I have worked with the All India Soil & Land Use Survey Scheme for 20 months. This organization is responsible for the technical phase of soil survey work in India. Field soil survey methods and techniques, land capability classification, soil correlation, soil interpretation, and assisting with soil survey reports have been included in my advice and suggestions to the Chief Soil Survey Officer and the four regional Soil Correlators. It took some time to realize that advisor meant just that. You have no responsibility in actual policy matters, technical and administrative decisions. You are outside looking in.

The Government of India sanctioned the All India Soil & Land Use Survey Scheme to bring together all types of soil surveys at a national level. This permitted utilization of personnel in planning soil survey operations. The scheme is financed by the Soil Conservation Board but headquartered at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi. It works as a separate wing at IARI under the Director, through the Chief Soil Survey Officer. Four Soil Correlation Centres were established at Delhi, Nagpur, Bangalore, and Calcutta. The administrative set-up makes it difficult for decisions to be made without taking considerable time. For the Chief Soil Survey Officer to make a decision, he must consult with the Director of IARI, the Soil Conservation Advisory Board and the Ministry of Food & Agriculture.

The four soil correlation centres are set up by soil regions: the Alluvial Gangetic Plains, Rajasthan Desert and Himalayan Mountains in the North, Black Soil Region of Central and Eastern India, the Red Laterites of the South, and the Red Laterites, Red-yellow podzols and tropical soils of Assam in Western India.

Each Soil Correlation Centre has a soil laboratory for mechanical and chemical analysis. It is equipped with a cartographic unit for tracing and making ammonia prints of the completed maps. At present, three maps are included in the report. The cartographic unit at headquarters does the report. It is difficult to get paper in India, so only eight to ten reports are available for a surveyed area. The reports are written when a subcatchment is completed. Copies of the reports are sent to the Soil Conservation Board and the Department of Agriculture in the States concerned. The reports seldom reach the Soil Conservation Officer responsible for the work in the catchment area. A new routing procedure is being developed to make sure the responsible officer in the field receives a copy.

New Delhi has been my headquarters, but I spent 70 per cent of the time working with the field soil survey parties. Forty-two crews are working in the seven major river catchments or watersheds doing detailed soil survey. The target is to survey and prepare land use maps for 1,500,000 acres annually. To work with these parties, I have traveled 25,000 miles by air and 22,000 miles by jeep. One jeep trip was 10,000 miles and took 65 days. The field parties consist of five to seven people. The Soil Survey Assistant, a college graduate, MS degree, heads the party. His party includes a recorder, surveyor and chairman, driver, and the camp crew. Living in tents