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WHAT RICE FARMERS OF CAMARINES SUR SAY
THEY WANT FROM THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT

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SEE ESP. n. 9, p. 15

ABSTRACT. A basic assumption of both the Bicol River Basin Development Program and its Social Survey Research Unit is the primacy of "people development." It is taken as given that regional progress is primarily the development of thinking human beings who have learned to participate in decisions that affect their destiny. As a consequence of this orientation, the first major research activity of the SSRU (in October 1973) included an inquiry into what the average rice farmer of Camarines Sur wanted from the Philippine government. It was discovered that, above all, he wants better water-management, more widespread land reform, and more non-farm employment opportunities. He shows notably less interest in such programs as electrification and family planning. In these expressed preferences a near-consensus is discernible.

To be properly oriented, regional development activities must take their direction neither totally from the planners nor exclusively from the people. They must proceed from both.

For if plans and programs are based purely on the consensus of the common man, with no additions, deletions, or changes of emphasis by those specially trained for the task, the resulting development scheme will almost certainly be characterized by an immoderate concern for the immediate, both in time and space, and too little awareness of the roots and causes of the region's problems.

This research report is based principally on findings made in the SSRU's Quick-Look Survey 1 (mid-October 1973). For a technical summary of QL1, see SSRU Research Activity Summary, No. 1, available on request from the SSRU. The author is director of the SSRU.

This will be so because ordinary people, by and large, attach more importance to the present and near future than they do to what may happen, say, five or ten years hence. Similarly, the meaningful world is for them what they can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and travel over--the land, water, plants, animals, artifacts, and fellow human beings, high and low, in their immediate environment. Finally, when they think of problems that need solving, what come to mind are symptoms, not diseases--effects, not causes. High prices, low wages, and unemployment are for economists the tip of an iceberg; for the common man they are almost all that matters. For regional purposes, most people make poor planners.

Program specialists, on the other hand, are skilled at tasks such as these. Their problem comes rather from an unconscious tendency, ever in need of restraint, to mistake important means for essential ends. For in the single-minded pursuit of national or regional growth they will continually be tempted to by-pass dialogue with the people involved to "get on with the business at hand." Yet to take this tack would be to miss the chance to achieve, at least in some small fashion, what is basic for any genuine regional progress--the development in the most human sense of the people living there. By not taking into account the opinion of the average person, by not giving him his say and listening to what he says, finding means to discuss with him in reasonable manner the advantages and disadvantages of the programs he suggests, the planner dooms himself to what must, on serious reflection, be judged a sterile exercise. For regional progress is either the development of thinking human beings who have learned to participate in decisions that affect their destiny--or it is really nothing.

This paramount emphasis on people is essential to the philosophy behind the Bicol River Basin Development Program. Progress is seen as the expected outcome of joint action taken on grounds of a continual, dynamic dialectic between people and planners. To be sure, both the BRBDP and the people

start with their own norms and measures for growth, some flexible, others relatively fixed. As the dialogue is joined, however, agreements and differences will hopefully be seen and recognized, and, as the situation demands, rejoiced over or resolved. From this interaction should come the genuine growth the BRBDP hopes to promote.

The role of the Social Survey Research Unit in this dialogue is that of a middleman, an interpreter. For in addition to its function as an evaluator and monitor of program activities, the SSRU is meant to be the people's voice. If it is to be this in fact, it must find or create the means whereby ordinary people can talk with the planners, as it were, and exchange ideas with them. In this way, it is hoped, the Bicol River Basin Development Program will become as well the Bicolanos' River Basin Development Program.

An initial step in the desired direction was taken when the SSRU tried to find out, among other things, which programs the average rice farmer thought should be given priority in government plans. These questions were part of the SSRU's first major research activity, Quick-Look Survey 1, conducted in mid-October 1973 in the province of Camarines Sur.¹

The remainder of this paper concerns the results of that inquiry. Discussed in turn are the background and farming characteristics of the farmers who were interviewed, how they were selected, some of their aspirations, and their program priorities. Selected conclusions and a brief discussion close the text. An appendix, giving details about QL1 too technical for inclusion in the text, closes the report.

