

CHAPTER 6

IMPACT AND PROBLEMS

Introduction

This chapter deals with the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme including the problems faced by the farmers. The discussion revolves around the following issues: lease tenure and tenurial security; economic impact; social impact relating to relocation, customs and traditions; role of the support services, farm management and operation. Some of them have been discussed in Chapter 2 and 5.

Basically the materials presented in this chapter were derived from the open-ended questions in Appendix D. These were collated with supporting data from relevant office files (of NLTB and DAF) and the landowners' experiences. The data's reliability has been discussed in Section 4.6. First-hand information from those involved with the scheme in the 1960s was hard to obtain. However the officials who were interviewed greatly assisted the interviewer.

For example, The Acting General Manager, NLTB (Suva) stated that the Indo-Fijians were, initially, not considered for resettlement in the scheme and there was not any clear criteria for settler selection. Some from the islands, via traditional connections and their provincial officers, had made contact by radio-telephone for selection (refer Subsection 3.3.6). Application forms had been sent out with enough time for sending them in. It was the country's first attempt at such a programme but the experience had helped to provide the guidelines for the formulation of future development scheme planning. There is now greater cooperation amongst the participating agencies (refer Subsection 3.5.1) and overseas aid or investment have become an integral part of development packages.

Basically the leaseholders consider themselves as commercial farmers aspiring for economic independence and wealth while maintaining traditional ties with their villages. They make compromises sacrificing the lesser important socio-cultural obligations to minimize time used in such activities for pursuing their farming goals. Such decisions are necessary (and understood by their relations) also for economizing cash incomes, farm produces and traditional exchange items. The general view is that the upkeep of these practices is a socio-cultural

investment in itself for their children's future. Recent political changes since the 1987 Military Coups further enhance the observance of customs and traditions. The current situation is summed up by Ravuvu (1988, 194) when he states that the powers of the Fijian chiefs have increased and the regaining

of the paramountcy of Fijian interests and village institutions is their objective and that of all traditionalists. Indirectly this affects the farmers' lives since the strict observance of customs and traditions means greater out-flow of farming returns and produces to unproductive non-farm activities.

The primary advantage of the scheme is the opportunity to lease and utilize economically one's own piece of land. Following are the advantages collated from the field survey: better education of their children; enough cash return (from a source of income more regular than in the village); knowledge and experience of better farming techniques; business experience and maturity; greater access to government and other support services; and access to economic or other employment opportunities.

Practically the list typifies the problems of the outer islands and less accessible regions. Their relocation to Lomaivuna has fulfilled many of their aspirations. This finding is attributed to the overwhelming dominance of the survey (77%) and the scheme by leaseholders from peripheral areas. Most of them considered the scheme as a way to a better future, probably more prosperous than in the village.

6.2 Individual Landholding and Lease Tenancy

Overton (1987, 195) states that successful peasants in all countries have been individualistic and the more individualistic they are, the more successful they get. Spate (1959, 9), Burns et al. (1960, 126), Ward (1959), Watters (1961) and Frazer

(1973) all supported this view. It advocates the change to individual land ownership as a possible solution to economic development. Contrarily, Lasaga (1973, 303 - 305) disagrees stating that such a change is difficult since it affects the very root and culture of Fijians.

Although new and untraditional, individual Fijians were attracted to the experience of leasing a block of land. Legal rights and sole authority through their lease titles are better than the customary practice of the village. A 30-year lease lasts a leaseholder's best years and it is possible that one in the household may take over provided the traditional landowners agree to further lease renewal. The leaseholders are also limited in some way by the conditions set in the lease agreement. For instance, no new development should be done on the land without consulting the traditional landowners who can demand the return of their land. However the NLTB, which acts as a buffer between the two parties, makes the final decision as to what is to be done over any lease.

6.2.1 Security of Tenure

The current thirty-year lease is quite valuable economically if farmers make full use of the opportunity. The assumption is that for pioneer settlers, it has been useful to two generations of leaseholders. The average age of the original settlers was thirty years (Field Survey, 1989). If this is considered with male Fijians' average life expectation at birth of 61 years (BSF, 1989), nearly 60% of the lease titles would have changed

hands before expiry/renewal.

The farmers have reason to be concerned about their households' future in Lomaivuna in relation to expiry of lease titles. Overton (1987, 149) had noted the problems of non-renewal and eviction in Lomaivuna and Waibau against which he suggested 'forced renewal' as a solution. As this would affect Fijians' rights over their land, it might be hard to implement politically, more so today than in the past (due to the recent rise of the traditionalists).

