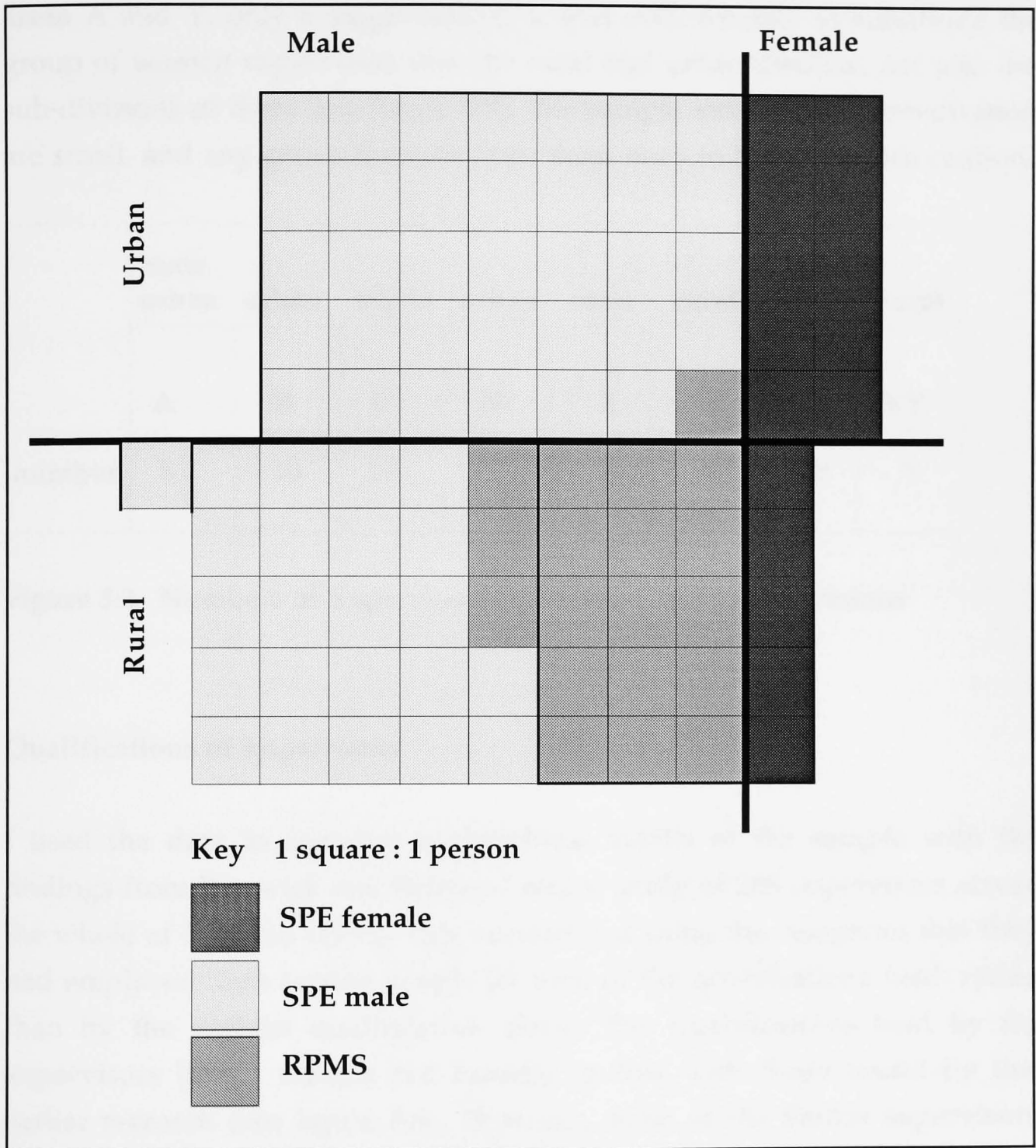
Figure 5:1 Questionnaire used on Supervisory Course 3, Questions 1-4

### Sorting the Data

Statistical analyses of educational access, and success, for pupils in Pakistan invariably distinguish between urban and rural, rich and poor, male and female sections of the population. Studies of supervisors make no such distinction, usually aiming for as wide a geographical spread as possible. One advantage of my approach, even though it has not succeeded in reaching every single supervisor in the two districts, is that it does allow some scope for comparing the data obtained from different groups of people.

In particular, I wanted to see if there were any useful distinctions to be made between the urban and rural supervisors, the men and the women, the supervisors of primary education (SPE) and the resource persons of mosque schools (RPMS). The numerical breakdown into these subsets is given in figure 5:2. The sample is equally split between the urban and rural areas. Women are in a predictable minority. They make up 22% of the urban supervisors, but only 11% of the rural ones. Almost half (44%) the male

supervisors in the rural area are resource persons of mosque schools, but only one urban supervisor still holds this designation. There were no learning coordinators appointed in either of these two districts at this time.



**Figure 5:2 Subsets of the Sample of Supervisors by Gender, Location and Designation**

In pursuing the analysis, another interesting area of contrast began to emerge: the profiles of supervisors within a sub-division often appeared to be strikingly similar to each other, yet contrasted to those in an adjacent sub-division. I had not expected such a distinction but, once seen, I began to look

for it in each data field. I have therefore presented some of the data for the male divisions distinguishing between the urban sub-divisions A, B, C, D and the rural sub-divisions X and Y. However, with a total of only 15 responses from supervisors working in girls' schools and, in each of the areas A and Y, only a single return, it was only feasible to subdivide the group of women supervisors into the rural and urban districts, not into the sub-divisions of these (see figure 5:3). The sample sizes in each sub-division are small, and any generalisations from them need to be made with caution.

	male						female	
	urban	urban	urban	urban	rural	rural	urban	rural
	A	B	C	D	X	Y	ABCD	XY
number	8	10	10	7	18	23	10	5

**Figure 5:3 Numbers of Supervisors in Districts and Sub-Divisions**

### **Qualifications of Supervisors**

I used the data to compare biographical details of the sample with the findings from Warwick and Reimers' recent study of 288 supervisors across the whole of Pakistan (1995). This necessitated using the categories that they had employed, and sorting people by each of the qualifications held, rather than by the highest qualification alone. The qualifications held by the supervisors in my sample fall broadly in line with those found by this earlier research (see figure 5:4). However, more of the Sindhi supervisors have additional qualifications, beyond the minimum teaching certificate, and considerably more hold a masters degree.

	Warwick & Reimers	This Research
<b>Sample:</b>		
Date	1988-89	1994
Number	288	91
Location	all Pakistan	Sindh - 2 districts
<b>Qualifications:</b>		2%
Matric/PTC only	10%	71%
BEd	60%	74%
Masters	50%	22%
MEd	20%	

**Figure 5:4 Qualifications of Supervisors**

Comparisons between the qualifications of different sub-groups also reflect expectations (see figure 5:5). Resource persons of mosque schools, who are on a lower grade and appointed directly from primary schools, are generally less well qualified than SPEs. However, almost half of the resource persons in post do now hold a BEd degree, and would therefore be eligible for promotion to SPE or high school teachers. In fact, in the sample there was only one rural resource person, and 3 in the urban area, who had achieved such promotion.

Warwick and Reimers also assert, but do not quantify, that women supervisors are more highly qualified than their male counterparts. This too is reflected in my findings. Indeed, every one of the 5 rural women holds both a BEd and a masters qualification. They thus form a particularly well qualified group within the whole sample.

	Sample	Female			RPMS
		all	urban	rural	
<b>Number in sample</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Matric or PTC only</b>	2%	0%	0%	0%	5%
<b>BEd</b>	71%	87%	80%	100%	47%
<b>Masters (MA or MEd)</b>	74%	73%	60%	100%	58%
<b>MEd</b>	22%	33%	20%	60%	0%

**Figure 5:5 Qualifications of Female Supervisors and RPMS**

What conclusions can be drawn from these results? The small increase in qualifications in Sindh, compared with the data drawn from all four provinces, may reflect the lack of learning coordinators within my sample. NWFP, in contrast to Sindh, has extended rather than reduced the number of learning coordinators following PEP2. In 1994 there were 771 learning coordinators throughout the districts of NWFP, each supervising approximately 26 schools (Marland and Wilson 1994). Their representation within the Warwick and Reimers sample would undoubtedly increase the proportion of supervisory staff with low qualifications.

Alternatively, the higher qualifications in Sindh may reflect the greater accessibility of education in this particular province. The two main urban areas of Sindh, Karachi and Hyderabad are characterised by extensive and well-used educational facilities from nursery school through to university. A higher than national qualification rate for supervisors would be in keeping with the relatively high urban literacy and education rates. However, this is certainly not true of the rural area, where basic education is scarce and the Alama Iqbal Open University provides distance learning opportunities to make up for the deficit of other colleges and universities. Yet it is exactly in this area, and for the female sub-group, that the qualifications are at their highest. Here, perhaps, the higher qualifications of the women may reflect the limited employment alternatives that are available to them, rather than any specific motivation for teaching itself. This in turn could result in women of high intellectual calibre and

determination gaining and keeping promoted posts in education - whether or not they gain satisfaction from such posts.

One young high school teacher, and able master trainer, presented herself as just such an example:

“I will tell you truly. Yes, I am BA, MA - in economics. I want a good job, in a bank maybe. But there is no Women’s Bank here! So now I am a teacher of science, for you I am master trainer of Sindhi language, may be even I will become supervisor. But for me? I want a good job, and that is not in education.”

(interview 1994)

Two earlier studies (Warwick and Reimers 1995, and Jatoi 1993 ) have tried, with limited success, to discern distinctive class allegiance, or social standing, between different groups within education. Warwick and Reimers comment on the difficulty of postulating features of class within another culture. Certainly those that they used (including maternal literacy, electricity in the home and material goods) would not sort the rural families I have visited into the expected categories. In my experience, some marginalised families, living in illegal reed encampments, have yet found ways to access electricity supplies and often have a visible wealth of material possessions, including fans, televisions and posters of popular celebrities. None of the supervisors’ homes I have visited have displayed such a range of modern, manufactured possessions. It is true that few children from these fringe communities attend school, but then education is still a minority interest throughout the rural areas and even senior educationalists may have wives and daughters who have never attended schools. Indeed I was taken aback to find that, of the 41 rural male supervisors on the course, only two could testify that their wives and sisters were literate and that their daughters went to school regularly.

Jatoi’s research suggested that women teachers do come from families where parents had received more formal education, in comparison with the parents of male teachers. This is then interpreted negatively to designate women teachers as being ‘downwardly mobile’, and therefore less professional in their approach than their male counterparts. Such a

categorisation again conflicts with my own experiences. My informal social contact with the families of men and women supervisors do indeed suggest differences in family outlook, particularly in their perceptions of women, but do not suggest any perceived lack of status for women who work as teachers. In visiting the homes of six male supervisors I have found none who was the eldest son of the family, yet the women visited (again six in total) have so far been either the eldest child, the only daughter, or a younger child in a family exclusively of girls. Also, in the men's families no woman worked outside the home, and more than once I have been offered a lavish hand-embroidered shulwar kameez because the wife or sister "has no other work to do". In contrast, the husbands, brothers, fathers, and indeed mothers, of women educationalists have been proud to tell me of the achievements of the women of the family outside the home, both in study and in work. Future research might do well to look not only at the qualifications of the sample, but also to scrutinise their position within the family, and the range of family qualifications and employment. Such research could lead to a better understanding of the position of women educationalists in a society where few women have access to educational and employment opportunities.

### **The Previous Experience of Supervisors**

One of the most common complaints against supervisors is that they are appointed from high school teachers and consequently have no understanding of primary school work. Contrary to this assumption, figures 5:6 and 5:7 indicate that almost half (45%) of all supervisors in this sample have only taught in the primary sector. Some 77% of the supervisors have begun their teaching careers in primary schools, typically spending about ten years in employment there. While 53% of supervisors were indeed appointed from secondary schools, the mean time in such a post was 5 years and less than half of this time was spent as a high school teacher. These averages, however, mask a considerable spread. One supervisors had spent less than a year as a high school teacher, another more than twenty. Three per cent of the whole group had only been high school teachers and had never taken a junior or primary post. It may be true that the teachers appointed to supervisory posts from secondary schools subsequently lose

their empathy for primary school matters, but many have indeed had substantial personal experience of primary school teaching in their early careers.

Thus the prevalent view that supervisors lack any credible experience as primary school educators needs to be challenged. Too often, findings which are ten or twenty years old are quoted as though they have current credence (e.g. Bhutto 1979 found less than 7% of his sample of 45 supervisors had any primary teaching experience at all). If the figures in this sample are representative, they suggest that the proportion of supervisors with primary experience may have increased more than tenfold. Perhaps an early career in primary teaching is just not something to brag about, discuss or even admit to, once a teacher becomes a supervisor.

Despite the requirement on the job description to hold an education degree, my data also include one urban male SPE who had no degree qualification at all, and two more who did not have a degree in education. Others may possibly have gained such a qualification only after their appointment as supervisors. Interestingly, there is no stated requirement for teaching experience within the job descriptions. However, throughout the full sample there were just two people who had been recruited directly to supervisory work on completion of a BEd degree, with no teaching experience of any sort. This represents some 2% of the sample.



	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	RPMS	All
Number in sample	76	15	45	46	19	<b>91</b>
Teaching experience:						
• <u>only</u> primary;	45%	47%	42%	48%	95%	<b>45%</b>
• <u>some</u> primary;	76%	80%	76%	78%	100%	<b>77%</b>
• <u>some</u> secondary;	53%	53%	53%	52%	5%	<b>53%</b>
• <u>only</u> secondary;	20%	20%	18%	22%	0%	<b>20%</b>
• <u>only</u> HST;	3%	7%	7%	0%	0%	<b>3%</b>
• <u>none.</u>	3%	0%	4%	0%	0%	<b>2%</b>

Figure 5:6 Teaching Experience of Supervisors

	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	RPMS	All
Number in sample	76	15	45	46	19	<b>91</b>
Mean number of years of service in:						
• education;	21.7	21.7	22.8	20.6	19.4	<b>21.7</b>
• primary (PST/HT);	10.3	12.2	10.9	10.2	12.9	<b>10.3</b>
• secondary (JST/HST);	5.5	3.8	5.8	4.6	0.2	<b>5.5</b>
• high school teacher;	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	0.2	<b>2.2</b>
• supervision (RP/SP).	6.1	5.3	6.1	5.9	6.3	<b>6.1</b>

Figure 5:7 Service Record of Supervisors

In compiling the tables above, it became apparent that differences within the sub-divisional groups were no longer visible in the final presentation, and that the suggested uniformity for urban, rural, male and female populations

was belied by the data in my hand. The following table makes these differences clear.

	Male (excluding RPMS)						Female	
	A	B	C	D	X	Y	ABCD	XY
<b>number</b>	7	10	10	7	9	14	10	5
<b>mean number of years teaching</b>	15.6	18.5	15.5	14.6	13.2	16.6	18.6	10.8
<b>experience:</b>								
• <b>primary</b>	71%	70%	70%	86%	33%	79%	80%	80%
• <b>secondary</b>	71%	80%	70%	14%	78%	79%	30%	100%

**Figure 5:8 SPE Experience by Sub-Division**

Although the population size of each sample is now small, there are some interesting contrasts. In particular, the rural women, who are the most highly qualified, have also achieved the most rapid promotion. Every one of them has spent some time teaching in secondary school and, on average, they have become supervisors after about eleven years. In contrast, the urban male group D has very limited secondary school experience and most supervisors in this sub-division have spent a substantial length of time as primary teachers. In line with the current views in the literature about the reform of supervision, this observation might lead one to expect the male group D to be a more promising area for academic supervision than the rural female sub-divisions.

### **Appointment of Supervisors**

It may be that the different profiles of people appointed in different sub-divisions is a reflection of the philosophy and experience of their immediate

commanding officer, the SDEO. Further research might therefore look more closely at different sub-divisions as case studies and explore the relationship between the SDEO and the supervisors as well as the selection and appointment procedures. This was not a direct focus of my research.

I did, however, collect some comments within the life stories which provide evidence for a variety of methods of gaining promotion. These include, in equal numbers, both personal patronage or recommendation, and individually initiated applications. It was also suggested to me on several occasions that a supervisor's post, like others within the education system, could always be secured by cash alone. While I cannot dismiss this possibility, I have no direct corroborative evidence from anyone who would admit to paying for a posting.

"I was promoted to supervisor. X have recommended me as a supervisor because he have remained my teacher from training college. So he is ideal teacher for me, and he love me also, like a brother. He called me himself. He sent a messenger to say 'I have a post for you as supervisor, if you want to join come, come immediately'."

(Promotion of resource person of mosque school to supervisor of primary education, male Y.)

"Before this there were three supervisors who didn't succeed to open the mosque schools in special districts of city area.... Then the same officer contact me 'You are hard worker - I hope you do well'. Then I join... Not as a regular RP but on deputation I works. Then they give me six months probationary period 'If then you will succeed, then we will confirm you on the same grade'."

(Promotion of primary school teacher to resource person of mosque schools, male B.)

"I got six times promotion, but I always rejected ... I have seen in district that supervisors come in school and her attitude is authoritarian ... And sometimes they spend full time in office... If I will see that I will get political bit freedom (but within the rule and regulation) and I feel that I will acquire respect, so I will

accept, otherwise not.”

(Proposed promotion of headteacher to supervisor of primary education, female C.)

“When I passed the BEd, the post advertised the government for HST and supervisors. One of those I selected - a post as a supervisor. But unfortunately a mistake of some clerk who posted me as HST. I complain ‘I apply the job of supervisor, I am not secondary teacher!’ Then he converted me into a supervisor, but it take six months.”

(Promotion of resource person of mosque schools to supervisor of primary education, male B.)

“I was selected [following application] without any approach or recommendation, they select me as LCO [learning coordinator] ... The selection of LCOs was not always good. Some came through politicians and they had no interest.”

(Promotion of primary school teacher to learning coordinator, rural male outside pilot area.)

“Another school I taught seven years and I found difficulty there to teach sixth class students. And I thought that there is something wrong in, some weaknesses in, primary teachers... So after seven years, eight years, I became PST supervisor, SPE. ... It was my decision, because I wanted to bring a change in primary education.”

(Transfer of high school teacher to supervisor of primary education, male C.)

With the exception of the last quote, the appointments to supervisory posts recounted here were all for promotion, rather than transfer. The headteacher demurred, but all the others were excited by the prospect and pleased to take on the new role. In the two districts I was studying, almost half of the sample (45%) became supervisors (SPE or RPMS) without secondary school experience and their appointments would similarly have marked a personal promotion. If the comments above are typical, this would be seen as a positive move within an educational career. All but two

of the rest of the sample held previous appointments as junior or high school teachers. This percentage rises to 100% for rural female supervisors. A degree in education is a requirement for both the post of high school teacher and that of supervisor of primary education. The gradings, and therefore the salary, are the same. The post holders are thus considered interchangeable, and personnel can be rapidly transferred from one to the other on receipt of a transfer order from their superior officers, without any increase of salary.

In the final quotation above, the supervisor explicitly states that it was his own decision to make such a transfer, and he further provides a credible educational justification for the move "because I want to bring change in primary education". I was, however, uncertain whether or not such a move into primary supervision, and out of secondary school teaching, would always be viewed so positively. One director assured me that it was seen as a prestigious move because the epithet of 'supervisor' sounds more impressive than that of 'teacher' and that supervisors enjoyed the prestige and privilege attached to their posts. The 'privilege' he had in mind was the supervisor's red motorbike. This is not, however, a privilege available to women. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that my other, mainly female, informants disagreed, vehemently asserting that teaching was undoubtedly the better job.

The supervisory courses in the rural area included ten women who were not supervisors themselves. These women all held posts as high school teachers and were working for SPEDP as master trainers to run in-service courses for primary school teachers. I had ample opportunity to talk to them, both during the master training courses and the supervisory training courses of 1993-94. Individually, and in groups, I would quiz them about the possibility of becoming supervisors. The women's sections were understaffed, and I thought it might be possible to encourage some to consider transfer into the posts of supervisor. Throughout this period, however, even though they were often enjoying the work with primary teachers, each one remained adamant that her current role as high school teacher was preferable to that of supervisor. The female supervisors who were present did not disagree. Indeed they too were quite explicit about a range of privilege, prestige and predictability which they had lost on

becoming supervisors.

“You must go daily to the office, it takes much time. In school you only work for part of the day.”

“It is difficult to travel, there is no proper provision and no finance. If you go to the bus station every day, they say you are not good.”

“In my school I see things happen, as a supervisor you see nothing.”

“There is no induction, no training, for the supervisor.”

“We are messengers only. We are used as clerks by the SDEO.”

Piecing together such discussions from my fieldnotes and journals of the time, I have summarised the main contrasts suggested between the two roles (see figure 5:9).

These views vividly highlight potential tensions in the role of supervisor. The teachers felt that they would suffer poor conditions of service with longer hours, fewer holidays and excruciating travel problems; that there would be no-one to train them or support them in the new post, and no guarantee of self-esteem from the knowledge of a job done well. In contrast the high school teachers knew that they could cope with the journey to work with dignity, and enjoyed the intrinsic rewards of competent teaching. These views provide evidence that, despite the director's blandishments, some high school teachers would certainly be unlikely to transfer willingly to the primary sector. Indeed, during 1993, not one single positive opinion was expressed about the role of supervisor amongst any of the women with whom I talked. The predominant view was of individuals all too aware of the difficulties they might expect to experience in the office, the schools or the road between them, and unclear of any intrinsic or extrinsic rewards that might compensate them for their trouble.

One supervisor described in detail her reluctance to become a supervisor

and the difficulties she faced in gaining credibility because of rural origins, youth and inexperience. She also hints at the potential temptation to use status, rather than personal integrity, to get things done:

“I was transferred in Karachi and posted as supervisor ... So it was not a promotion - same grade, same pay scale. I was very upset because I didn't have any experience of supervisor's work - no supervisory training. I didn't want to be a supervisor I wanted to teach - I love teaching. I tried hard to transfer in school as teacher. ... during this I visited some of the [primary] schools. Then it was disclosed on me that what a miserable condition students and teachers work in! So I decided not to go [back to secondary school] I could teach or guide teachers and teach children. From that day I started to work as supervisor.

“I still remember when I moved from X to Karachi and started to work as SPE, I faced a lot of problems. The peoples around me thought that how can she be our supervisor. She has no experience of supervisory work, she has less knowledge (being younger than them) and she comes from a village. I often listened these remarks but I never lose my temper. I didn't react badly, although I had the right and power to do it. I had to involve them with me. So I first did the work which I want to do with my headteachers and teachers. Now I have very strong relation with my headteachers and teachers. We respect each other and they do as I ask them.”

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	SUPERVISORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend school for class teaching time only. Enjoys school holidays and casual leave annually.</li> <li>• Daily travel to one school is relatively easy to organise appropriately. For example, a woman high school teacher may be accompanied to and from the school daily by a male relative.</li> <li>• Trained as teacher (BEd).</li> <li>• The tasks of a teacher are known and predictable.</li> <li>• Problems can be referred to the headteacher who will usually deal with them personally.</li> <li>• Students are easy to motivate.</li> <li>• A good teacher is a respected person within both the school and the local community.</li> <li>• Success is obvious through students' grades and achievements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance throughout office hours is expected. Expected to work through school holidays.</li> <li>• Frequent travel to many schools is difficult, hazardous, arduous and expensive. For women it has the added disadvantage of flouting cultural expectations and jeopardising one's reputation and respectability.</li> <li>• No relevant training.</li> <li>• The tasks of a supervisor are unpredictable and often changed with little notice e.g. to collect data or distribute textbooks.</li> <li>• Stern action with teachers leaves the supervisor vulnerable to reprisals through the unions. The SDEO is as likely to cause problems for a supervisor, as to resolve them.</li> <li>• Teachers, especially older, senior teachers or ones who rarely attend to their work, are hard to motivate.</li> <li>• A supervisor is respected by no one, ignored by teachers, bullied by clerks, and commanded by officers.</li> <li>• Success is elusive with no clear criteria.</li> </ul>

**Figure 5:9 Comparison of Roles of HST and SPE, 1993**

### Conclusion

I began this chapter by quoting the stereotype that I had often heard and that has influenced strategic planning by the World Bank: that supervisors are generally high school teachers, often unwillingly transferred, well qualified



but with no personal experience of primary school teaching. Analysis of the biographical data I have collected from supervisors in two districts corroborates this view of their qualifications, but challenges the preconception of the irrelevance of their professional experience. My study provides a different picture. In these areas a 'typical' supervisor would have begun a career in primary school teaching and continued teaching for over ten years before becoming a supervisor. Three quarters of the group had primary experience and almost half were promoted directly out of primary posts. Only a fifth of the group had no teaching experience in primary schools at all. This may still seem a large proportion for people taking on a professional role as supervisors for primary schools, but it is considerably smaller than the prevalent stereotype would lead one to expect.

It is harder to ascertain whether or not high school teachers are willing to be transferred into the supervisory service. Certainly, many rural women perceive the threats and distinct disadvantages in such a move, and any possible prestige or privilege would be unlikely to outweigh them. The issue of how supervisors perceive their task and its intrinsic and extrinsic rewards is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The quotation from the World Bank at the beginning of this chapter asserts that it is 'because' supervisors lack experience of primary school teaching that they are ineffective in influencing standards of education. The data presented here challenge the premise. Very few (2%) of the supervisors had no teaching experience at all, and a minority (20%) had taught only in high schools. Substantial primary school teaching experience is in fact the norm. If supervisors are indeed ineffective in their work then the cause must lie elsewhere than in the inappropriateness of their early careers. Chapters 6 and 7 will explore in more detail how the supervisors themselves, and those around them, perceived their role and its potential as a positive force in primary education.

## Why Are Supervisors Rarely Effective?

### Introduction

The previous chapter raised the question of whether or not educational personnel are willing to become supervisors of primary education. Although one male high school teacher claimed to have sought such a transfer, rural women were less enthusiastic, and could list numerous disadvantages for themselves if they were to take up such a post. In this chapter, I intend to look at individual narratives in more detail in order to discern at what particular periods of their educational careers, and in what circumstances, individuals believe they have been successful in their work. By contrasting these descriptions with times in their careers when they have felt less successful, I will seek to distinguish factors which may have helped individual supervisors to achieve, and sustain, success in their role. This will be a preliminary step towards discerning factors, other than lack of primary school experience, which might contribute to the apparent ineffectiveness of supervisors.

### Life Stories

The data used in this chapter draws extensively on the recorded life stories of seven people from the pilot project studying for a B Phil in primary education during a one-year study fellowship in the United Kingdom in 1994-5. Although the career paths of the seven individuals varied, all of them had focused throughout on education. They ranged in age from 37 to 54 years old and had spent between 8 and 35 years as school teachers. Their names have been changed, but are used consistently so that the individual voice of each person remains apparent.

Three of the men had started teaching in primary schools and been promoted directly from these posts. Sikandar and Manzoor then worked as resource persons of mosque schools and were later promoted again to become supervisors of primary education. The third, Kurshid, first became a learning coordinator under the PEP2 programme in a district adjacent to the

project area, and then a lecturer in initial teacher training. A fourth man, Javid, had studied for a degree before entering the teaching profession with an initial appointment in a high school. He later became a supervisor, acknowledging that he had no direct experience of working in primary schools. Two of the three women, Farida and Saeeda, had also taught only in secondary schools, although one of them spent some time acting as headteacher in charge of the primary, middle and secondary girls' school campus in her village. The third woman, Amna, had worked her way up from a first appointment as primary school class teacher to being the headteacher of the same school. None of the women was working as a supervisor at the time she was interviewed. Each had been offered such a post, but had been reluctant to accept it. Thus, all but one of the group had taken on supervisory roles in education, even though only three were working as supervisors of primary education at the time of the interviews (see figure 6:1). It is a limitation of the data that no life story of a female supervisor was obtained. The original intention of the project was that the fellowship programme should be specifically for supervisors but none of the fifteen women supervisors in the project districts was able or willing to undertake such a long period of study abroad.

<b>name</b>	<b>area</b>	<b>teaching</b>	<b>supervisory roles</b>
Amna	urban	PST	headteacher
Farida	rural	JST, HST	none
Javid	urban	HST	supervisor (SPE)
Kurshid	rural	PST, lecturer	headteacher, learning coordinator
Manzoor	urban	PST, HST	resource person (RPMS), supervisor
Saeeda	rural	JST, HST	headteacher
Sikandar	rural	PST	resource person (RPMS), supervisor

**Figure 6:1 The Prior Experience of Seven Study Fellows Interviewed in 1995**

The life stories were tape-recorded during a single week towards the end of the year the group spent in England. By waiting until this point I already had an outline knowledge of their career paths and personal beliefs. I was therefore able to use questioning spontaneously during each interview in order to move the story forward, or to slow it down and draw out further details of the transitions experienced between posts. My intention was to elicit each speaker's individual perceptions of the different roles undertaken during a career, the level of satisfaction gained from the work at different times, and the personal motivation for keeping, or changing, jobs. I asked each of the fellows to begin by telling me how he or she had become a teacher and then to continue through his or her career in chronological sequence, ending with a personal vision of how his or her style of working might change on return to Pakistan. The interviews were semi-structured using a few key questions to elicit information about the transition between posts.

Each interview lasted between one and two hours. The speakers used English, their second or third language, throughout. This is probably one of the longest periods of time each had communicated exclusively in English, without recourse to another member of the group to clarify points in Sindhi or Urdu. The language used tends to be definite and deliberate, repeating and refining ideas rather than being discursive or reflexive. My own role in the interviews was to consolidate information and check with the speakers that I had understood them. Some of these interjections provided a straightforward paraphrase of the narrative, while others were intended to elicit more detail, to check that my own interpretations were acceptable to the speaker, and to confront any apparent inconsistencies that emerged.

Later I listened to every tape two or three times before making a selective transcription which focused on transitions between posts and on the speaker's perceptions of effectiveness in each role. Unfortunately one tape, that of Saeeda, was corrupted and only the first half was audible. I treat these texts as life stories rather than life histories (Goodson 1995). I have not attempted to verify the events relayed, but accepted each part of the story as providing illustrations of how the speaker wishes his or her life to be perceived and explained.

There is said to be an inherent danger of 'the courtesy bias' in interviewing Asians (Jones 1983), through which too much attention is paid to saying what the interviewer is believed to want to hear. This danger was mitigated in these interviews by the trust developed between the speakers and interviewer, through working together over eighteen months both in Pakistan and in the UK. I had visited their homes and schools; celebrated Christmas and Eid with them; met their families and their colleagues; taught them, seen them teach others, and learned from them myself. The level of acceptance can be gauged in part by the language used which is interspersed with phrases such as "to be very frank", "I will tell you truly", "because we are speaking friendly" - each one asserting what needs to be said rather than what ought to be heard, and insisting that the very intention to speak honestly should itself be recognised.

