

Governing Population: The Integrated Child Development Services Program in India

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Introduction

I returned to Alipur village in western Uttar Pradesh for a short spell of fieldwork in the summer of 1989. Villagers excitedly told me about all the changes that had occurred in the four years since I had last been there doing a study on agricultural change. Among the new features of Alipur were an Anganwadi, a center that provided day-care, nutrition, and inoculations to children, and supplementary nutrition and health care to pregnant women and mothers of infants. I was so intrigued by this new development that in my second fieldwork project on the "ethnography of the state" I included the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), more popularly known as the Anganwadi program, among the development projects that I studied.

ICDS is interesting for a number of different reasons. It is one of the fastest growing development programs run by the Indian state. Launched with only 33 projects in 1985, the ICDS program had expanded to 1356 projects in the next ten years, and to 5614 projects by 1995 (Government of India 1985: 4; NIPCCD 1997: 3). The Anganwadi program grew even when the Indian government started cutting the budgets of other social welfare programs in the post-liberalization era initiated in 1991. Allocations for ICDS in 1998-99 went up to more than twice their 1990-91 levels.¹ Another reason for paying attention to the ICDS program is that it was one of the first interventions that attempted to control population growth rates by paying attention to the *quality* of the population. It thus provides us with one of the first large-scale examples of the kind of approach to population planning that has, after the Cairo conference, attained the status of official dogma. Theoretically, the ICDS program helps provide us with a nearly perfect example of the regulation, care, and documentation of the population, especially those parts of the population (women and children) that are poorly represented in official statistics. Such attention to the welfare of the population is a form of bio-power, one of the hallmarks of "governmentality", a term introduced by Michel Foucault (1991) to think about modes of government that are not necessarily part of the state apparatus.

The enlargement of the scope of governmental regulation and concern represented by the ICDS program produces new kinds of subjects and new kinds of resistances. Among the new subjects produced are

bureaucrats whose job is to focus on the weak and disempowered sections (women and children) of the weakest and most disempowered groups within rural north Indian society (lower and scheduled castes); Anganwadi Workers who are implementers of the ICDS project but also themselves beneficiaries of state benevolence; and, finally, the poor women and children who find themselves objects of state attention and discipline, but also beneficiaries of supplementary nutrition, educational services, and health care that may not be available to their economically better-off rural neighbors. These new subjects are placed in structurally dependent but antagonistic positions. Bureaucrats attempt to discipline and control the Anganwadi Workers, who in turn, attempt to discipline and control their rural charges. Those in subordinate positions, in turn, resist the mechanisms of surveillance that are employed on them. What do such acts of resistance by the women who are the objects of state surveillance, protection, and investment, mean for an understanding of governmentality? And how does one tie the ethnographic analysis of everyday practices of resistance to a structural understanding of inequalities of gender and class? The analysis that I develop in the rest of this paper pursues these questions in greater detail.

The section that follows attempts to lay out some of the more general features of governmentality, so that my use of this still somewhat unusual term is clear in the remaining parts of the paper. The section that follows contextualizes the ICDS program in the history of family planning campaigns conducted by the Indian government, and provides some details about the bureaucratic structure of ICDS. The third section provides a close look at what actual practices of one ICDS office. In particular, I am interested in the practices of surveillance, exemplified in the "surprise inspection", the most common instrument of rule and regulation. I follow one officer on her inspection visits, and record some of her reactions, as well as the reactions of the Anganwadi Workers who are subjected to these visits. The section that follows shifts attention away from surveillance to enumeration, one of the most important instruments of government. I show what kinds of data are collected by Anganwadi Workers and what happens to this data once it is passed up the hierarchy. Finally, I consider the question of resistance how it is to be understood within the governmentality literature, and what form it takes in the case of the Anganwadi program.

Governmentality

The term "governmentality" comes from a lecture by Michel Foucault (1991) in which he drew attention to all the processes by which the conduct of a population is governed: by institutions and agencies, including the state; by discourses, norms, and identities; and by self-regulation, techniques for the disciplining and care of the self. Political economy as knowledge and

apparatuses of security as technical means operate on the population as a target to constitute governmentality as the dominant mode of power since the eighteenth century (Foucault 1991: 102). Rather than attempt to exhaustively define governmentality, a job that has been well done by others, especially Mitchell Dean in a new book entitled *Governmentality* (1999), and by people such as Nikolas Rose (1996), Peter Miller (1990), Pat O'Malley (1997) and others, I wish to emphasize a few features of governmentality.

Foucault argues that since the eighteenth century, population became the object of sovereign power and discipline in a new way in that the growth of the welfare of the population within a given territory, the optimization of its capabilities and productivity, became the goal of government (1991: 100-101). The goal of "good government" became not simply the exercise of authority over the people within a territory, or the ability to discipline and regulate them, but to foster their prosperity and happiness.² Thanks to the rise of the science of statistics, "population" became an independent realm and force in social life separate from the state and the family. As an aggregate statistic, the population had its own intrinsic rhythms and regularities, and exerted its own effects on the economy and on the nation. Population becomes the new aim of government; an object whose control, regulation, welfare, and conduct become the main goal of government.

Governmentality is concerned most of all with "the conduct of conduct", that is, with the myriad ways in which human conduct is directed by calculated means (Dean 1999: 10). Such a definition of "government" harks back to the original meaning of the term, before it became hitched to a particular relationship with the state; before, that is, the words "government" and "state" started being used almost as synonyms in academic discourse. Miller and Rose (1990: 1) point out that in advanced liberal democracies, "political power is exercised ... through a multitude of agencies and techniques, some of which are only loosely associated with the executives and bureaucracies of the formal organs of state." In fact, the state has to be seen as "a particular form that government has taken, and one that does not exhaust the field of calculations and interventions that constitute it" (1990: 3). Like Weber, Foucault is interested in mechanisms of government that are found within state institutions and outside them, that in fact cut across domains that we would regard as separate: the state, civil society, the family, down to the intimate details of what we regard as personal life.

As an example of governmentality, take family planning. There may be state policies that promote or regulate an optimal family size through tax incentives, advertising campaigns, public health policies, zoning laws, and so on. But there are also corporate policies that may promote a particular family size in the form of leave policies, the provision of insurance, and the like; women's magazines and popular culture may

influence how many children a couple might desire or want; the comments of neighbors, co-workers, and teachers might draw attention to those who violate "societal norms" by having too many children or not enough, etc. All these are forces of governmentality; and between the concern with the population – its health, longevity, productivity, resources – that is so central to state policy, think tanks, and private agencies, and the desires that inform and regulate the sexual behavior and intimate relations within the "private" and "domestic" realms of (heteronormative) families and marriages, are a series of relays that transmit and translate ideas, practices, and policies from one realm to the other. Governmentality allows us to bring under one analytical lens the entire domain, showing the operation and role of state agencies within a wider field of action and intervention made possible by a range of social actors and discourses.

It should be clear that governmentality does not name a negative relationship of power, one characterized entirely by discipline and regulation. The emphasis, rather, is on its productive dimension: governmentality is about a *concern* with the population, with its health, longevity, happiness, productivity, and size. But managing a population involves an immersion in the details and minutiae of people's lives. Here mechanisms of discipline and regulation are important not merely as repressive measures but as facilitators of new modes of accountability and enumeration. Although neither Foucault nor various commentators on governmentality have had much to say about this topic, any discussion of discipline and regulation must entail a corresponding emphasis on questions of resistance (O'Malley 1998). What forms of resistance do the new technologies of governmentality engender? And, if we don't take governmentality to be a system that was set in place once and for all in the Enlightenment, but as an ever-renewing and ever-deepening process, then we have to consider how governmentality is itself a conjunctural and crisis-ridden enterprise, how it engenders its own modes of resistance, and makes, meets, molds, or is contested by new subjects.