The problem of renewal/extension of lease tenure is reflected in the views of three interviewees, two of them 'heads' of landowning units which have a total of 230.85 hectares in the scheme. At least 50 farms are located on their land. They maintained that the leaseholders (via NLTB or DAF) still owed them over \$18,000.00 in accumulated rent arrears. The lack of action for its recovery, sale of farms, the low rental charges and the lack of compensation for damages done to gardens and resources during the scheme's initial development have disappointed them tremendously. They agreed that the leaseholders have been exploiting the situation for quick financial returns and are convinced that the Government, as the initial lease guarantor, should be responsible for repaying all arrears and not simply writing them off.

The interviewees revealed that the approval for the use of their land in the scheme was not sought. They maintained that the NLTB had exploited their traditional respect for chiefs and authority by taking their approval for granted. Furthermore

no document was signed by them. One of them with 64.8 hectares in the scheme was not even informed to attend the meeting in the village with two NLTB representatives. Although young at the time, he should be in attendance as the head of a landowning unit.

Land rental, to most landowners, is a non-issue because it is too uneconomical being based on 'fixed schedules' and not market values (Overton 1987, 149). The NLTB's rent distribution policy gives more to the chiefs (refer to Chapter 2). A very small proportion per capita is received by the majority (the commoner-landowners). Land has become a highly valuable and marketable commodity in the country but the Lomaivuna landowners have very little to show for the commercialization of their land. Today the importance of land as an economic asset is common knowledge to all. According to Overton (1987, 114), it has resulted in the declining land exchanges between landowning units, individuals of different landowning units or relatives under the traditional system (tenancy).

6.2.2 Sale of Farms

Basically sale of farms has resulted from the increasing demand for land and a private farming property particularly by urban workers, as well as the immediate financial return from farm speculation and not the uneconomical returns from farming (Field Survey, 1989). Bayliss-Smith and Watters had noted land shortages as early as the 1960s and the slow disappearance of

the old flexible traditional tenure system (Overton, 1987). People with enough capital are usually on the look-out for available land, eager to own a property. Government support for ginger farming has created keen interest in the Lomaivuna leaseholds by these people.

The lack of institutional control over sale of farms on leased land is appreciated by leaseholders. Some had dropped out after getting the best possible financial return (from farm and lease) and started again elsewhere. Lease title renewal difficulty could be another reason. Others needed the money to build (or improve) a home in the village. The freedom to sell lease titles and farms is assumed to be the means of eliminating disinterested (or even unproductive) individuals in order to give others the chance to use the land. However some people used the opportunity to become absentee-leaseholders against which no policy is available. This practice only reduces the accessibility of land to the landless in the rural areas.

6.2.3 Freedom of Farming and Self Reliance

One of the advantages of relocation is the reduction of traditional commitments and probably, influence as effected by distance (the majority from the less accessible regions). Another influential factor is that the environment of the scheme is conducive to commercial farming and monetization. The farmers have less distraction so have the time to concentrate on their farms with production more intensive than in the village. This

includes the women's increased share of the total farm labour input.

Away from the traditional security of the village, there is extra pressure on the household to work harder, a fact partially responsible for the women's participation. Self-reliance is encouraged through the absence of reciprocity and other relatives for assistance. Also fostered are individual decision making, independence and a greater sense of self-preservation.

Although the farmers have the time for farming, effective utilization is still a problem. The survey revealed fairly low farm labour inputs. The farming pattern and most crops (except ginger) do not induce greater commitment and effort in time and resource inputs. Production is limited by market demand so the farmers only produce to satisfy weekly sales and domestic needs (or the year's ginger quota). This avoids overproduction and overmature crops in the field. Nevertheless relocation has moulded most households into stronger economic units (than in the village) with concerted and productive cooperation. On the other hand the influence of village life, customs and tradition cannot be totally discounted as these continue to make an impact in their daily lives.

6.3 Economic Impact

Accessibility to credit, regular income flow and the ability to invest on the farm or another business (from individual efforts

and accessibility to other employment opportunities in the urban areas are the major advantages of relocation to Lomaivuna.