My analysis here centres on elaborating and contrasting three main phases in the career paths: becoming a teacher; taking on initial supervisory responsibility; becoming, or declining to become, a supervisor of primary education (SPE). I had little inkling, when I began the interviews, that the contrast between the second and third phases would be so stark.

### **The Decision to Become a Teacher**

For all of the group, the initial decision to teach had been a positive one, although both Amna and Kurshid would have preferred a career in medicine. It was influenced both by the role models of good teachers whom they knew, and also by a belief in the value of teaching as a profession. For all the men, these role models came from within their own immediate circle of family and friends, and there had often been an explicit recommendation that they too would join this teaching dynasty:

"When I was a student in primary school, this school was opened by my family members. My uncles, some cousins and my elder brother were taught [i.e. teaching] in this school. At the time I observed professional enthusiasm of teaching in my family. This was the first incident which influenced me to become a teacher after completing my studies."

(Javid)

“Since my family is concerned with the education department, this also encouraged and motivated me to work in the same department. As I was impressed by my uncle’s behaviour and services rendered for children’s learning, I also determined to join as a teacher.”

(Manzoor)

“My two uncles were already primary teachers. Also they supported me that ‘This primary teacher’s job is good for you’.”

(Kurshid)

“The education officer there, he came to my father. He was very close friend of my father, and advised my father that I must have to join primary education because I would make a good teacher.”

(Sikandar)

Individual teachers had left an indelible impression on the young students, providing models to admire and emulate. Personal integrity and professional enthusiasm, love of children and love of subject, interesting and memorable teaching, were all recalled vividly:

“She was polite and sincere. Her handwriting was very beautiful. She always encouraged me. She was my ideal and I gave preference to all her work.”

(Amna)

“When I entered secondary school I was impressed by my mathematics teacher. He had a professional enthusiasm, he was hardworking and furthermore he was always punctual. He loved his students. He used easy language that all children understand and, particularly when geometry was taught by him, he gave examples from real life. Keen interest was taken by the whole class to listen to him and to do his homework happily. At that time I thought there will not be any profession but teaching, and I will be a teacher of mathematics like him.”

(Javid)

“The teacher welcomed me with a smiling face so I forgot what had happened the last day. I was impressed by her personality and behaviour. Moreover I was impressed by her teaching style because she taught us in interesting ways... In my play I was always a teacher as she was.”

(Farida)

This last extract hints that experiences of schools and teachers were not always affirming. In several cases the warmth of the child’s memories had to be robust enough to counteract other more negative and disheartening incidents experienced, or feared, by the pupils. In this particular account, Farida rapidly ‘forgot’ that another teacher had struck her for a single error. However, three of the group had actually avoided going to school for a period of time as a consequence of such classroom punishments, only returning when they could work with a new teacher or in a new school:

“While studying in third class I was minorly punished by a teacher on account of doing the sum wrong. In consequence I left school and disdained the maths. After some weeks time a new teacher was posted to that school and my father persuaded me to study under this Hindu teacher’s guidance. This teacher described and strengthened the lessons through story telling. His method was admirable and the memory remains unfaded.”

(Sikandar)

“As I was studying in class 4th the behaviour of the teacher was harsh and not worthy of respect. But my uncle was also working in the same school, so my teacher never punished me. However, I was psychologically depressed by the punishing of other children in the class.”

(Manzoor)

Changing school was itself a turning point for Saeeda. Following a misunderstanding with the teachers at the village girls’ school, she later broke with convention to transfer to the local boys’ school. After

matriculation, she was then in a position to rejoin the newly opened middle school for girls as a teacher, and begin her career by extending the education of her own former classmates. She does not elaborate any personal desire to be a teacher beyond a delight in being teacher to her playmates. However, her story highlights another feature especially crucial for the women in the group: that of needing to receive full, and audible, support from their own families to endorse any aspiration to challenge local expectations:

“So I got permission and I went to the boys’ school. Forty boys and I. Teachers, gentlemen, they gave me respect and love because I am only one. And they said to students: ‘She is your sister, you must respect her’. So they gave me respect as sister. And I learned more because I got respect from teachers and students. ... In my class (I cannot say for whole school because some teachers are strict, they beat children) but our teacher is very sympathetic. He worked hard all day long till 3 O'clock. He haven’t any child, but he love us as a child.

“... My relatives, they said to my parents that: ‘Why you send your daughter to boys’ school?’ ... My mother said: ‘Her father and brother are happy, why you are saying this?’ Because I am only one girl, since my brother and me get 5 or 6 years, so [my parents] said: ‘She is not girl, she is as a son’.

“... I got scholarship from [classes] 6 to 8. ... [but] the girls in my primary school, they stayed in home. After matric I got job in girls’ middle school. It opened at that time. First admission [was] my colleagues in class six. And I taught them, my colleagues. They passed middle and after that they left. When I got job, at that time they get admission. I taught my colleagues.”

(Saeeda)

Even Amna, whose first choice of career had been medicine, asserted her belief in the value of teaching as a profession. She highlighted how teaching is intrinsically rewarding in providing a means to help others through educating them. There is no hint of resentment that fulfilling the role of ‘mother’ in nurturing her younger siblings took precedence over her own



personal ambitions. Indeed, she had already shown considerable determination in her quest for education, routinely rising before dawn in order to complete domestic chores so that she could allow herself the privilege of attending school alongside the younger children in the family:

“When I was very young I had a wish to become a doctor but, unfortunately, my domestic circumstances ... I came in teaching because to become a doctor we must give more time and I had home responsibilities with my eight, seven younger brothers and sisters. Because when my mother was died I was eleven years old, so that is why I cannot give attention and I cannot fulfil my desire.

“But when I came in teaching, at that time I felt that teachers’ work also similar to doctors’ work, because doctors diagnose different kinds of disease and teachers also diagnose different kinds of weakness and strength. And I thought that if I will teach so many student and in future, if from those children one or two become a perfect man, with good qualities, that will be good achievement for me!”

(Amna)

The speakers also frequently recalled counter-images of behaviour they did not seek to emulate, both from individual teachers or the teaching profession in general. Most, however, remained stalwart in holding to their own principles. Only Sikandar admitted to being so overwhelmed by the difficulties of his job that he was anything less than a confidently good teacher, and then in circumstances which would be daunting for even an experienced and talented teacher, let alone a recent recruit to the profession:

“There is a traditional way that our children do not seek knowledge without any punishment. So we say in Sindhi that the donkeys do not go without a stick! Our teachers follow this and always say these words and phrases.”

(Kurshid)

“All teachers think that ‘We are superior from students, we are

teachers'. They are proud of themselves. They sit on their chair and they command their children - but I do not."

(Farida)

"When I was studying in school my teachers were very good. But I was not impressed [by] the teachers in this school. They don't respect each other and also their behaviour with children is not good. So I would not stay in this school, I spent only one year, then I transferred to another school."

(Javid)

"I was not a very good primary school teacher. I was PT - primary school teacher with certificate - so it was my choice to join in any primary school. So I selected one, one mile away from my village. Only two teachers, one headteacher and myself. Headteacher (he is expired now, he is not here) he was irregular and he used not to come to school. Only I was the alone man to look after the students, to collect the children, and to give them education ... There were 80 children on roll and 60 or 65 remain present. So it was very difficult for me to administer the school in a proper manner... I distributed the children in the groups, just like you see here. One boy X, he was a student of class 5, was delegated by me to look over them and give them some writing work. He helped me and I was engaged in work with class 4 ... When they were busy I myself directed my attention to class 2 ... Actually I did not give my full attention to the students' teaching, could not use my full experience ..."

(Sikandar)

Most of the group went on to give examples of the success of their own teaching, listing the achievements of former students who have become good citizens. Even Sikandar, later in the interview, selected his years as a primary teacher as a period of significant achievement within his whole career, providing a new interpretation of his earlier, self-deprecating assessment.

"My time as resource person was very good period, also my three

years as a primary school teacher. Because some of my children have got good jobs and I have encouraged them and given attention to their education. One is an engineer and one is a chartered accountant. Usually they come on Eid festival to me.”

The life stories outlined so far would be commonplace the world over. Yet it is their very banality that underwrites the credibility of the accounts of why these individuals selected a relatively low status career and how they flourished in it, sustained by memories of effective teaching and rewarded by the success of their own pupils. All teachers have themselves been taught for many hours and years. It is therefore not surprising to find that vivid models of what to do, and what to avoid, still linger when pupils become teachers. Such models often serve to inspire the young student to become a teacher, and may thereafter guide both the personal style developed, and the young teacher’s critical appraisal of colleagues at work. These positive images of particular teachers need to be personally and professionally sustaining, to stand as a bulwark against negative observations and generalisations of the teaching profession as a whole.

### **First Supervisory Roles**

Each one of the group had used personal role models in the profession and the family to inform their career choice, and to guide them towards competency. Once established as competent, and sometimes talented, teachers, all but one began to take on supervisory roles.

At this point in their careers, the life stories become dense with detailed anecdotes relating personal triumphs and particular achievements. Such incidents provide a testimony to the ability of the speakers to influence primary education positively under difficult circumstances. Thus Kurshid and Saeeda, newly appointed as headteachers in rural schools, had to work hard to raise the profile and importance of education within the local community. Later Kurshid drew on this experience again while working as a learning coordinator, encouraging other teachers to tackle their own problems and respecting their individual solutions. Sikandar and Manzoor, promoted as young teachers to become resource persons of mosque schools,

negotiated the opening and running of many new schools in under-schooled areas, and have maintained a personal interest in some of them to this day.

The circumstances described are seldom auspicious. There is often a hint of initial conflict in interests between the various stakeholders: parents see little advantage in the education offered and teachers are sceptical of new methods. The supervisor has to struggle at times to gain credibility, or even courteous attention. Yet a recurrent theme of the turning-points towards desired change is that of mutuality, working with the teachers and communities, listening as much as talking, giving and gaining respect. The problems loom large, the solutions are arduous, yet the purpose and importance of the work remain clear. The results were valued both by the speaker and by others, and, I was frequently assured, the improvements were sustained with the schools going from strength to strength over the years:

“I was appointed in a rural school very far from town and in desert area. First when I went to school the people, villagers, were very disappointed and disconcerted by teachers. They didn't respond me because they said 'Two or three teachers has come but they didn't stay teach our children. You also come from the town, far from our village, so we do not expect that you will be remaining here and educate our children'. There was no school building, nothing, no furniture. So, with the help of parents, the help of community, I succeed in this task. So I am now happy. There is many buildings - girls' school, boys' school in this village. If you come and you see, you will be impressed!”

(Kurshid)

“As the headteacher, every villager knows me, my background and my attitude also. This is why they help me in funds for furniture, drainage system etc. In 1993 I had only one teacher with me and I was in trouble how to organise all the subjects. At first I requested my officer but she was worried that senior teachers say it is their right to teach in the nearest school of the city and junior teachers have not permission from their parents, so she advise

me to create my own village teacher at matric pass. I requested a meeting with the educated villagers and told them of the position and asked for help. They said sorry that their wives were not educated and they were with the small children. Then I asked about their sisters and their daughters because these were my students and I knew they were middle passed. I told them 'Your children are mine and it is my responsibility to give them the best education. Also I am your daughter and sister - so why not you can help me? Today you give me your respect and tomorrow your children will give you respect because they will learn through your and my act.' After that one Hindu and two Muslim parents were agreed to send their sisters and daughters to help me in teaching."

(Saeeda)

"One day I went to a rural school. I was surprised to see the present number of children was only 25% of the enrolment. The teacher told me it was due to lack of cooperation from parents and that they were not interested in coming to school and talking about their children's problems. With the agreement of the teacher, we fixed a date to meet the parents in school and sent messages with the children. When I visited the school on that day I was surprised to see only two parents out of sixty. I was disappointed but not downcast. Together with the teacher we fixed another date. But for the next meeting I thought about the parents' interests. I arranged an expert in agriculture to come with me on that date, and we told this to all the community. At the appointed date I was amazed at the large number of parents in the school! After the agricultural expert had talked about farming, I talked about the importance of education for the farmers of tomorrow. At the end of the meeting they promised to send their children regularly. After three months I visited again and attendance had doubled."

(Kurshid)

"As a learning coordinator I had to introduce the learning modules published under PEP2. These learning modules were an

instrument for teaching the text book effectively through listed activities. When I presented these to the teachers on the course they refused to adopt them in school. They argued that it was not their mode. I said that they were right. It was not a perfect and final thing, but we could bring changes in it. After long discussion they agreed it could be used as a guide. This influenced my thinking that, before introducing any method or idea, we need to discuss it with teachers and give them the opportunity to talk freely and make decisions.”

(Kurshid)

“Basically, of the whole of Sindh it is very difficult to open schools in the south. Everyone realise it is very difficult, and everyone appreciate me how I do this. I go to very difficult areas where no person goes. I am very proud [of] my work. Personal influence, personal of resource persons, is must... I go daily to my friends, to key persons who are active in the community, to the mosques ... to every one mosque ... to motivate the educations. I succeed every time.”

(Manzoor)

Such stories were told with the same pride as the more conventional earlier tales of teachers visited by former pupils who were now exemplary citizens, teachers who had helped to raise money for buildings and bursaries or who had expanded extra-curricular opportunities for the pupils. These storyings are not verifiable. Fact and fantasy must remain intertwined and indistinguishable. Wherever the nugget of truth lies, the achievements may well have been embroidered, elaborated and extended. However, the fascinating feature of all the success stories I collected is that they refer exclusively to supervisory work as headteacher, learning coordinators or resource persons of mosque schools, and never to the work of supervisors of primary education (SPE).

If the deeds are fabricated or elaborated, at least the script of success was well known. In contrast, I could find no one who would even tentatively attempt to spin a yarn about success in an apparently similar role as a supervisor of primary education. The interviewees had neither the experience, nor even

the imagination, to engage in storying about their own personal triumphs as SPEs nor about any benefit or inspiration they had witnessed from other SPEs. Indeed, when asked specifically about supervisors, the stories suddenly become dismal and damning:

“I think in every year I didn’t see supervisor. Maybe one time in four or five years I have seen supervisor in my school. She observe in class maybe one hour. I think maybe, maybe she come more times, but only she stay in headmistress’s office.”

(Saeeda)

“I have seen in district that supervisors come in school and her attitude is authoritarian, not [to] me, in general.”

(Amna)

“So, I have experience that one day the supervisor was with me and we went to one school. And they asked that ‘This is a sum we can’t understand’... They went to supervisor, and supervisor was not good at that subject. So always, when I asked the supervisor ‘We go that school?’ he avoid it.”

(Kurshid)

As teachers, they saw their own supervisors as absent, ineffective or downright offensive. Perhaps because of these negative influences, when offered the job, the women demurred while the men accepted the appointment but could not comprehend what it was that they should do.

### **Refusing the Post of SPE**

The three women could be prompted to see that the job had potential, especially in extending educational opportunities for girls. They stated that they were prepared to do it, but only on their own terms. They clearly felt they would personally have much to lose in leaving teaching posts where they had developed a sense of their own expertise, and had gained the respect of others. The potential for losing both that respect, and the freedom to use their own professional initiative, were perceived as barriers that other

supervisors before them had failed to surmount.

“Look, a supervisor have no due respect. They are only, no they play their actual job. Yes I want to do actual job as a supervisor ... that is why I don't like that somebody interfere my work. Yes I want to help them [in school], I want to help there ... so if I'll work as a supervisor I want to work independently. I don't like interfere my officer. Yes I want to work actual job, not as a messenger or a no-respect or under the pressure of clerks. ... Yes, supervisors are under pressure of clerks, every month. It is also big problem.”

(Farida)

“We are talking as a friend, OK? When, because I got six times promotion, but I always rejected. ... Because my psychology is, I know myself, when I feel mentally free then my working capacity will be increased and I feel more confidence. ... If I will see that, if I will get political bit freedom, but in .. but in .. within rule and regulation, within rule and regulation. And if I will feel that I will acquire respect, so I will accept, otherwise not - to be very frank. I got full support from headteachers, teachers, SDEO also, but in my [school] office I have my own staff, I have direct contact with parents I have direct contact with teachers and so I was more successful. But in district office I have not feel these things.”

(Amna)

Farida was also deeply worried, and very candid, about the problems she would face in travelling to different schools to do such a job. She had slipped readily into teaching in her own village beginning illegally young. Her teaching was strong and, as she described it, inspirational, yet she had never sought advancement or change. The difficulties inherent in moving further afield, all too literally under the public gaze, were too much to contemplate. However supportive her family were, they could not shield her from the feeling that the eyes of others would watch and judge. Towards the end of the interview she provided a series of scenarios where such problems were resolved, but ideas such as acquiring a family car and familiar driver can only exist in a fantasy world. I quote her here at length so



that the language she uses, and the creeping incoherence of her speech, can convey her sense of overwhelming powerlessness at the impossibility of becoming an effective supervisor. "I am not afraid, ... but what can I do?" becomes a plaintive refrain haunting her whole account:

"When I became JST I am sixteen and a half, my certificate say I am eighteen! Yes so, but I looked like a student ... Look, at first we bend the order, OK, because at first, OK it is right when girls passed matriculation - because I also passed my intermediate at sixteen years, it is also matriculation age - I passed and I became a teacher. Yes, it is good age for teaching. We have problem of teachers.

"... Look, I am not afraid to work hard. I am not afraid to work with my seniors. I am not afraid to work from away my home. I am not afraid anything. OK. But when I see Pakistan situation if I work, working as a supervisor, I feel, I feel very difficulties. One difficulty is transport because \_\_ , and behaviour of officers. Look, it is true, sometimes we say yes, it is. ... Yes, I'll do, I'll do any job which is benefit for our education, I'll do it. But when I see other side, it is difficult to go there. OK because our officers, I don't know why, they are tricky officers. They say me 'Yes, we help you' but they don't.

"... When we go to X we change two buses, and when we go to Y we, we also change two buses. But here [in UK], when we go to College, it is peace. When we go, nobody see us. I, I can't see in their eyes something. Because if in Pakistan we go without burka, or with burka, they say 'Daily she is going from their house, she is not a good girl!'. So I can't understand. Here I have puzzle, what can I do? ... But really, as a friend, I can't understand what can I do? I can't afraid this job, but what can I do?

"... These supervisor, sometimes only on paper they will say. But I want to work actual. I can't understand really, to be honest, because I don't afraid of anything. Yes I'll do. But I have confusion for this. I don't know how. ... Yes, maybe my parents can buy a car

and they they keep a driver, but we but we didn't go [with] a strange person. We can't for security. I don't know why Muslims are very weak in moral or \_\_\_ ... I think they haven't a good education, that is why they don't value of girls or women\_\_ . In our house it is not that we [women] only listen. Look, our parents have value their daughters as their sons."

(Farida)

These detailed accounts of the perceived disadvantages for the women of taking on the role of supervisor elaborate the contrasts between the role of teacher and supervisor reported by high school teachers in the previous chapter (see figure 5:9). The women are not bashful or self-effacing. They do not doubt their suitability or their capability, but they doubt their peace of mind. They believe people, and extraneous circumstances, would both conspire to undermine their ability to do the job comfortably and well. They would be easily wrong-footed by bullying clerks, 'tricky' education officers or fellow supervisors who 'play' their actual job. They would lose the certainty and pride that they now possess in a job well done within the confines of their own school: appreciated by students and applauded by the local community. The rigours of travel between schools would leave them vulnerable and insecure. Given this scenario, it is not surprising that every one of the female sub-divisions in the project areas remained understaffed, lacking a full quota of SPEs, for long periods.

### **Accepting the Post of SPE**

Of the three men who had become supervisors, Manzoor and Sikandar continued their careers in the footsteps of family and friends, while Javid sought out the post from professional curiosity and commitment, hoping to discover why pupils recently transferred from primary school were particularly difficult to teach, and then to rectify this situation.

"... I faced difficulty to teach sixth class because there is something wrong with teachers of primary schools. So after seven years, eight years, I became PST supervisor, SP. ... It was my decision, because I wanted to bring a change in primary education."

(Javid)

Each one, therefore, had reason enough to want to do the job well, to impress his sponsors or to improve standards. However, when these supervisors reflected on their early, desultory supervisory work as SPEs, there was a marked difference in both the tone and the content of their narratives which contrasted starkly with the earlier stories of successful work in teaching or in other supervisory posts. The emphasis recorded at this stage is more often one of maintaining a discreet distance from the classroom and avoiding engagement in the task of education rather than one of tackling problems vigorously and creatively. This lack of personal involvement in the task appears to mask both an uncertainty about what is expected of a supervisor, and a desire to nurture their own preconceptions of personal privilege and status as SPEs. These dilettante supervisors may have had some hazy notion of what it means to supervise in primary schools, but they had not articulated what it might mean to supervise well. They stood, like understudies in the wings, waiting to be told what part to take on. But they were told nothing, or were delegated trivial tasks, and as a result they became content with doing little and achieving less. They sat in the office, visible, but under-employed, or they visited schools as a father, clerk or critic, but seldom strayed from the comfort of the headteacher's office or dared to demonstrate teaching methods. It is the trappings of the job, not its purpose - the peripheral duties not the central Duty - that emerge:

“In the beginning, in 1991, I start this job and I face very great difficulty because nobody guide us, guide me. And all my colleagues said that. Every day I go to the office and sit in the office with SDEO and talk to other colleagues on different topics and politics and other things.”

(Javid)

“Because I saw that every supervisor (except my uncle) every supervisor take action, and [put] the pressure upon the teachers and I didn't know what is the job of supervisors, and I think resource person as advisor and I think of supervisor as inspector. So I did that.

“... when I visit, I write in visitors’ book. I only look for negative points - so they know they can make improvements.”

(Manzoor)

“When first I had the post of supervisor I thought to be free and look after my private affairs as other supervisors are doing in Pakistan. I will go daily to one or two primary schools, just like a father, and then daily I will look after my own work - farms and rice mills ...

“... I was only the inspector. Only to visit the schools to communicate the reports of the teachers to the authorities, to collect the information and to submit it. I give the whole time to this office work.

“... And it is also the fault of government, I think. The government has kept the load upon the supervisor to go and to collect the data. They themselves disturb the supervisor. The DEO and SDEO say ‘We need this information at the moment - within two days. Go, leave all the works, and do it.’ They are disturbing themselves the supervisor. So how the supervisor will fulfil the requirement of the department in visiting all schools? If you give any person two tasks at a time he will perform only one of it.”

(Sikandar)

Sikandar and Manzoor had each spent some years as resource persons of mosque schools before being promoted to the post of supervisor of primary education. Initially, both the speakers maintained that these two roles were “Only little bit difference - grade is different, job is same”, despite the fact that they were describing active supervision of primary education in their earlier role, and success at avoiding such involvement in their promoted posts. This appeared as a contradiction to me, but not to them. It took some very persistent refocusing on what had been said earlier in the interviews, before either would acknowledge, let alone try to explain, such an apparently drastic change in the pattern of their work.

Through such questioning, contrasting elements of the two jobs gradually did begin to emerge. The crucial differences appeared to be that their earlier role was more focused so that they knew what they were doing and when they had achieved it. They were kept on task by the good example and vigilant interest of their peers and superiors, and the value of their work was appreciated by both the novice teachers and the village communities. In contrast, once promoted, they found they had simultaneously lost their sense of purpose, importance and pleasure in their work:

“When I was a resource person, then I was not giving more time to other than education. But actually I found that most of the supervisors were wandering and looking after their own works. So I thought that this is a good thing for me also - to go to one or two primary schools for a moment and to come back and look after my farm and my rice mills. As resource persons we were specifically instructed by the coordinator that ‘If you fail to fulfil the requirements of the department of mosque schools your services will be terminated and you will be out of a job or you will be repatriated to your own department.’ We were impressed by our authorities. They were looking after us because we were bound to submit our monthly tour of schools and at the end of the month our diary. The authorities were comparing these, and in case they do not match they are calling for an explanation. The authorities of the supervisor are also collecting the guide and the diaries, but they do not compare.”

(Sikandar)

“[Some] people didn’t go to government school, they prefer to [go to] mosque school, for the standard of education is very high and especially additional and Islamic religious. High, I explain, very high because the new teachers work enthusiastically and they work hard and punctual, punctuality. ... And we [RPMSs] , we are also active and we encourage the new teachers. We encourage and we support the teaching methods. I and my district coordinator we work together. Sometimes he support, sometimes I support, sometimes together visit then support. ... Personal influence, personal of resource persons ... [But as a supervisor] I have not

experience because there is, in government schools, there is a lot of senior teachers. I am not senior [to] them. That influence upon me. Because I being young and they was very senior and senior in age and senior also in professional. They think 'He is a young man why we follow him?' As resource person, then I got a training of master trainer, they think this is a special training, then they follow. ... I don't like to teach when I become a supervisor, I don't want to go to school and teach. When SPEDP programme started I learned the training and used the new technique and methodology which I received ... and I used this techniques with the trainings. I get respect, more respect, I feel more easily to teach and then give response. ... and there is a need because there is involvement of teachers' association who are not interested, some are not interested, to teach. Only the some associations support their members even they are teaching or not teaching, punctual or not punctual."

(Manzoor)

Such discrepancies between the two roles could indeed account for the different behaviour patterns and intrinsic rewards relayed by the two men. The first post was focused, accountable, unambiguous and rewarding. The second had greater security and a higher salary, but relied on the individual supervisor maintaining personal vision and integrity within a distinctly threatening environment. There was no clear sense of what the task of a supervisor entailed; no skilled practitioners to emulate; no sense of welcome and success within the schools; no accountability for one's actions. Figure 6:2, below, summarises these contrasting experiences:

Effective Supervisors: Experiences as RPMS	Ineffective Supervisors: Experiences as SPE
<p><b>Goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resource persons were charged with a clear and unambiguous task to gain community support, open schools, appoint and train local teachers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mentor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district coordinator was closely involved in monitoring and mentoring the work of the resource person. Failure to perform well could result in transfer back into school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new recruit emulated the work pattern of peers whom he found hard working, energetic and <i>sincere</i>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource persons gained the <i>respect</i> of the communities in which they worked and the novice teachers they appointed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Goal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisor's task remained unclear and unspecified, except in its trivialities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mentor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisor was generally left unguided and unsupervised. Education officers could override general duties with demands for specific administrative tasks to be completed urgently.</li> </ul> <p><b>Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new recruit emulated the work pattern of peers whom he found lazy, lax and otherwise employed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisors lacked credibility. They had to work with older, senior teachers who would pour scorn on their advice, or could intimidate them with threats of union action.</li> </ul>

**Figure 6:2 Contrasts Between the Work of Two RPMS when Promoted to SPE**

**When were these Seven Supervisors at their Most Effective?**

The life stories of the seven study fellows all have a traditional starting point. Once upon a time a child was impressed by a teacher and decided to follow in those footsteps to become a teacher too. These young pupils were determined always to be better than the bad teachers they had feared, and to become as good as the very best they knew. The middle of each story

diverges. The central characters take on different supervisory roles as headteacher, learning coordinator or resource person of mosque schools. In meeting the responsibilities of these roles, each one tells exciting tales of problems vanquished and difficult deeds accomplished against the odds. But where are the happy endings? At the point where the listener might be expecting each hero to be rewarded with the title of SPE, and to set off once again on the eternal quest to improve the quality of education, strengthened by past experiences and present status, there is instead a hiatus. Several protagonists remain where they are. They are content, pleased and proud of their efforts and effectiveness within their current small sphere of influence, and appalled by all they see and hear of supervisors at work. Politely, adamantly, they refuse to embrace the challenge offered by transfer or promotion into SPE. They do not believe they themselves could comfortably succeed beyond such a transmogrification, however good their intentions or incorruptible their integrity. There is too much to lose: dignity, pride and even, for the women, respectability. Those brave or foolhardy men who do indeed take up the challenge, soon slither to a virtual standstill. They wait interminably in the office seeking the approbation of their superiors, whiling away the time with a never ending string of minor administrative tasks and petty duties. Or they slip briefly into schools, sign a few curt comments in the log, and slope off to mind their own affairs. There are simply no more incidents of successful work in schools to relate, only the sorry success of avoiding work and leading an inconspicuous double life. The stories are convincing, but the conclusions disappointing and depressing.

The initial answer to the question of effectiveness is made disconcertingly clear. The people interviewed were effective as supervisors, improving primary education in their area, for just as long as they eschewed the designated post of SPE - supervisor of primary education. Sikandar and Manzoor were effective as resource persons in opening schools in remote areas and training young men to teach there. Saeeda and Amna were effective as headteachers in increasing enrolment and harnessing community support for improvements to the site and the staffing. Kurshid was effective as a learning coordinator in supporting primary teachers to make professional decisions about their teaching styles. Nonetheless, not one of Sikandar, Manzoor and Javid remained effective on becoming a



supervisor of primary education, and the others in the group even doubted that it would be possible to be so.

However, this 'when' is only the chronological 'when' corresponding to a successful period of initial promotion within their individual careers in education. If we are to move from stories to strategies, we need to move from this temporal 'when', to a 'when' which discerns the influential factors that contributed to the recounted incidents of effectiveness. We need to disentangle from the narratives common features that impelled individuals into action, and increased their chances of success. An analysis of the actual language used throughout the interviews suggests that two key enabling concepts are *sincerity* and *respect*. Neither word has wide currency in contemporary British English and, to a jaded western ear, each can sound anachronistic. However, these words resonate throughout these interviews, and indeed throughout all the oral data that I have collected in Pakistan. Initially, their repeated use appeared more quaint than practical, and their connotations remained whimsical and elusive. However, it gradually became clear that *sincerity* and *respect* denote vital and important concepts for the speakers. The selection and use of these two particular words is both purposeful and powerful.

In the rest of this chapter, therefore, I have augmented the life story data with brief quotations from other interviews, in order to elucidate the particular significance that these two terms hold for the speakers. 'Leadership' is also included in the discussion, but because of its unaccustomed absence in the recorded speech, rather than its presence.

### **Sincerity**

*Sincerity* is self-contained. It is an attribute of an individual, akin to personal and professional integrity. Being *sincere* requires one to be self-aware, reflective and totally focused on the purpose of education for the learner and the nation, rather than considering any privilege one might gain personally from being a teacher or supervisor. *Sincerity* is sufficiently rare to be remarkable but, when present, it can assure success without the need for any further qualification or explanation. Thus when Amna says of

a particularly impressive teacher that “she is polite and *sincere*”, nothing more is needed to sketch in a picture of a dedicated, effective and influential professional.

*Sincerity* is admirable and awesome. It takes on something of the status of a talisman, ensuring that anyone who has it is assured of success against the myriad problems that impinge on professional life:

“If the teacher is *sincere* with his profession, he can succeed over all the problems.”