"A Silent Revolution"

If one were seeking a model of governmentality today, it would be hard to come up with a better example than the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program. We can see this very clearly when ICDS is located in its historical context, and positioned more explicitly within state agendas. The ICDS was launched in 1975 soon after the formulation of the National Policy for Children. It was spurred by awareness that India exhibited some of the world's highest rates of infant mortality, morbidity, and malnutrition, and extremely high rates of maternal mortality during birth. According to the UNDP Human Development Report for 2000, the infant mortality and under-five mortality rates are still 69³ and 105 per

thousand respectively, and the maternal mortality rate stands at 410 per 100,000.

The goal of the Anganwadi Program was to provide a set of services that consisted of supplementary nutrition for pregnant women and young children, and education, immunizations, and preventive medicine for poor and lower-caste children. The immunization program was operated by the Health Department, which ran the Primary Health Centers (PHCs). It thus took advantage of the presence of a large number of children and "at-risk" women in the Anganwadis to inoculate children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers against the most common diseases.⁴ After experimenting with supplementary nutrition programs that produced generally poor results (Tandon, Ramachandran, and Bhatnagar 1981: 382), the ICDS program was initiated to provide a package of well-integrated services that would combine nutrition, health, education, and day care for children under six years of age, and nutrition and health for pregnant women (Heaver 1989; Sharma 1986; Tandon, Ramachandran, and Bhatnagar 1981).⁵

The ICDS program in any one Block (a Block consisted of an administrative unit of approximately 100 villages) was considered a "project", and each project received funding independently. In Mandi subdistrict (*ehsil*), there were two ICDS programs. In Mandi Block, the program had been operating since 1985, whereas it had begun in the other Block in 1990-91. The structure of command of the ICDS bureaucracy at the District level was as follows: it was to be headed by a District Program Officer (DPO). The two Child Development Project Officers (CDPO), who headed the program at the level of the Block, did reporting to the DPO. The CDPO was the head of the office, and supervised a clerical staff, which included an account clerk, another clerk who did other jobs, a peon, and a driver. The CDPO was responsible for overseeing the work of the four Supervisors (*Mukhya Sevikas*), the 86 Anganwadi Workers in the Block, and their 86 Helpers. The Anganwadi Workers were responsible for the day-to-day functioning of Centers in villages, which especially targeted poor and low-caste women and children as beneficiaries. The Anganwadi Centers were supposed to operate every day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Since it was not feasible for a single Anganwadi Worker to run a Center, take care of as many as 45 children, teach the children, cook food for them, supervise their medical care, and maintain the records, the Anganwadi Worker was provided with a "Helper". The Helper's duties included doing all the odd jobs associated with the Anganwadi, including rounding up the children to attend the Center, doing the cooking when the Centers were supplied with food, and cleaning the "school". In Mandi, all the Helpers, Anganwadi Workers, and Supervisors, as well as the CDPO were women; the rest of the office staff was men.

Apart from humanitarian concerns with the high mortality of infants and pregnant women, other factors may have contributed to the

support given to the Anganwadi program by the Indian government and by international development agencies such as UNICEF. The chief factor, no doubt, was a concern with population control.⁶ At the time that the ICDS Scheme was launched, the Indian government already had substantial experience with an aggressive birth control campaign. It had used a modernization theory model, according to which exposing people to information would change their attitudes, which, in turn, could change people's practices (this was called the knowledge-attitude-practices (KAP) model). When I was growing up in India in the sixties and seventies, it was impossible to miss the inverted red triangle that was a symbol of birth control. It was accompanied by the slogan, *Hum do, hamaare do* ("Us two, our two"). Sometimes, there was an additional graphic displaying a man, woman, a boy and a girl. However, when it became clear that methods of population control built on modernization theory were proving ineffective, so that better knowledge of contraception and the inculcation of "modern" attitudes failed to alter birth control practices, a sense of frustration set in among policy makers, culminating in the draconian measures adopted during the Emergency in 1975-77. By all accounts, the methods used during the Emergency forced sterilizations of men, especially among the poor and politically weak segments of the population only helped impede subsequent government interventions in this field.⁷

In the post-Emergency period, there was a lull in family planning campaigns. However, in the next decade, a new consensus emerged among governments and international development agencies that focused on the *quality* of the population (Dasgupta 1990). The logic, since inscribed as official dogma by the Cairo Conference, simply states that lower birth rates are highly correlated with higher status for women, accompanied by better nutrition, education, and health care for them and their children (Cliquet and Thienpont 1995, Sen 1994). In other words, investment in the development of "human resources" or "human capital" was expected to pay high dividends especially when targeted to women and children. This was, in fact, the explicit language in which the "ICDS Experience" was summarized in a government brochure: "The experience of ICDS during its first decade (1975- 1985) indicates that it has the potential of becoming a silent revolution a profound instrument of community development and human resource development" (1985: 24).

The adverse impact of rapid growth on the welfare of the population had long been recognized: Indian policy makers and politicians routinely emphasize how development efforts are slowed by rapid population growth. The debate then concerned what the best methods were for reducing the rate of growth of the population. Having failed to persuade people to adopt birth control practices by a vigorous advertising campaign, an increasingly desperate political leadership attempted to use authoritarian measures to sterilize people during the Emergency under the leadership of

Indira Gandhi's younger son, Sanjay Gandhi. However, the resulting backlash forced Mrs. Gandhi out of power in the elections of 1977. Since then, the ICDS program took over as a technology of birth control that sought to reduce gross birth rates by focusing on the quality of life for those children already born, that is, by reducing the mortality and morbidity rates for infants, and by reducing maternal mortality. If governmentality draws attention on how to govern and how we are governed (Dean 1999: 2), then ICDS is an excellent example of how the governance of the population came to be reformulated after a moment of crisis.

In fact, if one does not frame the population question narrowly, one can appreciate how the ICDS brings forth an explicit conjunction between the development of human resources, communities, and the nation. The relationship between the population, political economy, and sovereignty so central to governmentality is revealed quite clearly. In a country like India, children under fourteen constitute a large proportion of the population (42 percent according to the 1971 census, and 38.6 percent at the end of the seventies). More than 80 percent of all children live in rural areas, and have poorer access to government services than their urban counterparts (Dasgupta 1990: 1302). The Government of India's National Policy for Children proposed fifteen measures to achieve the goals of fulfilling children's needs. It stated:

The nation's children are a supremely important *asset* ... Children's programmes should find a prominent part in our national plans for the development of human resources, so that our children grow up to become robust citizens, physically fit, mentally alert and normally healthy, endowed with the skills and motivations needed by *society* ... It shall be the policy of the State to provide adequate services to children, both before and after birth and through the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development (Baig 1979: 339-341; emphasis mine).

Such a statement reinforced directives in the Constitution of India which provided for, among other things, free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen. The authors of the Constitution directed the Government to attempt the provisioning of educational services to all children within ten years from the commencement of the Constitution (Dasgupta 1990: 1304). The point I wish to make here is that concerns with the needs of "national development" were not incidental to programs aimed at children. In fact, the National Policy for Children explicitly conceived of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme as a response to its first three directives, which proposed a comprehensive health program, supplementary nutrition to remove deficiencies, and for the care and nutrition of expectant and nursing mothers (Baig 1979: 340). These themes were spelled out even more explicitly in a memorandum attached to the National Policy by the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW), which argued that "the child is an investment in the future of the nation and must, therefore, be an integral part of *economic* planning" (Baig 1979: 334-335).

The relationship between ICDS and economic planning for the nation was seen in its relationship to other development programs. The supplementary nutrition aspect of ICDS was funded from a range of different sources. For instance, in Mandi Block, the program had switched in the late eighties to a "wheat-based" program. This was mentioned several times by the ICDS staff in Mandi, and at first I could not understand why

they were placing so much emphasis on this fact. I later learnt that what was significant about the program was that the wheat allocated to it came from the Food Corporation of India (FCI). The FCI was the body that purchased wheat from farmers in the area at support prices set by the government. This policy of buying all the wheat that farmers could sell at pre-announced prices was one of the cornerstones of the green revolution, and had led to the accumulation of large surpluses in government godowns. The state's use of this "surplus" wheat for the ICDS, thus, took the results of agricultural development policies and, quite literally, fed them into its welfare policies. Therefore, the development of agriculture and the development of human resources were placed in a synergistic relationship that would lead to the development of the nation. The wealth of the nation was thus tied to the welfare of its population.