6.3.1 Credit Availability

Similar to all farmers, the primary criterion for loan application is a legal title to a block of land. The rationale is more in terms of the security it provides both parties as collateral for the application. This opportunity does not apply to Fijians in the village who, generally, farm under the traditional tenancy system or customary arrangements. The abolished DAF's Farm Development Fund was the most popular but today, the farmers seek assistance from the FDB, rather than the commercial banks.

Usually it is easy to have loans approved if one farms under a scheme and more so for government projects. Unfortunately Lomaivuna farmers have a dubious clientele credibility because of poor past performances. Recent FDB loan policy changes with the abolition of special assistance to Fijians (with other capital assets to be considered as collaterals) have discouraged struggling farmers to seek loans. Today many Lomaivuna farmers are solely dependent on weekly returns and household assistance (remittances) for providing farm inputs. Government subsidies on major inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and essential agro-chemicals have helped.

6.3.2 Regular Income Flow

The farmers' concerted production, more intensive than in the village, has provided them with a regular source of cash flow and a higher per capita output. In the village only the surpluses are sold (occasionally) when cash is needed for purchasing essential food items or for meeting other commitments (school fees, fund-raising, church or village contribution). In Lomaivuna the leaseholders have available cash at home for urgent needs, a practice not normal to many in the village. On the other hand relocation for many of the leaseholders meant the purchase of sea resources in Suva and Nausori. Previously they went to sea for these and did not buy them. The exposure to the urban areas provided by their relocation has made households more dependent on store (processed) foodstuffs and a subsequent rise in food expenses than in the village too.

Although Chapter 5 shows satisfactory economic returns to the farmers, most of them admitted very little savings. Many could not work out monies spent on miscellaneous expenses, for instance 'kava parties', which remains an important part of life and is expensive. These non-farm out-flows of income further reduce that which is available for more useful purposes.

6.3.3 Farm Investments And Other Ventures

The details on investment and farm inputs are provided in Chapter 5. Most inputs are limited to the production of ginger

and to a lesser extent, taro for which fertilizers, agro-chemicals and labour costs are the major components. The advantage of relocation in this sense lies in the access and more knowledge or experience gained about investment, technical assistance and better farming technology, seldom accessible to village farmers. Unlike in village farming, the Lomaivuna leaseholders have realized that such inputs are essential in order to be commercially productive and competitive.

Although some farmers may be attracted to the idea of going into other types of farming (pig or poultry farming for instance), the need for financial backing and essential skills or concern about marketing and fear of failure have forced many to remain on the familiar ground of crop cultivation. A few had tried but failed, discouraged by the work loads involved, more complex than cash-cropping. Other commercial ventures are handicraft and wood-carving production, practised by some farmers as 'sidelines' to cash-cropping for sale to middlemen at the Suva Craft Centre, to hotels and the Fijian Women Craftmakers Association ('Soqosoqo Vakamarama').

Only one farmer has expanded satisfactorily into poultry and later pig farming, at the same time maintaining the cultivation of his land. He once ran a retail store but had been closed because it became a liability affecting his other businesses. He still has his second truck (bigger than the last) which he bought in 1985, the same year the piggery was started. This latest venture which has a capacity of up to sixty pigs results from his belief that it could be more viable with the recent establishment of a Government abattoir near Nausori. His truck

was bought to exploit the farm-produce transportation business and the lack of competition in Lomaivuna. It also helps in his piggery business for which he has to get a lot of the requirements from Suva or Nausori. Household assistance is provided by his son (who runs the truck) but rarely by his wife and daughters.

With a loan commitment to the FDB (for the truck and piggery), he has a commercial bank account of about \$8,000.00. For the loan he has with the Housing Authority of Fiji (for residence in the village built in 1982), three of his five daughters are paying it off. Although he is sometimes assisted by his daughters in meeting traditional commitments, he does not receive cash remittances from them for use on the farm. He has shown that other farmers are capable of reaching such goals.

Retail shopping seems to be an enterprise preferred by a few farmers especially after the bankruptcy of the Cooperative Store. The stores, currently in existence at Lomaivuna are operated in small huts or as part of the residence and are generally poorly stocked. Most specialize in basic food items (sugar, salt, flour, rice, tea, biscuit, etc) with other necessities as kerosene and benzine. As most farmers purchase their needs in town during market days, those small Lomaivuna shops are only for emergencies.