¹The technical details of this survey (QL1) will be found in SSRU Research Activity Summary, No. 1, available on request from the SSRU.

THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

General Characteristics

1. The people we interviewed (almost always in Bicol) can be briefly described in two sets of phrases, the first of which applies to all of them; the second, to most of them.

Everyone we interviewed is:

- a. A resident of Camarines Sur;
- b. A rice farmer who was cultivating at least one parcel of land in October 1973; and
- c. A household head.

Almost everyone we interviewed is:

- a. Married (92 percent);
- b. Male (98 percent); and a
- c. Mother-tongue speaker of Bicol (95 percent).

2. The average (median) age of these respondents is about 44 years; their average (median) education an incomplete elementary course, or fewer than six years of formal study. See Table RS01.01.
3. The 579 married respondents have an average of about five living children, but the range is from 0-14, as follows: 0-2 children, 17 percent; 3-6, 42 percent; 7-10, 36 percent; and 11-14, 5 percent.
4. If we use the materials of which their houses are constructed (strong, light, mixed) as a very rough indicator of their socioeconomic status, then we can think of these respondents as divided into three subgroups: "upper class" (14 percent), "middle class" (32 percent), and "lower class" (54 percent).

Table RSO1.01. QL1 rice-farmer respondents classified by major group criterion and by subgroupings (Camarines Sur, mid-October 1973)

Group criterion	Subgroupings ^a
Respondent class	A (137); B (150); C (136); D (177)
District	Sipocot (85); Naga (100); Magarao (100); Milaor (112); Goa (102); Iriga (101)
Age (in years)	15-24 (18); 25-34 (121); 35-44 (168); 45-54 (143); 55 or over (150)
Educational attainment	None (49); Incomplete elementary (318); Elem. grad./some HS (170); HS grad./some coll. (57); Coll. grad. (6)
No. of living children	0-2 (120); 3-6 (240); 7-10 (120); 11-14 (30)
House materials	Strong (87); mixed (189); light (324)

^aThe total number of respondents is in all cases 600.

5. The study area in which the farmer-respondents live comprises all of Camarines Sur except the Caramoan Peninsula (specifically not included are the municipalities of Caramoan, Garchitorena, Presentacion, and Siruma).

For a list of the poblaciones and barrios included in this study and an explanation of how they were chosen, the reader is referred to paragraphs 7 and 11 in Appendix A.

The Selection Process

6. How were the respondents selected, and whom do they represent? More than two-thirds of the farmers described above were randomly selected from lists we got from Municipal Development Officers, Production Technicians, and/or Farm Management Technicians in the municipalities of the study area. The lists were of two kinds: Samahang Nayon members, and members of particular compact farms. From these two lists we derived three, calling those on the first list our Class A population; those on the second, Class B; and those on the third, Class C, as follows:

Population class	N	Members of
A	736	Samahang Nayon <u>and</u> compact farm
B	1881	Compact farm
C	1541	Samahang Nayon
Total N	4158	

7. A fourth population class (D), the size of which is estimated at 8316, consists of those farmers whose names would come to mind if members of population Classes A, B, and C were each asked to identify rice-farmer acquaintances who lived near them but were members of neither the Samahang Nayon nor a compact farm.²
8. The respondents, then, directly represent the members of the compact farms and Samahang Nayon in the particular poblaciones and barrios we studied, along with their neighbor-acquaintances who belonged to neither

²The estimated size of population Class D is based on the experience with sample Classes A, B, and C: asked to name Class-D-type farmers, they mentioned an average of two.

organization--12,474 people in all. Indirectly, the farmers we interviewed are representative of all Class A, B, C, and D people in the study area, who number about 91,000.³

The sample of 600 is 5 percent of the directly represented population. Findings we report here must be understood as correct within 6 percent, plus or minus (the so-called sampling error). This range of error would hold (if new samples were drawn) in 19 out of 20 studies (reliability level, 0.05). For the details of sampling error by population class and district, see no. 11 in Appendix A.