Since the goal of governmentality is to manage "the population", mechanisms for intervening into the affairs of communities and individuals are necessary. The ICDS program depended on community intervention for its efficacy. Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) were recruited from the villages in which they served in order to garner local support for the program. One of the most important components of local participation was that the space for the Anganwadi was to be supplied by the community. Thus, there was no provision for rent in the ICDS budget. Apart from reducing the cost of administering the program, such a requirement was intended to provide the community with a stake in the operation of the Anganwadis. This created a great deal of difficulty for Anganwadi Workers and was one of their chief sources of complaints about the program.⁸

The efforts to involve "the community" in the program did not always work very well. Instead of allowing non-governmental agencies, voluntary organizations, and community groups to influence the design of the program and the methods and kinds of services it delivered, the ICDS scheme, like many other government programs, imposed a top-down administrative structure with elaborate bureaucratic procedures which had a "slot" for community participation (Dasgupta 1990: 1315). Ironically, such a slot was deemed necessary to make the program conform to the requirements of "participatory development" which, according to development orthodoxy, was one of the lessons learned from the high failure rate of development projects in the past. Community participation was essential if government was to be seen not as something external and imposed but as an intrinsic mode of discipline that led to regular and predictable patterns of conduct, and that grew out of, and came "naturally" to, communities and selves.

Governmentality and State Surveillance

The concern with the size and quality of the population embodied in the ICDS program was exhibited in techniques of *regulation, enumeration, and*

accountability. There were a host of procedures and rules about the day-to-day functioning of the Anganwadis that made little sense when viewed from a "bottom line" perspective of gains in health and nutrition. Yet such regulations were not incidental to the ICDS. As important as the goals of the ICDS program were reducing infant mortality and maternal mortality, increasing educational achievements for girls, providing supplementary nutrition to decrease morbidity the methods to achieve those goals were equally important. The size of the population was being controlled, but, perhaps more importantly, new subjects were being created. And the only way to ensure regulation, enumeration, and accountability was through a process of surveillance. Although the methods of surveillance would never reach the Benthamite ideal of the panopticon, which ensured that subjects would regulate their own behavior because they never knew when they were being observed (Foucault 1979), the goal of the program was to achieve similar results. If Anganwadi Workers, children who were being served by the Anganwadi, expectant mothers, and the families of the "clients" would all behave "naturally" in regular, predictable, patterned ways, then surveillance would have been most successful (and hence unnecessary). But surveillance didn't always achieve exactly what it set out to do, and that is what makes this story really interesting.

The ICDS office in Mandi was located in one of the side streets that led off the busy road which served as the major shopping center of the "modern" part of town. When I first went looking for the ICDS office, I walked right past it; this happened on more than one occasion. I had been told to look for the blue UNICEF jeep that served as the unofficial mascot for the ICDS Program. I missed the office because the jeep was missing, and unlike other government offices, which displayed large signs, there was no outward indication that an office existed in that building. It was a nondescript space, consisting of a small driveway barely large enough for a vehicle, and a narrow flight of stairs to one side. One went up the stairs to come to a terrace, no wider than eight feet, which had a series of doors opening up to it on the left. There were three rooms there. The first room housed the main office, where the two clerks had their desks, and where the peon usually stood. The second room was used primarily as a storage space. The third office, furthest from the stairs, belonged to the dynamic and articulate Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) of Mandi Block, Asha Agarwal. She was a thin, small-boned woman in her thirties who spoke with a confident and engaging tone, sitting behind a fairly large desk in a sparsely furnished and decorated room. Like other officers, she had a buzzer on her desk, which she pressed whenever she needed to get the attention of the peon.

Inspection Trips

The chief instrument of bureaucratic surveillance was the surprise inspection, which functioned to ensure that the goals of regulation, enumeration, and accountability were met. Regulation took the form of seeing that the Anganwadi centers functioned at regular days and times, that the workers and children were obeying instructions about how the day-care center ought to be run, how the schooling was to be accomplished, how the facilities had to be maintained. Enumeration was important in that one of the officers' primary responsibilities was to monitor the degree to which the Anganwadi Workers collected data, especially information about women and children who were the targets of the ICDS program. In this sense, the object of the officers' surveillance was the degree to which the Anganwadi Worker monitored "her" client population. As we will see, in practice, this model worked quite unevenly. Accountability was accomplished by a series of checks that ensured that the data recorded by the Anganwadi Worker matched what could be observed during the inspection. For example, if the Anganwadi Worker claimed that forty children regularly attended the center and ate their meals there, she might be asked to explain why only twenty students were there during a surprise inspection. Or the claims of the Anganwadi Worker about what she had taught the students might be tested by giving the students an impromptu test.

One of the greatest challenges facing the bureaucrats was to ensure that the village women who had been hired to run the Anganwadis were in fact operating them. Asha Agarwal would often impress upon me the importance of inspections for ensuring the "proper operation" of Anganwadi Centers in her Block. She reinforced her point by relating the following anecdote to me. When she had taken over the Mandi office, it had been without a CDPO for several months. The government had appointed one of the previous Supervisors to be a temporary CDPO. Asha pointed out that appointing a Supervisor to monitor the functioning of Anganwadis was doomed to failure because "In-Charges", as the temporary CDPOs were termed, were at the same level in the official hierarchy as other Supervisors and, hence, lacked the authority to "pull up" (*khainchnaa*) other Supervisors and Anganwadi Workers. In addition, the office jeep had not been operating for a year because the money to repair it had not been sanctioned by the state government; the previous "In-charge" had used the lack of a vehicle to justify not making inspection trips. This, in turn, had enabled the Supervisors to slack off, and the clerks too felt that they could get away with not fulfilling their responsibilities. Once Supervisors stopped going on inspection trips, Anganwadi Workers felt they had nothing to fear and they ceased operating the Centers. Thus, claimed Asha, because the "In-charge" had not made inspection trips, the "whole system" ground to a halt.

During her first few months in Mandi, the ICDS jeep was still inoperable, so Asha, too, had not conducted any inspection trips. But when

it appeared that the vehicle would not be repaired in the foreseeable future, she started taking public transportation to pay "surprise visits" to the Centers. She went to four Centers and was horrified to find that none of them were functioning. She felt that it was useless going to other Centers because she would then end up having to give warnings to all the workers under her charge. So, at the next monthly meeting of Anganwadi Workers, she announced that if she found Centers that were not functioning, she would take disciplinary action against the workers concerned. Following that warning, she resumed going on inspection trips. At first, she found attendance at the Centers spotty. However, once the word spread that she had started issuing warnings and docking Anganwadi Workers' pay, the Centers started operating again. Thus, even without an official vehicle, Asha managed to use inspection trips effectively and, although she could not inspect as many Centers as she would have been able to with a vehicle, she still managed to monitor quite a few.

I accompanied Asha Agarwal on a couple of inspection trips. She had carefully planned our itinerary so that we would visit Centers that had a record of good performance. But the fact that these were "surprise visits" meant that they could not serve as public relations exercises. The first trip was on a cold and overcast day in February, 1992, soon after the office had received a fresh disbursement of funds for purchasing petrol. The blue ICDS jeep, which had been lying idle because of insufficient funds for repairs and for petrol, was coaxed into life by the driver. Since Anganwadis were supposed to operate from nine in the morning to one in the afternoon, we left the Mandi office just before nine. Asha and I sat alongside the driver in front, while the Supervisor responsible for the areas we were visiting was in the back. Our first stop was the petrol station. Asha informed me that the state government had requested all offices to cut their expenditures by twenty percent. Since the office's annual report was due at the end of March, they had to run around even more than usual. She wondered aloud: How did the state government expect her to cut expenditures so drastically and still get all the work done for the annual report?