6.4 Social Impact

Entering the scheme has brought the farmers greater material wealth, a more monetized way of life, some degree of freedom, security, independence and a slightly better standard of living. Socio-cultural links with their relatives in the village are maintained. There is greater dependency on processed foodstuffs (including canned or tinned) and fresh purchased products (beef, mutton, chicken and fish). Accessibility to the urban areas has brought concern about Lomaivuna youths being influenced by their unemployed peers in the city and getting into crimes. The Lomaivuna community faced a similar problem with street kids under the Salvation Army brought to the place to work on their block. The leaseholders' protest to the DAF led to the monitoring of their stay with the number of boys on weekly trips reduced.

6.4.1 Material Wealth

The first immediate advantage is the wooden residence provided for each leaseholder. In the early 1960s when the Fijian 'bure' (thatched house) was common in the village, this was considered really prestigious. One has to work hard to be able to build a wooden house. Generally the leaseholders furnished their houses better than village farmers. Many are able to do this through the available 'deposit and monthly repayment scheme of urban home furnishing companies as Courts (Fiji) Limited (Suva and Nausori).

Lomaivuna farmers are also able to equip their children satisfactorily for school, better than farmers' children in the village where such matters (new school uniforms, enough books, pens, footwear and other essentials) are not considered important. Better cooking implements and other domestic items make the leaseholders far superior than their village counterparts. All these changes have been made possible by their relocation to Lomaivuna with more intensive farming, larger cultivated areas, more consistent work on the farm and a regular source of income. In many village homes are wood-fire cooking still used. The homes, although have changed gradually to wooden type, are mostly one-roomed with basic furnishings usually of the traditional types. Favuvu (1988, 196) stated that there could be only one village in the whole country still retaining traditional thatched houses (no wooden or concrete house to be seen).

Nevertheless entering the scheme has its demands. The leaseholders have to work harder and keep up production and productivity to maintain their new way of life and standard of living or make further improvement. Furnishings and furniture get old or damaged and have to be replaced. The pressure is on each individual Lomaivuna leaseholder to live up to the expectations of their peers in the community and relatives in the village.

6.4.2 Educational Investment

Community cooperation through the instigation of the LDA and government assistance resulted in the establishment of the primary school in the early 1960s. Later the leaseholders managed to start their own secondary school now providing education to form six level. The close proximity of the major education offices, other primary and high schools, and tertiary institutions in Suva and Nausori are other advantages. These services and facilities are unavailable in their villages of origin. Unlike in the village, their children can travel to school by bus if they want to. Where most of these leaseholders originally came from, it is difficult to send children to better schools which are mostly found on the two main islands, particularly in Viti Levu. This problem still exists today despite the improvement made in education facilities (rural junior secondary and high schools being established) in the outer regions since 1970.

Most parents in the villages usually prefer to send their children to secondary schools on the main islands. Although such parents believe this as prestigious, many find it hard to maintain their children in terms of school fees and other requirements. Such children normally drop out of schools and prefer to stay in the urban areas rather than return to their villages. Fortunately the Lomaivuna leaseholders do not face this problem as a result of their relocation. The leaseholders' investment in education during the past decades has started to pay off already. Some of their children are now in the

employment sector and have contributed through remittances. The fruit of education through the scheme has also spread to the surrounding villagers and isolated farmers. Their children also attend the two schools in Lomaivuna, considered by most inland Naitasiri people as prestigious.

6.4.3 Fewer Traditional Obligations

Village life, with its customs and traditions is considered one of the major drawbacks of Fijian progress and development. It is assumed that communal living, the upkeep of extended family relationships and relevant commitments, the chiefly system and all associated protocols, observance of customary ceremonies, reciprocity and the system of 'kerekere' (borrowing) are constraining progress. Although true to some extent, the traditional ways of life have their merits in the form of communal cooperation, security and socio-cultural companionship. Waibau settlers had revealed to Overton (1988) that resettlement was a means of escape from traditional commitments. On the other hand, the Lomaivuna leaseholders only confirmed a decline in such obligations and village influence.

In practice, socio-cultural ties continue to exist but distance from the village permits certain freedom of choice and action. With the chance to decide which customary obligations to participate in, the leaseholders are able to save time, money and other resources. Reciprocity is reduced greatly since all farmers are able to provide for themselves. There is more freedom, independence, household cooperation and self-reliance.