“If I am being a professional, *sincere* and punctual then I will influence on the teacher, as well as on the unions’ members [and the] community.”

“If [an] officer is *sincere*, there is no need to pressurise from the associations.”

“It is my belief that everybody, if be *sincere* with their job and - he do not wait for other people that first they improve themselves, then I will improve myself, so we have not to wait... First we think that what are the weaknesses [of] mine, so [we] remove these weaknesses.”

Despite such clear personal benefits from practising *sincerity* in one’s professional life, occurrences remain scarce and precious. Each one of the quotations above circumscribes the attribute of *sincerity* within a conditional construction. If only *sincerity* were more prevalent at every stratum of education, then the system might begin to improve. However, such a scenario exists only in the world of dreams. It could be tempting, but time wasting, to wait for the whole structure to improve first, before scrutinising one’s own practice. *Sincerity* demands urgency. Each individual should be urged and advised to cultivate *sincerity* within his or her own sphere. *Sincerity* would both add dignity to the immediate work in hand, and contribute significantly to achieving the goal of improving education for others.

The persistent repetition of the two terms *sincerity* and *respect* has also been heard by researchers collecting verbatim comments from teachers in training in Pakistan. Davies and Iqbal quote a 'typical' response, though also rather conventionally stylistic, which describes a teacher trainee as one who: 'thinks that teaching profession is not a business but a sincerity with the pupils, with the poor parents and ultimately with the nation' (1997:263). This seems to imply that, for the sake of *sincerity* to the child, the citizens and the country itself, teachers would be prepared to forego more obvious and worldly rewards. In contrast, Nauman (1990) presents a far bleaker picture of one particular training college where lack of *respect* is rife and the consequences threaten calamity:

Most inmates of this system *have no respect for themselves, hence they have no respect for others*. They mock at the system, laugh at their own foibles. They don't trust each other. The teachers think the student are cheats, the students think the teachers have shattered their ideals. Most of them are disillusioned. They have no hopes, no aims, no ambitions. They are living from day to day, watching impersonally as the system crumbles around them. If there is a major cause of self-destruction, it is this: each lifts a finger to accuse the other. Everyone thinks of himself as a victim.

(quoted in Warwick and Reimers 1995:43, emphasis added)

Here the lack of '*respect* for themselves' reflects a lack of *sincerity* to the purpose of education and training. This in turn is seen to have engendered a negative ethos of mere vocational voyeurism which has already annihilated all forms of interpersonal *respect* within the institution, and now threatens to cause the complete breakdown of the system for accredited qualification of new primary teachers. Once *sincerity* has disappeared, education has indeed become no more than 'a business', at best.

## Respect

Motivating others to work for you, and with you, within this culture is achieved through exercising *respect*, rather than leadership. *Sincerity* can be

a means to lead others by example, and it may inspire them to emulate that particular model. *Respect*, on the other hand, provides a means to instigate independent action from others, working in different roles, empowering them to take responsibility for their own decisions and to appreciate their own work:

“We have to learn each other, we have to listen each other and we have to *respect* each other. Then we will succeed otherwise not. Because when we impose or insist that teachers do this they will make a quarrel and they hate supervisor or SDEOs. So first of all we have to make friendly atmosphere in schools.”

“To change the attitude of the teachers we have first to change our attitude to the teachers. We have to give them full *respect*, to listen to them and value their ideas and opinions without first imposing our ideas. We have to encourage the teachers and praise what is good in their work.”

“And every teacher, every association leader wants *respect*. [If] every officer gives them *respect*, they automatically will work.”

*Respect* is essentially a reciprocal relationship. *Respect* breeds *respect*. Thus Saeeda when seeking help from parents urges them into specific action “today you give me your *respect* and tomorrow your children will give you *respect*” . This symbiosis is repeated by other speakers generalising from their different personal experiences:

“*Respect* must be earned, not paid for.”

“In my opinion when we give *respect* to others, definitely we gain *respect*.”

“If a teacher wants *respect* from the community, he should work for their children.”

“How we get *respect*, is how we give *respect*.”

Giving *respect* requires both the ability to attend to others, and also an individual *sincerity* to one's own work. Those who are not *sincere* in their work will fail to gain the *respect* of others. Thus Javid recalled a particular teacher who "was harsh and not worthy of *respect* " and Farida suggested a direct causal link between supervisors' lack of *sincerity* and their lack of *respect*: "A supervisor have no due *respect* ... they play their actual job". However, though *sincerity* is a quality necessary for gaining *respect*, there is some doubt whether or not it would be sufficient. Indeed it is the threat of loss of *respect* that is cited by the women in the group as one of the main factors that deters them from becoming supervisors of primary education. In Amna's words: "If I will feel that I will acquire *respect*, so I will accept, otherwise not".

Although *respect* is currently a little used word in British educational circles, yet intriguingly many of our study fellows from Pakistan claim to have seen its practice securely embedded in the ways of working they have encountered while studying in the UK. They bear witness to countless small incidents which they describe as embodying *respect* and which they believe they can usefully emulate on return and learn to use as a general strategy. The quotations below from three separate fellows indicate the powerful approbation signified through the use of the word *respect* in describing actions. They also encapsulate the transition from observation of a particular incident, through generalisation and in to application.

"We reached [a school] at 12.45. Headteacher welcomed [us] warmly. Her personality was symbol. She highly *respected* us and want to know about our thoughts, what we want to know about her school. [She took us] round every class and reception class. Everything was lessonable .... she serve us and describe everything to us ... I appreciate to her every action, one time she took rubbish paper. It was a surprise for me."

"The difference is that here [in UK] you *respect* everyone."

"There [in UK] I have learned *respect*. I have learned appreciation, and I have learned to listen. Now I use this in all my work and I make success."

*Respect* is a potent force for enabling people to work professionally and, conversely, any overt lack of *respect* would seriously affect someone's ability to function in his or her role. Lack of *respect* can subtly undermine even personal *sincerity* to the work in hand and result in a diminution of work:

"I like to work in a group because when we work together we have the opportunity to exchange our ideas, to learn to each other and produce best work. I found it easy for myself because I give them *respect*."

"If a person feel [*respect*] like this, then his personal capacity will be increased. If sometime we feel that any person is neglected, then his working capacity, in my opinion, his working capacity will be numb."

For all supervisors, to give and gain *respect* is a crucial aspect of their work. Through giving *respect* to the teachers in the schools, and the communities served by the schools, they should be able to establish a culture that supports professional decision-making for school improvement. Their intermediate position in the educational hierarchy, bridging the gap between school and office, does, however, leave them peculiarly vulnerable as individuals. They need to experience the enabling force of *respect* from their superior officers, as well as to use *respect* to empower teachers and communities in their work. They may give and gain *respect* within schools through demonstrating their own *sincerity* to the task by providing information, advice and demonstration lessons, but how can they gain similar *respect* from their officers?

Kurshid believes that personal *sincerity* is sufficient. Citing his own experience of promotion to learning coordinator, an advancement achieved through hard work alone, he generalises this experience to suggest that *sincerity* assures recognition and *respect* from officers of all ranks, as well as from teachers. Thus, for him, reforming one's own style of working, imbuing professional pride into whatever one undertakes, is a necessary and sufficient prelude to more general improvement of education and should thus be the first lesson practised and imparted by every supervisor.

“I stand in front of the teachers as a good teacher, good supervisor. I believe that if I am a good teacher and good supervisor, the other supervisors, teachers, SDEOs, directors they will *respect* [me]. And they will call me that ‘You are a good teacher and good supervisor you have to work in other areas’. .... So we have to change this atmosphere, bit our behaviour, our own behaviour, not we wait for others that first they change theirs, then we.”

“... there is a - confusion that every teacher wants to change their jobs. They prefer clerkship, because they earn more money than teachership. So I preach my teachers that ‘Yes, it is your right ... You seek knowledge or change your job. But, as you are in schools, you work honestly with that time. One year, four year, one hour - be true with that time’.”

Others were audibly distrustful of their officers. They were sceptical both about officers’ credentials and their experience. They expressed grave doubt whether officers do, or even can, appreciate *sincere* supervisory work:

“SDEOs may be good administrators, but in pedagogy they are nil!”

“In Pakistan, we cannot consider that a director or SDEO or DEO consider [us] as a human being or give equal opportunity. Also respect and other things — we have great *respect* for him, on other hand have he *respect* for us?”

This potential break in the chain of *respect* appears to be a deeply destructive force. It is, in part, fear of this threat to *respect* that has hindered the three women from taking on supervisory roles. It is also, perhaps, a lack of understanding of the potential for empowerment of SPEs through *respect* shown by their immediate superior officers, that has contributed to the retrogressive working practices of the three men in the sample who did, in name at least, become supervisors of primary education.

The discontinuity of effectiveness in their work demonstrated by these three

men might be rephrased as a sapping of their *sincerity* for their task, resulting in a collapse of the network of *respect* that they had previously enjoyed. With neither the *self-respect* that *sincerity* ensures, nor the mutual *respect* that could be gained by working attentively with parents, teachers, colleagues or officers, they had little chance to succeed. To regain *sincerity* they needed to understand more fully how the role of SPE supports the aspiration for an educated nation: to see the link between their own actions or omissions and the primary goal of improving education. One of these men recounted how he was soundly rebuked by his sponsor for losing such clarity of focus and jeopardising his professional *sincerity* and his *respect* for the children indirectly in his care:

“So X came to me, and he said me that ‘How do you perform your duty? I have seen your schools and since two or three months you have not visited them. So, are you performing in this manner your duties? It is not good, you are not honest [*sincere?*]. If you will deny other children, somebody must have to deny your children. Your children will not get good education, if you will not look after the others. So, go and perform your duty.’ ... Then I said ‘Yes, you are right. I see that these children are not the nation’s children, they are as my children, I cannot deny them training.’ ”

(Sikandar)

## Conclusion

*Sincerity* in education requires an unwavering focus on the outcomes and benefits of schooling for children. In this context, *sincerity* is sometimes contrasted with leadership, and the latter deemed counterproductive. To focus on leadership alone is to blur the sharp scrutiny of teaching and learning which lies at the heart of education, and thereby to jeopardise personal *sincerity* to the profession as a whole in pursuit of individual self-aggrandisement:

“Some officers, some leaders, are very good, associations are very good, and work *sincere* but some officers think they are a leader



and not interested in teaching. Their thinking is that way.”

‘Leadership’ is in fact neither a common, nor a complimentary, term within the vocabulary of any of those whom I interviewed. On the rare occasions when it is used it is imbued with an element of self-loathing which admits that ‘acting the leader’ has occasionally seemed expeditious, but has seldom brought lasting benefits. Assuming the role of a leader within supervisory work in education is seen as self-contradictory: it may command instant attention, but it negates *respect* and thus undermines the very goal of *sincerity* to the task that the supervisor is seeking to promote. The leader, inevitably though inadvertently, destroys the inherent ‘beauty’ of the task. Gaining the approbation of the leader becomes the paramount goal, and improving the quality of education ceases to be an end in itself:

“When [first] I apply my plans and decisions to headteachers ... for development of schools education, why they not give me good and positive response? When I assess my work then I know it is not good leadership it is dictatorship, because I am not lord and other persons are not my servant.”

“Working as a leader of others ... they obey my order but no give me response and no take interest in that work. They work only show for the response, but no beauty of work shown in it. If I work friendly and politely and mixed with them - the work shows shining, and beauty of the work increases their ability.”

Wariness about the term ‘leadership’ amongst educationalists in Pakistan was noted by Warwick and Reimers (1995) who comment specifically on a lack of perceptible leadership behaviour at each level of the educational hierarchy and the distinctive avoidance of the word itself:

[Headteachers] were not trained to be leaders, did not see themselves as leaders, and did not act like leaders.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:99)

During their rare appearances at schools [supervisors] may observe classes and talk with teachers, but they do not have the

time or the inclination to be managers or leaders.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:92)

Presidents and prime ministers have all come out with cogent rhetoric about the need for more and better education, but they rarely provide the leadership and budgets necessary to improve schools across the country.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:3)

Few Pakistani officials ever use the term leadership, and fewer still understand what it means.

(Warwick and Reimers 1995:147)

So strongly has the concept of leadership become intertwined with the achievement of school improvement in western thought that writers seem to assume that the lack of the term, and any associated behaviour patterns, is itself having a debilitating effect on progress. Leadership is assumed to be the vital missing ingredient which could energise the whole education system and readjust its focus from arid administrative preoccupations to perceptible improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, although they can offer no examples of positive and effective leadership from Pakistan itself, Warwick and Reimers conclude buoyantly that 'training for management and leadership can break the stagnation' (1995:97), without questioning the assumption that their own very different paradigm would retain its potency in another setting. My analysis of interview data, however, would suggest that any eventual and deliberate use of the word 'leadership' for education in Pakistan would need to enunciate both *sincerity* and *respect* as powerful components.

The detailed life stories have suggested that, with personal *sincerity*, underpinned by a clear focus on the goals of education, each individual can achieve something of value, whatever the status of his or her particular job. As teachers they taught and inspired individual pupils; as headteachers, learning coordinators or resource persons they increased enrolment and standards of teaching. When *sincerity* ceased, as it did for three men becoming SPEs, they eschewed contact with schools, took refuge in the office or the fields, and were thereby unable even to attempt to act effectively.

When assured of *respect* from those they worked for, and those they worked with, their effectiveness was multiplied. Capitalising on this *respect*, Saeeda increased the staffing of the school; Amna resolved personal and professional problems for her staff; Kurshid trained and supported fellow coordinators; Manzoor opened 75 schools in a single month. Without *respect*, individual achievement will be neither recognised nor increased and *sincerity* becomes hard to maintain. At each stage in their careers, these professionals knew that they were effective when, and only when, they worked with personal *sincerity* within an atmosphere of *respect*. They also expected or experienced a diminution of *respect* in taking on the role of supervisor of primary education which could ultimately undermine personal *sincerity* and render them ineffective.

We should not see the current absence of the word 'leadership' as a void to be filled in order to secure improvement, but as part of an alternative vision of progress founded securely on inculcating *sincerity* and *respect*. Rather than seeking to reinforce or reshape a named concept of leadership into the educational dialogue of Pakistan, we might usefully learn first to extend our own vocabulary to incorporate the terms 'sincerity' and 'respect' as important descriptors of the behaviour of our own intended and titular leaders. We should then be better placed to seek out ways to ensure that these concepts flourish throughout the education sector: that individuals can and do show *sincerity* to the goals of education, and work with *respect* for those above, below and beside them in the educational hierarchy.

In chapter 7 and 8, we will explore the effects of SPEDP training in order to consider whether or not supervisors can become more effective in schools and, if so, whether any increase in effectiveness is reflected in perceptible differences in individual *sincerity* and mutual *respect*.

## What Do Supervisors Want To Do?

### Introduction

The previous chapter used the life stories from seven individuals to gain insight into their experiences of different supervisory roles. Periods of activity and enterprise early in their careers were contrasted with later laxity and lethargy on appointment to the more highly paid supervisory post of SPE. A lack of understanding of what the role entailed, and how to do it well, may have precipitated this change in attitude and effectiveness. The situation, however, might be better described in their own words as a loss of both personal *sincerity* and *respect*. This loss was foreseen and feared by those who did not take up the role, and experienced by those who did.

A similarly dismal picture of the role of SPE was built up through interviewing rural women high school teachers and supervisors in 1993 (see figure 5:9). Supervisors were perceived as coerced into action by the whim, rather than the wisdom, of their officers and constrained from achievement by the bigotry of clerks or the political machinations of the teachers themselves. Initially, involvement in SPEDP was seen as just such another unreasonable demand. After two years of the project, during which most supervisors worked as master trainers of teachers and attended a series of courses on developing the supervisory role through work in schools, the atmosphere of despondency amongst SPEs began to change. There were signs of a variety of positive interventions which might improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. Success stories began to emerge and the talk on the courses changed from the resentful, "Why us? We will retire soon. We are not for this work"; through the resigned, "Show me the path and I will follow it faithfully"; to the ebullient, "Listen what we have done!".

It is my intention, in this chapter, to explore such apparent changes. To this end, supervisors' perceptions of their own work will be further scrutinised through analysing data from the questionnaire and self-evaluation inventory which were completed by all members of the third and final

supervisory training course held in November 1994. The focus of the analysis will be to consider if, and how, the supervisors themselves believed their pattern of work to have changed during the project years and what sorts of activities they undertook in schools.

The sample of 91 respondents has already been introduced in chapter 5 (figure 5:2). It is perhaps important to reiterate that the 19 resource persons of mosque schools in the survey hold a very different post to that described in the life stories recounted in chapter 6. Sikandar and Manzoor had been appointed as RPMS at the time when expansion of the mosque school system was a major part of the New Education Policy of 1979. Since then, mosque schools and their resource persons have been brought into the same system as all government primary schools, and are now administered under the male section of each sub-division. The current cohort of RPMS no longer have to galvanise local communities into opening new schools, then select, train and support local men as teachers. Instead they are involved in the same range of tasks as the SPE, but their beat is made up specifically of mosque schools. These schools are predominantly in the most rural areas, small, co-educational and often 'shelterless' - that is, made of whatever local materials are to hand, rather than built to a traditional school design from fired bricks.

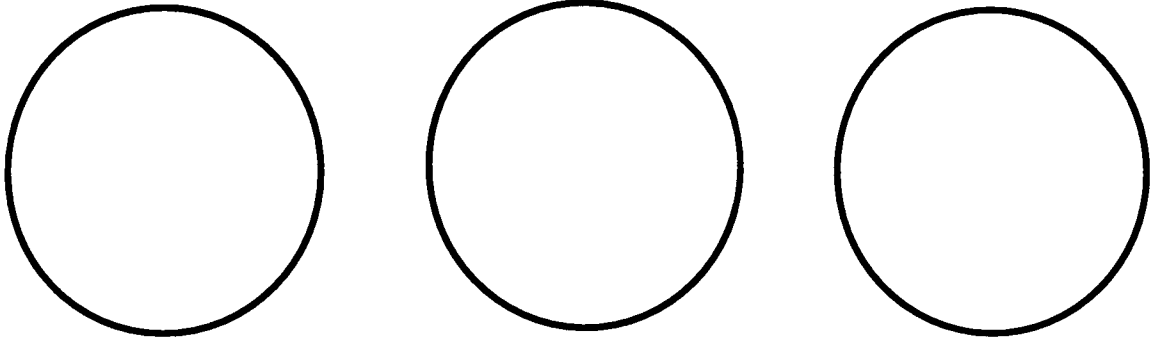
### **Supervisors' Perceptions of their Use of Time**

On the questionnaire, supervisors were asked to record the proportion of their working time which they believed they spent as advisor, inspector, administrator, or on tasks that were outside education altogether. Having completed their estimate of their current work, the supervisors were then asked to reconsider their recollections of working in 1992, just before they became involved in SPEDP, and to estimate their use of time at that point. Finally they had to imagine their ideal pattern of work and how they would like to distribute their time after the end of the project in 1996. Each of these scenarios was recorded on a pie chart, and annotated with percentage equivalents. The questionnaire ended with space for each participant to reflect on his or her own perceived strengths and weaknesses in their professional work. These prose statements were later added to the data

collected through interviews, fieldnotes and life stories.

5 How much of your working time is spent as:

V **advisor**  
I **inspector**  
M **administrator**  
O **outside education**



**2 years ago**  
**1992**

**now**  
**1994**

**preferred**  
**1996**

6 What aspect of your work do you feel you are best at?  
Why?

7 What aspect of your work do you feel you need to develop?  
Why?

**Figure 7:1 Extract from Supervisors' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire, although printed out as shown in figure 7:1, was introduced orally and completed through discussion. Spoken explanation made the intentions of each section clearer than rubric in any language could have done. In particular, it was important to emphasise that the purpose was to record an individual response: to describe oneself, not to try to produce a 'perfect' or impressive answer. There was intense discussion between participants as the forms were completed, and considerable attention was given to the detail of each chart and how responses differed between colleagues. Some considered, for example, whether or not an equitable distribution of 25% of one's time to each category would be just.

However, value judgements took precedence over neat arithmetical simplicity, and no-one actually recorded such a distribution. The discussion and the distinctiveness of individual scripts suggests that the preliminary objective, of recording a personal and reflective response from each participant, was achieved.

The four broad categories used for the time distribution: advisor, inspector, administrator and work outside education, were intended to reflect the major tensions that vex a supervisor's working life. Supervisors are repeatedly charged with spending too much time on tedious administration, rather than school-based work, and too much of their time in schools on inspection, rather than in advisory work guiding teachers (e.g. Curle 1966; Lyons and Pritchard 1976; Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). The final category, of spending time outside education altogether, was an additional one, devised as a way of acknowledging that supervision is not necessarily the only work that they are engaged in. Some outside work is legitimate, if disruptive. For example, during the SPEDP years, supervisors, as public servants, have been called on by the provincial government to provide a literate task-force for completing the electoral register, flood damage claims and the national census. Other use of time outside education is prevalent, but only occasionally acknowledged because it is illicit. An example of this would be Sikandar tending his rice mills after a cursory visit to the local school. By putting both the legitimate and the illegitimate use of time 'outside education' under one heading, I hoped to elicit an honest answer without fear of reprisals for acknowledging time misspent.

In contrast with the biographical data gathered in the first half of the questionnaire, the pie charts and percentages in this section were necessarily impressionistic, and did not attempt to capture a literal representation of time use. Supervisors had not, for example, been asked to keep a diary of their work or to collate initial data about the different types of work they undertook. The purpose of the graphs was rather to provide an overview of the supervisors' perceptions of their role, whether or not it had changed, and how they would like to see it develop further. The task of completing the charts was undertaken with serious, reflective attention. But they are clearly based more on memories and musings, rather than measurement. In a search for trends and patterns of response which might continue to show

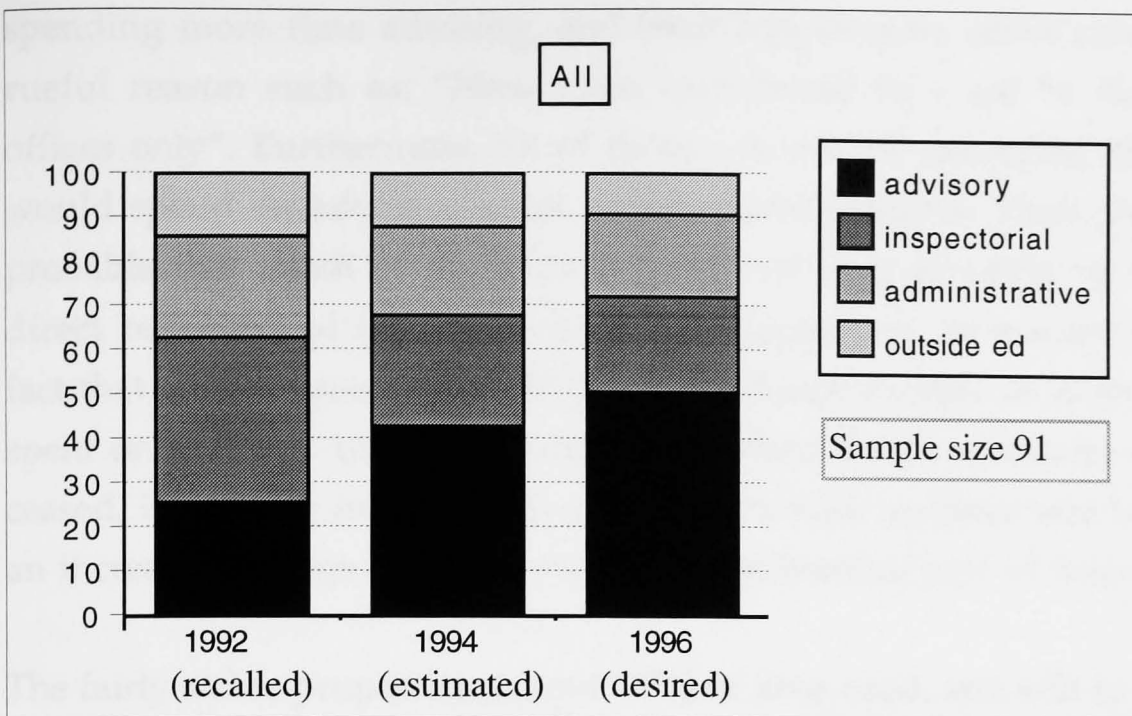
interesting convergencies or anomalies between sub-groups, I have found the mean allocations of time under each category. In presenting this data graphically, I continue to emphasise the impression of changing proportions over time, rather than precise percentages which might suggest accurate measurement.

In interpreting the results, I have used these arithmetical means but have also kept an overview of the individual entries. For example, was the move always in the same direction, or did some people take an opposite view and increase time spent on different aspects of their roles? I also noted extreme cases such as one who recalled working 100% outside education because “I was not supervisor then”, and another who looked forward to the time when he would spend 100% of his time outside education because “In two years time I am retired man”. These particular entries were not included in the averages, since they depicted periods when the author was not, or would not be, a supervisor at all. On the other hand, the script which recorded 100% of time previously spent on inspectorial work was included, even though such an extreme view of how time was spent might be more ironic than representative.

### **Perceived Changes in Supervisors' Use of Time**

Figure 7:2 provides a graphical representation of the cumulative results for the whole sample of 91 supervisors.





**Figure 7:2 Supervisors' Current Perception of their Changing Use of Time**

The main trend is a steady, estimated, and desired, increase in the use of time for advisory work. This is achieved by small reductions in the amount of time spent in the office on administration and in irrelevant tasks outside education as well as, more significantly, by a reduction in the time spent on inspection. The supervisors are therefore proposing both a modest increase in the amount of time actually spent in schools (from 63% to 72% of a working week), and in addition, a considerable shift in their use of this time, so that inspection activities take up one third, rather than two thirds, of the total time available in schools.

The perceived swing towards advisory work, rather than inspection, during the SPEDP years is not surprising, since the transfer of time to active and supportive supervision was an underlying theme on each of the courses. A reported move towards spending time advising in schools might be merely politic or polite, rather than a reflection of any genuine change. Furthermore, at the time of the survey, most of the supervisors (84%) had been working as master trainers, actively involved in delivering in-service courses to teachers for at least eight days in every month. Such work would be represented within the advisory category, and would therefore inflate the results to reflect this temporary change in the pattern of their routine work.

There were only 9 individuals (10% of the total) who did not claim to be

spending more time advising, and their scripts were often annotated by a rueful reason such as: "Now I am transferred to a job in the education offices only". Furthermore, all of these supervisors increased the time they would spend on advisory work in their ideal scenario. Thus, although it is probable that much of the current switch of time to advisory work was a direct reflection of the supervisors' temporary role as master trainers, the fact that all sub-groups (and 77% of individuals) sought to increase the time spent on advisory work still further after their duties as master trainers had ceased, is a strong indication that such work with teachers was being seen as an increasingly important, enjoyable and influential part of their work.

The fairly stable proportion (about 20%) of time used, and still to be used, for administrative work compares favourably with Lyons' and Pritchard's findings that inspectors "spent between 50 and 60 per cent of their time on administration and that inspection tended to be bureaucratic rather than an advisory or creative exercise" (1976:94). Some years later the UNESCO study of Pakistan reported an even worse situation:

... all these [supervisory] officers have so many other matters to attend to that they are hardly able to devote any of their time to their professional function. As much as 95 per cent of time is spent on administration or in giving interviews.

(UNESCO 1984:55)

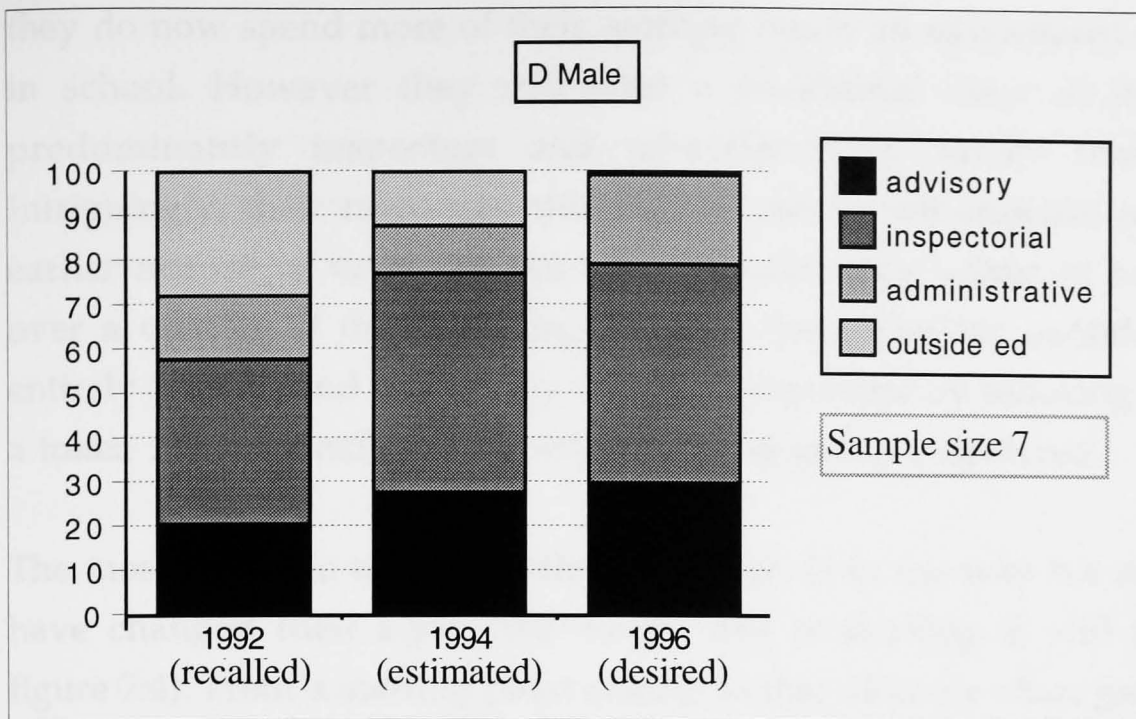
The type of administrative tasks demanded may have altered little, but the ratio of supervisors to schools has improved significantly over the last twenty years, dropping from an average of 53 in Sindh, in the 1976 study, to the more manageable number of 25 in the rural area and often less than 10 for urban, male supervisors in this sample. It is possibly this increase in the total numbers of supervisors available that has supported the reduction in time spent on administrative tasks, rather than any deliberate rationalisation of their duties, or recognition of a need to prioritise their professional, academic function in schools.