The first village where we stopped was Kalanda. There were two Anganwadis in Kalanda that had been operating since 1985, when the ICDS project began in Mandi Block. I was told that it was a primarily Muslim village, and we encountered an impressive mosque at the entrance to the village rather than the temple often seen in Hindu-majority villages. The village was most unusual for the well-maintained quality of its inner roads and the complete absence of sewage water and garbage on the streets. I was told that many men in the village were masons and had volunteered their labor to lay the roads and the drains. Some of them had gone to work as laborers in the Middle East and had come back with small fortunes, which accounted both for the relative grandeur of the mosque and the neat-looking houses.

The first Anganwadi that we went to inspect was housed in a dark room that served as the storage area for a farm family. A huge pile of lentils (*arhar*) occupied half the room, completely covering one wall and a good proportion of the floor space. The Anganwadi Worker, a pleasant and energetic woman, quickly sent the Helper to round up additional children to add to the fourteen who were already there. Asha asked the children to count numbers and to recite the alphabet, which they did with practiced ease. One child in particular, who was a little older than the rest, had written down numbers all the way to 100 on his slate, and had also memorized all the poems and songs that they had been taught. While we were at this Center, a number of children came in, looking washed and scrubbed. Asha told me that the teacher only had a high school degree, but seemed to be doing a good job with the children. She castigated the Anganwadi Worker for not removing the charts, which functioned as teaching aides, from the wall where the lentils had been piled. "It is your job to look after the charts". she told her. "When you knew that the crop was going to be stored there, why didn't you remove the charts beforehand?" After inspecting the Attendance Registers and writing a brief report in the Inspection Register, which noted when the inspection took place, how many children were there, and what the children had demonstrated, we left the Center and headed for the second one.

The second Center in Kalanda was in the porch of a house. When we reached there, the Anganwadi Worker was nowhere to be seen. There were a handful of very young children present, along with the Helper. When asked where the Anganwadi Worker was, the Helper claimed that she did not know. Asha and the Supervisor attempted to coax some of the children to stand up and recite the number table or identify objects on an alphabet chart; however, none of them opened their mouths. It was hard to tell whether this was out of fear of the visitors or because of their unfamiliarity with the task. We waited for a few minutes, then headed back to the jeep. As we were leaving, the Anganwadi Worker came hurrying towards us. She apologized profusely, and blamed her delay on the fact that the bus she was traveling on had broken down. Asha chastised her in no uncertain terms. Even if her bus had broken down, she said, this was no excuse for reaching the Center at 11: 15 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. The Anganwadi Worker lamented her fate, saying that it was her bad luck that the one day when she started late was the day when we happened to reach there. She tried to persuade us to come back to the Anganwadi for a few minutes, but Asha wanted to see Centers in other villages that day, and it was fast approaching closing time.

On our way to the jeep, Asha noted wryly how much better the Center operated by the woman who was only "high-school pass" seemed compared to the second one, despite the fact that the second Anganwadi Worker had a Master's degree. The children at the first Center seemed better taught and the teacher displayed more enthusiasm, observed Asha. She

appeared surprised at this because, in the past, she had found that the better-educated "teacher" had done a really good job.

That day, we visited another village with two more Centers, and had a remarkably similar experience in that the two Anganwadis that were well run had workers who had high school degrees, whereas the Anganwadi Workers in the other two were women whose qualifications exceeded the minimum required for the job. Asha's explanation for this was that highly trained women often felt that this job was below their dignity. They usually preferred other, better-paying jobs, but accepted the position of an Anganwadi Worker for lack of other opportunities. Asha said that it was probably a mistake to hire people who were overqualified, because such people would never be happy in a job where their skills were underutilized and in which they felt underappreciated.

During her inspection trips, Asha referred to the attendance registers, in which Anganwadi Workers had to record the number of children who came to the Center, in order to evaluate the performance of an Anganwadi. If she did not find a Center open or functioning properly during a surprise visit, she docked the Anganwadi Worker's pay for that day and left a note requesting an explanation (*spashtikaran*) for why the worker was not there. Repeated absences or delays in responding to the CDPO's demand for an explanation resulted in extended pay cuts; however, a decision to terminate employment required a great deal of documentation and careful groundwork on the part of the CDPO.

One example of repeated abstention from duty was provided by Sona Devi, an older, widowed woman with three children who lived in a large village called Hamirpur which had three Anganwadi Centers. Asha told me that she had found Sona Devi's Center closed during her last three inspection visits. Asha opened her inspection ledger and showed it to me as evidence: it indicated that Asha had reached the Center at 12: 30 pm and found it closed. When she asked why there were no children at her Center, Sona Devi replied that they had all gone to see a play (*nat*) being performed in the village. But when Asha checked this story with workers at the other Centers, they were unaware of any play being performed in the village at that time. Yet, despite Sona Devi's poor record, Asha had, so far, resisted firing Sona Devi. All she had done was cut Sona Devi's pay for not performing her job.

Asha then proceeded to give me more examples of how difficult it was for her to fire, and therefore discipline, Anganwadi Workers, even when she knew that they were not doing their jobs. Balvanti, an Anganwadi Worker, used to manage a Center in her natal village. When she got married and left for her husband's village, her father requested that his younger daughter be made the Anganwadi Worker in place of the elder. Asha told him that she could not do that because she was required to advertise the position, and that, furthermore, all new positions were reserved for

Scheduled Caste (SC) applicants.⁹ Asha waited for, but did not receive, a letter of resignation from Balvanti. After her marriage, Balvanti returned to her natal village for a few months before she moved permanently to her new home.¹⁰ During the time that Balvanti was back in her parent's home, she resumed operation of the Anganwadi. Asha added that Balvanti had been a conscientious worker, and had done a very good job of running the Anganwadi. But, eventually, Balvanti had left permanently for her husband's village. Whenever she returned to her parent's home for brief periods during the year, she would reopen the Center and operate it for a few days. But, for most of the year, the Anganwadi remained closed. Once when Asha had gone on an inspection tour and found the Center closed, she went to Balvanti's house to verify her whereabouts. She was told that Balvanti had just left for the fields on some urgent business. But a small child who was standing there piped up, "She hasn't gone to the field, she has gone to her own home!" Thus, her family members lie was exposed. During previous inspection visits, Asha had tried to persuade Balvanti's family that she would be better off resigning than getting fired. She told them, "This is a government department. By resigning, she leaves with her self-respect intact. By getting fired, she brings disrespect to herself." Yet, eighteen months after that incident, Asha had not yet received a resignation letter. Asha added that it was imperative that she fire Balvanti before a new consignment of food was allocated to the ICDS program because, if she waited to relieve her until after the food had been supplied, the chances were that Balvanti, knowing that she would have to resign soon, would appropriate the food. Asha also knew that Balvanti would come back to her parent's home for Holi (the spring harvest festival), and was afraid that she might restart the Anganwadi for a few days. Asha would then have to conduct three more inspections to fire her. Asha underlined the difficulty of her task by noting that the two registered letters that she had sent Balvanti were not returned to the office, nor was there evidence that they had been delivered. Asha surmised that Balvanti's family probably knew the village post-man, and had cajoled him to hand the letter over to them without signing a receipt. She had drafted another letter terminating Balvanti's employment, and was about to send it to her boss, who would have it signed and delivered officially.