Frazer (1973, 89) sums up the incompatible relationship between village life and monetization stating that communal tasks leaves no time for the planting of commercial crops which is necessary if a satisfactory cash return is to be obtained. Frazer's objection is less to the amount of time taken to do these activities than to the frustration of the inefficiency with which they are carried out and the poor timing. The village headman usually demands work to be done whenever he likes or just when pressing farm duties require attention. Fijians in the village serve a number of masters; the chiefs, whole village (commitments), church (activities and cash contributions), school, clan, landowning unit, extended and the nuclear family.

Maintenance of ties to the village restricts the advantages of relocation which could only be fully realized and enjoyed if those ties are severed completely. The fact remains that it cannot be done unless radical changes are made to Fijian society or if the very basis of Fijian culture is changed. Although traditional obligations mean time away from the farm and outflow of financial and other resources, Fijian leaseholders' choice of action indicate the importance of such practices to their lives. Left in the middle between these two opposing forces (progress versus tradition), the leaseholders have tried to maintain a balance between village obligations and the modern life at Lomaivuna. The general view is that both sides are desirable and beneficial to their households. Although Lomaivuna signifies progress, the word stands for a lot of things let alone economic gains.

6.5 Farm Management and Operation

Apart from the concerted involvement of the household in the running of the farm, the leaseholders have gained more commercial farming and business experience. As well as the technical knowledge received from the Extension Service and access to support agencies, learning better techniques of farming and cultivating new crops are experienced. Staple crops are also commercialized to a greater extent than in the village.

6.5.1 Farm and Business Experience

The experience gained can be attained in many ways, one of them being through numerous contacts with different business houses and people but especially the participant and support agencies (the DAF Extension Service, FDB, NLTB, the now defunct BOMAS, NMA, TFP and other marketing agencies). The farmers have learnt a lot also from each other through previous incidents and experiences, (both good and bad) related to farm management and organisation. Generally they should have grasped some idea of the essential qualities for commercial success: reliability; trustworthiness; budgeting skills; perseverance and hard work; proper use of time and prompt payment of financial commitments. The latter emphasizes the importance of being a reliable client to lending agencies.

Knowledge and understanding of essential aspects of farming (techniques, planning and management, soil fertility,

conservation and marketing) are gained from the DAF and its Extension Service. More knowledge on marketing are learnt from the NMA, TFP and other marketing agencies. Production has to be planned to meet market demands and satisfy set quotas. Over-production only leads to wastage without available markets. Contractual marketing arrangement is an important experience the farmers have gained.

Nevertheless the leaseholders are unable to fully appreciate and utilize the available wealth of business knowledge, experience and farming expertise. The semi-commercial character of farming as influenced by traditional ties and obligations has prevented them from aspiring for greater efforts and personal sacrifices. The relaxed personality of the village still prevails, constraining any positive attempt for better performance.

6.5.2 Landuse and Coservation Techniques

The leaseholders' traditional conservation methods and know-how (shifting cultivation, fallowing and basic crop rotation) are supplemented by DAF extension advice on planting techniques, drainage and the use of agro-chemicals. Similar knowledge is gained about the soil, its attributes and limitations which have improved on their simple traditional method of using soil colour and the feel of the soil to determine fertility and crop suitability. Part of the learning process are the experience with new crops and fertilizer-use, contouring for conservation purposes or across-slope digging and planting, and row-cultivation. Mixed-stand planting has been replaced by single-

crop stand cultivation to enable better crop planning. This allows cultivation in stages to enable continuity in maturity and supply for the market.

A basic problem is the leaseholders' receptivity to new ideas, techniques and other changes including the extension service advices for raising productivity. In traditional crop cultivation, the majority have stuck to the old methods with minor changes as row-cultivation, a little use of fertilizers and separate cultivation of different crops. It is normally the risk of failure that makes farmers reluctant to accept and practise new methods and ideas, preferring to remain on the familiar ground of swidden agriculture.

6.6 Other Advantages and Disadvantages

A scheme like Lomaivuna in the rural areas is bound to affect the people in the surrounding areas. The facilities and services (schools, health centre, extension service, telephone, shopping) provided in the scheme have benefited the local people tremendously. In some way the scheme has led to a more efficient transportation system (bus and cargo transport service) which previously were unreliable.

Cash-cropping has also spread through the region gradually and its intensity today can be partially attributed to the scheme's impact. The presence of the Extension Service has expanded the role of the Department of Agriculture in the region. This had opened the way for the progressive involvement of other

government and private agencies in the development of this part of Naitasiri, boosted by the completion of the new Suva-Sawani-Serea Road. The extension officers, who have mingled well with the people in and outside the scheme, are considered as part of the community.