Farming Characteristics

9. More than half (56 percent) of the respondents were cultivating only one parcel of riceland during the current crop season. Another 28 percent were farming a second parcel, while a minority of 16 percent reported from three to seven parcels.

Especially likely to be farming only one parcel were farmers from the Goa district (78 percent; 0.001), members of Class D (68 percent; 0.01), and those of lower socioeconomic status (62 percent; 0.05).⁴ Members of Classes A and B were especially likely to have two or more parcels (71 and 73 percent, respectively; 0.01).

³As of October 1973 there were about 18,000 Samahang Nayan members and about the same number of compact farm members in the study area. In terms of our Classes they were divided (our estimate) as follows: A, 5452; B, 12,600; C, 12,240; and D, 60,548; total, 90,876.

⁴The percentage given in parentheses refers to the number of respondents of the named category who possess the characteristic being discussed. Unless otherwise mentioned, the figure that follows (here, 0.05 for example) is the level of significance of association indicated by the

10. Referring either to his only parcel of riceland, or to one selected randomly from several for purposes of discussion, the average respondent reported the following:

- a. The size of this sample parcel is 0.72 hectares;⁵
- b. The riceland is generally either irrigated (49 percent) or rainfed (46 percent), rarely upland (2 percent) or farmed in several ways (4 percent).
- c. The median per-hectare gross harvest is reported as 56.60 cavans of palay for irrigated land, 42.70 for rainfed, and 25.00 for upland. Overall, the median is 49.24 cavans per hectare.
- d. This sample parcel is most often (85 percent of cases) found in the barrio where the respondent lives. In all but 4 percent of the cases it is in the same municipality.

Chi-square test for k independent samples. Significance of association refers to the likelihood of a particular relationship, found in the sample, having occurred by chance in the sample draw, and not really being present in the population. The 0.05 here means that in this case it could have occurred by chance in only one out of 20 sample draws. For 0.01, the odds would be one out of 100; for 0.001, one out of 1000. We do not report levels higher than 0.05 because, with most others, we (arbitrarily) consider such an association nonsignificant, that is, too likely to be due to chance.

⁵This is the median area. The mean figure of .97 hectares would be misleading in the present instance, since it results from the presence in the sample of a relatively small number of very large parcels. The Coefficient of Variation (standard deviation divided by mean) for these area data is a very high .70. For similar reasons, the median is used in paragraph 10c, above. Details of parcel sizes and harvests will be found in "SSRU Research Report Series," No. 2: Rice-farm practices in Camarines Sur: Do compact farms, Masagana 99, and the Samahang Nayon make a difference?

- e. In slightly fewer than half the cases (46 percent) an M99 loan has been obtained for the sample parcel.

Especially likely to have obtained loans, were, of course, farmers belonging to Classes A and B, since compact-farm membership is a prerequisite for M99 loans. Those with at least a complete high school education also tended more than others to have gotten loans (62 percent; 0.02). No preference is evident for farmers on grounds of district, kind of house materials, age, or number of children.

- f. However, in only 17 percent of cases is the respondent aware of any written farm plan and budget for his sample parcel.

Significantly higher percentages were recorded for the Sipocot, Naga, and Goa Districts (29, 22, and 22 percent, respectively; 0.001), for Classes A and B (33 and 28 percent; 0.01), and for high school graduates (29 percent; 0.02).