Asha showed me examples of letters in which she had put two Anganwadi Workers on notice and had demanded a written explanation for why they had been absent from their Centers. Both women responded within a day, saying that they could not be at the Anganwadi because their children had suddenly taken ill. Asha told me that this was the excuse that she was given most frequently. If, during a surprise visit, she found a Center that was not functioning, she would visit it again in a few days, usually within a fortnight. If she found that the Center was still not operating, she would leave a warning, and would dock the worker's pay for yet another

day. Shortly thereafter, she would visit the same Anganwadi for a third time; if it was still not operating, she would leave a third warning, and would thereby prepare the way for suspending the worker. Anganwadi Workers were not government employees and, hence, could be fired after the third warning. However, Asha usually gave them another chance. "When we go to higher officials to get rid of someone," she explained, "they tell us, 'first make the file thicker'." In other words, get more material, more paperwork, before taking any action. The thicker the file," she said, "the easier it is to get a decision to fire someone."

Thus, the surveillance exercised by the CDPO through her inspection trips was not always matched by a capacity to discipline and fire workers. The CDPO's authority was limited to withholding the pay of Anganwadi Workers who were not doing their job. In order to relieve an Anganwadi Worker of her job, the CDPO had to first assemble an unimpeachable record of the worker's misdemeanor, and then convince her boss that such drastic action was justified.

On one of my visits to the ICDS office on a warm day in February 1992, the staff had pulled the desks and chairs onto the narrow porch to take advantage of the sunny weather. While I was talking to Asha, a man came up the stairs and headed into the office. After consulting with the clerk, he came and handed a slip of paper to Asha. It was an application for leave on behalf of his wife who was an Anganwadi Worker. The application requested leave for a few days because she was ill. Accompanying the application was an impressive stack of papers, including an X-ray, which the man plopped down in front of Asha. He said that if Asha didn't believe him, she could look at the medical papers and convince herself that his wife was telling the truth. Asha categorically refused to believe the man. She said that she had made surprise visits to that Center on two occasions, and found it closed both times. What was more, many villagers had come to her, complaining that the Center did not function. She told the man that if his wife could not operate the Center because she was ill, she should have applied for medical leave, and Asha would have been happy to endorse such an application. Alternatively, his wife could have applied for "casual" leave (which, however, was limited to twenty days every year). But, Asha emphasized, the worker could not keep the Anganwadi closed indefinitely because she was ill, *and* continue to draw a salary as if the Center was open. Asha added that she had not yet received a response (*spashtikaran*) to the letters she had left at the Center. She demanded to know why, if the Anganwadi Worker was ill, the Center was not being run by her Helper: "If your wife cannot make it to the Anganwadi on certain days, why is the Helper absent? I should find the Helper [at the Center] even if the Anganwadi Worker is not there." The man defended his wife, saying that she could not force the Helper to show up. But Asha did not give up her line of questioning. If his wife went to the Anganwadi regularly, why did the

attendance registers not demonstrate that fact by listing the names of the children who were present? "When I went there," Asha said, "none of the registers had been filled." That charge finally broke the man's resistance. He then switched tactics, and claimed that it was hard to entice children to come to the Anganwadi when there was no food (*poshtahaar*) provided to them. Asha claimed that, by that logic, none of the Anganwadis in Mandi should have been operating, since there was no food being distributed at any of them. Defeated by that battery of arguments, the man left. When he had gone, I asked Asha if she intended to fire that particular Anganwadi Worker. To my surprise, she said that she did not think it necessary to resort to such a drastic step. "This was only my second warning to her," she said. "We have to allow for the possibility that there are often genuine reasons why the Center is not open." Anganwadi Workers sometimes came back on track after repeated warnings and, in that particular case, she would wait a little longer.

Asha proceeded to tell me about other Anganwadi Centers that were in trouble, drawing on the cases of Balvanti and Sona Devi referred to earlier, and emphasized the difficulties she had in doing anything to remedy the situation. Asha had already been to Balvanti's village twice, and a Supervisor had visited once, and they had both found the Anganwadi closed. In addition, when Asha went to inspect the Center, villagers complained that it no longer functioned properly. However, oral complaints were of little use, and Asha was frustrated in her efforts to persuade villagers to write down what they told her. "The problem," she said, "is that when you ask someone to give you a complaint in writing, they at once withdraw what is otherwise vociferous criticism. With government work, unless you have something in writing, you cannot build a case and take any action."

The recalcitrance of subordinates was only one of the many ways in which the hands of CDPOs were tied. Sona Devi, whose pay had been docked by Asha, had decided to put political pressure on Asha to restore her stipend. One day, five men came to talk to Asha and told her that she had no right to speak to Sona Devi in an "insulting tone". Asha presented her case to them, and asked them what they wanted her to do, given the fact that Sona Devi's Anganwadi was found to not be functioning on three different occasions. Ignoring her question, the men said that they were not asking her to do anything, they just wanted to warn her to not "misbehave" with her workers. Asha became enraged as she recounted what had happened: "First, she [Sona Devi] does something wrong, and then she tries to put [political] pressure on me! That makes me even more angry."

Surprise inspections and registers were two devices by which regulation and accountability were pursued through devices of enumeration. It was not only that superior officers at "higher" levels traveled in jeeps, it was also that they traveled in order to conduct inspections, to discipline, reward, encourage, and punish. Registers helped them do just that, since

registers enabled them to check their observations against what had been noted. For example, Asha complained that workers who ran Anganwadi Centers in their homes often brought in additional children when they saw the dust of the jeep in the distance. Thus, by the time the CDPO actually reached the Center, there were many children there even if the Anganwadi had not been operating. However, she managed to catch the worker's "deception" in such cases by checking the names of the children present against the names (if any) entered in the attendance register. The CDPO's ability to swoop down on the space of the Anganwadi Worker was thus mediated by the semiotic of dust; a smoke signal delivered by that very device—the jeep—that enabled her to suddenly enter the space of the Anganwadi Worker.

The surveillance exercised by superior officers on their subordinates was part of the routine functioning of the Indian state. However, this kind of monitoring did not easily translate into control and discipline. The authority of the CDPO, as of any superior officer in the hierarchy, could be subverted, deferred, or denied through a range of tactics. The workers who were the objects of surveillance by their superiors did not merely conform and police themselves as expected. Rather than simply regulating and normalizing, the power of superior officers to exercise surveillance on their workers sometimes provoked disruptive reactions that threatened the hierarchical assumptions of bureaucratic order. Government by state bureaucracies did not smoothly translate into self-government by Anganwadi Workers; there were significant points of tension and friction in the art of government.

I found a similarly contested relationship between Anganwadi Workers and villagers. As part of their job, Anganwadi Workers were required to collect vast amounts of data, particularly about women and children, segments of the population that had not been as extensively surveyed, counted, classified, measured, injected, or schooled in the past. The monitoring that superior officers exercised on Anganwadi Workers was meant partially to ensure that they were, in turn, conscientiously monitoring the population they were "serving". The next section deals explicitly with the relationship between Anganwadi Workers and "their" villagers.

State Mechanisms: A Number's Game?

Although they were not government employees, Anganwadi Workers were expected to behave like them in one important regard. They had the crucial responsibility of generating official statistics for the state. In an appropriate image, Hacking has characterized the activities of the modern state as generating an "avalanche of numbers" (1982).¹¹ In the Anganwadi program, record-keeping often appeared to be an end in itself; it also had far-reaching effects in mapping, surveying, and tabulating the population and, most importantly, in potentially monitoring the lives of women and children.

Enumeration is a critical modality of governmentality; it is through the collection of statistics that the conduct of conduct can be affected. What kinds of statistics are collected, who collects them, and how they are used all affects the regulation of populations, techniques of accountability, and the formation of group identities. Foucault has pointed out the family resemblance between statistics and the state; the rise of statistics is integral to the science of the state that developed in Europe at the end of the sixteenth century (1991: 96). Kaviraj (1994) links enumeration to a specifically modern form of community identity, which he opposes to "fuzzy" communities. It is through the purposeful counting of peoples as members of certain kinds of groups that arguments about representativeness, about majorities and minorities, about who is falling behind and who is ahead in income data, educational achievements, etc. can be made. Statistics are not just collected by the state; and they are certainly not always collected or employed in the *interests* of the state. Aggrieved groups can quite effectively marshal statistics against the state to justify a range of actions. My argument is that statistics function to gauge things like activity levels or health, monitor the actions of social agents, and regulate the behavior of populations. All these functions extend beyond the state and belong to the realm of government more generally.