The leasehold blocks in the scheme have been under continuous cultivation for more than twenty years. Successive farmers have come and gone. A problem lies in replacement farmers knowing very little about the state of their blocks. Their interest in effective production for sale and better returns could lead to over-utilization or even long-term destruction. Considered with the climatic or weather pattern and soil composition of the area, serious environmental problems could arise.

The lack of concern given by the LDA, DAF and its Extension Service to encourage, advise and help farmers keep their own basic farming records (on inputs, different crops cultivated, harvested, marketed or used for other purposes, cash returns and expenses) for instance on a bi-weekly or monthly basis is rather unfortunate. In fact the farmers were left to their own devices on these elementary entrepreneurial requirements. They relied on the management records which were of less importance to their individual farm's organizational success.

6.7 Conclusion

In a compromising position, being pulled in opposite direction by the opposing forces of the modern economy (Lomaivuna) and

traditional ways with related obligations of the village, the leaseholders have tried to utilize the best of both sides. This unavoidable situation has been largely responsible for the farmers' inability to concentrate totally on their farms for better output and returns. However, their relocation has brought them a way of life which for many has few misgivings. It has provided what most of them had hoped for. Their progress is recognized although their economic achievements could have been better still.

Despite the problems faced at Lomaivuna, the possession of a piece of land, individual lease titles, more regular source of income, available finance from farm returns for domestic needs, education and fulfilment of most commitments and/or wants have made their life satisfying. They have succeeded in combining traditional Fijian agriculture with new technologies, crops and farming patterns, modifying past experience for adaptation to the monetised sector. In the less restrictive Lomaivuna environment, the farmers have achieved some degree of individualism which has affected the whole country in terms of land and agricultural policy-making since the early 1960s.

Unlike the sugar-cane, rice or even copra and cocoa agricultural sectors, Lomaivuna farmers, like all who rely on root crops face serious marketing problems. These include the lack of markets, unorganized or inefficient marketing system and unreliable prices. The occurrence of temporary absence, drop-outs, sale of farms and non-farm (side-line) activities or dependence on off-farm incomes are to be expected in such a situation. The fact remains that the leaseholders have shown certain degree of

commercial superiority with knowledge and experience gained over their village counterparts. The many advantages provided by relocation supercede the disadvantages, especially so when these would be hard to achieve if they had remained in the villages.

Although the Lomaivuna leaseholders' progress and development do not look much in comparison to the other agricultural sectors, the difference lies in the type of support they get particularly from the Government. This has not been forthcoming since the failure of the banana scheme in 1967 and the LDA's abolition in 1969. Because this was based on the view that Lomaivuna was not productive for export, many farmers felt they had been unjustly treated bringing forth the argument that export production was the Government's primary concern. Respectively the other objectives of the scheme as provision of land to the landless, employment, relief of population pressure on the land as in the small outlying islands or even the political motive of spreading traditionally known support throughout the country are all secondary to that.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The Lomaivuna Scheme has made great a impact on Fijian land development in eastern Viti Levu which was lagging far behind the west agriculturally. Galala farming and the LDO, 1961 (passed for the scheme's establishment) had assisted to break down the restrictive traditional land policies and the conservatism barring Fijians from commercialism. The number of Fijian leaseholders has risen gradually since the 1960s. There is greater perception of the land's economic value, decline of traditional tenancy and more Fijian demand for the return of land from Indo-Fijians after expiry of tenure.

Ginger remains the most popular crop in Lomaivuna (refer Table 5.6). However, root crops bring in more earnings (refer Graph 5.6 and Table 5.7). The scheme is composed mainly of low-cost operations today, a necessity to minimize costs and expenses (refer Subsection 5.11.1). This indicates the viability of such operations in introducing Fijians into the commercial sector with proper guidance in management (especially finance control). This is a major cause of Fijian failure in business. Lomaivuna attests to this point and the importance of personnel with the skills, qualifications

and experience (refer Chapter 3 on rising debts and mismanagement of funds).

The failure of the initial banana scheme illustrates that it is important to undertake proper planning, to carefully consider organization, and to carry out research and proper testing of crops (refer Subsection 3.4.5 and Section 5.7). Evidence points to the plan being rushed (passing the LDO to establishment in less than two years), settling people before completion of the site and infrastructure or even the stoppage of the planned crop trials of tea and rubber (refer Subsection 3.3.1).