## Comparisons Between Sub-Groups of the Sample

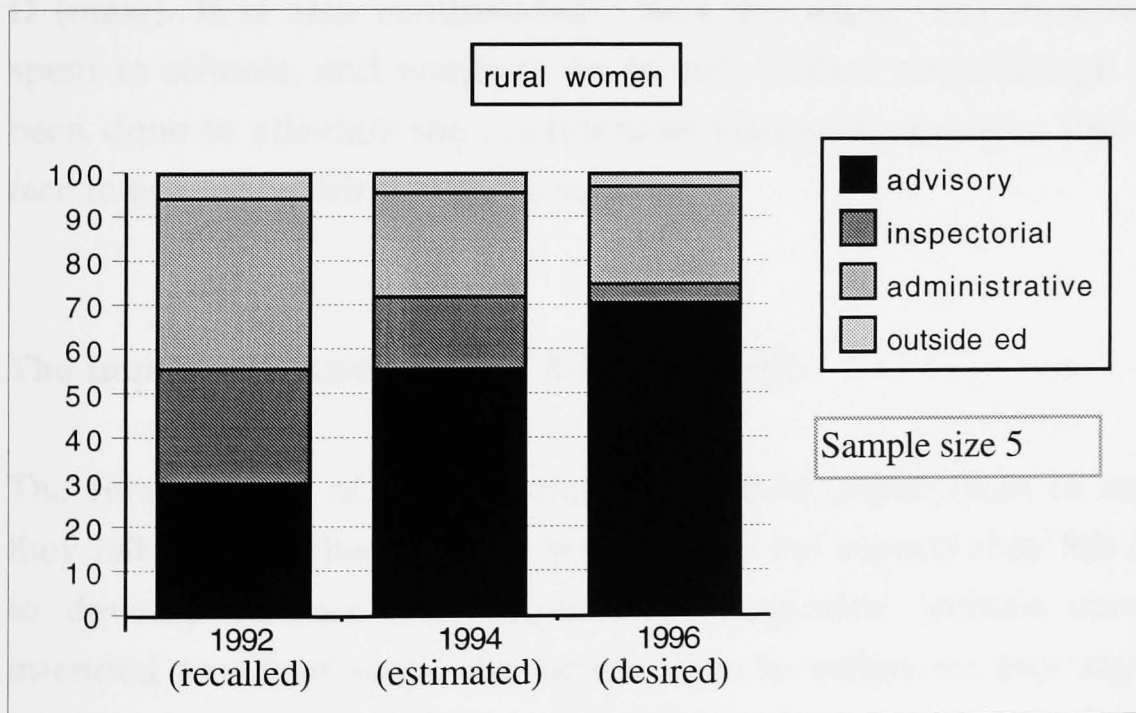
Comparing the responses from the male and female sections, the only perceptible differences are that the women do not admit to spending as much time on jobs which do not directly support education as the men do, but are prepared to spend more time on administration. Since the women tend to cover more, if smaller, schools, increased administration time seems realistic. It also reflects the earlier findings of Lyons and Pritchard (1976:94), and therefore adds to confidence in the reliability of the responses.

Among the rural male supervisors, differences between the results for resource persons of mosque schools and supervisors of primary education were negligible. The similarity in the distribution of time within these two sub-groups suggests that the distinctiveness of the role of resource person, which so energised Sikandar and Manzoor in the 1980s when mosque schools were being opened, is no longer experienced by the men who hold that designation now but who merely supervise the already existing schools. This parallels the regression of learning coordinators from innovators to inspectors reported in both Nizamani and Zai (1993) and Warwick and Reimers (1995).

The urban male supervisors in sub-division D again provided a profile that was exceptional in distinctive ways. Their wealth of primary teaching experience was disclosed in chapter 5 (figure 5:8). Almost all the supervisors in this group were promoted directly from primary school, and only one had any secondary school teaching experience, and even that was as a JST. This might be expected to underwrite a positive view of an actively advisory role within the classroom. Indeed this seems to be implied by the World Bank view that the 'academic support function' of supervisors has been neglected by supervisors with no primary teaching experience (1995a). Yet this particular group is unique in this research study for endorsing a more inspectorial and administrative role for supervisors, (see figure 7:3).



**Figure 7:3 Supervisors' Current Perception of their Changing Use of Time: Sub-division D (Male)**



**Figure 7:4 Supervisors' Current Perception of their Changing Use of Time: Rural Female Supervisors**

Not only do the supervisors of group D admit to increasing their advisory role only a little, and their inspectorial role rather more, but they are the only group that actually desires to spend more time on administration. Their role-perceptions have evolved over the years of work in SPEDP, and

they do now spend more of their working hours on educational matters and in school. However they still hold a traditional view of their role as predominantly inspectors and administrators, rather than advisors. Intriguingly, their responses also suggest strong self-criticism of their own earlier misuse of time. On this questionnaire they admit to having spent over a quarter of their working lives on tasks that lay outside education entirely in 1992, and apparently wish to compensate by reducing this time to a token 1%, the smallest proportion that any group considered.

The most dramatic transformation, however, is in the way the rural women have changed their style, and would like to develop it still further (see figure 7:4). From a starting point similar to that of every other group in 1992, this group already claimed to spend more than half their working time advising teachers, and would like to increase this proportion still further. In their desired outcome, three quarters of their time would be spent in schools, and 95% of this time used for advising rather than inspecting. The degree of this shift towards advisory work is in fascinating contrast to group D (male). It is also commendable that this group has increased the time spent in schools, and wants to do so still further, even though nothing has been done to alleviate the considerable transport problems that the women face in actually getting to those schools.

### **The Importance Attributed to Advisory work**

The final section of the questionnaire asked supervisors to amplify what they felt they did best in their work, and what aspects they felt they needed to develop further. The request for unguided written comments was intended to allow scope for supervisors to reflect on any aspect of their working life at all, and thus perhaps to broaden my view of what it was they did. However, in completing these questions the supervisors kept very closely to the main categories of work already delineated on the questionnaire. Most answers included the words 'advisory', 'inspection' or, more rarely, 'administration'. The only new category that was added was 'teaching'. I have regarded teaching as a subset of advisory work, whether it referred to teaching teachers on training courses or to teaching children in demonstration lessons within a school. Furthermore, the comments closely

reflected the ideal scenario supervisors had outlined in the previous section of the questionnaire, with participants generally electing to do more of those aspects of their work that they already felt they did well. The question thus provided additional reinforcement of their personal views on the importance and inherent enjoyment of different types of work within their role.

Statements affirming the role of supervisor as advisor were legion, occurring on 75% of all the scripts. Here is a small selection, affirming the purposefulness of advisory work in influencing teachers directly:

“I do my best work as advisor in my beat because it is need and necessary to help and support teachers.”

(male Y)

“I like to act as an advisor for teachers and work together with them.”

(male Y)

“I want to improve my advisory role to be a good and perfect supervisor.”

(male A)

“We now inspect through advisory role because in this way the teacher will change their teaching methods and improve themselves.”

(female D)

“The importance of advisor is must because advice gives opportunity for listening [to] teachers’ problems, and with advice teachers are making better planning.”

(male Y)

“We feel most strongly our role of guiders because in our country there are too many people who are administrators and who only play that role. We have need of guiders to lead our teachers into successful change.”

(female X)

“Advising is more important to democratic work, but inspection is the environment of our country’s education system.”

(male X)

In these comments one can hear the ring of individual successes readily generalised into categorical statements about the value of such work. The tone of expression is markedly different from the despondency recorded in my field notes two years earlier, when no one would provide positive examples of successful supervisory work, saying only “as supervisor you see nothing”. However, the tension between personal triumphs and societal expectations is still apparent. Advisory work may be ‘democratic’ but it is not the custom, and advisors are needed because too many people act solely, and sterilely, as administrators. These potential conflicts must cast some doubt on the sustainability of the supervisors’ ideal scenarios. Once the compulsion to perform a more advisory role fades with the completion of the master training work, will supervisors indeed achieve their aspirations for a permanent shift in their work patterns, or will they return again to the original time divisions? Will the fact that they have witnessed positive results from such work be sufficient to ensure that it remains a priority in their daily lives?

### **Working with People**

Many of the statements by women provided comments which not only endorsed the advisory role as a way of working, but also centred specifically on the sound, and influential, relationships developed with the people with whom they had worked. In this they are indicating new, or at least newly applied, skills, and suggesting a strong causal link between improved personal relationships and perceptible changes in behaviour and outcomes. This interpersonal focus may also help to explain the redefinition of almost all school-based work as advisory work amongst the rural women. Perhaps they now perceive all their interactions in school as working with people, guiding rather than telling. In this way many traditionally inspectorial tasks, such as observing lessons or reviewing attendance figures, could be re-

categorised as advisory tasks, with the focus on the quality of the feedback to the school, rather than on the collecting of data for the office. We can also read these comments as evidence of their ability to demonstrate *respect* through empowering others to make their own decisions:

“I believe I have built teacher as best people because I have taught them honestly and given them best guideline to develop their abilities as thinkers.”

(female D)

“My best work is my relationships with head teachers, teachers and now with PTA.”

(female C)

“I am best at the advisory role of my work because I feel that through this role I can make better changing in the behaviour of headmistresses as well as teachers and I can easily change the method of teaching.”

(female B)

“I want to give importance to children and prepare them as good students who will become scientists, philosophers, educators and engineers to build our nation.”

(female D)

Occasionally the men also recorded a change in their attitude towards teachers, but the focus was more on the negative aspects of their earlier working style than on any noticeable achievements since:

“We didn’t know how to talk to teachers. We were dictator, we did not listen to them ... I have recognised that I may change my attitude and be soft and help guide the teachers in a friendly way, instead of threatening them.”

(male X)

A similar gender distinction was noted by Farah in recent research involving 16 case studies of primary schools in Pakistan. She reports that:



“Official supervision and support is relatively more pronounced in the female schools than in the male schools” (1996:161). The girls’ schools provided more instances of specific support from their supervisors; the boys’ school gave fewer instances, and even these were of more generalised ‘cooperation’, rather than definite help or explicit guidance.

Many of the supervisors’ comments linked advisory success directly to their increased involvement in teaching, either as master trainers or within the classroom itself. These comments suggest that the experience of being a master trainer has been a powerful one for some supervisors. Through this work, the positive experiences of their earlier professional life as teachers sustains them in the more uncharted and uncertain waters of work with primary school teachers. Several have extended this work to taking demonstration classes or offering guidance to teachers in schools. Such comments also echo Manzoor’s recollection that, after training as a master trainer, he was more ready to demonstrate teaching in front of older teachers and, thereby, felt that he gained their *respect* at last.

“I am best at teaching because of my experience in schools and as a master trainer.”

(male C)

“I take much interest in the effective teaching because of my interest as a master trainer.”

(male Y)

“We have to think out good teaching for the purpose of learning.”

(male Y)

“I understand I am best at teaching, it is my love!”

(female X)

“I like teaching and giving professional guidance to teachers - teaching is everlasting.”

(male Y)

“I am proud of my work with teacher. [I] demonstrate myself and

he or she observe me then they will follow what I have done.”

(male B)

### **The Roles of Inspector and Administrator**

A small number of supervisors, including most of group D and some others newly appointed to supervisory posts, continue to rate inspection as both their pride and their aspiration. Others saw it as limited in its effectiveness and possibly destructive of good relationships. Only 3% of the total sample sought specific improvement of their inspection skills. Just as the women may be defining all school-based work as advisory because it involves working with people, so group D may perceive all their school work as inspectorial because it involves making judgements and passing on this data to higher authorities for action. It is, however, hard to hear a positive, proactive undercurrent in their rather formulaic statements. There is very little sense of real achievement gained through their work as inspectors. It is ‘best’ perhaps only because it provides something to do on the ‘compulsory’ visits out to schools:

“Our work as inspector is our best work.”

(male D)

“Mostly I like inspection because as a supervisor it is compulsory to visit schools.”

(male C, recently appointed)

“Our best work is inspection because we see the problems of schools.”

(male D)

“If we act only in the role of inspector, we must not expect good response from our subordinates”

(male B).

No supervisor felt that administration was currently a strength, and where it was desired (by 16% of the group, including every one of group D) it was

usually endorsed as a means to power within the education system, something that would provide authority or prevent interference, rather than as a professional skill of value in raising standards:

“Administration is important to prevent interference of other officers transferring teachers etc.”

(male B)

“We want administrative power.”

(male D)

“I need improvement for to be a good administrator because lack of authority is delegated to SPEs.”

(male C)

Taken together, these comments suggest that inspection remains a traditional and valued skill, but is not now seen as the main route to progress. Advisory work in schools, and through training teachers, was frequently perceived as personally empowering and intrinsically rewarding. The work was often described as having a direct influence on others and how they work too. Administrative work, in contrast, was seen as more politically empowering and was an issue of particular importance to urban male supervisors.

### **Self-Assurance in the Advisory Role of Supervision**

All 91 supervisors in the sample also completed a self-evaluation inventory (see figure 7:5). Data from this were used primarily to inform and refine the organisation of the course itself and the statements reflected themes that had been, or were to be, developed. The first four sections highlighted activities which had been elaborated during the first two supervisory courses. The last two sections were a more direct precursor to the third and final course which was about to begin. It was not the intention to try to cover the full range of supervisors' tasks. In particular, most of the statements reflect the advisory aspect of their fieldwork in schools. Few of the statements could be interpreted as supporting the inspectorial role, and

no statements at all were concerned with administrative tasks or work outside education.

All the statements reflect positive traits and activities that a 'good' supervisor might be expected to show. This could mean that the inventory was open to abuse with supervisors deciding to give themselves glowing descriptions and selecting only the highest scores, without pause for reading or reflection. However, the fact that the supervisors were working in translation was a good reason to keep the statements short, direct and positive. In Karachi, they had to work from a foreign text (in English) and translate the meaning for themselves. In the rural area, they worked from a translated text (in Sindhi), which I could neither read nor check. However, because of the construction of the inventory, in both areas I was able to talk to participants about their emerging range of scores as they were filling in the sheet, regardless of the language in which it was printed.

The inventory, like the questionnaire, caused considerable discussion. Small groups of supervisors sat together and debated, for example, when and how they provided 'ways for teachers to share ideas' (#19). Despite such group discussion, or perhaps because of it, no two scripts were identical. This was an encouraging indication that each supervisor had indeed tried to reflect a particular personal style of working through their own self-evaluation. Only one script scored 5s throughout, indicating that one supervisor had a phenomenally high opinion of himself, or a drastically low opinion of the activity.

For analysis here I display the mean score for each question. I have also listed the mean scores of the two increasingly contrasted sub-groups: the urban male supervisors of sub-division D, and the rural female supervisors. These two groups have shown through their graphs and comments that they place particular value on inspection and advisory work, respectively. Through their self-evaluations we may be able to see whether this distinction is purely semantic, or whether it is reflected in what they actually do when visiting schools. To aid this analysis, I have highlighted the four highest, and lowest, ranking statements for each of the groups (see figure 7.5).

## Self Evaluation Inventory for SPE

Circle the appropriate number for each statement to show how well it describes the way you work.

E.g **5** I strongly agree, this describes my work, I always do this, ...

**0** I strongly disagree, this does not describe my work, I never do this.

### Mean score for respondents in different areas

(Highest four scores in **bold**, lowest four underlined.)

	area number	all 91	male D 7	female rural 5
<u>personal qualities</u>				
1	I communicate clearly through writing and speaking.	3.9	4.3	3.2
2	I listen to other people's views with respect	<b>4.3</b>	4.3	4.3
3	I work well with others	4.0	4.1	3.8
4	I can take on a leadership role	3.7	<u>3.0</u>	4.0
<u>primary school curriculum</u>				
5	I enjoy working with children	<b>4.3</b>	4.6	<b>4.4</b>
6	I know the aims and objectives of every subject	3.9	4.6	4.2
7	I can demonstrate a range of effective learning activities for each age and subject	4.0	4.5	4.0
8	I try out new learning activities in the classroom	3.8	<b>4.8</b>	4.0
<u>relationship with teachers</u>				
9	I know the teachers in my beat schools	<b>4.4</b>	4.6	<b>4.6</b>
10	I observe lessons & offer constructive feedback	3.8	<u>3.0</u>	<b>4.4</b>
11	I help teachers evaluate themselves	3.9	3.4	4.0
12	I help teachers to feel confident and motivated	4.1	4.6	<b>4.8</b>
<u>commitment to schools</u>				
13	I keep my schools well informed of what other schools are doing	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.6</b>
14	I help to improve the working conditions	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	3.8
15	I help the headteacher to set realistic goals	3.9	4.5	3.6
16	I encourage schools to use the environment fully	3.9	4.3	4.2
<u>planning development</u>				
17	I help teachers plan, carry out and evaluate classroom initiatives	3.7	3.1	4.2
18	I provide appropriate training for teachers	3.8	<b>4.8</b>	4.2
19	I provide ways for teachers to share ideas	3.7	4.1	3.6
20	I regard difficulties as problems to be solved	4.0	3.9	3.6
<u>wider community</u>				
21	I hold meetings for parents	<u>2.9</u>	<u>3.0</u>	<u>2.8</u>
22	I help parents to understand the school aims	<u>2.9</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>3.0</u>
23	I help schools make more use of the community	<u>3.4</u>	3.9	<u>3.2</u>
24	I take an active part in civic and local matters	<u>3.6</u>	<u>3.0</u>	<u>1.4</u>

**Figure 7:5 Mean Scores on the Supervisors' Self-Evaluation Inventory**

The first point to note is that the final two sections carry the lowest scores. This was the expected result. The course about to begin had as its two main themes 'planning development' and outreach into the 'wider community'. We had already ascertained that these were areas of supervisory work which were ready for development and frequently overlooked in the prevalent work of supervisors. Work within the wider community accounts for all the lowest ranking scores of the full sample and the rural women. The lowest score for any statement was, perhaps predictably, the rural women's assessment of their role in civic affairs. This statement (#24), and the two on working with parents (#21 & 22) were the only questions to be given 0 answers by any supervisors, indicating that they never took part in civic or local matters, nor had any direct contact with parents.

The very low scores in this section also support the view that the current role of supervisor has become far removed from the earlier roles of resource persons of mosque schools and learning coordinators as described by Manzoor, Sikandar and Kurshid. In their life stories, reported in the previous chapter, outreach into the community to increase enrolment, attendance and material provision in schools, were all crucial aspects of their success.

The highest scores for the full sample include statements about knowing the teachers in beat schools, enjoying work with children, listening to others with respect, keeping schools well informed and helping to improve working conditions ( #9, 5, 2, 13 & 14). These statements are desirable facets of a supervisor's role, but are rather diffuse and general. They would certainly fall short of the aspiration towards 'dynamic supervision' that Bhutto deemed imperative (1979:10). Part of the problem here is the construction of the inventory itself. The statements in it are not all equally clear or categorical. It is, perhaps, easy to agree with a fairly vague aspiration such as #14: 'I help to improve working conditions'. Many tiny and trivial actions, such as pointing out litter when visiting a school or forwarding the annual data returns, would support such a claim, as well as more momentous actions, such as securing extra facilities or staff. In contrast, statements such as #6: 'I know the aims and objectives of every subject' would have to be downgraded by an acknowledged weakness in any one of eight subject areas. It is thus a statement that would take considerable

personal confidence to justify a high score.

With hindsight, a more precise inventory could be drawn up to provide a fuller picture of what supervisors actually do, how 'dynamic' they are in schools. However, it should be remembered that this particular list was drawn up primarily to be useful within the course itself. The analysis of it here is a retrospective use of the data in order to throw more light on the differences between two particular groups and the way they choose to describe their work.

### **Responses of Different Groups**

Despite reservations about the evidence that supervisors would need to draw on in order to agree strongly to these statements, it is interesting to note the different emphases within the scores of different groups. The rural women agree particularly strongly with the statements under the heading 'relationships with teachers' asserting that they help teachers feel confident and motivated (#12), that they know their teachers well (#9), and that they frequently observe lessons and offer constructive feedback (#10). Conversely, this last statement has one of the lowest scores for group D. Group D's strengths cut across different categories, reflecting the commitment to school agreed by the full sample, but also adding that they provide appropriate training for teachers (#18), and try out new activities in the classroom (#8).

The rural women thus show consistency with their claim to view their role as primarily one of working together with teachers in an advisory capacity. Group D appear to work rather differently in schools. They are less likely to observe teachers and offer feedback which will motivate them, but more likely to provide demonstration lessons and direct training of teachers. Such behaviour does not in itself indicate a strongly inspectorial role, but then there was no scope within the inventory to record more traditional inspection tasks such as testing pupils' coverage of the curriculum, or recording rates of absenteeism. Their reported activities may merely be a reflection of their current prescribed role as master trainers running courses and demonstration classes for cohorts of teachers. It does, however, perhaps suggest that they have evolved their own role more cautiously and

conventionally than the rural women have. Group D's approach appears less interactive and could be consistent with a style of working based on telling and demonstrating, rather than discussing and negotiating.

## Conclusion

Supervisors, like inspectors before them, have frequently been criticised for their use of time and, more particularly, for how little value their time is to the schools they do, or should, visit. The following extended quotation from Bhutto (1979) summarises the main complaints:

The Supervisor has many and varied duties to perform. No attempt seems to have been made to determine his functions. In fact, he continues to perform the same routine tasks as were performed by his predecessor in the pre-independence days. In recent years, he has been assigned additional duties for collecting data, conducting inquiries, etc. No wonder, most primary schools remain unvisited, uninvigorated and uninspired. ...

He examines schools and teachers to determine whether or not prescribed syllabuses and textbooks are being taught and certain teaching methods are being followed. He observes teachers teaching and leaves behind a long note containing 'do's' and 'don'ts'. Very often he criticizes the teacher in the presence of pupils and also, takes over the class to demonstrate how to teach. He audits written work of the pupils to judge its adequacy or inadequacy. Invariably he gives a class of pupils, a haphazardly constructed test to assess the teacher performance. He 'tells' the teacher to do this or that but seldom explains the 'why' of it.

Everything is done hurriedly. The Supervisor seldom stays in a school long enough to observe extra curricular activities of the pupils, to start an experiment, to have an informal chat with individual teachers with a view to finding their satisfaction and problems, or to contact the community.



In short, the present procedures of supervision are authoritarian and based on mistrust of the teachers; they are demoralizing for the teachers. These practices and procedures are to a large extent, responsible for the current low standards of education in general, and of primary education in particular. Exigencies of a rapidly changing world and the ideological aspirations of the people of Pakistan make it imperative that the existing practices of inspection be replaced by dynamic supervisory techniques.

(Bhutto 1979:9-10)

Bhutto was writing twenty years ago, when 'inspectors' first became 'supervisors', and he claimed that their working practices had not altered or improved for thirty years before that. Neither, it seems, have they altered significantly since. Supervisors are still frequently directly blamed for low standards and lack of improvement in schools. Poor supervisory practices, it is claimed, can cause teacher absenteeism (Government of Pakistan 1983:5); 'dysfunctional schools' (UNESCO 1984:55); lack of staff development (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:9); 'a serious barrier to quality' (Hawes and Stephens 1990:21) and lack of academic supervision (World Bank 1995a:8).

Unfortunately the very practices that Bhutto castigates as ineffective, seem to be accepted and endorsed by the current senior educational officers. The most notable change between Bhutto's list and one given to me recently by a director of education, is in replacing the disparaging tone with one of unquestioning acceptance. These clearly are the duties of the supervisor. There is no hint that such a visit might leave the school visited but 'uninvigorated and uninspired':

"The supervisor must look at the muster role and check all absences accounted for. Then he should check the homework and that the coverage of the curriculum is according to schedule. He should look at books and ask questions of pupils to see if they know their lessons. Finally he may make suggestions, or give a model lesson."

(director of education, 1995)

This chapter has sought to discover, from questionnaire responses, how

supervisors use their time, value the different activities they undertake, and whether or not they have been able to adapt and alter their working style. An underlying premise has been that, however far particular duties might be prescribed by senior officers, or indeed by SPEDP itself, the individual supervisor still has some control over when and how each task is fulfilled, and thus can choose to turn a routine, programmatic school visit or training course into an occasion for 'dynamic supervision'.

The analysis of the questionnaire and inventory has indicated how supervisors involved in SPEDP over a two-year period perceived their own attitudes, time management and work patterns to be changing over that time. They reported that they spent more of their working time in schools, and more of this time in schools was now spent actively engaged in an advisory role. They also indicated that these were aspects of their work which they would like to increase still further, even after completion of the training programme.

Through their work as master trainers and in schools, most supervisors believe they have evolved a way of working which embraces a more active and attentive style of advisory work. They can point to specific, successful changes in school practice and ethos for which they feel directly responsible. Their reports of their own professional behaviour now include many of the features cited by earlier authors as essential to effective supervision. The supervisors' comments reflect: 'work with teachers on their professional problems' (Curle 1963:153); reaching 'into both the classrooms and the surrounding communities to promote constructive change' (Government of Pakistan 1983:60); achieving 'desired changes in the behaviour of learners' (Hawes and Stephens 1990:150); and that are securely founded on 'listening to teachers' (Anderson 1991:92).

One intriguing factor in the survey is that there are nuances discernible between supervisors in sub-divisions. The categories which I expected might show considerable variation (urban and rural, male and female, supervisor and resource person) showed little. Yet two particular working teams, the rural women and the male urban sub-division D, repeatedly demonstrated differences in experience, attitude and activity. These differences are an important reminder of the influence of the local on the global. My research

was not designed to explore the ways in which working groups of supervisors in a sub-division may come to share views and working styles. However, such differences have emerged and highlight possible avenues for future investigation. Earlier studies (Lyons and Pritchard 1976, Bhutto 1979, UNESCO 1984, Warwick and Reimers 1995), through selecting random samples of supervisors across the province or country, have blurred any possible distinctions between such sub-groups. It may be that sub-divisional teams develop a distinctive and influential character, as do the staff of different schools in the UK. This possibility could be explored in future research through case studies of the ethos and effectiveness of different sub-divisions.

Even with the small-scale research reported here, the emergent distinctions between groups of supervisors provide impetus to challenge some accepted assumptions that underpin development programmes and sectoral reforms in Pakistan. Analysis of the supervisors' qualifications and experience in chapter 5 revealed that group D conformed most closely to the current paradigm for new supervisors, while the rural women were the furthest from it. This led to the hypothesis that group D should be, or become, the most active and supportive of supervisors in schools. However, this chapter suggests that the reverse is true: the rural women show most change in their established practice and most commitment to continued advisory work in schools. The limited change in the activities and attitudes of group D is critical. It implies that appointing supervisors from primary schools will not be sufficient to ensure the active support of teachers in the classroom. The rural women showed greater aptitude and alacrity in adopting an advisory style of working, even though every one of them transferred from secondary school. This, in turn, suggests that appointing supervisors directly from primary teaching posts is not even a necessary condition for the improvement of supervision in schools. Reform of supervisory practice requires something more than reform of the system of appointment.

Specific training is often cited as the elusive 'something more' that is required. However, here again there is a puzzle. These two particular groups both received the same level of training, yet they have not been equally influenced by it. Evidently something more is again needed to ensure that

training actually results in changes of attitude and behaviour. How training may help to support the reform of supervisory practice, and what else may be required, will be further discussed in chapters 8 and 9.

## What has the Training Achieved?

### Introduction

“Although there is not big change, there is little change. But this little change is in behaviour and attitude, and this change is difficult one to make. Teachers and supervisors are changing their thinking and their doing, so children of lower classes will be getting quality education in government schools.”

(course director, supervisory training review, 1995)

In 1995, a year after the completion of the supervisory training programme in the two pilot areas, I undertook an impact study of the courses. The comment above set the scene. It was my intention to articulate the ‘little changes’ and estimate whether or not they were powerful enough to influence the quality of education in government primary schools. Wherever it appeared that supervision had been enhanced or, conversely, progress had been inhibited, I wanted to explore the contributory factors and consider how improvements could become more assured. The immediate outcome of this review of progress was to be the revision of the three supervisory courses for use in the extension of the project into new areas under SPEDP2. This chapter draws on my fieldnotes and journals, to illuminate the context, rather than the substance, of those revisions.

As part of the impact study, I held meetings of supervisors and education officers in each district. I also visited a range of schools: some that I had visited on almost every consultancy, some that were new to me. Education officers and headteachers were asked how their supervisors were working and what changes they had noticed, if any. Supervisors were asked what they believed they had actually done in their work as a result of the training they had received. In contrast to responses to similar questions earlier in the project, every supervisor now had a tale to tell about some innovation or improvement he or she had instigated personally. Many also recounted how they were working and planning as teams to effect changes across a number of schools. Some of these teams were of supervisors alone. Others

included headteachers, members of the newly formed parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and, occasionally, education officers.

### **Education Officers' Changing Perceptions of Supervisors during the Project**

One difficulty of tracking changes in the views of education officers is that the same people seldom remain in post from one year to the next. In the lifetime of the project, all eighteen officers, including sub-divisional education officers, district education officers and directors of primary education, have changed posts, some several times. Indeed, only one officer has remained in the same district throughout the last five years, and even she has changed designation. This lack of continuity makes it hard to assess whether or not any changes in the work pattern or attitudes of supervisors have been reliably discerned.

The perceptions of the supervisors by education officers, and the perceptions of officers by supervisors, have remained circumspect and wary. Two directors, interviewed in 1994, sounded reasonably sanguine about the tensions inherent in the supervisors' role:

“For supervisors, management has become a hurdle between the call of duty, and the performance thereof.”

(director of education, 1994)

“There will always be some tension between the roles of master trainer, messenger and clerk. [Supervisors] must play all three.”

(director of education, 1994)

Supervisors themselves are consistently negative in their appraisal of the role allotted to them by their superior officers. They resent being used to run errands or collect data they can neither interpret nor use. One supervisor was particularly outspoken:

“Often, in Pakistan, the supervisor is collecting data for higher authorities. But is this helping the children to a better education? If not, why is he doing it?”

(male C, 1995)

In reality the question is disingenuous: he is doing it precisely because he is told to do it. Such telling is, in my experience, frequently peremptory and often results in conflicting imperatives. For example, at the beginning of one course a supervisor showed me a letter, signed by the SDEO, making attendance at this course 'top priority'. However, he explained his colleagues' absence because they had later been called to a meeting, on the same day, by the SDEO himself. Presumably that was an 'over the top' priority! A more serious example involved a supervisor trying to balance staffing ratios between adjacent schools which were under- and over-staffed respectively. The obvious solution of negotiating the redeployment of one teacher was debarred because of a recent 'no-transfer' order. However, despite adhering to this himself, he showed me no less than three transfer documents for teachers within his beat, each one signed by the SDEO.

The supervisor's critical question above highlights the differing perceptions of the purpose of the role of supervisor. The officers see it as providing unquestioning support for the short-term immediate goals of efficiency, whereas the supervisor is appealing to an ultimate goal of effectiveness which could, perhaps should, be used to sieve and sort the allotted tasks. In this he is claiming that the 'call of duty' should take absolute precedence over the call from the SDEO for routine management tasks, and that the academic, rather than the administrative, functions of a supervisor are fundamental to the post.