11. Asked what they considered themselves to be at present, respondents selected the following categories.

Current status	N	Percent
Owner-cultivator, landlord	122	20%
Amortizing owner	17	3
Lessee	116	19
Share tenant	291	49
Combinations	51	8
Don't know	3	1
Total	600	100%

Especially high percentages for the owner categories (first two rows, above, totaling 23 percent) were found in the Milaor, Iriga, and Naga Districts (29, 27, and 26 percent, respectively, 0.05), in Classes B and D (28 and 30 percent, respectively; 0.01), among high school graduates (51 percent; 0.02), older farmers (45-54 years, 26 percent; 55 and over, 36 percent; 0.02), and those of higher socioeconomic status (54 percent; 0.001).

SELECTED ASPIRATIONS AND ATTITUDES

12. On the other hand, the great majority (73 percent) of respondents say they would like to be landowners. This tendency is so widespread that all kinds of respondents show about the same desire for this status. One exception occurs in that high school graduates have a higher percentage of aspirants than those with less education (82 vs. 71 percent; 0.02).

Of those 139 respondents already in an owner category, all but 12 elected to remain in that status. Of the 407 who are share tenants or lessees, the majority would also choose ownership status, but a sizeable number prefer a dependent role. Here are the percentages.

Current status	Percentage choosing to be:				Total N
	Owner	Lessee	Share tenant	Other	
Lessee	72	23	1	4	116
Share tenant	65	16	15	4	291
Total (%)	67	18	11	4	407

13. Asked to comment on the desirability of being a landowner, on the one hand, or a tenant or lessee with security of tenure, on the other, 61 percent of respondents say that ownership is preferable, despite the responsibilities it entails. But 37 percent opt for security of tenure. No significant differences occur.
14. Asked to comment on the desirability of staying in a well-known community, despite economic hardship, or trying a new start elsewhere, only 21 percent are for moving out.

However, high school graduates (46 percent; 0.02), members of the upper socioeconomic subgrouping (34 percent; 0.01), and farmers of the Goa and Iriga Districts (32 and 35 percent respectively; 0.01) take the adventurous position more frequently than others. Members of the Samahang Nayon are least inclined to try a new start elsewhere (16 percent; 0.05).

15. Asked whether or not, all things considered, they would say they were content with the general state of their family, 86 percent replied that they were.

Notably satisfied were farmers from Sipocot District (92 percent; 0.01). Outstanding for the frequency of their negative replies were Iriga respondents (only 73 percent content; 0.01) and those who had completed elementary school but not high school (79 percent; 0.02).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

16. Eleven government programs, nine of them presently included in the Bicol River Basin Development Program and two added by the SSRU, were submitted to the farmer-respondents for appraisal.

From the BRBDP we took the following:

- a. Water-management ("Build more irrigation and flood control projects");⁶
- b. Land reform ("Help more farmers become landowners");
- c. Credit ("Credit for more farmers");
- d. Samahang Nayon ("Form more Samahang Nayon ");
- e. Road construction ("Build more roads");
- f. Transportation ("More regular bus service");
- g. Compact farming ("Form more compact farms");
- h. Electrification ("Electricity for more towns and barrios"); and
- i. Family planning ("More family-planning clinics").

The SSRU added these two:

- j. Non-farm employment ("More daily-wage jobs for farmers when they are not fully occupied with farm work"); and
- k. Free high schools ("More free high schools").

17. Each project was briefly described on a flash card given to the respondent. He was then asked to compare each project in turn with every other one, considering the question, "Of these two programs, which should the government undertake first?"
18. The rank order of preferences and proportion of positive choices expressed by the farmers are shown in Table RSO1.02.

Agreement on rank order is significant among all groupings--whether subdivided by respondent class, by district, by age, by educational attainment, by number of living children, or by socioeconomic status (0.01 or 0.001 by the Kendall coefficient of concordance W).

⁶The sentence or phrase in parentheses is the expression of the project as it appeared in English and Bikol on the flash cards presented to respondents during the interview.