The most time-consuming activity of Anganwadi Workers consisted of documenting and generating statistics. A plethora of registers recorded such things as how many children attended the Center each day, and who they were - their name, father's name, and caste. A nutrition register recorded how much food and fuel was consumed each day. A third register was used to record the birth dates of each child born in the village, its parents' names, ages, and castes. Similar records were kept of all deaths. The name, age, and caste of each pregnant woman and a record of the outcome of the pregnancy were recorded in another register. A travel log maintained a record of when and why an Anganwadi Worker was missing from a Center. An inspection register was maintained where Supervisors, the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), and other visitors recorded their impressions about the functioning of the Anganwadi.

Maintaining all these records posed a daunting challenge to most Anganwadi Workers, particularly those who lacked the requisite cultural capital in the form of mathematical skills. Sharda Devi was an Anganwadi Worker in the village of Bhaipur, a few miles from Mandi. Her husband was a self-taught "doctor" who was also the Community Health Worker for the village. When I met her during one of my visits to her Center, she complained to me about the mathematics involved in the supplementary nutrition program. Different quantities of food, measured in grams, had to be given to children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers. Then the totals had to be added up for each category, and for all groups for each day. These totals were next tallied against the amount of food actually left in the

Center. When the CDPO came on her inspection trips, one of the things she looked for were discrepancies in the registers and the actual amount of food remaining at the Center. Sharda Devi's husband asked pointedly, "How do they expect a person with an eighth-grade education to do all this? If I didn't help her, she would never be able to manage the books." However, everyone, including the CDPO, understood that the object of the exercise was not so much to detect "corruption" as to keep the record straight, so that no aspersions of corruption could reasonably be made. Thick files and carefully totaled numbers were more important than actual action, because the logic of bureaucratic justification demanded written evidence, a fact often lost on semi-literate or illiterate people in rural areas.

But there was more to the functioning of Anganwadis than generating numbers so that tables and columns totaled up correctly. A silent revolution was indeed taking place through this program, and it was not just in the "development of human resources". Perhaps, for the first time in the history of the nation, were records being kept on births and deaths in rural areas. Anyone who has attempted to do a census of an Indian village knows how difficult it is to record precise ages and dates of birth, as the techniques of the modern, Western imaginary of the nation and "its" population are (mis)translated into incommensurable modes and methods of recording the passage of time as it intersects with life histories. I looked at several registers in Anganwadis that recorded information about births. The mothers' ages, which may have varied from 15 and up, were all carefully recorded as over the legal age of marriage: 18 years and 6 months, or 19, or 22 years. However, the birth of children in the village since the Anganwadi program began in Mandi was recorded to the day, and sometimes to the hour. The registers contained similar, relatively accurate, information about deaths. In other registers was to be found data on inoculations, the weight of infants and pregnant women, attendance at the Anganwadi, etc. The Anganwadi Program had resulted in a quantum leap in data on women and children, particularly with respect to fertility and infant mortality.

It may be objected that since Anganwadi Workers were not trained census takers, the quality of the data they collected was suspect. And, indeed, since there were no mechanisms to check whether an Anganwadi Worker had recorded *all* the births and deaths in a village, or had accurately noted down the exact birth dates of individuals, it would have been impossible to tell if a birth or death had been recorded correctly. However, what needs to be pointed out is that, unlike census takers, Anganwadi Workers either lived in the village in which they worked, or went daily to the village to operate the Anganwadi. They could gather a great deal of information from the children who came to the Anganwadi. Further, births and deaths were major public occasions in villages in western Uttar Pradesh and, thus, could be hidden only with great difficulty. Finally, Anganwadi Workers had no incentive to not record such events or to misrecord them.

Thus, although there were few mechanisms to double-check the records kept by Anganwadi Workers, there was little reason to be suspicious of the figures that had been entered in the registers.

The broader point that I wish to make here is that, seemingly a by-product of the functioning of the Anganwadi program were a series of numbers, modes of enumeration, classification, and recording that operated on a segment of the population whose low level of literacy and lack of participation in the formal economy had kept it relatively insulated from the chronotope of state surveillance. What differentiated the Anganwadi Worker from the census taker was precisely the degree of *familiarity* with the village that no outsider could ever obtain. Even when the Anganwadi Worker kept her distance from the social life of the village, its politics and divisions, she still knew a great deal more about individuals and families than any other state official could possibly know. More importantly, the Anganwadi Worker learnt a great deal about women in the village, a segment of the population relatively insulated from the gaze of other (male) state officials.

However, just as there were limits to the state's surveillance of the running of Anganwadi Centers through the direct supervision of the CDPO, there were limits to its surveillance through practices of data gathering by Anganwadi Workers. The Anganwadi program did not merely or mainly result in the incorporation of women and children into the relentless march of the machinery of state surveillance. I give two reasons below why such a conclusion would exaggerate claims about increasing state control, and underestimate the spaces for resistance and ambivalence created by these very processes. Whether or not the state's role in rural life was increased by the Anganwadi program, it is clear that new modes of governmentality were being introduced by the program, techniques of enumeration and data gathering, and novel technologies of regulation and accountability.

Despite Anganwadi Workers' best efforts, villagers often resisted their efforts to collect statistics. At one of the monthly meetings of Anganwadi Workers that I attended, several of them stood up to document the difficulties they experienced in collecting the information they were required to enter in the registers. One Anganwadi Worker said that villagers refused to allow their children's weight to be measured. One day, as part of her duties, she had weighed some children. The next day, a little boy fell ill. His sibling told the rest of the family that the child had been weighed the previous day. Measuring children's weights and pronouncing them "healthy" was considered reason enough to attract envy, the "evil eye" so feared by people in western Uttar Pradesh.¹² After that day, none of the households in the village would allow their children to attend the Anganwadi. They told the Anganwadi Worker, "When you don't feed the children, why do you weigh them?" She could not convince them that no harm would come to children by weighing them.

Similarly, some Anganwadi Workers reported that when they went from door to door to do a survey of the population, people often refused to cooperate with them. "Why do you come to our house to do the survey when we have to come to you for inoculations and injections?" the Anganwadi Workers were asked with impeccable logic. "You should just sit at the Center and do the survey there." Anganwadi Workers also described their difficulties in asking questions about all members of a family. They were challenged by villagers with the words, "When you feed only the children, why do you want to take a survey that includes everyone? Why do you want to find out who has died—are you going to feed the dead too?" The workers said that they had no good responses to such questions, and were sometimes unable to persuade villagers to cooperate with them.

State surveillance did not increase by virtue of the fact of data collection. When analysts use the concept of "the state", the impression conveyed is of a unitary and cohesive institution that has potentially great capacities for controlling, monitoring, and manipulating its population. However, when one disaggregates the state, and analyzes the workings of individual bureaucracies and programs like the ICDS, it becomes more difficult to conceptualize a coordinated, systematic institution that can exploit the data collected by its various apparatuses. In fact, the level of coordination between agencies and bureaucracies of the state that is implied by the term "surveillance", with its connotation of linkages between data collection and repression, suggests capabilities that the state may not possess. The ICDS project at the Block level diligently accumulated the data collected by the Anganwadi Workers and passed it on to the district level, from where it was fed into national statistics on the program. However, it was not clear if anyone at the district level was processing the data, and using it for any purpose whatsoever. I was told of mountains of data were sitting there awaiting processing, from which conclusions might be drawn, and lessons extracted. Hacking's image of an "avalanche of numbers" is appropriate: it suggests an undirected and undisciplined flow, triggered by the smallest disturbance a mountain of numbers threatening to cascade down without being directed to any end by any agency.