In contrast, several SDEOs appear confident that work in schools is in fact trivially easy for anyone who has ever been a primary pupil. They interpret any swing towards the so-called 'academic function' of supervisors in a somewhat simplistic way, and they believe that office work is both more important and more arduous:

"I was principal of a high school. When I became an SDEO, management was new thing for me. Visiting primary schools? That was no problem. I know what is a good primary school from when I was a pupil."

(SDEO, 1994)

“Previously supervisors had not training. Now they have training to be a guide to teachers; to help in curriculum preparation, assessment and discipline, that is corporal punishment. They show teachers teaching aids to motivate pupils.”  
(SDEO, 1993)

In return, supervisors also perceive their officers’ weaknesses more starkly than their strengths: “In administration he has his place: in pedagogy he is nil.” They berate attitudes they interpret as indolent, ignorant or interfering. The life stories in chapter 6 provided examples of complaints about ‘tricky officers’ who remain elusive or renege on promises; officers who make no attempt to understand, esteem or respect what supervisors are striving to achieve; or politically motivated officers who disrupt supervisors’ work through bombarding them with trivial tasks or transferring them from one beat of schools to another. The highest praise any officer receives is still only that she or he ‘allows’ supervisors to supervise. More often, supervisors complain that their officers display little understanding of their work, and support it even less:

“In spite of doing so much things, we just can’t impose things on teachers. It must come from here [the heart]. Teachers, headteachers, even supervisors don’t feel they have support of DEOs and SDEOs. Seniors should support, and be seen to support, the juniors.”  
(group reflection, 1994)

“ We are not getting support from higher authorities, we have to snatch support.”  
(group reflection, 1994)

Individual SDEOs have, however, made deliberate changes in their own organisation to accommodate supervisors’ increasing concentration on school-based work. For example, in one area, monthly report meetings were organised for a time, to share findings and coordinate ideas. In another area, an enterprising SDEO seconded teachers to help in the office-bound administrative tasks, in order to release supervisors for fieldwork. However,



she still received little thanks from her supervisors, who complained that she might now demand to see development plans when visiting schools, but that really she did not know what to make of them:

“Now my supervisors prioritise their field work. I take over the burden of administration and I have two teachers on detailment for this work.”

(SDEO, 1995)

“Our SDEO is not obstructive. She does not know our work, but she does not stop us doing it. She has come into schools and seen the planning on the walls. ‘You have planning?’ she asks, but she does not look at it!”

(SPE, 1995)

From comments such as these, I have to conclude that the gap of understanding between officers and supervisors has scarcely diminished over the course of the project. There is a dislocation here between the mutual advantages apparent to teachers and supervisors alike of adopting changed attitudes and ways of working through school visits, but the limited advantages apparent to more senior officers of the self-same changes. This lack of appreciation of each other’s role remains a weakness of the current situation, and a threat to sustaining and extending any initiatives that have begun. It perpetuates a barrier to developing trust and mutual respect between officers and supervisors. It is unlikely that there can be any profound enhancement of supervision until this issue is resolved. The revised courses do attempt to bridge the rift by including days for supervisors and SDEOs to work together and plan follow up activities throughout their sub-division, but this may not be enough to affect underlying attitudes and assumptions.

### **Headteachers’ Changing Perceptions of Supervisors during the Project**

In the schools that I visited regularly over the years, the headteachers’ comments about their supervisors began to change. Initially, a supervisor was noticed only by his or her absence, and there was little relish for any

suggested increase in the number or thoroughness of the visits. At best, supervisors were seen as a nuisance; at worst, tyrants. Gradually, over the years, headteachers began to express clearer expectations of the supervisors' behaviour in visiting their schools. Latterly, comments suggest that these expectations are being realised. Supervisors are perceived as playing a more sympathetic and supportive role, 'smiling' rather than insulting, and some are working collegially with the teachers to plan and evaluate developments throughout the school. The series of comments below is typical, and reflects the stages in this transition of expectation, attitude and behaviour:

"The supervisor is coming and asking for money, that is all."  
(headteacher, 1993)

"I tell you I have not found any supervisory personnel in school from one year to the next, except for the time of annual examinations. I did not get any help or guidance from supervision."  
(headteacher, 1993)

"Supervisors must cooperate with headteachers and show sympathy for their task. They must visit classrooms and talk directly to teachers."  
(headteacher, 1994)

"Supervisor must also be a smiling face because, even if they have nothing, but have only smiling, they will win the others' hearts in gentle ways."  
(headteacher, 1995)

"She visits regularly, she is my friend. Together we work out the planning - SP, HM [supervisor, headmistress] and teachers together, sisterly."  
(headteacher, 1996)

Such comments indicate that at least some supervisors have indeed changed not only their words, but also their attitudes and their actions. They also endorse reports of local research by Bhutto (1979) and Farah (1996) that,

though supervision is often only noted by its lapses or its absence, there is a willingness, even an eagerness, among school staff for a more pro-active model, once it has been experienced. The first step is to get rid of the worst practices (rare, cursory visits, bribery and bullying), then to substitute a more positive approach, attentive to the school's actual circumstances and to the people in it. Most supervisors claim to have done this in at least one school, and to have witnessed significant improvements as a consequence.

Within the third supervisory course, groups of supervisors nominated a central 'target school' within their sub-division. Here, they were able to observe classes, to listen to the headteacher and staff and, later, to begin to form a school development plan together. After the course, each supervisor also selected a school from his or her own beat to be a personal target school in which to try out ideas introduced in the training, and to monitor the effect. The designation of a small number of individual schools as target schools has helped to accelerate visible improvements in the project areas. These visible improvements have, in their turn, had a powerful motivating effect on the supervisors involved. In the revised supervisory training, individual and group target schools are identified within the first week, and the successes and difficulties experienced are made part of each successive course. Schools from the first phase are also used as model schools for specific visits, and their headteachers invited as guest speakers on specific topics. If supervisors can enhance their practice even in one school and appreciate the causes as well as the consequences of such success, then they may feel impelled to extend their work and sustain progress.

### **Activities in Individual Target Schools**

During the review in 1995, every supervisor was ready to cite some action he or she had undertaken to improve the target schools identified in the previous year. A variety of changes, verified through school visits, is listed in figure 8:1. These are grouped to show the three main phases of impact. An initial period of improving the physical environment was often accompanied, or rapidly followed, by attempts to involve parents. In many, but by no means all schools, the initial physical changes were later followed by more radical reorganisations that have had a direct influence on teaching

and learning. It is an indicative, rather than a comprehensive, list.

- |   |
|---|
| <p><b>Improving the environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing litter bins and designating monitors to keep the classroom area neat and tidy.</li><li>• Tree planting campaign to improve the immediate school environment.</li><li>• Mounting displays of information, local news, PTA programme, pupils' work etc.</li><li>• Setting up a school library area and collecting and making books for it.</li></ul> <p><b>Involving parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "Door-to-door knocking" and parents' meetings to increase enrolment and attendance, especially of girls.</li><li>• Mobilising local communities to improve school buildings and resources.</li><li>• Inviting local people to speak to pupils in support of the social studies curriculum.</li><li>• Establishing parent-teacher associations.</li></ul> <p><b>Influencing teaching and learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishing model classrooms, leading demonstration lessons. and working alongside new, weak or untrained teachers to improve classroom performance.</li><li>• Supporting teachers in planning and teaching the new integrated curriculum through practical group work.</li><li>• Reorganisation of the school timetable and resources to create a specialist areas for science and English language, staffed by the most appropriately qualified teachers.</li><li>• Establishing a kachi class for children too young to join grade 1.</li></ul> |
|---|

**Figure 8:1 Examples of Developments in Individual Target Schools**

The changes listed may sometimes sound trivial, but they are seldom insignificant to the individual school and supervisor involved. Even the smallest innovation affirms an attitude that direct, purposeful action can impact on a problem and improve the prevailing situation. In one school, for example, the simple strategy of providing boxes as litter bins and designating one class to organise and oversee their use had far-reaching effects. At one level, the removal of rubbish from the school grounds automatically improved basic standards of cleanliness. At another level, it also affected the school's self-image and prompted greater cooperation

between different users of the site, so that pupils from the adjacent school began to use the bins too. The pupil monitors were determined to go further, however. They had noticed that litter in the street outside the school not only blew into the school grounds and added to their problems but that it was unsightly and unhygienic. They watched the street before and after school and their observations suggested that this litter was caused, as often as not, by children who did not attend either school. Indeed, many of them did not attend any school at all, but lingered on the street, minding their younger siblings and watching the world go by. On the day of my visit, the school litter monitors had called a meeting with as many of these children as they could contact, with the aspiration of enlisting their support in working towards a cleaner neighbourhood environment. The original innovation thus made an immediate physical impact, but had also encouraged pupils to take on social responsibilities and plan initiatives of their own. Their personal growth in citizenship was an unforeseen benefit. It is even possible that their actions in extending their field of influence into the neighbourhood may one day encourage some of the children in the street to seek to join the school itself.

By 1995, the involvement of parents had increased in many schools. This issue had been a key theme of the third supervisory course a year earlier. At that time, the evidence from the participants' self-evaluation inventories suggested that the supervisors rarely tried to increase parental participation and understanding. After the course, initial steps had often been quite tentative, with supervisors inviting selected parents known to them to assist the school through donations or practical help. In one rural girls' school, selected as a target school, staff absence was so extensive that the supervisors had gone 'door-to-door knocking' through the village, to elicit adult support to monitor the children's studies. This was one of the earliest examples I found of involvement of adults because they were parents of pupils rather than acquaintances of the supervisor or staff. However, new regulations for establishing parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in schools, which were published in 1994 and came into force in 1996, often provided further impetus for extending parental involvement. In some of the schools visited, the involvement of parents was believed to have resulted in greater understanding between parents and staff, steadier attendance, increased enrolment, and the opening of classes for under-age pupils. In addition

financial support from parents had often led to impressive improvements to facilities including water tanks, electrical installations and additional classrooms. In a few schools, the chairman of the PTA was further involved in contributing to forward planning and deciding the school's priorities for development.

A simple procedure and proforma for school development planning had been introduced towards the end of the third supervisory course. Where these were being used in schools, the changes witnessed became part of a negotiated strategy agreed by staff, supervisor and PTA. In such schools, the potential for far-reaching impact on the ethos and effectiveness of the whole school was evident. The headteachers often commented on the value of working together to resolve problems. They felt encouraged, and even inspired, by the involvement of others. More confident supervisors and staff had moved on from relatively simple improvements to the site itself, to tackle fundamental aspects of teaching, learning and serving the community. Changes had begun to influence the work within classrooms, with examples of shared resources, team teaching and strategic staff deployment.

One supervisor explained, with passionate enthusiasm, how his experience in his initial target schools had provided him with the confidence, and courage, to extend such work into other schools throughout his beat. Although the task is phrased firmly in the future tense, his sense of the slow and lonely struggle ahead has not dampened his *sincerity* and his stoical determination to achieve significant improvement in all his schools:

“I want to work for promotion of education, especially in rural areas, to value the education. Now I work with one school in central position. The headmaster is my friend. When it is working well, I, we, will work with more schools. May be it will take some ten years to improve all schools in just my one beat. But here is my place, and in ten years I will do that thing. Even [if] no one will see me, I will do it truly.”

(male Y, 1995)

The opportunity to try out ideas in particular schools, and to share these

results with others, has provided a powerful model for enhancing supervision and reflecting on the improvements. The simple device of institutionalising an annual school development plan has provided a means to sustain these improvements beyond the first facile changes to the appearance of the site itself. In the revised supervisory training, school development plans are introduced in the second course, reviewed and extended in the third. Ways of using individual school plans to contribute to, and to reflect, sub-divisional and district planning priorities, are also being explored as a further means to link school-based work with the mainframe of educational policy. It is hoped that this will also help more senior education officers to appreciate the changing role of supervisors who no longer aspire merely to work in the office, or even to act as master trainers in schools, but see themselves as the instigators of development and negotiators of the planning needed to underpin it.

### **Activities Stemming from the Role of Master Trainer**

Comments on the questionnaires, reported in chapter 7, made it apparent that the experience of being a master trainer had been an empowering one for many supervisors. It allowed them to renew and reuse their teaching skills with a different audience, and this in turn often accorded them more respect among primary school teachers. Being a master trainer also provided them with the support, and the tensions, of working in a team, and with the thrill and frustrations inherent in taking control of a training initiative. The mixed feelings that ensued were vividly recalled by one young supervisor:

“At the beginning I feel difficulty. But, after three or four months, I understood everything! But I still have difficulty to observe - because, when I came here and train teachers in demo centres I learned a lot how to train teachers. ... I could not speak too much before becoming a master trainer. I can teach children, secondary school children I can control, because I was perfect in my subject. But when I start to teach teachers, it was very difficult! My other colleagues had a long experience. And one of my colleagues, he speaks too much - when he start he didn't stop! So I learned [from] him a lot, how to speak in front of teachers and how

control ... We work together, and we were very close, because we want to work hard, and improve, and deliver the education and train the teachers very collaboratively. ... But first we take first step, if problem arrive we will stop, solve problem ... .”  
(male C, 1995)

This supervisor, and others like him, may well have learned more through the experience of these early courses than their students did. Whatever the teachers learned, they would then need to learn how to apply it in their own classrooms. The master trainers, on the other hand, were learning through application all the time. My journal notes record several disastrous early sessions: some teachers apathetic, others assertively challenging the authority of the trainers, and some trainers critically unprepared in both their subject area and their ability to organise the group. Even the most assured individual trainers could not always cooperate sufficiently with their colleagues to sustain and manage the course throughout the month.

Many centres had shown significant improvement as the training course for primary teachers was repeated six times throughout 1994. The teams of trainers gained both a sense of identity and the confidence to adapt, extend and develop ideas. My journal entries underline the extent of the changes in some centres:

“On to \*\* demonstration centre. Amazing enterprise after the dismal hole they made of their earlier [training] centre. Aids threaten to engulf the room. Careful calligraphy and some innovative features are welcome improvements. ... I admire their grit in coming back always to improve the work ... and the quiet dignity and stature of these men who once had none.”  
(23.10.94)

“Surprise visit to \*\*\*\*. But it is I who am most surprised! The master trainer has regrouped [the participants] and organised intense group discussions with teachers thinking and applying. Hard to believe this possible from the shaky start of the first course. \* is highly amused when I describe it as a ‘good bad centre’ - one that was truly awful, and in such disarray all seven master



trainers had to be on hand to keep the class contained. Now the sole woman trainer (then too frightened to speak) moves deftly from leading discussion to supporting groups at work. ... In the same school we visit a bored 'trained' teacher, teaching as he always has - a stark reminder of the limits of impact."

(27.10.94)

Another master trainer from the same centre captured this symbiotic relationship between teacher and trainer, individual and team, in verse for the closing ceremony:

"New ideas, new thoughts,  
Demo Centre gives lots.  
Participants, noble teachers,  
Hard worker, master trainers,  
Twenty fourth day, closer, opener,  
We did all clever, clever.

.....

\*\* [MT] is only unit of Centre,

\*\*\*\* [the centre itself] is main character!"

The experience of being a master trainer has provided three things in particular, each one of which has empowered supervisors in their work: actual mastery of at least one area of the primary curriculum; confidence in the ability to teach teachers; and a positive experience of team work involving other supervisors.

### **Mastery of the Primary Curriculum**

Subject mastery and an awareness of curriculum development for that subject can be important assets to supervisors in their visits to schools, giving them credibility and confidence in suggesting, and modelling, improvements to the practice they observe in the school. Conversely, without such knowledge, supervisors may avoid any contact which might threaten or undermine their authority. One supervisor candidly recalled how easy it was to shirk school visits, rather than face up to one's own

limitations:

“Supervisors must also know the curriculum and have mastery of every subject. Once a teacher said to me he had a problem in mathematics, but I myself could not do it. I went away and returned later when I could satisfy him. When I have mastery I feel happy to visit the school, otherwise I hesitate and do not go!”  
(male Y, 1995)

Knowledge of the primary curriculum cannot be assumed. Research under PEP1 suggested that less than a quarter of the teachers in post understand the mathematics and science curriculum for class 5. This would imply that supervisors recruited directly from primary schools are unlikely to have ‘mastery of every subject’. Those transferred from high schools may have extensive knowledge of one or more areas, but are unlikely to cover the whole curriculum in their teaching, and may not appreciate the learning needs of younger pupils.

It is then, perhaps, a risk of the revised supervisory courses that the curriculum content has been reduced. In the pilot phase, each subject was the focus of one day of training. In the revised course fewer subjects are covered, but more thoroughly. The emphasis, now, is on supervisors understanding the progression of the subject from classes 1-5, and exploring issues of effective teaching in that area, through both preparing lessons and observing in schools. The intention is to provide a method by which supervisors can plan to achieve ‘mastery’ wherever they feel ‘hesitation’, rather than to attempt the impossible task of providing complete coverage of all curriculum areas in a few days. This strategy of instigating self-study and practical application in schools is complemented by appraisal activities throughout the training in which supervisors are encouraged to identify, address, and review areas of personal weakness. This is a break with the traditional design of courses, both by the government Bureau of Curriculum Extension Wing and by development programmes such as PEP and SPEDP. The traditional design assumes that every course should cover every area for every participant. However, in endeavouring to help supervisors identify and meet their own individual needs, the new strategy has the potential to provide a more refined tool for supporting professional

development throughout the education system. It thus represents a change of philosophy: from training technicians who can reproduce and deliver to professionalising the supervisors so that they can devise and evaluate training of their own.

### **Training Teachers**

Growing confidence in the ability to teach teachers has also made supervisors more active in schools. Thus, as reported in chapter 6, Manzoor changed his attitude and behaviour from “I don’t like to teach when I become a supervisor” to “I used these [SPEDP] techniques ... I get respect”. Another supervisor claimed he had become a veritable “mobile training institution”, visiting schools on his beat, laden with examples of children’s work, teaching and learning aids, planning and assessment activities, all of which he was prepared to demonstrate and discuss.

Many supervisors began to adapt and alter the published training materials in successive editions of the primary teachers’ course. Others used their increasing confidence to design and deliver completely new training courses. Through visiting schools, and working with headteachers, they had discerned various specific needs within the teaching force and sought to address these through focused training. Calling on fellow supervisors and expert teachers to give their services without remuneration, and teachers to attend without payment for travel and daily allowances, short courses had been run on a ‘no-cost’ basis. At first, most of these sessions reflected specific curriculum areas, including English, the integrated curriculum, art and story telling. Later, supervisors also mounted courses specifically to address recent government initiatives such as making good use of supplementary reading materials, teaching children below statutory age, and teacher assessment to supplement automatic promotion in the first three years of primary school.

Undoubtedly, the most exciting training initiative I have seen has been in the design of courses for primary headteachers. In following up the primary teachers’ courses in schools, supervisors rapidly noticed how influential the attitude of the headteacher was in either increasing or restricting changes.

One supervisor surmised that: “The greatest change is in the atmosphere of headteacher and supervisor relationship”, referring to the increasingly collaborative relationships developed between some, though not all, headteachers and their supervisors. The benefits of such changes provided the impetus for two groups of supervisors, one urban and one rural, to design and establish a week-long course for headteachers in the management and leadership of school development. Their underlying intention was to share the best practice they had experienced in order to inspire less adventurous headteachers to become more zealous in improving standards within their own schools through working with colleagues and parents. The two courses for headteachers have since been amalgamated, adapted and recorded by their authors to become part of the provision in new areas under SPEDP2.

Revision of the supervisory training also sought to capitalise on the growing confidence of supervisors as professional trainers. The materials were rewritten so that supervisors organising future courses will be expected to adapt and extend ideas in order to reflect local needs from the very first days of training. This is a deliberate departure from earlier practice in the PEP projects where identical training was provided for each layer of the cascade in turn. The task of the master trainer was then just to learn and repeat. One of the supervisors commented about learning in primary school: “In Sindh, we make a parrot”, and some projects have made parrots of their trainers too. Evidence from SPEDP demonstrates that master trainers can do much more than ‘learn and repeat’. They can adapt, extend and ultimately design training materials to meet specific needs. Moreover, through doing this, they stand to gain both credibility and enjoyment from their work.

Since the purpose of all the training is to encourage the trainees, whether they are teachers, headteachers or supervisors, to make professional decisions to improve education, it is essential to treat the trainers as professional decision-makers themselves. The content of the training packages should have direct results in enhancing specific aspects of teaching and supervision, but becoming able to design and deliver relevant and effective training which is responsive to changing needs, is a skill that has the potential to sustain the development of the education service as a

whole.

'Enhancing school level management', through the identification and support of a headteacher, first began to feature in the Social Action Plan for Sindh in 1996. It is now part of a sectoral reform strategy, but has yet to be realised. Thus, in perceiving and addressing the needs of headteachers, the supervisors were working in advance of provincial reform, which is only just beginning to establish a role for the headteacher in primary schools beyond that of 'teacher in charge'.

Actual evidence of reform often lags behind policy aspirations. The actions of supervisors in SPEDP projects demonstrate how practice can be influenced rapidly. Through responding to policy in establishing PTAs, and in preempting policy to enhance headteachers' management skills, they have illustrated how supervision has the potential to act as a two-way conduit. Through such actions supervision could both inform the policy makers of the best practice, and help practitioners to implement policies effectively.

### **The Emergence of Teamwork**

The emergence of teamwork between supervisors has been slow, but significant. Vilifying others sometimes appears to be something of a national pastime in Pakistan. But rarely are personal misdeeds admitted, unless considerable trust has been established. Indeed the image often projected, at least initially, is that of a single person of unassailable integrity, surrounded by limitless corruption. A corollary of this scenario is that the person concerned will often volunteer to undertake tasks as an individual, but will be less willing to do so with others. One of the marked developments through the SPEDP years has been supervisors' changing attitudes towards each other, their growing respect for professional colleagues and their increased desire to work together with supervisors, teachers and officers. They now more readily admit their colleagues', and even their own, strengths and weaknesses. As one remarked enigmatically: "Now horses and donkeys are working together!"

This sense of teamwork is increasingly cited by the supervisors as crucial to achieving change. Even where innovations have foundered, rather than flourished, there remains an apparent faith that teamwork might revive and renew the endeavours:

“Problems are only solved if we have concept of team. Team is must. Nowadays our SPEs are working individually and each one may have their own weak corners. I myself, I have weak corners. But in a team - team is must according to my opinion - we will have to develop a support network of supervisors themselves. Some SPEs, my colleagues, are not accepting this programme mentally. We do not care for this. If we can make a group of may be five SPEs we can move forward. We do have a system including SDEOs, but they are untrained men. The SDEOs can give authority, but they cannot do the work. We need a system of supporters who are themselves supervisors. Then we will have the phenomenon of teamwork.”

(male A, 1995)

This growing habit of working out strategies together and, especially on the women’s side, actually visiting schools together, has helped to initiate some of the changes listed in the previous sections. The quotation above suggests that an effective team will involve only those who are already working well individually. There is, however, evidence that the emergence of teamwork may also have helped to involve a greater number of supervisors directly in the work of school development. Seeing the enthusiasm generated has sometimes encouraged other supervisors to want to take part:

“To begin with I do my work alone. Now others they see what I am doing and they take interest. If anyone take interest I will work with him, otherwise not.”

(male B, 1995)

“She has seen our work and she listens to us. When we are visiting near schools, sometimes she will come.”

(female X, 1995)

Conversely, it is also apparent that some supervisors become marginalised by a drive towards structures from which they feel excluded. Friction between potential colleagues can be created, both when the teamwork is an informal new network between equals, and when officers are directly involved:

“He thinks, because he is coordinator, he is high and mighty man. I do not care for this. I will work my own work. With my friends I will work. I will not work with him.”

(male A, 1995)

“First I would like agreement with my SDEO and other colleagues because, as you know, that is teamwork. And if I want to do something, and we all will cooperate and assist, then it will be more successful. But, I am telling you truth, sometimes people feel jealousy also because I have full cooperation of SDEO.”

(female C, 1995)

Productive relationships and teamwork with education officers is a specific difficulty. The rigidly hierarchical structure of Sindhi society places each person in a defined stratum and imposes an endemic ‘culture of fear’ (Davies and Iqbal 1997:262). It appears obligatory to accept unquestioningly the words and deeds of those above one in the hierarchy; and equally obligatory to disparage and deride those below. A supervisor may break with convention and talk with teachers, parents or peons, listening and responding to what they have to say; but it is harder yet for a supervisor to talk, rather than listen to, a superior officer. My journal entries record this impasse repeatedly:

“SDEOs do not let the supervisors speak at the meeting. Even those who know us well are timid, and only speak when compelled. The deputy director keeps notes, but only of what we [the consultants] say.”

(8.3.94)

“Education officers’ meeting started 20 minutes late with impossible seating which precluded eye contact and made it

difficult to involve even the SDEOs. It takes \* [my colleague] to reorganise the room and reroute proceedings with common sense, good grace and good manners. Perhaps I am becoming too accepting of the situation, my sensitivities are becoming blunt.”  
(27.10.94)

“In your culture you thank everyone for whatever they do good. In ours, if it is a success then your superior takes the credit. If it is not, you get the blame - unless you can blame someone else first!”  
(senior educationist, 1998)

There is a danger that the success of some supervisors in schools may actually be exacerbating the problems of communication. As supervisors become more aware of their professional potential, their exuberance can effectively exclude both peers and superiors who lag behind. Teamwork has, at times, been a potent force. But it has also widened rifts and caused alienation between potential colleagues. This tension, between the enabling power of working together and the disabling power of professional jealousy and personal marginalisation, is one we have yet to resolve.

### **Activities Across the Whole District**

Some actions initiated by supervisors have had a wide audience from the start. For example, the introduction of automatic promotion in the first three classes left teachers and schools unsure of individual children's progress. The preparation and publication of specific charts and folders for continuous assessment has made the teachers and supervisors trialling them more aware of the issues involved in judging pupils' attainment, and more organised in their approach to assessing, recording and reporting to parents. In addition, the actual organisation of this project by a small group of supervisors who report directly to the director of education, also provided a powerful prototype for developing, evaluating and disseminating local initiatives. Both this particular project, and the structure evolved for supporting it, have the potential to influence school practice across the whole division or, ultimately, the province itself. Other particular initiatives, which have the potential to influence a wide audience, include



the publication of small booklets explaining each year of the primary curriculum for parents, and the compilation of a guide book for supervisors containing both information and advice.

The following table (figure 8:2) highlights a small selection of the developments enumerated by the supervisors, and seen in the schools, in order to illustrate the range and the potential for further development and impact.

Initiatives	Development & Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individual improvements</b> to environment (litter bins, tree planting, water tanks) and organisation within school (distribution of classes, cooperation between site users, subject leadership by staff).</li> <li>• Enlisting support from individual <b>parents</b> to improve physical conditions.</li> <li>• Supervisors working as master trainers gained confidence in their knowledge and understanding of the <b>primary curriculum</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Master trainers</b> took ownership of courses within their centres, and worked together to improve them and follow them up in schools.</li> <li>• <b>Teams</b> of supervisors have elected to work together.</li> <li>• <b>Piloting procedures</b> to extend teacher assessment and recording of pupils' achievements under a new system of automatic promotion from one class to the next.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated improvements as part of <b>school development plan</b>, have influenced school ethos, and provided a basis for collegiate decision making involving all staff, supervisor and PTA.</li> <li>• Establishing <b>PTAs</b> has increased parental involvement and had wide ranging consequences.</li> <li>• Supervisors became a "mobile training institution" interacting with teachers and pupils on <b>school visits</b> and gained respect of staff.</li> <li>• Supervisors have designed and delivered short, <b>no-cost training courses</b> to meet observed needs of teachers and headteachers. The courses are based on sharing the best observed practice and provide a forum for the sharing of professional expertise.</li> <li>• <b>Local priorities</b> have been agreed, and centralised support strategies developed.</li> <li>• A <b>network of primary school development coordinators</b> has been established throughout the district to respond to both local needs and demands from central government.</li> </ul>

**Figure 8:2** Examples of Initiatives and Developments in the Year Following Supervisory Training through SPEDP

## Failure to Sustain Initiatives

Unfortunately, perhaps inevitably, some initiatives also petered out. For example, initial momentum for area meetings and shared school visits in the rural area dwindled because of the difficulty of meeting in distant localities. The reasons given for halting an initiative were usually a combination of lack of resources, lack of recognition, or lack of authority. One supervisor cited all three:

“We are working without any facility [allowance], which we have not claimed and we will not claim. SDEOs are accepting this programme verbally, but no practical step has yet been taken. We need to be sure the programme is accepted officially. If the authority is created there, the attention will be there.”

(male A, 1995)

Others were more specific: the desire to be noticed by a new SDEO confined one group to their desks for several months; a confrontation in a school had the result that “the teachers became allergic to me”; or a change of responsibilities within a sub-division had the demoralising consequence that “now my schools, my good schools, are taken away”.

As in every other study of primary supervision in Pakistan, travel problems have been repeatedly and persistently cited as the major disincentive to working in schools. For men with access to motorbikes and some, though meagre, financial allowances, travel is still not necessarily easy, due to distances, traffic and political unrest. For women, expected to use public transport, bus or tonga, the difficulties, dangers and expense were disabling. Twenty years ago Lyons and Pritchard commented ‘In Pakistan where there is a separate women’s inspectorate, one could not but admire the fortitude with which many of them faced the hazards of travel often in difficult and dangerous country ...’ (1976:34). The hazards still abound, and it is surely time that ‘admiration’ was supported by action to alleviate the difficulties.

The solutions that have been tried so far have not succeeded. There have been attempts to supply groups of female supervisors with access to a

vehicle, either of their own or shared with the sub-divisional education officer. However this is perceived to infringe the privilege of the senior officer, who expects to have sole use of a vehicle due to her status, even though she may not often actually need to use one. Supervisors are adamant that promises to provide access to such vehicles are made but never kept. Status is enhanced by having a vehicle and a driver waiting all day on the off chance of being called to a distant meeting, rather than delegating a vehicle to be actually used, day in, day out, by supervisors going about their routine jobs.

### **Aspirations for Future Action**

The demise of some initiatives was disappointing; the success of others was inspiring. But perhaps the most significant point was that they had been attempted at all. In undertaking any one of the actions reported here, supervisors were going beyond what was demanded of them by their officers, or even what was requested of them by the project. This suggests that they had begun to see more clearly their own potential as change agents who can exert a direct influence on the quality of primary provision in their area.

In the early years there was an insistence that we should provide the answers. With answers given, everything would rapidly be put right:

“Tell me the words, and I will say them. Tell me the deeds, and I will do them. Show me the path, and I will follow it faithfully.”  
(female X, 1993)

“SPEDP will water the deserts of Sindh!”  
(male X, 1993)

But ‘telling’ the answer is no longer in our tradition of teaching or of training. As one supervisor ruefully commented: “To begin with, I expected you to tell us what to do - to lead us. But you tell us nothing!”. Furthermore, ‘telling’ would seem peculiarly inappropriate for consultants working as guests in another culture. We could share, we could question, we could

clarify, but on all courses the answers, tentative, imperfect, mutable, were to come from the participants themselves. Gradually this premise was accepted, and very gradually the supervisors' confidence in us, in themselves, and in their own vision, began to form.