Most notable is the consistently high place given to water management, which is not only always first, but also significantly higher than its nearest competitor, land reform.

Table RSO1.02. Rank order and proportion of positive choices expressed by rice-farmer respondents for selected development programs (Camarines Sur, mid-October 1973)

Development Program	Rank order	Proportion of positive choices ^a	Number of respondents
Build more irrigation and flood control projects	1	.79	600
Help more farmers become landowners	2	.66	600
More daily-wage jobs for farmers when they are not fully occupied with farm work	3	.61	600
More free high schools	4	.53	600
Credit for more farmers	5	.49	600
Form more Samahang Nayon	6	.47	300 ^b
Build more roads	8	.43	600
More regular bus service	8	.43	600
Form more compact farms	8	.43	263 ^b
Electricity for more towns and barrios	10	.33	600
More family-planning clinics	11	.28	600

^aThe proportion of positive choices is defined as the actual number of times a particular program was chosen over another, divided by the maximum possible number of times it could have been so chosen.

^bRespondents who could not pass a test calling for basic understanding of the Samahang Nayon and a compact farm were not asked to compare these programs with the others. For details see no. 15 in Appendix A.

19. Some differences within respondent groupings are worthy of comment (the test applied was that for the difference of proportions).

- a. Land reform interests Magarao District farmers (proportion favorable, .73) significantly more than it does the farmers from Iriga (.57). Significance level is 0.05.
- b. Non-farm jobs are significantly (0.05) more attractive to farmers with an incomplete elementary education (.63) than they are to those who are high school graduates (.49).
- c. Credit is rated higher (0.05) by Naga District farmers (.57) than it is by those from Sipocot (.41).
- d. Electrification interests farmers of the Magarao District (.21) less than it does their fellow farmers from Sipocot (.34), Naga (.41), Milaor (.35), or Iriga (.35). All differences are significant at least at the 0.05 level.
- e. Family planning shows differences in preference by education and by age, but not by number of living children.

Thus farmers with no formal education show only minimal interest (.15) in family planning, compared with elementary (.34) and high school (.36) graduates; elementary graduates also show a stronger preference for family planning than do those who never finished grade school (.25). All differences are significant at least at the 0.05 level.

Among age groups the most concerned about family planning are farmers who are 25-34 (.39) or 35-44 (.37) years old; they give more frequent positive replies than do the 45-54 (.21) or 55-and-over (.15) age groups. All differences are significant at the 0.01 level.

However, only for the 35-44 year olds and the elementary school graduates does family planning succeed in moving out of 11th place. For these subgroupings it is in 10th place, ahead of electrification.

CONCLUSIONS

Since conclusions emerge from the fusion of findings, on the one hand, and, on the other, selected assumptions, premises, goals, previously known facts, and similar available information, the series of conclusions one might conceivably derive from a study's findings is bounded only by the abundance or scarcity of these latter inputs. For reasons of economy and emphasis, we restrict ourselves to six such statements.

Before he considers them, the reader is reminded that the validity of these conclusions is conditional in two ways. First, as with any conclusion, the truth of those that follow depends on the truth of the findings and other elements on which they are based. Second, because of the known range of sampling error involved, all the overall findings derived from this particular study should be taken as correct only within 6 percent, plus or minus.

They are also conditional in a third way. They are subject to modification by new data, and to expansion or supplanting by more important conclusions based on premises, objectives, or facts other than those used in putting together this particular set of statements. The reader's corrections and other contributions will be welcomed.⁷

⁷Because of the need to issue this report as quickly as possible, the director of the SSRU decided, perhaps unwisely, to short-circuit the ideal prepublication discussion of findings described in SSRU Announcements Series, No. 1. Thus while this published version of the report benefited from the comments of Director B.V. Gaon of BRBDP's Plans and Programs division, it does not incorporate the views and interpretations of Director S. P. Pejo of the Social Infrastructure division, who is most directly concerned with the subject matter of the conclusions. This is an unfortunate shortcoming.

