

we found merchants to be somewhat reticent about their business dealings. This means that we had to interview the same merchant on repeated occasions until he had taken the measure of us and a relationship of candor had been developed. We knew that we had broken through our informant's reserve if he would explain smuggling methods to us. Of course, we never got that far with a number of merchants, but we did with some.

A problem, which is related to that of rapport-building and which we confronted in interviewing merchants, was to select an optimum time for meeting informants. We found that the best times were early in the morning and late in the evenings. Typically, the merchant opens his shop around 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. It remains open until mid-afternoon, at which time the merchant may go home--after locking up--for lunch and a nap. The shop opens again for several hours in the evening. Interviewing a merchant on detailed issues is not very productive during the period from mid-morning to mid-afternoon, because the merchant is busy looking after customers at this time.<sup>57</sup> Also, he may be reluctant to discuss his business with his customers in earshot. The evening is an especially good time to interview because merchants like to gather in front of their shops for tea and conversation.

Four interview forms are being used in the market study: (1) an inventory of marketing services, which is being administered in all villages; (2) an interview of village merchants (social characteristics, career history, capital assets, description of business activities including crop buying and loans, farming activities); (3) an interview addressed to periodic vendors (social characteristics, residence, stock-in-trade, sources of goods, price mark-ups, attendance at markets, farming activities); (4) an interview addressed to market visitors (social characteristics, occupation, residence, sales and purchases, frequency of visits to market, other markets visited). The original plan to carry out a systematic survey in all markets with these interview instruments proved to be too ambitious. The modified objectives that are now being sought are to conduct the market service survey in all villages in the sample and to carry out a survey of merchants in all villages.<sup>58</sup> The previous plan was to carry out the merchant survey from December to February, but this timing was found to be inappropriate for gathering data about crop marketing because the season continues from late October until April and May.<sup>59</sup> A systematic survey of periodic vendors and market visitors is no longer planned due to the time constraints and limited research personnel. These interview schedules are being used to assemble a sample of 15 to 20 case studies of each

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<sup>57</sup>This is an excellent time to make observations of the shop's operations, however. One is quickly made aware of how farm produce is a substitute for cash and how the merchant is continuously making small commodity loans to his customers, recording the merchandise and its value in a notebook.

<sup>58</sup>A 50% sample of merchants in each village would total about sixty-five interviews. In villages which have only one shop, the merchant is always included in the sample.

<sup>59</sup>The merchant survey was postponed, therefore, until April and May, 1982.