"In the beginning we listen to you people, now we know that you listen to we people."

(male Y, 1994)

"I expected answer, but you gave us questions. I thought that if I had answers I could do it. Now I think that I can ask questions too, I can find my own way."

(male X, 1995)

"Your 'What?', 'Why?' and 'How?' have helped me to think deeply into things - to find the skin of the hair."

(male C, 1995)

"Not all the problems [discussed on the courses] are our problem. But we have learned that, whatever are our problems, we ourselves can start to solve them."

(male Y, 1995)

Such comments mark a significant change in aspiration - from problem sufferer to problem solver. It is a development which could complement the changes in attitude towards the teachers themselves. Not only can supervisors now "be soft ... instead of threatening", but they are able to work with others - supervisors, teachers, parents and officers - to achieve specific, shared objectives and to make improvements.

One group ratified their new perceptions in two ways: in a succinct, purposeful mission statement written as the opening paragraph in their new sub-divisional log, and in a vivid personal metaphor of empowerment. The mission statement endorses their professional focus on the quality of education for pupils, and the need to influence this through working with other people. The metaphor reflects the growing certainty of the group that they can keep in view both the goal, and the steps towards

achieving it. It speaks of their excitement in their work and their determination to overcome any difficulty. The first statement speaks of their *respect* for others, the second of their *sincerity* to the arduous task:

“This sub-division, X female, aims to provide for both pupils and staff an environment in which all individuals are valued and which demonstrates the importance of team work and quality.”  
(logbook X, 1995)

“First we were as oxen, blindfold and walking round and round. But now we are not blinded. We can see the way ahead. The way ahead is climbing up a mountain. But, look, we are not walking - we are running!”  
(female X, 1995)

## **Conclusion**

The literature reviewed in chapters 2 and 3 indicated how an effective supervisory service has been consistently perceived as vital to ensuring change and development within primary schools. However, in Pakistan at least, the personnel appointed have been repeatedly castigated for achieving very little. Supervision is more often prized for its potential than for its practice.

The previous chapter outlined how the SPEDP training programme was seen, by the supervisors who took part, as precipitating a personal change of attitude, resulting in an increase of the time they spent on advisory work in schools. This chapter has outlined ways that such aspirations have resulted in benefits for those schools with visible improvements to, for example, the environment, enrolment and ethos. It has also given examples of ways in which some supervisors have achieved more than specific improvements in a few schools. Through working together with teachers, headteachers, parents and fellow supervisors, some have begun to evolve structures for influencing policy as well as practice. There are numerous examples of actions by individuals and local groups which have the potential to improve the quality of primary education in individual schools and across

the sector as a whole. In these cases supervisors have indeed become an 'interface between centralised strategy and decentralised application' (Pauvert 1988:14).

SPEDP, like other development programmes before it, has thus upset the culture of inaction and precipitated some supervisors into adopting a more active, advisory, and innovative role in schools. From a starting point of almost unmitigated despondency in 1993, new work loads and higher expectations within SPEDP appear to have breathed new life into the concept of supervision. This, in turn, has been accompanied by greater job satisfaction and self-esteem for the supervisors themselves. The unspoken, and frankly outrageous, assumption of the project - that if supervisors were to work considerably harder and in even more difficult circumstances, they would find valuable intrinsic, though not extrinsic, rewards in their work - appears to have held good. Some supervisors, at least, are 'running ... up the mountain'.

However, a drift away from active advisory work within schools, to bureaucratic, administrative, tasks in offices, is often recounted as though it were inevitable and inexorable (Government of Pakistan 1983:5; Lockheed and Verspoor 1991: 121; Pakistan Office 1992:6). The only glimmer of hope suggested, but not demonstrated to be effective, is through providing appropriate training. For example Bhutto (1979:261) 'cannot over-emphasize the need for providing an intensive pre-job training' and Warwick and Reimers (1995:102) assert that 'training for management and leadership can break this [observed] stagnation'. Breaking the stagnation, effecting change and development in primary schools, has indeed been achieved by learning coordinators, trained under PEP; resource persons of mosque schools, trained by the government; and by supervisors, trained under SPEDP. However, both of the first two projects are also now deemed to have had only a transitory influence. Training may have been the catalyst which precipitated change, but it has not been sufficiently influential to sustain it.

The PEP projects provide a clear precedent of such regression in working habits, once a programme of support has ceased. The learning coordinators introduced in this project were charged with working in schools, carrying out model lessons, and training teachers to implement new teaching styles.

Extensive positive results were reported, including increased teacher attendance and raised student achievement (Government of Pakistan 1983; BCEW 1993). Indeed the recorded success of learning coordinators within PEP has had consequences throughout the world in providing the World Bank with a blueprint for intermediary supervision (Lockheed and Bloch 1990). Subsequent observations by education officers in Pakistan are less laudatory. They have suggested that these same learning coordinators rapidly ceased to lead developments through any direct influence on teaching at all. Instead, they appear to have become increasingly indistinguishable from other supervisory staff in undertaking routine administrative tasks as far away from schools as possible (Pakistan Office 1992; Warwick *et al.* 1992; Nizamani and Zai 1993; Khan 1996).

A similar regression to the norm amongst resource persons of mosque schools has been suggested by the research reported here. The life stories of Manzoor and Sikandar tell credible tales of successful work when they took on the role as resource persons in the 1980s. They gained the support of rural communities, found premises in which to establish schools, then selected, trained and supported young local men to teach in them. However the questionnaires, completed by supervisory staff across two districts in 1994, could detect no discernible differences between the working patterns of latter-day resource persons and their colleagues who were designated as supervisors of primary education. There were no indications that they spent any longer in schools nor that they used their time in a more advisory capacity.

Many of the observed changes in supervisors' attitudes, behaviour and effectiveness within SPEDP may similarly prove to be just a short-term halo effect, instigated by the intensity of the programme and the support provided through on-going training, a locally developed professional manual, and the informed interest of consultants. However, some small, but crucial, differences between this development project and earlier ones may yet prove influential in securing a greater chance of long-term sustainability. In particular, the earlier innovatory programmes have demonstrated that supervisors can work productively when the targets are set. This has been true of resource persons appointed to open mosque schools and of learning coordinators appointed to work with teachers in the



classroom. Both these innovations involved defining a new supervisory cadre, with a limited, specific task to perform. The work of SPEDP, however, goes one significant step further. It shows that the supervisors already in post can also set and achieve their own targets, although initially they found this both a surprising expectation and a daunting task. It is this capability of supervisors to instigate autonomous action with teachers and whole schools which holds, I believe, the strongest potential for future growth.

My analysis of the life stories concluded that people in supervisory roles were effective when, and only when, they worked with personal *sincerity*, giving and gaining *respect* from working with others. The work within SPEDP has provided opportunities for both qualities to be developed within each supervisor's work. Two key tasks sustained over a year or more - supporting a target school, and acting as a master trainer - provided opportunities for both *sincerity* and *respect* to be enhanced in a restricted educational environment. The courses provided a foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills so that supervisors could observe in schools, lead training in a particular aspect of the curriculum and draw up a development plan with some confidence and credibility. The resulting situations of working collaboratively with teachers and with other trainers, provided opportunities for professional *respect* to grow reciprocally. The sequence of training courses and seminars over a three-year period, provided a forum for relaying successes, sharing problems and planning new strategies. At all stages, supervisors have been encouraged, and expected, to identify any barriers to progress and to devise their own strategies to overcome them. Supervisors have been regarded throughout as professional decision-makers, and the solutions they have devised often exceeded all expectation, for example in developing a professional role for headteachers in advance of provincial policy.

However, although SPEDP has gone some way to restoring credibility to the supervisors in the eyes of teachers and colleagues, the lack of trust between supervisors and officers remains a threat to progress and taints the vision supervisors hold of their own role. In prevalent terminology, the lack of *respect* and *sincerity* remain endemic in the education system as a whole, and it is often easiest to avoid conflict by avoiding work. As a result, the delicate balance between advisory, inspection and administrative work can

be upset in favour of the safe and visible tasks which may impress the SDEOs and which will not threaten the status quo in schools. Sustainability relies on ensuring that supervisors are valued and *respected* by all, as the innovators and instigators they have shown that they can be.

## How Can Supervision Influence School Improvement?

### Introduction: Supervisory Trends in Sindh

Reviewing the three models of supervisory practice outlined in chapter 3 and summarised in figure 3:1, they can now be used to provide a retrospective rationale for the development of supervision through two large-scale education projects in Pakistan which have spanned the last twenty years.

The PEPs of the 1980s were an explicit attempt to shift supervisory practices from a debased form of model 1 to a new, though limited, version of model 2. The 'guardians' of standards were to be supplemented by 'guides' to innovatory, 'modern' teaching methods. This shift in practice was to be achieved by appointing learning coordinators as a distinctive, intermediate supervisory cadre. The learning coordinators would be promoted directly from primary schools and could therefore be assumed to show both empathy and expertise within the classroom. The pedagogic imperative of altering teachers' practices was to be supported through the creation of a series of exemplar lessons. Learning coordinators would then be trained to demonstrate the prescribed range of teaching styles through using the official learning modules in school-based training sessions and through delivering model lessons. Learning coordinators would thus be school-based, advisory teachers who could model the teaching styles required by central policy and encourage others to emulate them. There is, however, little indication that they would extend their role beyond the basic task of modelling desired practice - the original learning coordinators were certainly not expected to develop good practice further themselves.

SPEDP had a similar starting point, in an implicit underlying assumption that slipshod supervisors generally work to a minimalist version of model 1 - inspectors who have become mere postmen and clerks attached to the district offices. Such an assumption could be corroborated by early reviews of supervisory practice, in Pritchard (1975) and Bhutto (1979), as well as by the continued hearsay, stereotype and self-description of supervisors in the

1990s. However, the aspiration of SPEDP was far more radical than that of PEP. Instead of producing a new group of personnel, charged with a limited task and provided with specific tools with which to undertake it, the intention was to professionalise the very post-holders themselves. Furthermore, instead of aiming at efficient, empathetic pedagogues as the 'guides' required for model 2, SPEDP expected supervisors to become catalysts of further development and thus to begin to work as educational 'innovators' within model 3. The supervisors were expected not just to deliver in-service courses, but to design them; not just to model lessons, but to observe teachers at work; not just to judge success, but to establish how to evaluate it and to plan for more.

This sounds like an extravagantly ambitious proposal. Yet my study of the supervisors in the programme indicates that, to some extent, it was indeed achieved. Most of the supervisors involved began to describe their roles, less in punitive inspectorial terms reminiscent of model 1, and more in supportive advisorial terms suitable for an enhanced model 2. Few were content just to model prepackaged solutions. Many began to extend the boundaries of good practice through their contributions to the training courses and their work in school. Moreover, individuals and small teams of supervisors in each district demonstrated their capacity, not only to initiate and sustain substantial changes in their individual target schools, but also to influence progress across wider areas at sub-division or district level. In this, they were realising policy through practice, and forging effective practice into policy. They were thus beginning to work securely within model 3, and to make a significant impact on developing the quality of education throughout a range of schools.

However, just at the moment when it appeared as though the investment of twenty years of development priority for supervisors in Sindh was beginning to bear fruit, the emphasis in development work across the world was shifting. The extension programme, SPEDP2, reflected global trends in promoting the potential of a school's local community, together with the individual headteacher, to take on a role supervising, or at least monitoring, both teachers and students. Simultaneously the Social Action Plan (SAP), which specifies sectoral policy for the province and the country, agreed between the Government of Pakistan and the donor bodies, recommended

that most supervisors of primary education (SPE) should be transferred back into high schools, to work once again as subject specialist teachers and that learning coordinators could, where necessary, be appointed from the ranks of primary school teachers to work in classrooms alongside the regular teachers. Just a few SPEs would stay in post to maintain a ratio of 1 supervisor to every 40 schools. These remaining SPEs would have only an indirect influence on classroom practice through monitoring the work of three or four learning coordinators and through periodic inspections of schools.

Thus, in accordance with SAP, the Social Action Programme for Sindh 1995-6 specified that 120 new posts for learning coordinators were to be created, and 80 posts for supervisors were to be surrendered. Training for learning coordinators to deliver specific modules was also being arranged, and attention was to be given to their facilities for travelling to schools. Furthermore, the role of headteacher was to be officially designated for all schools employing five or more teachers, and mechanisms were to be established for devolving funds to parent-teacher associations (PTAs) so that the community could be directly involved in purchasing resources for schools and in sanctioning improvements to the site (Government of Sindh 1996).

The government's implementation plan for 1996-7 continued the trend and set the agenda for the second phase of SAP to cover the remaining years of the century. Although there is a clear statement at the beginning of the document that it is the actual outcomes of schooling that are to be the focus, there is no intimation that supervisory staff are necessary, or even useful, in achieving quality or effectiveness at the school level. There is no inkling that they too might have some role in realising the objective of decentralisation through supporting local decision-making and increasing the active participation of all stake-holders. There is, in fact, simply no mention of them at all. Supervisors have been quite suddenly written out of the text, even though the issues underlying the demand for improvement have changed little, if at all:

In this phase the focus will be on quality outcomes, school effectiveness, and the strengthening of a participatory approach. ...

The priorities for effective action include teachers, effective learning materials, curriculum, community participation and supportive management. There is a distinct requirement for decentralization, with autonomy for decision making at school level; curriculum, methods and inputs adapted to local conditions; and active community participation. ... The increased focus on education quality, school level improvements and decentralization implies that these processes will stretch over the next 3-4 years.

(Government of Pakistan 1996:2)

This shift of policy seems set to demand a definite shift of supervisory staff back through the models again. Most supervisors (SPE), some of whom have demonstrated the ability to function within model 3, are to be relegated back into secondary schools, creating a two-tier system of learning coordinators functioning in schools through model 2 and a few remaining supervisors acting as inspectors in a reinvigorated form of model 1. Headteachers and community members would then take on a role that might include elements of model 1 and model 3, but only in the parochial context of their own schools. They would certainly check the attendance and achievement of both staff and pupils (model 1), and might possibly also develop a coherent concept of quality teaching and learning in their own school (model 3). Some might even become effective change agents within their own community. However, they are unlikely to have either the opportunity, or the range of insights, needed to innovate and disseminate developments further afield across a diversity of schools

The introductory statement in the SAP reflects international trends, but does little to build on specific in-country experience and success. This chapter seeks to do the reverse. It will use the achievements, problems and aspirations of developing supervisory techniques in Pakistan to look critically at emerging international trends. Accepting the micro level research findings, that supervision can be improved to work at both a supportive and an innovative level in schools in Sindh, this chapter will seek to answer two specific questions:

- What is meant by school effectiveness and quality outcomes?
- How can supervisors' work influence school improvement?

## School effectiveness and quality outcomes

Chapter 3 outlined how external supervision has been assumed to be an important instrument for improving the quality of education in many countries over the last hundred years or more. It has often been described as a vital, powerful tool, certainly desirable if not strictly necessary. However, since the task of supervision has been deemed so 'obvious', neither the aims nor the means of teaching them have been regularly scrutinised or analysed.

By piecing together three models of supervision and exploring some supervisors' perceptions of their own changing practice, the research reported here has provided an initial exploration of the means of supervision, its practice and its potential, in the particular, and particularly difficult context of southern Pakistan. The actual purpose of supervision, however, has not been probed. Whether or not supervisors are in the best position to achieve the aim of improving quality in primary education has been neither questioned nor examined. To do this we need to explore the evolution of ideas about school effectiveness and school improvement, and consider their influence on the structure of development projects in low-income countries. Theories about improving the effectiveness of schools should bring us closer to an understanding of how supervisors might function to enhance the quality of education.

School effectiveness research is a growth area. The literature is prolific and, the world over, education policies and projects seek to apply the findings in order to focus funding and ensure that changes are likely to lead to perceptible improvement. Providing basic education of quality to the whole population is currently an explicit international imperative. Rationales, in terms of personal human rights on the one hand and political aspirations for economic and social development on the other, vie for credibility. Different societies, however, may subscribe to their own idiosyncratic blend of beliefs about education as an end in itself, adding to human dignity for the individual, and education as a means to further ends, both individual and societal.

The universality of the imperative to improve both educational opportunities and outcomes was given renewed status in 1990 with two

important international conferences attended by many heads of state and international organisations. Both the Jomtien conference in March 1990 on Education for All, and the United Nations World Summit for Children held in September, called for a concerted worldwide effort to achieve universal education before the turn of the century. The second conference published a plan of action to prioritise the education of children and also produced a convention on the rights of the child. Both these documents assume education to be a fundamental human right for all children. Providing education then becomes an end in itself, although some quite modest claims for the potential beneficial impact of education on family health and social development are also made. These benefits are not the direct goal of education itself, but the documents admit they may help in prioritising different governments' commitments to expanding education and may also help to ensure that education takes priority in the budgetary allocations of any country:

At present, over 100 million children are without basic schooling, and two-thirds of them are girls. The provision of basic education and literacy for all are among the most important contributions that can be made to the development of the world's children.  
(UNICEF 1990:3)

We will work for programmes that reduce illiteracy and provide educational opportunities for all children, irrespective of their background and gender; that prepare children for productive employment and life-long learning opportunities ... and that enable children to grow to adulthood within a supportive and nurturing cultural and social context.  
(UNICEF 1990:5-6)

Besides its intrinsic value for human development and improving the quality of life, progress in education and literacy can contribute significantly to improvement in maternal and child health, in protection of the environment and in sustainable development. As such, investment in basic education must be accorded a high priority in national action as well as international co-operation.



(UNICEF 1990:19)

However, whether extending educational opportunities is explained as a means to realise human dignity or to release human capital, it is only if the quality of education is assured that educational funding can be seen as an investment, rather than simply as an expenditure. This word of warning was made explicit in Article 4 of the World Declaration on Education for All, drawn up at the earlier conference:

Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development - for an individual or for society - depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e., whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills and values. The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on actual learning acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment, continued participation in organised programmes and completion of certification requirements.

(quoted in full in Annexe 1 of Little, Hoppers and Gardner 1994:230-250, emphasis in the original)

Set out here, this statement may seem as trite as any truism. However, in the context of educational development at the time it had a radical and resounding ring. The 1980s have been dubbed 'the lost decade' for education in developing countries (Jolly 1990, Graham-Brown 1991): a time when efforts to increase access to education took precedence over equity, effectiveness and achievement. The 1990 Jomtien conference, however, precipitated a renewed focus for international funding into basic education in general, and primary schooling in particular. At the conference itself, for example, the President of the World Bank avowed an intention of doubling educational provision over three years with an ever increasing commitment to the primary sector. This statement affirmed the continuation of a shift in donor policy towards supporting basic education. When the World Bank began making loans for educational projects in the early 1960s, these were initially for improving technical, vocational and higher education, a step seen as necessary to provide a middle management cohort for new economic programmes in developing countries. World

Bank support for primary education began in a small way (4.5% of the education budget) in the 1970s and increased to 23.1% by the late 1980s (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). The United Kingdom, incidentally, has devoted even less of its educational aid budget to primary education, with only 1.7% used specifically for primary projects in the early eighties.

In the wake of the conference both donor and recipient countries were called upon to make major policy statements responding to the challenge of providing 'education for all', and setting out their own specific agendas in line with the overarching principles in the declaration. For the British Government, ODA (now renamed DFID) clearly articulated the key role of education in effecting positive change at every level: personal, social, political and philosophical. The strategy paper Aid to Education in 1993 and Beyond stated categorically that education could be seen to support each one of three central objectives of aid which:

... embrace the human goals of better education and health and the reduction of poverty, social essentials such as good government, and economic growth and reform, and worldwide ideals of enhancing the status of women and improving the environment.  
(ODA 1994:2, emphasis in the original)

This statement is particularly interesting in moving the education of the girl child from the humane goal of healthier families (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991), or the more questionable social 'essential' of providing new earners and tax payers (King and Hill 1993), into a worldwide ideal to enhance the status of women. Some societies, however, and certainly some individuals in rural Sindh, might cogently argue that the status of women would be more surely enhanced by their exclusion from aspects of formal education. For example, the father of one of the study fellows who travelled to the UK for a year of training under SPEDP was challenged in just this way by the village elders. "How could you let this happen to your daughter?" they asked him. "Our daughters are precious as gold to us, we keep them safe and secluded within the family." With equal rhetorical force he answered: "Likewise, our daughter is precious as gold to us - and we have made her as a crown for all the family." His powerful response is undoubtedly more unusual than the original expression of caution. This simple incident

highlights the potential for serious dislocations of beliefs and goals between aid agencies, recipient governments and local communities. A disruptive potential which threatens any attempt at wide-scale reform.

The World Bank treads a more cautious path. The 1995 publication, Priorities and Strategies for Education, stresses the gain in human capital which can subsequently be used as a means to promote societal ends. The text hints that there is also likely to be some variation in the actual values promulgated as a result of the public policy of any particular country. The language is absolutist only in categorically asserting the importance of education itself:

Education produces knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. It is essential for civic order and citizenship and for sustained economic growth and the reduction of poverty. Education is also about culture; it is the main instrument for disseminating the accomplishments of human civilization. These multiple purposes make education a key area of public policy in all countries.

(World Bank 1995b:xi)

Education - especially basic (primary and lower-secondary) education - helps to reduce poverty by increasing the productivity of the poor, by reducing fertility and improving health, and by equipping people with the skills they need to participate fully in the economy and in society. More generally, education helps strengthen civil institutions and build national capacity and good governance - critical elements in the implementation of sound economic and social policies.

(World Bank 1995b:1-2)

In Pakistan primary education has been repeatedly acknowledged as a fundamental right for every child and espoused as a means for overcoming tribal and regional differences, and uniting the nation through inculcating the moral and spiritual values of Islam. Gender issues have become gradually more explicit, starting with the enigmatic and ambiguous declaration that: 'Women need education just as Pakistan needs educated women' (Government of Pakistan 1959:187), and moving to deliberations

for 'tackling women education' made explicit in the National Education Policy (1992-2002), the 8th Five Year Plan (1993-99) and the Social Action Programme (quoted in Government of Pakistan 1994).

Pakistan's response to the Jomtien conference thus predictably endorsed education as a human right. However, it also claimed education as a means for wide-scale social improvement which would require more than mere literacy to achieve. The statement is careful to specify the need to educate both boys and girls in primary schools, but it is disconcertingly vague about how they might later use their learning to ameliorate pressing social ills and help to eradicate 'indignity, deprivation and exploitation'. The following extract is quoted in Anita Ghulam Ali's Situation Analysis (1990). She concludes that it commits the Government to 'a plethora of responsibility ... there will have to be a vast departure from past strategies and attitudes' to secure any specific achievements:

The draft of the Education Policy 1990 spells out its policy statement in the following words 'Primary education shall be recognized as a basic fundamental right of every child. Primary education shall be made free & compulsory to achieve universal enrollment by the end of the decade'. The conceptual framework of the new policy (draft) states 'The purpose of education is to create a sizeable population of such educated men & women who could understand the world well enough and are able to bring about change to provide adequate health & education services, a better environment, wipe out ignorance and deprivation, that afflict developing societies. The objectives of this policy, therefore, is that education of the people who are under-privileged & live in misery does not consist primarily in learning to read, but also in learning to grasp the factors to which their miserable condition is attributable. Education is seen as a means of supporting efforts to put an end to the continuing indignity, deprivation and exploitation of the masses.'

(Ali 1990:95, emphasis in the original)

Basic education for all thus remains unchallenged as a human right for each individual. Some observers would still conclude with Gould that education

seldom has the radical results sometimes claimed and that 'though education can be a liberating force ... in practice it seems to have been more commonly a force for stability and the status quo' (1993:203). However the majority of authors, especially those writing on behalf of their governments, continue to assume that extending education will also support the attainment of the particular aspirations of that society. Even when the actual goals of development and the specific contribution of an educated populace in achieving them are left obscure, as in the statement from Pakistan, they may still be jeopardised if the quality of education provided by schools is perceived to be inadequate. If education is to be a cornerstone for development, there is a need to establish that schools themselves are effective in ensuring pupils' education:

Poor primary schools compromise the entire system of human capital development. They produce graduates who are poorly prepared for secondary and tertiary education and ill-equipped for lifelong learning. The consequence is an insufficient number of truly educated managers, workers, and parents who can efficiently contribute to development.

(Lockheed and Bloch 1990:11)

### **School Effectiveness and School Improvement in Developing Countries**

School effectiveness research has, perhaps inevitably, been almost as widely criticised as it has been endorsed. At one level this simply fuels a healthy debate and a continual refining of research methods. However, as Hamilton wryly commented, the global industry of effective schooling embraces 'four processes: research, development, marketing and sales' (1998:13). 'Marketing and sales' managers may be less than discerning about the shortcomings of any research which justifies their particular product. In so much as the research is being applied to school improvement initiatives almost before the ink is dry on the pages of the reports, the main criticisms are as important as the main findings. Only those of most relevance to educational development programmes in low-income countries are outlined here.

## **The Influence of Home Background on Achievement**

The beginning of the school effectiveness movement is credited to an American study, the Coleman Report Equality of Educational Opportunity (Coleman *et al.* 1966), which was reflected in Britain the following year in the Plowden Report: Children and their Primary Schools (Department of Education and Science 1967). However the message taken from these early reports was that the actual school which pupils attended had a more modest impact on their achievements than did their socioeconomic background. This precipitated a dismally deterministic view of scholastic success, which tended to curtail discussion of the contributions made by individual schools and diminished the belief in education as a means to ensure greater equity.

### **Critique: Measuring 'Effectiveness'**

Effectiveness is generally measured through pupils' attainments on standardised tests covering aspects of literacy, mathematics, and sometimes science, at the beginning and end of a period of schooling. This provides a means to rank schools by achievement or by improvement. Measuring improvement or 'value added' is seen as an important refinement in acknowledging the actual influence of the school itself on the final attainment of pupils, whatever the proficiency of the initial intake. However, revisiting the evidence collected, with a focus on the attainment of different classes, different subgroups within classes, or different subjects, provides data which can alter the judgement on the whole school performance and result in a different ranking ordering of schools by effectiveness (Elchanan and Rossmiller 1987). The outcomes used in these early studies are deemed to cover too narrow a range of pupils and may therefore lack reliability as a measure for the school as a whole. This weakness is further exacerbated by the fact that the actual differences cited between the effective and the ineffective schools are often small. The smaller the margin between one categorisation and the other, the more important it is that the criteria used are reliable. Later research studies have adopted more complex, multi-level statistical techniques to overcome the criticisms levelled at the first studies.

The outcomes used also cover too narrow a range of achievements to ensure validity. Through selecting predominantly academic measures they ignore significant issues which might legitimately be included to reflect the aims of the school and by which to judge the quality of the educational product. Aspects such as citizenship, collegiality or creativity remain unaccounted for. Ironically, schools which are peculiarly 'effective' at achieving the cultural aspirations of the local community may be most disadvantaged by a system which values restricted academic achievement as a measure of effectiveness. The case for putting local context at the centre of the effectiveness aspirations has been made throughout a recent book of iconoclastic articles: School Effectiveness for Whom? (Slee, Weiner and Tomlinson 1998). One suggestion in this collection is to refocus the research into school 'effects', rather than school 'effectiveness', taking into account the complexity of the political and social reality of the school and the community it serves (Lingard, Ladwig and Luke 1998). For schools in developing countries, local aspirations are likely to be even further divorced from central fiat. Davies (1994), who has conducted research in both the United Kingdom and developing countries, makes an eloquent if extreme case for devolving the very definition of 'effectiveness' to the school population itself:

The message is clear. Rather than governments or teams of outside researchers coming into schools and classifying them on their outputs and processes, school communities must themselves investigate what constitutes effectiveness for all participants - most crucially the students. Effectiveness studies often dehumanise students by reducing them to 'intake variables'; there is a cultural deficit, a stereotyped approach which appears to sympathise with schools for the 'poor quality' of their intake. But asking the 'intake' what they want and expect from school will allow the cultural and background differences between pupils to emerge as important and rich data which should begin to shape what and whom the school is for.

The implications for transparent management are to conduct one's own effectiveness research. The 'outcomes' must be identified by the school community itself; the comparisons on

performance on those outcomes must be internal to that institution over time, or mutually agreed between institutions; the collection of data must be a joint enterprise by all participants. (Davies 1994:38)

In view of this long-established criticism, it is perhaps particularly disappointing that the call for accountability in effectiveness within third world countries tends to focus entirely on a narrow definition of scholastic attainment. While even this may be an improvement in helping to focus attention on the differential attainment of neighbouring schools, it might be more helpful to adopt a broader measure of effectiveness from the beginning. It is interesting in this context to contrast two statements in a recent World Bank Poverty Assessment Report on Pakistan. On the same page, writing about changes in management style to ensure increase accountability to the users of the service, we read:

A participatory, team-based, and results-oriented management style should be introduced at facilities. In-service training for ... staff should teach them to work as a team towards common objectives, and their performance should be evaluated accordingly ... The linkages among levels of ... facilities should be strengthened, and their geographic and client focus improved ... and staff should not be transferred out of the district.

(World Bank 1995c:29)

In education, performance evaluation could be changed to a merit-based system, based on objective data (the achievement test scores of children, absenteeism, and so on). NWFP has begun achievement testing in grades 3 and 5, which should be expanded to other provinces and used in performance evaluations. ... the community should play a role in evaluating teaching performance.

(World Bank 1995c:29)

Whereas the second statement implies a punitive programme, based on a simplistic and predetermined range of indicators interpreted locally by people outside the immediate education system, the first has a very



different flavour. In this statement the staff are being encouraged to work in sustained teams which transcend previous hierarchical or geographical boundaries. They are expected to define their own objectives and performance indicators in tune with the needs of their clients. It is hard to see how the two statements can fit under the same opening assertion that: 'A participatory, team-based, and results-oriented management style should be introduced at facilities.' The crucial difference hidden in the text is that, while the second statement is clearly about education, the first refers exclusively to the health service. There seems to be no consideration that the education service might also benefit from a similarly professional and participatory approach through agreeing the precise goals for each school.