Governmentality and Resistance

The examples of resistance offered in the previous section raise the question of the role of resistance in understandings of governmentality. O'Malley argues that resistance has too often been seen as a "negative externality" that causes programs to fail, rather than as a constitutive part of rule, of "government from below" (1998: 157). To see resistance mainly in terms of that which causes state programs to fail privileges the perspective of planners and bureaucrats and fails to acknowledge the central role played by resistance in shaping discourses, institutions, and programs of rule. At its limit, O'Malley suggests, resistance can so fundamentally transform regimes

of rule that it can create a "significant source of instability" (1998: 170) for those regimes. Resistance, in other words, might provoke a shift in strategy of modes of governance that alter them so fundamentally as to be constitutive rather than acting merely as a source of constraint.

Resistance, of course, provokes reactions from those in charge of programs and policies. One such fascinating tussle about the meaning of work in the Anganwadi concerned ICDS's component of schooling. Contrary to the state's efforts to portray them as voluntary workers, most Anganwadi Workers that I interviewed referred to themselves as "teachers", consciously eliding the difference between themselves and schoolteachers. The state, on the other hand, employed the discourse of motherhood in representing the efforts of Anganwadi Workers as voluntary. By this logic, what Anganwadi Workers did in the crèches was deemed an extension of what a "good mother" would have done at home: the only difference was that the Anganwadi Worker performed that function for more children than would normally be found in a household. By the state's logic, therefore, the work done by an Anganwadi Worker differed in scope from what she did at home, but was *qualitatively equivalent* to mothering. In contrast, by referring to themselves as "teachers", Anganwadi Workers emphasized how similar their work was to that performed by teachers in elementary schools. Thus, Anganwadi Workers chose to emphasize the *qualitatively different* nature of work in the Anganwadi as compared to the home.

Anganwadi Workers were proud of those students who had either refused to leave their Centers to go to a "Montessori" (the name for any school that charged tuition and claimed to teach English as a subject) or returned to the Anganwadi because they had learnt so much there. Once, towards the end of January 1992, I dropped in to visit the Anganwadi in Alipur. Sharmila, the Brahmin woman who was the Anganwadi Worker, pointed to one of the girls in her class. Before she joined the Anganwadi, the girl used to walk a fair distance to a Montessori in an adjacent village. When she started attending the Anganwadi regularly, she discovered that her classmates knew more than she did. She was, in fact, asked by one of the other little girls if she had learnt anything at all at the Montessori! Sharmila commented that, because the Montessori charged Rs. 15 a month as tuition and the Anganwadi School taught children for free, people in the village assumed that the education students received at the Montessori was better. "They don't value this education because it is free," Sharmila concluded. At another Center in Kalanda, described above, the "star student" had been removed from the Anganwadi and sent to the village school by his parents. However, he ran away from there and came back to the Anganwadi because he liked being at the Center.

At one of their monthly meetings, Anganwadi Workers complained that, ironically, the superior education provided at the Anganwadis actually created "problems". The workers claimed that as soon as the children learnt

a little bit at the Anganwadi, their parents felt that they were "too bright" to stay there and would transfer them to a Montessori or a government-run primary school. This resulted in high turnover and many children left the Anganwadis soon after beginning their education. The Anganwadi Workers added that this was bad for the children because, in the government schools, they were packed eighty to a class, and the teachers were usually found sipping tea in the courtyard instead of teaching. They pointed out that teachers in the government schools were paid thousands of rupees for their "efforts", whereas Anganwadi Workers were compensated little for giving children individual attention.

The tension between "voluntary worker" and "teacher" was symptomatic of a more general contradiction that underlay the design of the Anganwadi program. On the one hand, the Anganwadi program was clearly built on the notion that women, as the "natural" care givers for children, would be best suited to bring health and educational interventions to young children, and to pregnant women and nursing mothers. On the other hand, Anganwadi Workers were expected to be "professional" in carrying out their duties, and were bound to an even more impressive array of bureaucratic procedures and record keeping than their better-paid counterparts in government service.

The tensions between Anganwadi Workers' status as voluntary workers or paid professionals were manifest in the selection of sites for locating Anganwadis. One day, as we walked to an Anganwadi Center, Asha took the opportunity to return to one of her favorite themes the difficulties created by the fact that there was no provision to rent space for the Anganwadis. "When someone gives you a place for free," she said, "you can't tell them that they don't have a right to use that space for their personal use. And then the result is that even if the children don't have a place to sit, there is little you can say to the owner of the house."

On another occasion, she explained why "it was a bad idea" for a woman to run an Anganwadi Center in her own home. She said that in such a Center, it became impossible to determine when a woman was actually working, and when she was doing her own housework. During her frequent inspection trips, she said, the noise of the jeeps and the dust it blew warned the Anganwadi Worker that the Officer was coming. "If the Center is in her house, and she is inside doing her cooking, she can quickly come to the place where the children are and pretend she was at the Center. Or she could be inside and pretend she had gone there to get something. So there is no practical way to check on her activities." In addition, Asha felt that if the Center was at the worker's home, there was no way to ensure that she was not diverting the food provided for supplementary nutrition of children for her own family's needs. "It is far better for the woman to go to a Center somewhere else because then she goes with the attitude that she has to work for the next three hours." Not only would it make it easier to keep

surveillance on the worker, it would also maintain the Anganwadi Center as a separate space imbued with the authority of the state.

The problem, she said, was that when she told women to not establish Centers at their own homes, they replied, "What can we do? Get us another place, and we'll move." Thus, one of Asha's biggest frustrations with the program was that no money had been allocated for rent. The space for the Anganwadi was supposed to be donated by the village, in order to ensure "local participation" in the program. However, in Mandi Block, the program had been operating for six years and landlords, nervous of government intentions towards their property and aware of laws that favored tenants, were systematically taking back the spaces they had loaned to the Centers.

Women who worked in the Anganwadi Program were thus expected to perform "home-like" duties in the Centers, extending their "natural" roles of caring for children and cooking meals. However, they were also expected to *maintain* the boundary between their homes and their workplaces, because blurring those boundaries made surveillance and control impossible. In harnessing women's energies by extending their domestic roles to the public sphere for the development of the community and the nation, the Anganwadi program was unable to mediate the tensions created by domesticating the state, as conflicts between control and performance became intractable. Control required women to operate the Centers in a workspace, a non-domestic setting; however, the tasks that they were expected to perform were considered domestic and "home-like" duties. Predictably, Anganwadi Workers resisted such a formulation by taking the opposite position on those issues, arguing for an elision of work and domestic spaces on the grounds that it was hard to run a Center in borrowed space, and insisting on a distinction between domestic work and the "teaching" they did in the Anganwadi Center. Thus even the best efforts of state officials to govern the conduct of Anganwadi Workers, who were after all their own employees, did not bring about the exact results that they had hoped. Instead of the program's objectives becoming the objectives of the workers through a process of internalization and self-discipline, recalcitrant workers redefined their activities and changed the site of the Anganwadito their own homes. Here is a case where resistance took not the form of refusal, but largely of *reinterpretation*. It was not that Anganwadi Workers necessarily changed what they were doing; they were in a semiotic struggle about the *meaning* of their actions.

Conclusion

Governmentality, Dean and Hindess (1998) remind us, is equally about the government of conduct and the conduct of government. Examining the Integrated Child Development Services program allows us to see precisely how the latter shapes the former. In other words, how does the functioning

of one government program shape the conduct of workers, clients, and bureaucrats? State efforts to alter, regulate, monitor, measure, record, and reward the conduct of politically disempowered groups of lower-caste women and children emerged from an effort to manage the size and quality of the population. At the same time, the conduct of government itself was changed as a result of this interaction, as these groups imbued the state with their own agendas, interpretations, and actions.