Traditional knowledge and experience of the area (choice of crop and site) are insufficient for commercialization involving a lot of funds and other capital resources. The scheme was also hampered by the lack of a monitoring and evaluation system to provide feedbacks to the management on progress, problems or constraints and possible solutions.

Farmer drop-out and low survival rate (refer Section 5.2), sale of farms (refer Subsection 5.2.2 and 6.2.2) and absenteeism (refer Subsection 5.2.3) demand careful scrutiny of would-be settlers and proper selection procedures. Selection should be based on merit and experience, not the "who you know" syndrome (refer Subsection 3.3.6 and 5.3.1). The selected should be made to commit themselves to the venture by some contract. Those who have been set up already in a business venture

should be considered last for selection (refer Subsection 5.3.2). Table 5.10 is not a good guide to whether age is an essential selection criterion. The younger farmers might not be productive probably because of proximity to the urban areas and related distractions. Period of entry (Table 5.11) and provincial origin (Table 5.12) seem to be less important in terms of gross earnings and productivity.

A tragedy of farming efforts in Lomaivuna is that production can be expanded but this does not necessarily translate into higher incomes. This illustrates the importance of careful planning and choice of crops (those in demand) with available markets. Even the initial banana scheme lost its New Zealand markets to Western Samoa and Peru in the 1960s. Crop diseases and pests (banana leaf streak and nematode) indicate the need for crop research or experimentation to find hardy but high quality varieties, very vital to worthwhile productivity and high returns.

Lomaivuna leaseholders have turned to non-farm and off-farm activities to boost their incomes (see Table 5.9). This has occurred out of necessity for maintenance of farm and household. Farming still remains the major economic activity.

The basic applicable principle for active farmer participation and productivity is that suggested by

Bryant and White (1984, 19). Participation depends on the benefits one hopes to gain, multiplied by the probability that they will actually be achieved, minus costs of working for them, that is, $[P = (B \times Pr) - C]$. The handicap in Lomaivuna was that certain essential variables (e.g. capital and marketing outlets) were not readily available. However the benefits, though below expectations, are still attractive despite the land's declining productivity after over 20 years of usage.

Lomaivuna households are more fortunate in many respects than their village counterparts. Relocation has freed them partially from the shackles of communal living and dependency and exposed them more to the monetary sector (refer 6.4.3). With this came the inevitable modern changes of individualism, less interrupted personal efforts towards household welfare and security, and strong desires for material possessions (refer Graph 5.4 and 5.5).

It is partly through their efforts for socio-economic progress, though slow and somewhat difficult this might be, which have provided a model for other individual Fijians to seek leasehold titles, even for a portion of their own Mataqali land. Nevertheless this view should not be taken to imply that traditional village life is unproductive. Gradually it has responded to commercialism, individualism and materialism through the years.

Farming away from their home regions in Lomaivuna has done little to sever their ties and obligations to the village, relatives and chiefs (refer Table 5.12 and 6.4.3). This is why customs and traditions will continue to affect their lives, farming and development. Today they have learnt to live in a state of ambivalence attending to both the modern life of monetization (commercial farming) and the old ways of meeting traditional commitments which are investments for the future in their own ways. This factor should qualify most leaseholders as semi-commercial (or semi-subsistence?) farmers. The general belief is that the total conversion of Fijians to commercialization, in any form of business enterprise, is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. This view is supported by recent events relating to the rise of Fijian traditionalism following the 1987 Military Coups.

Some Ideas For The Future

In terms of future development, it would be advisable for the Government to consider more active appraisal of rural people's views about the types of development they need. After all, development should come from them as they are the backbone of any such programme. In other words, they should take part actively in decision-making during plan formulation and implementation. The current practice of having Local Task Force Groups (Studies) responsible for

regional planning is a step in the right direction. There is not enough accessible under-used land left for resettlement (for instance, of the size of Seaqaqa) and if any is found, it is highly likely that the landowners might not allow it to be used. Future land settlement should be based on voluntary and spontaneous efforts like 'galala'. LTFG of the Divisional (District) Development Offices are the most appropriate organizational means to deliver the programme. They have closer contact with the grassroots people.