### **Supervisor as Guardian**

If one accepts that the particular school and its teachers make relatively little difference to the final achievements of the pupils, there is little left for the supervisor to do except to check that rules and regulations are being upheld and results are monitored. Model 1 supervision is quite adequate to the task, which is simply to observe and inform. If Davies' plea resulted in more schools setting their own parameters for success, the supervisory role would have to be extended somewhat, to inspect that process too and to check its effectiveness in identifying and achieving goals within the school. The supervisors' function would, however, remain essentially the same: to check the quality achieved within the parameters agreed at local or national level. Some countries, such as Republika Srbska, employ a specific group of people to undertake the meticulous inspection of conformity to the regulations. However, there may be little need to delegate such supervision to a distinctive professional body. As the comment from the World Bank above suggests, members of the community might act as a vigilante group themselves and take on much of the regular monitoring of individual teachers and the whole school. A newspaper article, based on a Report on human development in South Asia, listed ways to improve teaching quality in primary education, and notes how in one area, following the introduction of just such a system of community control and sanctions, teacher attendance soared 'by 91 percent':

... bringing the levers of control closer to the community is another mechanism to raise teacher quality. Vigilant parents may be the most important tool in ensuring that teachers actually teach. Unlike education monitoring teams or police inspectors parents have a strong personal interest in improved performance of school teachers. In Karantaka, India, attendance of primary school teachers went up by 91 per cent after the Panchayati Raj system was introduced. However, the problem in many regions is that parents have no means of taking action. A greater degree of administrative decentralization is urgently required so that the day to day decisions in schools are made by the local community rather than regional or national officers.

(Mahbub ul Haq with Mariyam Khan 1998 "Universal Primary Education - a Question of Unflinching Will!" The News on Sunday: Karachi, 14.6.98 p19)

### **The Emergence of 'Manipulable Variables'**

In contrast to the findings of the Coleman Report, early research within low income countries suggested that provision in the school itself was indeed an important factor influencing pupils' achievement. The turning point was the doctoral research on schools in Uganda by Heyneman in which he quantified the impact of school-based factors as being up to four times more influential in poor countries than in industrial societies (Heyneman 1976 and unpublished correspondence quoted in King 1991:202). Such findings led the World Bank to renew its education focus through analysing and altering these school-based factors in specific projects. Later, both the World Bank and ODA also sponsored literature reviews which compared the relative impact of different factors on improving outcomes (for example Fuller 1990, Lockheed and Verspoor 1991, Lewin 1993, Pennycuik 1993). The factors which appear to have the most certain impact have become the 'manipulable input variables' that continue to underpin the structure of donor programmes:

Recent reviews of the literature on correlates of learning in low- and middle-income countries show that most consistently

positive effects are found for teacher subject knowledge, instructional time, textbooks, and instructional materials. ... Inputs in these categories would have the highest priority for expenditure.

... Such inputs as smaller classes and higher teacher salaries set on the basis of seniority and formal qualifications are cited less often in the research literature, however, and therefore probably deserve lower priority ... . In addition, expensive inputs, such as laboratories, are not effective.

(World Bank 1995b:81)

The provision of textbooks, radio programmes, in-service training and time for learning have all been 'manipulated' in different programmes throughout the 1990s. In contrast, variables such as class size, initial teacher training, teachers' remuneration, television programmes, science laboratories and computers have been equally deliberately left alone, with the justification that they do not seem to have a predictably positive influence on results, and would therefore not provide a good return for investment. Unfortunately, explicit ongoing research into the results of altering these, or other, variables has seldom been built into the projects themselves. Where it was intended to incorporate research into the effects of project innovations, as in PEP1, there have still sometimes been difficulties in delivering serviceable results. A World Bank review mission of the first two years of PEP1 commented despondently on the specific research element, but in a generalised complaint which was intended to cover other projects too: 'elaborate project evaluation design frequently produces findings which are trivial or uninterpretable and are therefore unusable' (quoted in Government of Pakistan 1983:25).

### **Critique: The Selection of Variables to be Manipulated**

The deliberate manipulation of input variables remains a strong feature of school improvement programmes in developing countries. However, the selection of particular inputs to apply through subsequent projects and programmes sometimes seems idiosyncratic in the face of the supporting

compilations of evidence. For example, the World Bank specifically endorses 'active learning techniques' and rejects investment in teachers' salaries or expensive resources such as science laboratories. Yet in Fuller's influential compilation of data from sixty studies in a variety of countries, all three of these particular inputs had a positive effect in roughly a third of the studies included (the actual proportions are 1:3; 5:14 and 4:11 respectively). It is not unduly cynical to suggest that the search for 'the golden fleece of low-cost quality' (King 1991), has been influential in constraining pragmatic choices of inputs selected as the particular 'manipulable variables' to be applied - even though the language of selection implies that the choice reflects a rational assessment of impact rather than cost.

The 'inputs' originally selected for scrutiny are, perhaps inevitably, a reflection of the preoccupations of the period in which the research took place. Nowhere, for example, does 'supervision' appear as a listed variable with measurable impact, even though it has been assumed to have a positive influence for decades and has been cited as a means to overcome dismal in-school factors. Neither do the currently fashionable issues of 'leadership', 'participation' and 'planning' appear on the lists of variables analysed in the main reported research period of the 1980s. Even the 'quality of the school principal', found to have a positive effect in just 4 out of 7 studies, appears to have been analysed solely in terms of length of service, qualifications and training (Fuller 1987:258). These are quite different 'qualities' from the personal attributes and working styles of headteachers scrutinised in western studies throughout the 1990s.

It is also important to question why school inputs are repeatedly seen as relatively more influential in lower-income countries than in the West. One response is simply that the schools concerned have so little, and therefore start at such 'a low base' (Lockheed and Levin 1993:4), that any increase in provision, expertise or comfort is likely to bring about an improvement to learning. This is perhaps an overtly 'rich world' viewpoint and one epitomised by Gray and Wilcox who reflect on the apparent necessity of adequate resourcing for school effectiveness:

1 In 20 years of reading research on the characteristics of effective

schools we have only once come across a case of an 'excellent' school where the physical environment left something to be desired ...

2 In many years of reading HMI's published reports on secondary schools we can only remember two or three occasions where their overall rating was highly favourable and the roof (or something similar) was in need of repair ...

3 We have never read an account of a 'good' school which had serious staffing difficulties.

(Gray and Wilcox 1995:21)

Yet many strikingly effective schools in developing countries may well have all these problems, and far more besides. For example, one of the best mosque schools I know now has an expanding roll of over one hundred pupils. However, it has just one regular teacher, assisted occasionally by others pending their transfer to better placements, and, on my last visit, it was housed in three tiny katcha classrooms built of mud (one still without a roof or door) encircled by a boundary fence of dried thorns. These meagre facilities are carefully constructed and regularly improved with community support but all too regularly they are damaged or washed away in the autumn rains. The school thus has all three problems mentioned by Gray and Wilcox: a drastically poor environment; a roof which not only needs repair but has yet to be constructed; and chronic difficulties in getting staff even to turn up. Yet the pupils are impressively regular, keen and compliant, and the headteacher is invariably enthusiastic, energetic and eager to excel. Learning is achieved and enrolment climbs. There are certainly elements of quality which are attainable by some teachers in even the most difficult and dispiriting of circumstances.

An alternative reason for the impact of school inputs could be that, where there is a marked dislocation between school values and home values, any additional inputs which strengthen and focus the culture of the schooling enterprise can help to establish the value of its ethos in the eyes of its pupils. Fuller hints at this relationship, with a suggestive but unargued 'therefore', when he writes of schools in developing countries:

... the school institution often operates within communities where

any commitment to written literacy or numeracy is a historically recent event. Therefore, a school of even modest quality may significantly influence academic achievement.

(Fuller 1987:256)

To accept this line of thought would entail a new description of how inputs influence achievements, through both clarifying goals and providing pertinent, practical means to make them attainable. This in turn could provide a relatively robust explanation of why instructional inputs such as texts, time and in-service training are more influential than inputs which may improve the teachers' status or conditions of service, but do not necessarily improve their teaching (including higher salaries, personal education, smaller classes). On the other hand, some of the recorded differences, such as the success of radio instruction over television programmes, or libraries over science laboratories, would need further investigation.

However, disparities between home and school values are certainly not unique to developing countries and any descriptions of the impact of inputs should fit a variety of situations. Thus, one might suggest similarities between the intentions behind supplying free text books for girls in rural Sindh or computer networking facilities for pupils in an Education Action Zone in urban England. Both reflect the supposition that school-based inputs can help to bridge the gap between two cultures. The inputs are valuable, not simply because the pupils' families might well not be able or willing to provide them for their own children, but because they make explicit the purpose of a significant part of the schooling enterprise: learning the curriculum in Pakistan; extracting information from diverse sources in the UK. They also provide pupils with the means to practise and perfect these skills. Similar inputs amongst more privileged populations in either country would be expected to have less of an effect on outcomes.

However, here we meet another difficulty with the research - how to recognise a privileged background in different cultures. Since the first studies in Britain and America concluded that social background was a more significant variable than factors within the school attended, subsequent research has generally included statistical controls on the pupils'

background, so that effects are being compared for similar socioeconomic groups. Indeed Fuller's compilation of research findings specifically selected studies where such controls had been made, but added the caveat that 'if these controls [for class variables] are misspecified, then the relative influence of the school may be overstated' (1987:256).

The usual controls applied to data in developing countries are parental education and occupation. This may indeed be misleading as a marker for 'class' in the way it is understood in the West. In countries like Pakistan, where female education is often curtailed for cultural, rather than simply fiscal reasons, the control may not in fact act as a reliable marker of 'class' at all. For example, in a Baloch Colony where we work in Karachi, many of the girls leave school on their betrothal at about the age of nine whereas, in contrast, a Bangladeshi community not far away has for generations supported virtually 100% completion of primary schooling for girls. When these two sets of young women become the mothers of the next generation of pupils, their level of education will indicate more about their particular sub-cultural background than about their 'class'. However if, as the various critiques of effectiveness research repeatedly suggest, it is the distance between the cultural values of home and school that is significant, parental education levels could de facto be giving a better guide to the consonance or dissonance between home and school aspirations than parental employment or disposable income would.

It is worth noting that Fuller is considerably more sceptical about the application of his review of studies than later strategists have been. The simple lists of recorded results, rather than the reasoning behind them or the strictures accompanying them, are still often quoted to back up far-reaching decisions about project design and implementation.

### **Supervisors as Guides**

Supervision does not appear on the lists of manipulable variables which are explored. Nonetheless, in Pakistan, the period during which manipulable variables have been given most prominence is also the one in which learning coordinators were appointed as supplementary, school-based

supervisors, intended specifically to counteract 'in-school factors'. Learning coordinators were expected to make a direct impact on teachers' practices and students' achievements. Their own frequent visits to a small number of schools would set up an expectation of more regular attendance by all the teachers, while their demonstration lessons would provide a shared experience of new styles of teaching and learning. They would explicitly model the particular practices advocated within the current educational policy, and should thus be able to encourage every teacher to extend a personal repertoire of teaching styles. For example, if other specific inputs are offered, such as new text books, teaching kits or radio instruction programmes, the learning coordinators should be able to guide the teachers to use these resources well. The learning coordinators would thus, in effect, be providing focused in-service support directly within the schools. Moreover, in-service work is itself regarded as a significantly effective input variable, with a potentially greater impact on pupils' achievement than, for example, pre-service training or extra years of schooling for teachers themselves.

The introduction of learning coordinators thus provided a means to integrate a variety of specific inputs through providing another general one: in-service training. The learning coordinators were to embody the central policy through reformed practice at the very place, the actual classrooms, where changes were required. Moreover they would provide hard-pressed teachers with a deeper understanding of modern techniques, and in doing so they would help to bridge any cultural gap between the teachers' current styles of work and those desired and prescribed by the government. Just as access to a text can clarify the learning enterprise for a pupil, so access to model lessons should exemplify and clarify the new teaching culture for a teacher. As a relatively small group of personnel, learning coordinators themselves could be periodically introduced to specific techniques or materials, and trained to deliver a new in-service programme within their beat of 10-15 schools. They could thus provide a pragmatic, cost effective means to influence teaching practices in primary classrooms.

In this scenario the supervision directly provides the input variable of in-service work which is itself organised so as to model the effective use of other specific inputs such as a new curriculum, textbooks, or reading



materials. Supervisors can succeed only in so far as they spend ample time in schools, demonstrating the desired teaching practices in a credible and encouraging manner. This necessitates the move from model 1 to model 2 in supervisory practices. It requires a shift away from a distanced, directive guardian who emerges from a central office periodically to tell others what they should have done, towards an empathetic and encouraging teaching guide who works alongside others to plan a way forward using new techniques. Though completely polarised in their style of practice, the two roles are, however, still closely related in their purpose. Both models assume a strong centralised definition of what schools should achieve and how. The guardian role assumes it is enough for teachers to be told, the guide admits teachers will themselves need to be trained. This second model is essentially pedagogic. It could not, therefore, be undertaken routinely by parents or community members but might be seen as a function of headteachers or senior teachers working in one or more schools.

### **Characteristic Features of Effective Schools**

While low- and middle-income countries have pursued improvement programmes which selected from within the received list of input variables, high-income countries have gone down a different route. Faced on the one hand with the claims that individual schools make little difference to outcomes and on the other hand with the common sense hunch that some schools are simply 'better' than others, more recent research has focused on scrutinising the school as a complete organisation through describing and contrasting the ways in which different schools work. There is also a growing appreciation that the application of this type of research could add a new dimension to policy and planning in the third world by tackling the issues of individual school achievement in a more holistic manner. Thus Lockheed and Levin criticise the traditional project pattern of manipulating input variables as 'leaving intact the infrastructure of institutions that are failing to serve the needs of their students' and contrast this with the approach of effective schools analysis and its 'emphasis on transformation of the entire school' (Lockheed and Levin 1993:4-5).

Effective schools research in Britain and America was given a new lease of

life through extensive longitudinal studies of pupils' schooling in randomly selected schools (for example in Britain, Rutter et al. 1979 observed secondary schools at work and Mortimore et al. 1988 observed junior schools). In addition, case studies of particularly effective schools, sometimes matched against less effective control schools with a similar intake of pupils, have also been used to try to pinpoint the elements which underpin success. Though the methods vary, both the large and the small studies set out to scrutinise the way that schools work: the processes, not just the products. Small case study research, as a technique, can be more easily managed with limited resources than larger longitudinal studies and, thereby, should be more readily applied in lower-income countries. However, although such work is regarded as both a relatively cheap and a potentially rich mode of research for developing countries, it still remains an underused methodology. There is little published case study research of schools at work in the third world, and even less systematic use of such research to analyse features of success which might be transferable to other schools. Even when, as in PEP1, case studies are part of the original project brief, the actual research design can easily revert to more familiar and traditional modes of data collection and quantitative analysis. New techniques need to be taught, nurtured and valued before they are likely to become accepted, applied and extended. Tensions between novel design and orthodox delivery were recorded in the mid-term PEP1 report:

In fairness to the original research design it should be pointed out that the orientation of the Primary Education Project evaluation through 1980-81 and '82 was not as originally proposed, and that qualitative case studies were identified as early as 1979 as essential to the evaluation exercise ... Two factors however, determined the evaluation pattern which materialised. First the almost meta-physical appeal of classical research methodology wedded to the hower [power] of the computer, and second the management problems faced by the project with respect to its research activities and the adequacy of research personnel.

(Government of Pakistan 1983:27)

In the United States and in Britain, both the large-scale longitudinal studies and the small-scale case studies have resulted in rich descriptions of the

interior workings of a variety of schools. These in turn have often been analysed and condensed to provide checklists of key features distinguishing the most effective schools from the rest. The first such list is credited to Edmonds (1979), and is a result of his work in schools in poor urban areas of the United States. This identification of characteristics describing successful schools in difficult areas was intended as a direct challenge to the prevalent belief, fuelled by the Coleman report, that schools could do little to improve the educational achievements of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Edmonds' original list (quoted in full in Silver 1994:88) comprises six features:

- strong 'administrative leadership';
- a climate of expectation in which no pupils are permitted to fall behind;
- an orderly, quiet, atmosphere conducive to learning;
- an emphasis on mastery of basic skills;
- institutional flexibility to focus and divert energies towards the fundamental objectives when this is necessary for achievement;
- frequent monitoring of student progress against instructional objectives.

Strangely, his specific point, that successful schools are 'flexible' and ready to modify and adapt teaching systems, styles and curricula in order to ensure the effectiveness of their work, has disappeared from many subsequent accounts of his research. These refer to a 'five-factor model' which simply omits the fifth statement in the above list altogether (e.g. Gray and Wilcox 1995, Reynolds *et al.* 1996). Yet this missing feature is possibly one of the most vital for schools in difficult areas which might include, not only the poor urban districts of industrialised nations where the research originated, but also, potentially at least, poor rural areas in developing countries.

Introducing a rare set of case studies of projects aimed to increase school effectiveness for 'children of poverty, especially in the third world', Lockheed and Levin (1993:1) stress the importance of a flexible approach which is able to challenge preconceived models and encourage local initiatives. They claim that such flexibility is one of the crucial facilitating conditions for increasing effectiveness, and that 'a major feature that the

various initiatives have in common is that each adapted to local circumstances; flexibility appears to be the key to effectiveness' (1993:1). Harber and Davies (1997) develop this idea further, devoting a whole chapter to expanding 'the need for flexible schools' into the concept of the 'post-bureaucratic school'. They propose the following juxtaposition: 'The outmoded bureaucratic school ... has a whole raft of overt and covert goals, but has rigid and inflexible means of trying to achieve them. The post-bureaucratic school on the other hand has a consensus on goals, but flexibility and diversity in attaining them' (1997:150).

Although subsequent lists of effectiveness characteristics vary in other ways, they are almost invariably longer than Edmonds' original. The statement about flexibility does not recur, yet many other statements do seem to overlap. There also appears to be a distinct evolution of the most prominent features recorded, which both reflects, and fans, the flames of fashion. In particular, over the last twenty years the leadership of the headteacher and the specific involvement of both teachers and parents in the management of the school have become ever stronger themes. The leadership element was indeed present in Edmonds' original list. There, however, it was simply 'administrative' - providing the necessary organisation to bring together the 'disparate elements of good schooling'. Since then leadership has begun to take on a life of its own as a focus for debate and has been described in ever more fulsome and symbolic terms including 'strong', 'purposeful', 'professional', 'educative', 'democratic', 'involved', 'visionary'.

Although there is relatively little comparable effectiveness research generated in developing countries, one pertinent exception is Farah's study Roads to Success (1996). This research was commissioned by the World Bank as a background study for new education projects in Pakistan and was carried out by the Agha Khan University in Karachi, with consultancy support for using novel research techniques. The study specifically contrasts eight 'improving' schools and eight control schools in rural areas throughout Pakistan. The final list of distinguishing characteristics of the good schools is reminiscent of those from contemporary western research including specific points about the roles of staff and community as well as describing the positive educational ethos of the school. Her conclusions highlight the importance of the role of the headteacher and emphasise

desirable personal qualities, including a commitment to participatory development. She claims that the major determinant of school success in sustaining self-initiated improvement is the interplay between the school and the community it serves:

Critical causal factors in the process of positive school change are a combination of: (1) a competent head teacher and (2) a vigilant and supportive community. Either of these key stakeholders can be responsible for encouraging the participation of the other. Sustained change, however, comes about when both are present. A successful head teacher takes initiatives both inside and outside of the school.

(Farah 1996:11, emphasis in the original)

Other important features discerned within the good schools include:

- a competent headteacher working collegially with the staff;
- a vigilant and supportive community;
- regular, committed and competent teachers concerned to ensure children's learning;
- a task-oriented, orderly and relaxed classroom climate;
- shared goals understood by staff, students and the community;
- positive attitudes towards the many problems that beset the school.

Although these general features certainly echo those generated in other countries, in each descriptor there is also an acknowledgement that there are several initial steps to be taken in order to achieve a basic level of engagement before striving for excellence. As an essential preliminary, teachers must actually attend the school regularly; the senior teacher designated as head must have the confidence and standing to involve others; classrooms must become more relaxed than frightening. There is, although Farah does not use the word, a need for *sincerity* to the task. Only then can educational improvements begin to flourish.

The last point on the list above, that good schools embrace problems whereas poor ones are overwhelmed by them, adds a new dimension that

reflects something of the poignancy of the context of small rural government schools in Pakistan. Creative, flexible adaptation to difficult circumstances, some endemic and some unexpected, is a necessity for schools in low-income countries which seek to become, or to remain, effective. The counterpart characteristic for industrialised nations might be 'entrepreneurial flair', but, while this is an increasingly valued attribute, it is still seen as more of a luxury asset than a necessity.

### **Critique: Improving Schools**

The attributes listed as characteristics of effective schools are an evolving cluster, reflecting, perhaps, more of a benign, but banal wish-list than actual determining features. Whether or not the traits discerned are cause, consequence, or simply coincident with the very descriptions of effectiveness, is debatable. For example, one feature often listed is teachers' high expectations of their pupils' attainment. However, since effectiveness is actually gauged by high attainment, it could be that the expectations are simply coincident with such a definition of school effectiveness rather than a distinctive cause of the success. If pupils are already achieving well, the teachers readily expect them to continue to do so.

The key question for policy-makers using school effectiveness research is whether or not such lists of features can help in a quest to improve individual schools, especially those deemed less than effective in the first place. Effectiveness studies concentrate on describing how certain schools are seen to function and the processes which might perhaps underpin their confident success. However, as Fullan (1999:33) complains: 'How to get there remains in the black box.' It is one thing to describe specific features of a school which functions effectively, but quite another to hope to transpose these features into less effective schools and witness improvement. Indeed, attempts to manipulate the characteristics in order to create more effective schools have been problematic and not particularly successful. Progress has been especially difficult to achieve where a prevalent sub-culture within the school remains resistant to any assertion that the prescribed changes will actually entail improvements at all (Reynolds and Packer 1992; Gray *et al.* 1999).

The use of effectiveness research to inform educational policy has been said to 'pathologise' schools which neither conform to the effectiveness models, nor even accept them as 'prescriptions' for improvement (Rea and Weiner 1998). Consequently there has been a renewed call to research 'ineffective' schools, or deviant schools which are effective in some particular non-standard ways, just as meticulously as those deemed successful by the traditional measures. Such research could help us to understand the inner working and values of more varied establishments. Although this plea originates from schools in difficult areas in Britain, it is also pertinent to schools in the third world, where ineffectiveness can appear endemic across large areas. Harber and Davies point out:

Schools are not ineffective just because they 'lack' something (resources, management training, and so on). They are ineffective because the logic of schools in fragile states is a different logic. Ineffective schools are usually effective for someone or some interest.

(Harber and Davies 1997:167)

Thus, even where a school is ineffective as a whole, its very dysfunctionality may be effective for some individuals within the school or the community at large. There are vested interests at every level, from pupil to politician. Absentee pupils are obviously not engaged in learning at school, but they may be meeting their more immediate needs through earning wages in jobs. Teaching the text by rote is unlikely to instil transferable knowledge or even basic literacy skills, but may yet retain solace, security and power for teachers, whose own tenuous understanding of the subject can barely make sense of the facts recorded on the printed page. Continuing to work in dismal, dingy, dilapidated surroundings is dispiriting but may still seem preferable to the headteacher than the potential confrontation inherent in persuading all site-users to keep the area clean and tidy. Ineffective, or even non-existent, schools for the village populace may seem to serve the needs of the wealthy landowner in perpetuating an ignorant, but compliant workforce.

Conversely, reforms which appear from an outsider's perspective to lead

unarguably to improvement, may seem much more dubious from within the organisation itself. Chapman and Carrier (1990), introducing a volume of challenging essays, Improving the Quality of Education: a Global Perspective, noted:

Resistance to change is not because people are lazy or malevolent. Often it reflects a wisdom and insight into the incentive system within which the participants live and operate. They recognize that changed ways of doing things may alter patterns of relationships they value and patterns of exchange from which they benefit. What is good for the country in the long run is not necessarily good for individual participants in the short run ... The incentive value of participating in, supporting, or just tolerating a new project varies across groups. Those seeking to improve educational quality, whether from host or donor country, must operate from an equation that incorporates these factors.

(Chapman and Carrier 1990:14)

The groups which need to appreciate an incentive value to altering the practice of ages include not only the teachers who are expected to organise and administer the changes, but also the immediate and wider communities of which the school forms a part. Thus, when Lockheed and Verspoor assert that: 'A social consequence of greater education is the adoption of more 'modern' attitudes. Becoming modern involves adopting rational, empirical, egalitarian beliefs ...' (1991:5), they seem to be oblivious of the possibility that such a set of beliefs might be anathema to cultural enclaves where unquestioning acceptance of traditional social hierarchies is of paramount importance. In such situations 'modernity' might be more readily equated with corruption than with progress. If 'rational, empirical, egalitarian beliefs' were indeed admitted to be a 'consequence of greater education', then altogether less education could be seen as the better option. Schools might be left, deliberately, half built or half empty. As Davies has written: 'the way forward is for a much more politicised exploration of the various definitions of 'effective', and who controls contemporary interpretations' (1994:37).



Thus one paramount requirement for progress which is often overlooked, is the sheer will to change. Where central policy is strong, communication rapid, and schools are moderately homogeneous, as in Britain, what Bhutto (1979:248) referred to as 'the colonial ... carrot-and-stick' attitude seems to be enough to ensure the perpetual endeavour to achieve new performance criteria. In more heterogeneous areas, with weaker communication systems and limited acceptance of central policy, more depends on there being a motive force which can operate within the school itself.

For fairly functional schools, the will to change would need to incorporate at least the problem-solving attitude identified by Farah, and the flexibility towards organisation which featured on Edmonds' original list and is reflected in Harber and Davies' portrait of the post-bureaucratic school. Such problem-solving and flexibility, however, are only likely to be productive where the goals of effectiveness have already been agreed. In difficult areas and dysfunctional schools, the will to change may need to be more drastic and assertive. It must be prepared to shatter preconceived notions and realign the vision of effectiveness in individual schools, their immediate communities, and indeed the country as a whole. Lockheed and Levin write fervently of the need to harness a zealous will to act, which can transcend self-interest and embrace self-sacrifice and altruism in the achievement of long-term goals distinctive to each society:

The commitment requires leadership at every level of society and with the support of a broad constituency of political parties, government bureaucracies, businesses, parents and student. It requires visionary spokespersons at all levels who will continue to push the vision and serve as the educational conscience of society. ... In the absence of this will to change, the knowledge base for effective schools ... will stay dormant, never emerging from its chrysalis to transform the schools. This type of leadership and mass mobilization may require nothing short of a mass social movement with charismatic leadership to overcome the inertia of the educational system and traditional practices. Such movements will need to be catalyzed in different ways in different societies depending on such matters as political alignments, potential coalitions, institutional arrangements, and cultural traditions.

(Lockheed and Levin 1993:14)

Pared to a minimum, then, three common themes emerge as conspicuous traits of effective schools as delineated in the literature of the late 1990s:

- leadership which articulates a vision of progress to be made and which both motivates and sustains the will to change;
- a school ethos that holds high expectations of staff and students within a supportive, stimulating, professional, atmosphere;
- partnership and trust between everyone involved, including parents and pupils; employees and employers.

In areas with a limited tradition of educational achievement, a further trait seems essential:

- a flexible,problem-solving approach to all the difficulties facing the school.

In Pakistan, at least, this list might be further rephrased to emphasise *sincerity* and *respect*. Thus the leadership should emanate from *sincerity* to task of extending and improving education and the partnership should be founded on *respect* for each person, empowering every one to contribute fully.

Such a school would be 'post-bureaucratic', with clear goals, a strong sense of urgency, and a pragmatic approach to progress. The overarching goals are securely educative, founded on expectations of achievement by pupils and staff alike. Moreover they remain attuned to the prevalent culture: sensitive both to stable local parameters and volatile political imperatives through sustained partnerships with the various client groups. Each school can maintain its own integrity, forging practical solutions to its unique situation. A school should be able to be idiosyncratic in its approach, without being 'pathologised' by a comparison with a particular paradigm.

A single illustration, from my own experience, comes from a remote village school in Sindh serving a population of indigent labourers. By name it is a coeducational school, but by tradition it is predominantly boys who attend, with only one or two younger sisters included in the youngest classes. Increasing girls' education in the neighbourhood was the supervisor's paramount priority. By working with the imam and reorganising the

timetable to place Islamiat first and foremost at the opening of each day, many more parents were persuaded to send their daughters to school, specifically for the religious tuition. As the supervisor foresaw, but I could not, once the girls had entered the compound they were eager, and able, to stay all day. Now, more than half the pupils of class 1 and 2 are girls, and perhaps it is time to look again at further extending the enrolment of village boys. In this example the local cultural values were not only respected, but deliberately incorporated into the school development strategy - which simultaneously aimed to achieve a national policy imperative of increasing female enrolment. Moreover, through the professional dedication and *sincerity* of the supervisor and the staff, the girls are not merely enrolled, nor are they just learning a sacred text by heart, they are receiving a genuinely balanced and practical education.

### **Supervisors as Innovators**

To ensure that such a 'post-bureaucratic' school is actually improving, the supervisor has to be more than a guardian of standards, since the goals of the school are no longer predetermined. Likewise, the supervisor has to be more than a guide, providing pre-packaged exemplars of good practice, since centralised solutions often fail to suit local practices. Instead, the supervisor has to be innovative in helping to define the very notion of quality within each school. New strategies have to be developed and evaluated in order to achieve particular goals for each school which will reconcile national imperatives with local realities.

The question then arises of who is best placed to provide the necessary vision of progress and the determination to change. The assumption of new donor programmes seems to be that these different elements are generated exclusively within the school itself, through the headteacher working with the immediate community. However, it certainly seems arguable that the provision of external supervisors, as model 3 innovators, is likely to be more effective in ensuring improvement. What is demanded is a disinterested force for change which may have to break with a prevalent 'inertia of the educational system' (Lockheed and Levin 1993:14). Such a force may exist within some schools, but cannot be assumed of all.

Reynolds and Packer, reviewing school improvement initiatives in Britain, have warned that 'basing school improvement programmes completely within schools may imprison them in a cultural jail of poor practice' (1992:183). A similar warning should perhaps be given about the dangers of relegating the definition of quality to parents and headteachers alone. Comfortably coasting schools, where no-one sees reason to change, remain a threat to improvement in any culture. The broader vision of external supervisors can help in 'raising the horizon beyond the village boundary' (Curle 1966:130) and is well placed to challenge the tradition of past practices, to explain and explore national imperatives, and simultaneously to respect local values and priorities.

A midway model has been proposed in Pakistan to help each effective school 'infect' others. A group of headteachers of well-run government primary schools in Karachi, drawn together to discuss how to secure similar improvement in other schools, proposed a series of school clusters, supported by the most talented, successful and ambitious headteachers:

The above-mentioned type Heads would choose two or three schools in the vicinity of his/her school, and they could make frequent hops to help and advise, and would be close enough for the schools in the Chain to make contact regularly. At the end of one year there would be an Inspection Team which would recommend first, second and third prize for the schools that had showed marked improvement, and the heads would be recommended for 'advance increment' and 'public acclaim certificate'. The Head who got the first prize for the school would then qualify to be 'Leader'/Head of another cluster the next academic year. And that way, it was hoped, that each year at least 100 schools that could fly their own flag, proclaiming their entry into a better future of education, could be created.