20. The M99 program is benefiting good credit risks significantly more often than poor credit risks.

This conclusion is suggested by the fact that Class A and B respondents --90 percent of whom have M99 loans--have two or more parcels of rice-land significantly more often than do farmers without M99 loans (compare paragraphs 9 and 10e, above). The relative financial stability of M99 borrowers is confirmed by a fact recorded in SSRU Research Report Series, No. 2: the median size of the irrigated sample parcel reported by M99 borrowers is significantly larger (0.001) than that reported by non-borrowers.

21. Relatively few M99 borrowers have recently (if ever) had the learning experience implicit in the making of a farm plan and budget.

This conclusion follows from the fact that only one out of three, or fewer, of Class A and B respondents are aware of any written farm plan and budget for their sample parcels (paragraph 10f). It is confirmed by the fact, reported in SSRU Research Report Series, No. 2, that only 22 percent of A-B respondents actually participated in making a farm plan and budget for their sample parcel.

22. Official statements to the contrary notwithstanding, about half the rice farmers of Comarines Sur still identify themselves as share tenants.

Reference is to paragraph 11, above. For Samahang Nayon members the figure is 52 percent.

23. The desire for landownership, while widespread among those who now call themselves lessees or share tenants, is by no means universal. One cannot assume a priori that a particular non-owner wants to own land. He may just want security of tenure.

For many rice farmers, it seems, the relative benefits of being a land-owner have yet to be proven. Twenty-eight percent of lessees and 35 percent of share tenants remain unconvinced. Security of tenure,

dependent though it be, is for them more important than owning the land.
See paragraphs 12 and 13.

24. Rice farmers of Camarines Sur are generally content with the overall state of affairs in which they find themselves at present. Moreover, even if they felt economically depressed they would probably be reluctant to move away to some promising new residential site.

See and compare paragraphs 14 and 15, above.

25. The single most important conclusion to be drawn from the findings reported above is perhaps this, that there exists a near-consensus among rice farmers of Camarines Sur regarding what they want from the government.

They want, above all, better irrigation and flood control, more widespread land reform, and more non-farm employment opportunities.

After that, they want more free high schools, credit for more farmers, and more Samahang Nayon.

Next, they want better roads, more regular bus transportation, and more compact farms.

Finally, and in last place, they want more widespread electrification and more family-planning clinics.

DISCUSSION

The low priority which the farmers place on road construction, electrification, and family planning seems at first glance to be an illustration of the shortsightedness of the average man as a regional planner, referred to in the introduction to this report.

Nonetheless, two considerations are suggested, the first of which accepts road construction as a high-priority goal, while the second raises one small doubt regarding the proven need for an intensive family planning program in the Bicol River Basin area at this time.

- a. The fact that non-farm wage employment scores so high (third place) and better roads so low (eighth place) suggest the possibility of the BRBDP's gaining popular support for its road-construction plans by adopting a labor-intensive approach to the program. If large numbers of farmers are given non-farm jobs as road-construction workers, they will probably show increasing approval of this essential government effort.
- b. While it is likely that a family-planning program is needed now in Bicolandia, and likely as well that the disinterest of the average farmer in family planning derives from the usual folk lukewarmness toward such proposals (generally affirmative, but most often stopping short of acceptance), another possibility should be entertained. This is, that a drastic reduction in the birth or net-reproduction rate, while imperative for the nation at large, may not yet be called for in certain regions of the Philippines, such as this one, at the present stage of their development.

At least one United Nations development-communications officer has posed this question, and it deserves an answer. For if in the foreseeable future a large family-labor pool will benefit the Bicol River Basin area, the low rating presently given to family planning may fit the present situation better than we think. In any event, if the data exist to sketch the population picture peculiar to the BRBDP's target area, they should be assembled and the question answered. If the data are not at hand, the SSRU might help to gather them.

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