In the Fiji situation, the programme should be designed with protective measures against land speculators (to prevent them from co-opting its benefits) and political interference, if possible. The supervisory agency should maintain closer communication links with individual participants and also provide access to material, financial, capital and technical help. The design of programmes should integrate implementation, monitoring and evaluation into a single and continuing process involving all participant groups; the LTFG, extension officers and the entrepreneurs (farmers particularly). Strict accounting and financial planning procedures should be enforced, the basics of which should be taught to the participants through seminars and practised in the field with the help of extension officers.

As cooperative land use is not advisable for communally-owned Fijian land, the LTFG should be empowered to survey

and allocate available land to Mataqali members from those landowning groups with plenty of land (after that suited for its subsistence is estimated), and of course, with the NLTB's cooperation. If possible, participants should be given certain freedoms relative to traditional and village commitments. This should give them enough leeway to concentrate on their chosen enterprise. The mistakes and lessons of Lomaivuna and other recent schemes should assist a voluntary but government-supported programme to be functional. It is vital to have qualified personnel to handle the extension work.

Government support in terms of essential resource inputs is essential. The best available loan support (the FDB) has become unfashionable to most small farmers in recent years with its increased interest rates and extra collateral requirements. The FDB has become too commercialized to be of supportive assistance to small poorly-resourced peasant villagers planning to enter the commercial sector with the utilization of a portion of their Mataqali land. The Divisional/District Development Offices (with LTFG) could also be used as lending agencies funded by the Government at low interest rates but in a strict business-like manner. Lomaivuna's lax lending policies were one of the main reasons for its downfall and that is a mistake which should not be repeated. This assistance should be restricted to those just starting off, not those who qualify for FDB loans. The Fijians were not as business-minded then as they are

now. What better way to entice more landowners to commercialize their land than by putting at their disposal essential entrepreneurial requirements?

The entry of the Military into the domestic economic and political matters is disconcerting. The current practice of using RFMF Auxiliary Units to handle marketing of rural produces (crops and sea resources) needs further consideration. Its practice of going out to the rural producers even in less-accessible regions is commendable but in the long term, it might prove unworkable economically. These soldiers do not have the expertise to handle the task, more so when it comes to the financial aspect of management. It would be better to direct the capital resources made available by the present government to an established marketing authority (such as the NMA) to boost its activities or set up another manned by personnel with the expertise. Available and reliable marketing holds the key to better returns and success. The authorities should find ways of utilizing the huge root crop resources in the country. Government plans for using cassava in ethanol production is encouraging. In terms of overseas markets, banana, taro and ginger are the best prospects for Lomaivuna farmers. Further tests and experiments are essential to find a banana variety which is nematode and (known) disease resistant or palatable to compete on the New Zealand and other available markets.

On the other hand, external observers hold the view that disproportional development efforts have been directed towards particular eastern and northern regions (Bayliss-Smith's 'Government-pampered periphery'). This argument has a political dimension in the possible resurgence of tribalism amongst Fijians (without the strong common Indo-Fijian opposition). This practice, if not curbed, would certainly lead to worsening tribal, provincial, regional or 'vanua' (confederacy) differences. A number of incidents and developments (including appointments and promotions) since Independence and, particularly after the 1987 Coups, supports this view. With the promulgation of a new racially-weighted constitution on 25/07/90 giving more than 50% of the seats in both Houses of Parliament to the indigenous Fijians, the country may be controlled by the traditional elites in the future. Without proper checks and balances, misuse of authority and positions can result, worsening the current situation, particularly those related to development programming and resource allocation.

In the present political state of the country, it is hard to say with confidence what the Government's plan of action for national development is. If common sense prevails, the Government would do better to provide a more equitable distribution of development programmes and capital resources with greater priority to previously-neglected regions. The land issue in terms of native lease renewal should be addressed. The growing political

pressure against it could lead to disastrous economic consequences.

The Government and ruling elites should consider seriously the contradictions they have created since 1987. Although their rhetoric encourages economic growth, their actions promote a return to more conservative traditionalism. If the latter prevails, development efforts in the past three decades would be wasted. Enterprising Fijian individuals may find it hard to obtain land for commercial farming or express their individual potentials. Vital to all levels of the Government machinery (including rural development extension services) is the appointment of qualified, skilled and experienced personnels to responsible positions. Hopefully, patronage will not be further encouraged. If it is, development programmes, government services and disaster relief programmes will become increasingly less efficient and efficacious. In many ways these views highlight to exemplify the many faces of Chambers' biases in action (refer to Chapter 2).