(Ali 1990:101):

In this scenario the cluster-headteachers utilise their own experience of effective practice to provide inspiration for others. Ali stresses that the details of improvement for each school would differ: there is no single

model to suit all circumstances. She writes of the selected group of headteachers: 'Each one had their own system, but a common factor was their own integrity, dedication and a sort of personal pride in the school' (Ali 1990:101). In this statement we can recognise again the elements of *sincerity* for the enterprise of education which guarantee the drive to find solutions. It is this *sincerity*, securing and sustaining the will to change, which is the common feature of success - rather than any particular solution implemented as a result.

However, although the final outcomes in individual schools may differ, the supervisory support provided by cluster-headteachers is likely to remain closer to model 2 than to model 3. The cluster-headteachers would share their own specific experiences, encouraging other headteachers into a similarly assertive and pro-active stance. They would be motivators, but not multipliers of change. To realise model 3 in full requires the supervisor to be innovative, developmental and evaluative - as well as practical, pragmatic and problem-solving. A headteacher, retaining responsibility for his or her own school, whilst also 'hopping' into two or three others, has little opportunity to gain, or influence, a wider picture of education. The strength of this model of headteacher as guide is that it keeps a grip on local reality; the weakness is that it has limited input from innovations and aspirations further afield. It can provide impetus for increasing the number of individual learning schools, but it is powerless to ensure that together they form part of a 'learning sector'.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the application of school effectiveness research to improvement programmes aimed at reforming and revisioning practice. Such sectoral improvement programmes are characteristic of projects in lower-income countries sponsored by international agencies. However, the function of external supervision in ensuring progress has seldom been a focus of study. In this chapter my three models of supervisory practice have been used again to elucidate further the role that external supervision can play in easing change and underwriting improvement in primary education. Since supervision is concerned with improving quality, the role

of the supervisor depends on how quality is believed to be influenced and progress towards effectiveness is achieved.

If progress is believed to be contingent on adherence to centrally defined rules and regulations, then supervision in the form of inspection will be adequate (model 1). For the simplest issues, such as absenteeism, community representatives can efficiently monitor performance and inform the central office. For a more detailed analysis of the standards of the teaching and learning achieved, an external system of inspection would be necessary.

If progress needs to include altering pedagogic styles in the classroom or initiating whole-school planning, then the appropriate model of supervision changes to that of guide (model 2). The required behaviour is still defined centrally, but it is taken into schools and modelled by intermediary supervisors - learning coordinators or itinerant headteachers, for example. The 'standards' to be achieved are not just written into rules and regulations, but are embodied in a human exemplar who can encourage and redirect the endeavours of others.

If effectiveness is to be more locally defined, techniques for securing progress will vary from school to school. However, far from requiring less external supervision this scenario requires as much, or more. Individual schools may achieve effectiveness through idiosyncratic means, but the results need to be re-evaluated, refined and redistributed both to ensure that change is improvement, and also to secure the development of the educational sector as a whole. Innovative supervision (model 3) which seeks to sustain and articulate an evolving concept of quality in education, would be a greater asset than ever.

Lyons and Pritchard suggested that this model of supervision would be a corollary of decentralisation strategies and claimed that 'the stronger the position of the regional or local units in respect of the management of their schools the more likely is the field inspectorate to be able to devote its attention to professional and pedagogical duties' (1976:41). Strategies for the improvement of primary education which write the headteacher and community into the script of school improvement, but simultaneously

erase all trace of innovative external supervision would seem to be limiting potential before the start. In the case of Pakistan, they are also turning their back on twenty years of experimentation in supervision models which do include telling stories of success.

## How can Supervision in Pakistan Become More Effective?

Through my research I have set out to explore primary school supervision on different levels, as defined in Harber and Davies (1997). A macro level, which considers the purpose of supervision in improving the quality of primary education in any country; a meso level, which re-evaluates the potential for supervision within the historical and cultural context of Pakistan; and a micro level, which considers the practice of supervision in two districts of Sindh involved in the Sindh Primary Education Development Programme 1992-96. Conclusions and issues for further development can be drawn out at each level.

### The Micro Level

This study used data from 91 supervisors who attended the final course of a programme of supervisory training in 1994. The participants comprised over 90% of the supervisors responsible for a beat of primary schools in two districts. The districts selected represent the main geographical contrasts of urban and rural areas and, although the samples are not random, there is no reason to believe that they are not representative of supervisors throughout the province of Sindh. The study provides insights into the educational careers of supervisors, their personal views about their working lives, and their responses to new professional demands made on them through the project.

Analysis of the supervisors' careers in education shows that they have a great deal more primary school experience than is generally supposed. More than three quarters (77%) of the supervisors had some primary experience while almost half (45%) had been appointed directly from primary schools. Just 3% had taught only as high school teachers, and 2% had not taught at all. The significance of these figures is that they challenge the influential assumption that supervisors are ineffective in school improvement because they lack primary school teaching experience. This belief more accurately reflects findings twenty, or more, years old (Pritchard 1975; Bhutto 1979). A



simple data collecting exercise is all that is needed to provide an updated picture across Pakistan. If my figures are representative of the current situation, then it is time to look for new reasons to explain any apparent ineffectiveness in supervisors' professional behaviour.

Data from the questionnaires and interviews indicate that most supervisors believed they had altered their working patterns substantially over the period of training, and felt that they were playing a more active role in schools as a consequence. A majority also claimed that they would like to increase this aspect of their work still further in the future. These findings suggest that the supervisors were capable of redirecting their work into schools and that they often gained professional satisfaction as a result. Changes in supervisors' working styles were corroborated more cogently by headteachers than by education officers and the officers interviewed remained largely unaware of what supervisors were attempting and achieving in schools. Such a lack of appreciation of the purpose of school-based supervision amongst education officers is a threat to the sustainability of any changes in work pattern once the SPED programme ceases.

There are many examples of the work achieved over the period of the courses which illustrate how supervisors have been able to influence the quality of education in individual schools, in sub-divisions and across a whole district. Further, some of their more ambitious initiatives took place significantly in advance of national reforms in educational policy. One such example was the way in which some supervisors identified the key role taken by those headteachers who were particularly successful in directing developments in their own schools. They then used their insights to devise a specific training course to provide other headteachers with the necessary skills and understanding to be similarly effective. It was only after this event that the post of headteacher was officially designated for large schools across the province, and no role definition or training had been considered at the time when these supervisors were at work. It was a particular feature of SPEDP that supervisors were encouraged to take initiatives and design their own developments, as well as to deliver pre-packaged training to others. Examples of their endeavours provide evidence of the potential of supervisors to lead reform, as well as to respond to directives.

As predicted from the historical origin of their roles, resource persons of mosque schools (RPMS) in the sample generally had lower academic qualifications, and less secondary school teaching experience, than supervisors of primary education (SPE). However, how they chose to use their time was similar. There was no indication in the data collected that resource persons spent any more of their time working with the community or supporting the teaching in schools than the other supervisors did. The original differences in pay scale and experience between RPMS and SPE remain, but the intended difference in performance is no longer apparent. Research by Warwick and Reimers (1995) similarly suggests that learning coordinators became more administrative and less interventative once they were subsumed within the standard supervisory system at the end of the PEP projects.

Contrasting data from two sub-divisions within the pilot area suggests that the group with most primary experience were the least influenced by the training, while the group with the highest qualifications and most extensive secondary teaching experience were the most influenced. On the final course the former group still perceived their role as predominantly inspectorial and administrative while the latter group, the rural women, claimed to have redirected most of their time into advisory work in schools. These results reflect the opinions of very small groups of people and should not be generalised. Further research could usefully explore the possibility of differences in working pattern between male and female supervisors, those based in urban and rural areas and sub-divisional groups reporting to individual education officers. However, as a particular case, these unexpected results do demonstrate that recent primary teaching experience is not only insufficient to secure a swing to school-based supervision, but it is also not necessary. Some supervisors transferred directly from high schools can indeed work supportively within primary schools; some supervisors with extensive primary experience still adopt a more office-bound approach, even after explicit and extensive supervisory training. There is something other than experience, and something more than training, that is needed to harness the potential of supervisors to secure school improvement and to institutionalise the success of the most assured individuals.

This micro study has broken new ground in attempting to access all the active supervisors serving particular areas. It has challenged some outdated assumptions through showing both that many supervisors do have primary school experience and also that this is not sufficient to ensure an advisory style of working. It has also demonstrated that supervisors can work in ways that support both school and sectoral development and that they gain personal satisfaction from such work. However, this part of the research does not directly suggest what the elusive factor is that can transform desultory work into effective supervision.

### **The Meso Level**

Life stories from seven master trainers in the project were used to trace influences on their careers in education. Their stories revealed a disjunction between successful work early in their careers and a more ambivalent attitude towards the promoted post of supervisor of primary education (SPE). The women in the group refused the post altogether believing that such a position would jeopardise their job satisfaction, their status and even their safety. Three men accepted the post, but did not proceed to fulfil it in ways that were likely to benefit schools. These findings are also reflected in interviews with supervisors during the early stages of the project, when no single person could relate positive accounts of his or her work as a supervisor. Success in improving schools through the specific role of SPE in Pakistan seems peculiarly rare.

Scrutiny of the language used in all the interview data reveals two concepts which appear to be of paramount importance to the supervisors in achieving professional competence: *sincerity* and *respect*. Even where personal *sincerity* to the task of education is assumed, it can still be undermined in a situation where *respect* is lacking. Where *respect* exists between professionals it is a powerful means to instigate endeavour and secure progress. The valuable long-term results of working through *respect* were starkly contrasted with the possibilities of achieving transitory effectiveness by imposing demands through exerting status or acting as a leader.

In all the life stories it became apparent that the individuals were *respected*, and showed *respect* for others, through their work as teachers, headteachers, learning coordinators or resource persons of mosque schools, but not as supervisors of primary education. The work with SPEDP appears to have given individual supervisors a means to gain *respect* through their work with teachers, but it has not been similarly effective in securing mutual *respect* between supervisors and their officers. The analysis of life stories has been especially useful in providing insight into the tensions, triumphs and tribulations of the supervisors' working lives. Additional studies of life stories from a broader cross-section of educational personnel could produce valuable research on the cultural complexities that face different professionals within the system as a whole.

Pakistan has a long history of appointing supervisory personnel, finding them inadequate, and then dismissing them in favour of a new cohort under a new name. Over the last twenty years some notable achievements by groups of supervisors have been recorded: resource persons established new mosque schools in under-schooled areas; learning coordinators in PEP provided on-the-job training for primary teachers; supervisors in SPEDP led developments in individual target schools and designed new training courses. Supervision has been described as 'the weak link' in the management of primary education (UNESCO 1984:65). However, my research suggests that, in Pakistan at least, a weaker link may lie between the supervisors and the education officers. If this link is to be strengthened, it will need to be forged in such a way that it sustains professional *respect* between the two groups.

### **The Macro Level**

At the macro level three models of supervisory practice were proposed: the guardian, the guide and the innovator. These in turn were mapped into international theories of school effectiveness and school improvement which influence the structure of educational reform programmes. These simple models could help to provide greater clarity in discussions of the role assigned to any supervisory cadre. Through making the expectations of the

role explicit at the outset there would be an increased chance that selection, training and appraisal might become more appropriate. Part of the problem for supervisors in Pakistan is that their superior officers assume they are guardians for directives from a central office; headteachers want them to be guides and helpers to assist within schools; and, through SPEDP, some have shown considerable personal skill as innovators defining the direction of progress throughout their area of influence.

Using these models to describe current trends in international work suggests that there is a belief in the guardian role as essential, the guide as desirable, and the innovators as a beneficial, but possibly unattainable, aspiration. Combining this belief with a trend towards decentralisation and delegation of more decision-making to individual schools, it appears that community members may be expected to take on the guardian role, inspecting schools and reporting on what they see, while headteachers are set to expand their roles to act as guides to better classroom practice, possibly supplemented by learning coordinators. The danger here is that the innovator role is left out of the scenario altogether. Without innovators the development of the education sector may be impeded and the whole system continue to stagnate. The role of innovative supervisors outside both the school culture and the centralised bureaucracy is difficult, but powerful.

After twenty years of exploring and experimenting with modes of supervision, Pakistan is well placed to lead the world in explicitly developing the role of local supervisors as educational innovators alongside the increased involvement of headteachers, learning coordinators and community members in guiding practice and guarding standards in individual schools. If this opportunity is ignored, then the education of individual children and the political aspiration for an educated nation, may both rely more on chance than on strategic planning attuned to local needs.

# 11 Appendices

## APPENDIX A

### Job Descriptions for Supervisors and Learning Coordinators In PEP2, 1991

#### JOB DESCRIPTION OF SUPERVISOR PRIMARY EDUCATION (SPE) SINDH (PEP2)

1. Department : Education
2. Job title : Supervisor Primary Education and ASDEO
3. Job Grade : BPS - 15
4. Reporting to : SDEO
5. Reporting to job-holder : Learning Coordinator, Headmaster, Headmistress.
6. Overall Purpose : To oversee the proper implementation of education in the schools of his districts and the management of those schools.
7. **Main Functions**
  - 1.1 Regular visits to schools for collection of required data.
  - 1.2 Maintain a record of the qualifications of teacher in his/her beat.
  - 1.3 Maintain a record of the list of schools and their addresses.
  - 1.4 Maintain a record of number of teachers in his/her jurisdiction.
  - 1.5 Inform SDEO about the shortage of teachers in any school.
  - 1.6 Keep a record of enrolment in each school and in all the schools.
  - 1.7 Maintain a record of physical facilities available to each school in his beat.
  - 1.8 Maintain examination records of pupils appeared and passed each year for each school separately and also maintain cumulative record.
  - 1.9 Collect admission data during the month of April (now August) regarding each school and send it to the SDEO.

- 1.10 Grant casual leave to teachers.
- 1.11 Forward cases for transfer of teachers, GPF advance, joining reports of new teachers to appropriate SDEOs.
- 1.12 Verify materials with the entry in Dead Stock register of the school.
- 1.13 Verify attendance of teachers from Teacher Muster Roll and attendance of pupils from class attendance register.
- 1.14 Send proposals for meeting the shortage of teachers, furniture, building and teaching materials to appropriate SDEOs.
- 1.15 Keep a record of the teachers who are trained, those who are untrained, those who have undergone an inservice course and plan for inservice training of teachers on a no cost basis.
- 1.16 Conduct and prepare reports on enquiry matters assigned by SDEO.
- 1.17 Contact SDEO and other authorities for academic support.
- 1.18 Supervise the work of Learning Coordinators, assist them by visiting troubled schools for extra support and organize local level training for primary teachers through Learning Coordinators.
- 1.19 Organize process evaluation and synthesize results on an on-going basis for decision-making.

### **Academic**

- 1.20 Visit each primary school on turn basis.
- 1.21 Check the availability of curriculum reports on each subject, national teaching kits, a set of teachers' guides, prescribed textbooks.
- 1.22 Ensure/verify the use of teaching kits in the actual classroom teaching.
- 1.23 Possess a list of prescribed books for each subject at the primary level.
- 1.24 Bring on notice the use of unauthorised books and ensure their removal from the school after use.
- 1.25 Help teachers in planning their scheme of work on monthly or on full academic year basis.



- 1.26 Assess the pupils on course content taught by the teachers.
- 1.27 Observe teachers while they are teaching in actual classroom situations: discuss the presentation of topics with teachers observed; identify sources from where teachers might obtain professional support.
- 1.28 Devise the plan of examination for the schools within his/her jurisdiction and notify the same to each school; constitute a committee/committees for holding exams and ensure the conduct of examinations for each school during the scheduled programme.

### **Community Development**

- 1.29 Identify the needs of the community where the schools are situated.
- 1.30 Prepare a case study for each school, including a description of its vicinity, type of villagers, customs and estimates on current and future enrolment.
- 1.31 Contact community members of villages during visits to the schools and attend parent-teachers meetings organized by the schools to help build good community relations.
- 1.32 Help teachers in obtaining community support for solving problems.
- 1.33 Organize meetings of heads of schools.

- 8. Minimum Qualifications: Graduate with degree in teaching.
- 9. Minimum Experience: A High School Teacher with any experience can be transferred and appointed as SPE/ASDEO.
- 10. Age: Age not determined.
- 11. Sex: Either
- 12. Other:

## JOB DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING COORDINATOR SINDH (PEP2)

1. Department : Education
2. Job title : Learning Co-ordinator
3. Job Grade : BPS - 11
4. Reporting to : ASDEO/SDEO
5. Reporting to job-holder : Headmaster/ Headmistress Primary Schools
6. Overall Purpose : To improve the Standard of Instruction in the Schools in his area of responsibility.
7. **Main Functions**
  - 1.1 To provide professional support and guidance to the Primary School Teachers.
  - 1.2 Observe Classroom instruction in the schools.
  - 1.3 To strengthen School Community relationship and persuade parents to get their children admitted in school in order to increase enrolment and reduce dropouts.
  - 1.4 To collect data at school level.
  - 1.5 To conduct 'C' level training at their centres.
  - 1.6 To provide on job training to teachers as a follow-up of 'C' level training.
  - 1.7 To distribute Learning Modules to the schools in his jurisdiction.
  - 1.8 To assist regular supervisor in conducting Annual Examination.
  - 1.9 To deliver Model lessons based on Learning Module.
8. Minimum Qualifications: Matric, P.T.C.
9. Minimum Experience: 5 years.
10. Age: 18-40 years.

11. Sex: Either

12. Other:

**JOB DESCRIPTION OF SUPERVISOR PRIMARY EDUCATION (SPE)  
BALOCHISTAN (PEP 2)**

1. Department : Education
2. Job title : Supervisors / ASDEO
3. Job Grade : BPS - 16
4. Reporting to : ASDEO /SDEO
5. Reporting to job-holder : Headmaster/ Headmistress.  
Primary/Mosque Schools.
6. Overall Purpose : Supervision/Inspection of Primary Schools
7. **Main Functions**
  - 1.1 He/She will guide the primary and mosque school teachers in the improvement of the quality of education.
  - 1.2 He/She will keep a guard against absentees in primary mosque schools.
  - 1.3 He/She along with the teacher will be responsible for increasing the student enrolment in the schools.
  - 1.4 He/She will establish good relationships with the community for the betterment of the schools in his/her jurisdiction.
  - 1.5 He/She will record impression in the log book of the school and report to the SDEO/ASDEO.
8. Minimum Qualifications: Graduate with degree in teaching (trained graduate).
9. Minimum Experience: A High School Teacher (HST) can be transferred and posted as Supervisor/ASDEO, with any number of years of experience.
10. Age: 25+
11. Sex: Either
12. Other:

**JOB DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING COORDINATORS  
BALOCHISTAN (PEP 2)**

1. Department : Education
2. Job title : L.C.O.
3. Job Grade : BPS - 11
4. Reporting to : SPE/ASDEO
5. Reporting to job-holder : Headmaster/ Headmistress and teachers of Primary Schools.
6. Overall Purpose : To improve the Standard of Instruction in the Schools in his Jurisdiction.
7. **Main Functions**
  - 1.1 To conduct local level training of 'C' level staff i.e. Primary teachers, in the use of teaching kits and learning modules.
  - 1.2 To assist teachers by providing guidance and demonstration lessons.
  - 1.3 To help Head teachers in their community work by identifying causes for non-attendance and organizing parent teachers meetings.
  - 1.4 To coordinate good relations between schools and the society.
  - 1.5 To collect and compile education statistics.
8. Minimum Qualifications: Matric, P.T.C.
9. Minimum Experience: At least five years as Primary Teacher.
10. Age: Less than 50 years.
11. Sex: Either
12. Other:

**Appendix B**                      **Proposed Job Descriptions for Supervisors and Learning Coordinators and SDEO of Sindh, 1996**

As published in:

The Instructions for the Management of Primary Schools Hyderabad: Schools directorate.

Compiled by Nizamuddin Memon, Director BCEW, using the 1947 Education Act for Administrative Duties and Marland & Wilson, ODA consultancy report, March 1994 as a basis for the academic duties.

**DUTIES & POWERS OF A SUPERVISOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

**Administrative**

- 1 To assist the sub-divisional education officer in the control and supervision of primary schools in his beat.
- 2 To examine or inspect private schools registered with the government, at least twice a year.
- 3 To pay frequent surprise visits to the schools for checking absenteeism and determining the quality of the work of teachers.
- 4 To examine in detail the various records maintained by the schools at the time of annual examinations or inspections such as attendance registers, collection of fees, disbursement of salaries etc. and to check articles of dead stock and school libraries and to make recommendations for the writing off of unserviceable articles.
- 5 To assess the requirement of schools in his beat as regards furniture, maps, accommodation, assistant masters, etc. and submit a consolidated indent of all requirements of the schools of his beat to the sub-divisional education officer.
- 6 To pay special attention to those points in schools which bear upon rural uplift.
- 7 To recommend to the sub-divisional education officer transfers of teachers with a view to bring about suitable adjustment of trained, qualified and unqualified teachers in their respective beats and to point out to the sub-divisional education officer the schools which are either under staffed or have teachers in excess of their requirement.
- 8 To keep a close watch upon the schools in their beats which may show a tendency to backwardness in average number on the rolls, average daily attendance and average standard of efficiency. To pay periodical visits to such schools for noting down the progress made from time to time and to appeal to the members of the local community for improvement of such schools.

- 9 To see the condition of new private schools and to make recommendation for their recognition, if justifiable.
- 10 To submit recommendations to the sub-divisional education officer for striking off the unserviceable articles in his office.
- 11 To submit to the sub-divisional education officer all monthly and periodical returns.
- 12 To perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the sub-divisional education officer or the district education officer.

### **Academic**

- 1 To evaluate the quality of the educational provision within primary schools regarding:
  - the quality of the teaching methodologies;
  - the assessment and record keeping policies;
  - the standards of consistency and continuity of children's achievements across the whole school and between schools.

Through:

- visiting schools to evaluate the whole school development;
  - regular feedback meetings with the learning coordinators, teachers and headteachers when appropriate;
  - organising in-service education for learning coordinators.
- 2 To provide advice to the headteacher on the management and development of the school.
  - 3 To ensure that appropriate planning is carried out by all teachers within the school in order to enable the effective delivery of the curriculum.
  - 4 To maintain an accurate record of data regarding the teachers, children and resources of the schools.
  - 5 To forward information to the sub-divisional education officer regarding any shortages or deficiencies within a school that affect the satisfactory delivery of the curriculum to all children.
  - 6 To monitor academic achievement of individual schools and provide feedback on their performance to the sub-divisional education officer.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION OF A LEARNING COORDINATOR**

### **Duties**

- To support the professional development of primary teachers, in order to improve their teaching skills, by:
  - \* Providing constructive advice and feedback through the use of regular observation of classroom practice recorded through an observation schedule/log book.
  - \* Planning and delivering demonstration lessons on any area of the primary curriculum.
  - \* Evaluating the quality of the children's achievements and using this information to guide the teacher in future planning.
  - \* Providing appropriate in-service training for teachers and headteachers, under the direction of the supervisors.
- To appraise primary school teachers in their classroom performance and, in conjunction with the headteacher, to advise them on their further professional development.
- To oversee the functioning of School Development Centres, where these are established.
- To provide an effective link between the primary school and the community so that each helps the other reach its goals and pursue parents to participate in the learning of their children.
- To assist supervisors in monitoring academic achievement of primary students and provide feedback on student performance.
- To disseminate information from the Directorate of Primary Education to the schools and from the schools to the Directorate, as required, through SPEs.



## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR, SDEO**

as published in:

The Instructions for the Management of Primary Schools : Schools Directorate Hyderabad 1996, compiled by Nizamuddin Memon. Source unknown.

### **A. DUTIES**

#### **1 General**

- 1 To be responsible for the general administration, inspection and Annual Examination of all Primary Schools in his jurisdiction.
- 2 To tour within his jurisdiction from time to time for a minimum of 200 days in a year and to submit a monthly tentative tour programme in the last week of the previous month with approval of the District Education Officer.
- 3 To make recommendations for opening of Branch Primary Schools to the Directorate through the District Education Officer.
- 4 To prepare draft scheme for expansion of Primary Education on lines indicated by the District Education Officer/Director.
- 5 To submit estimate of additional expenditure to the Directorate through the District Educational Officer.
- 6 To make recommendations regarding opening of new schools to the Government through the District Education Officer.
- 7 To arrange payment of salaries to all employees working under him on time.
- 8 To prepare and submit all monthly and periodical return, regarding enrolment, staff, maps furniture, class books, prize books, writing material, etc., to the District Education Officer.
- 9 To submit all monthly and periodical returns, regarding enrolment, staff, maps, furnitures, class books, prize books, writing material, etc., to the District Education Officer.
- 10 To maintain all prescribed registers and records pertaining to his office.
- 11 To submit the list of serviceable articles and their equipment, with recommendations for their disposal/removal or otherwise in the month of May every year.
- 12 To submit annual report and such other periodical returns and equipment, wit recommendation for their disposal/removal or

otherwise in the month of May every year.

- 13 To submit annual report and such other periodical returns as may be required by the Director or the District Education Officer from time to time.
- 14 To scrutinize Inspection Reports of the Primary Schools, take action thereon and submit copies of the Inspection Reports with his remarks to the District Education Officer.

### **B. OTHER DUTIES**

- 1 To write confidential reports on the performance of all Supervisors of Primary Education and Clerks of his Office.
- 2 To hold conferences of Primary teachers while on tour with a few to improving efficiency in their Schools and give them lecture on the principles of teaching and school management.
- 3 To hold annual inspection of the record of all Supervisors of Primary Education.
- 4 To make recommendations for striking off the unserviceable articles of his office to the District Education Officer, beyond his/her powers.
- 5 To submit an annual report on the functioning of Primary Schools under him to the District Education Officer with the Statistical Return in the prescribed proforma.
- 6 to submit any other information or returns as and when required by the District Education Officer.

### **POWERS**

- 1 To exercise all powers vested in appointing authority with respect to Primary School Teachers.
- 2 To transfer all teachers and inferior servants as per Government Policy.
- 3 To grant all kinds of leave to teachers and inferior staff.
- 4 To recommend to the District Education Officer the names of candidates for training.
- 5 To award Primary School Scholarships.
- 6 To adjust staff in Primary Schools in accordance with their needs from lump sum posts sanctioned by the government.
- 7 To increase or decrease rent of any school building within the budget

allotment of the year subject to the following conditions:

- i that the total expenditure on rent of all institutions taken together does not exceed the corresponding approved expenditure on rents of all these institutions in the previous year by more than 5 per cent; and
- ii that the increase in rent is certified to be reasonable by the Government Executive Engineer.

- 8 To adjust monthly school fixed contingencies in accordance with the scale laid down with the approval of the Director subject to the condition that the total expenditure on contingencies of all institutions taken together does not exceed the corresponding approved expenditure on contingencies for all these institutions in previous year by more than 5 per cent.

### **OTHER POWERS**

- 1 To sanction casual leave to Supervisors of Primary Education/ Resource Persons and clerks.
- 2 To recommend to the District Education Officer leave other than casual leave to SPEs, RPs and clerks.
- 3 To recommend to the District Education Officer the correction/change in names and date of birth along with reasons of such correction change.
- 4 To declare one holiday for a School after the annual examination/inspection.

Appendix C

Questionnaire and Inventory for Supervisors

Why?

Name ..... M/F sub-division .....

1 Qualifications .....

2 Experience

Number of years in each job:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PST	JST	RPMS	LC	HT	HST	SPE	other

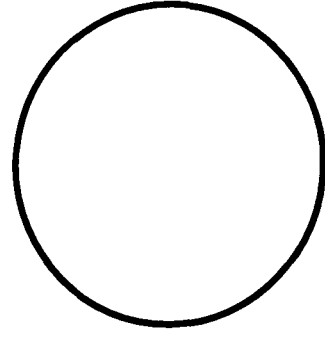
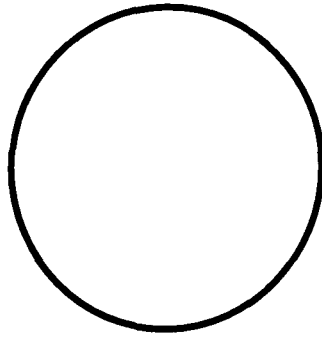
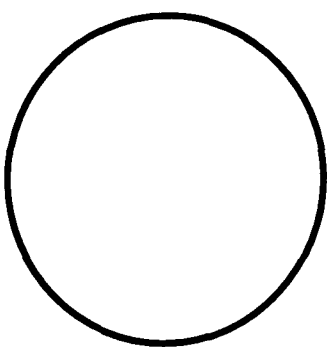
3 Training

Which SPEDP courses have you attended? Tick the boxes:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RP	MT 1	SPE1	MT2	SPE2	SPE3

4 Are you a master trainer? Y/N subject .....

5 How much of your working time is spent as an **advisor V**  
**inspector I**  
**administrator M**  
**outside education O**



2 years ago  
1992

now  
1994

preferred  
?

4 What aspect of your work do you feel you are best at? Why?

.....

.....

.....

5 What aspect of your work do you feel you need to develop? Why?

.....

.....

.....

## Self Evaluation Inventory for SPE

Circle the appropriate number for each question:

5 all the time; 4 often; 3 quite often; 2 sometimes; 1 occasionally; 0 never.

### personal qualities

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 I communicate clearly through writing and speaking. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 I listen to other people's views with respect       | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 I work well with others                             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 I can take on a leadership role                     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

### primary school curriculum

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 I enjoy working with children   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 6 I know the aims and objectives of every subject                                     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 7 I can demonstrate a range of effective learning activities for each age and subject | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 8 I try out new learning activities in the classroom                                  | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

### relationship with teachers

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 I know the teachers in my beat schools           | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 10 I observe lessons & offer constructive feedback | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 11 I help teachers evaluate themselves             | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 12 I help teachers to feel confident and motivated | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

### commitment to schools

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 I keep my schools well informed of what other schools are doing | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 14 I help to improve the working conditions                        | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 15 I help the headteacher to set realistic goals                   | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 16 I encourage schools to use the environment fully                | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

### planning development

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 I help teachers plan, carry out and evaluate classroom initiatives | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 18 I provide appropriate training for teachers                        | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 19 I provide ways for teachers to share ideas                         | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 20 I regard difficulties as problems to be solved                     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

### wider community

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 I hold meetings for parents                      | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 22 I help parents to understand the school aims     | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 23 I help schools make more use of the community    | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 24 I take an active part in civic and local matters | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

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