I began this paper by noting the importance of a "benevolent" program like the Integrated Child Development Services in the face of certain incontrovertible and tragic facts relating to the high mortality and morbidity rates for children and pregnant women in India. The program promised to inexpensively increase the human capital of the nation and, thus, promote its rapid development. Investing in children, the logic went, was investing in the nation's future. Another, closely related payoff was its potential to bring down fertility rates. Better health, education, and increased rates of survival for children were expected to have long-term effects in slowing down population growth. As Suman Nayyar, a training officer in the ICDS directorate succinctly put it: "If a couple knows that their children won't survive, they'll have more. Education is the best contraceptive" (*InterPress Service*, Jan. 7, 1987).¹³

The ideology of humanitarian intervention, given an economic rationale as an investment in the future of the nation, was accompanied by a discourse of protection. The premise of benevolent protection implicit in the ICDS scheme almost never drew comment from any of its planners or participants. The commitment to protection explained why the ICDS program targeted women (especially pregnant women) and children, and why the program was geared so heavily to poor and lower-caste groups. These were the groups who most needed protection, as they were "at-risk", "vulnerable", and least able to help themselves.

Investment in human capital and benevolent protection colluded with the third feature that was a necessary effect of such a program, and that was the vast increase in the monitoring, surveillance, and regulation of the "target" population.¹⁴ This happened through a variety of mechanisms. Anganwadi Workers were required to collect a staggering array of statistics. It is significant that most of the data collected by Anganwadi Workers dealt with the segment of the population that was least represented in official records. Almost any type of record kept by the state—land titles, school records, bank accounts, postal savings accounts, electricity connections, loans—all recorded the name, age, residence, and sometimes caste of the father. Typical records read: "Ravinder, age 16, s/o (son of) Gavinder, Village Khurd" or "Poonam, age 10, d/o Gavinder, Village Khurd". Men were present in a variety of capacities: as sons, husbands, fathers, and even grandfathers. Significantly, women were largely absent, and were mentioned only occasionally as wives and daughters. Since women were

less likely to attend institutions of formal learning, or to transact business at a bank or post office, they were far less visible in the official record. It was precisely this segment of the population, heretofore insulated from the apparatuses of state surveillance, that the Anganwadi Workers' statistics were systematically bringing under the gaze of the state.

There was another aspect to the increased ambit of state surveillance. This had to do with the Anganwadi Workers, who were themselves ambivalently positioned as simultaneously implementers of the ICDS Program and beneficiaries of state benevolence. Anganwadi Workers were not treated as state employees, and what they did at the Centers was defined as volunteer work for which they were recompensed not with a salary but with a stipend. Participation in the program subjected them to an intensive regime of regulation and surveillance. Inspection trips to monitor the performance of Anganwadis were made by several levels of officials who, thus, subjected them to a level of monitoring that exceeded even that exerted on regular employees of the state.

However, state surveillance was not without its ambiguities and ambivalences. In coping with the requirements for paperwork placed on them and the insistence on procedure followed by Indian bureaucracies, Anganwadi Workers gained a great deal of competence in navigating and circumventing the procedures of the bureaucracy. They too learned the methods of creating paper trails that prevented them from being cowed down by the high-handed methods of the bureaucracy and its demands for literacy. In addition, the requirement that Anganwadi Workers travel to training centers for three months at the beginning of their tenure, and to the office in Mandi for their monthly meeting had several unintended consequences. In western Uttar Pradesh, women almost never made such trips on their own, that is, without the "protection" of an accompanying male. And, yet, because they were required to do so, women in groups of two or more embarked on these trips. In so doing, they began to traverse a public space formerly closed to them by the constraints of "honor" and threats of gendered violence. Finally, one cannot understate the transformative impact on the lives of Anganwadi Workers of the discovery that they could teach, and often teach better than (relatively) highly paid teachers in government schools. As described above, Anganwadi Workers' greatest source of pride rested in the favorable comparisons made by students and parents between their Centers and the private schools that charged tuition.

In addition to these features of ambivalence and ambiguity were instances of resistance that defied the monitoring and surveillance functions of the ICDS Program. Such resistance varied from villagers who refused to answer survey questions, to Anganwadi Workers who challenged the CDPO at the monthly meetings, to workers who used the rules of the bureaucracy to resist being fired from their unrecognized "jobs". Resistance also found expression in the Anganwadi Workers' refusal to see their work at the

Centers as an extension of the work of childcare, cooking, nurture, and attention to the sick that they did at home. Anganwadi Workers insisted on calling themselves "teachers" and, thus, underlined the similarity of their work to that performed by primary school teachers.

I trust that it is clear that my emphasis on ambiguity and resistance is not intended to efface the state's surveillance and regulation, the productive proliferation of statistics, and the preoccupation with questions of the population. I have emphasized throughout that governmentality is never just about control, it is most of all about a *concern* with the population, with its size, but also with its health, happiness, and productivity. It is precisely this relationship between the state's increased capacity for the surveillance and control of women's lives and its concern with saving the lives of children, particularly girls, and protecting millions of others from more acute forms of malnutrition and disease (Sen 1990) that becomes hard to grasp in conventional academic discussions which pit the state against civil society. An understanding of governmentality demonstrates to the contrary that these are two features of a singular process, a process, moreover, that does not reside in the state. In the government of conduct, the state is only one among a number of heterogeneous institutions and cannot simply be assumed to be the dominant player. Nor can it be assumed that the conduct that is desired by planners, policy makers, and bureaucrats is actually achieved, for the subjects of these policies may well alter the nature of the programs themselves, and thus alter the conduct of government as much as it changes them.

Notes

¹ The exact amounts were as follows: expenditures in 1990-91 were Rs. 268 crore vs. Rs. 603 crore in 1998-99 (approximately \$151 million).

² What is interesting in this discussion of governmentality is the extent to which the welfare of populations within territorial states is discussed in isolation from the wider context in which those states existed. In particular, if one is thinking of European states in the eighteenth century, the welfare of the population within those states was intimately linked with the welfare of those other populations who were the object of their state's actions: their colonial subjects.

³ For the purposes of comparison, the UNDP report puts the infant mortality rate in 1960 at 165 per thousand live births, indicating that it has been more than halved in the last forty years.

⁴ The health component for children included the administration of large doses of Vitamin A, iron and folic acid tablets, DPT and BCG immunization shots, and the monitoring of malnutrition by weighing or measuring mid-arm circumference; for pregnant women, measures included iron and folic acid tablets, and tetanus shots.

⁵ In a survey conducted in 27 of the 33 blocks in which the ICDS program began, Tandon et al. (1981: 380) reported that 76 percent of children under three years of age in rural areas, and 78 percent of those under six, were malnourished. Severe malnutrition was found in 21 percent of rural children under three, and in 26 percent of tribal children in the same age group.

⁶ Concern with the size of the population arose both from fears of the inadequacy of the food supply, as well as from its potential to impose demands on state services. India's population was 442 million in 1960, 884 million in 1992, and is estimated to grow to 1,022 million by the year 2000.

⁷ The overwhelming defeat of the Congress (I) in the elections that followed has been attributed by most political observers to the coercive tactics used for birth control during the Emergency.

Sanjay Gandhi's followers often invoked China as an example of "successful" population control, and democracy was held to be the chief reason for India's failure. For a fascinating analysis of China's efforts in this field, see Greenhalgh (n.d.).

⁸ This issue will be analyzed in at greater detail later in this paper.

⁹ Scheduled Castes (SCs in official terminology) are the lowest castes in the caste hierarchy.

¹⁰ This custom is known as *gaunaa* in west Uttar Pradesh.

¹¹ See also the work of Cohn (1987) and Appadurai (1993) on the Indian state. Appadurai states the problem particularly well when he says, "statistics were generated in amounts that far defeated any unified bureaucratic purpose ..." (1993: 316).

¹² The belief in the "evil eye" is not limited to people in western Uttar Pradesh, but is common in large parts of the South Asian subcontinent.

¹³ There are various versions of this basic formula. I have heard the same sentiment being expressed as "Development is the best contraceptive".

¹⁴ Although I cannot develop this line of argument here, I will note that the use of military and missionizing metaphors in development projects is remarkably similar to those employed in colonial conquest—God, guns, and glory.