Experience has shown that agricultural development is not rural development. In recent years the emphasis has been on developmental programmes oriented to alleviation of rural poverty, which has become synonymous with rural development. These programmes owe their existence and continuance virtually to the initiatives and financial assistance from the Central Government. Panchayati Raj Institutions, established as vehicles of rural development from 1959 onwards, were for sometime inactive in many of the States. Of late interest in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has revived and it can be said that they have come to stay. However, the implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes through District Rural Development Agency, and not by the Panchayati Raj Institutions, is an evidence that the Panchayati Raj Institutions do not enjoy the trust of the Government in carrying out beneficiary-oriented programmes.

1. An official agency, registered under the Societies Registration Act.
Andhra Pradesh, the first to implement Panchayati Raj, has almost been a bastion of Panchayati Raj. The recent reorganisation of revenue administration, by establishment of revenue mandals and of Panchayati Raj by the introduction of Mandal Praja Parishads and Zilla Praja Parishads - to take the revenue and developmental administration nearer to the people - shows an abiding faith in the principles of Panchayati Raj and of the concern for the common man. The Government of Andhra Pradesh, has been implementing the developmental programmes. We have, in the earlier chapters, discussed in detail the views of officials and non-officials and also of a cross section of the people on these programmes. An overview of the important findings is now attempted to provide an integrated and clear picture. Suggestions have also been made to improve the situation in light of the findings.

First, about the knowledge and attitudes of the sample of the cross section of villagers in the selected villages - one each in three blocks.

By and large, the level of development of a village and the correct understanding of facts relating to Panchayati Raj Institutions of the people therein are mutually related.

2. For a period of about 6 years (1975-1981) when there were no elections to Panchayat Samithis or Zilla Parishads, technically Panchavati Raj did not exist.
A high level of awareness, limited to about 1/5 of the total respondents, is associated with higher education, a higher level of land holdings, and a higher level in the hierarchy of religion/caste. More distant the tier, the less aware are respondents of its functions or resources.

Sense of Political Efficacy (SPE), has been found to be associated with the level of education and religion/caste. On questions relating to this, the unresponsive constitute the largest group.

The people consider the programmes undertaken by the gram panchayat to be useful. The treatment at the primary health centre and the existing veterinary services are satisfactory. The facilities for selling their products in the market are adequate. They are aware of the programmes operating for the benefit of the weaker sections through Panchayati Raj Institutions and also think that the weaker sections have benefited by the programme. There is a general awareness of the role of Government, in providing agricultural facilities through the banks etc. But the largest group of the people is not aware of the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in agricultural development. They consider that there have been improvement after the 1981 elections in fields like education, because of existence of Panchayati Raj Institutions and interest evinced by the officials and non-officials. The villagers blame officials as well as
non-officials for lack of interest in providing their villages with the required facilities.

They came to know about the government programmes and Integrated Rural Development Programme through neighbours, government officials and newspapers in that order. The purpose of the Integrated Rural Development Programme is fairly well known to them. Of those who consider themselves eligible for benefits under Integrated Rural Development Programme, only a few get the benefit. To get a loan, the villagers take the help of local leaders like landlords, non-officials and officials of Panchayati Raj Institutions and other departments. Normally there are no long delays in getting the loans under different schemes. They get the amount they applied for. They have not encountered any problem in working the scheme or in repaying the loan amount. Yet they would not consider the Integrated Rural Development Programme to be of any benefit to them as their annual income did not go up.

Most of them send all their children to school. Provision of the mid-day meal to the school children was considered to be a good one, but there were problems in its implementation. They would like the mid-day meal programme to continue and have suggestions for the improvement of the programme. There is also a favourable response to the provision of books and uniforms. Given an option about one fourth would like to have both (a) mid-day meals and (b) books and
uniform, but if a choice is to be made about two fifths of the respondents, prefer books and uniform while about one third are for mid-day meals programme. The Government of Andhra Pradesh would do well to take note of these views and review its policies.

The cross-section is almost equally divided in its responses to questions on the helpfulness of the non-official and their interest in the poor. Comparatively they find it easier to meet the officials or non-officials at the lower levels than at the higher levels. Their level of dissatisfaction with the existing system does not seem to be associated with their age, education, religion/caste or income. They consider that the attitude of the upper castes towards the poor has changed for better in the past ten years. This is a good augury for the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

They believe that the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions has benefitted weaker sections but they do not consider that the Central Government is taking more interest than the State Government in matters relating to the welfare of the weaker sections. The direct election of the sarpanch, according to them, has not improved the implementation of developmental programmes. But those who considered that the direct election of the president of the Panchayat Samithi has improved the implementation of the developmental programmes are larger in number than those who think otherwise.
Now we come to the 'consensus' among the officials and non-officials. Generally speaking the functionaries at the district level - officials or non-officials - show a better understanding and awareness of institutions and programmes than those at the block level, and officials show better awareness than non-officials.

Generally, an officer can be expected to stay in the same place for about nine years. Important officers connected with developmental programmes have been frequently transferred in Chittoor District. While the impact - good or bad - of these frequent transfers cannot be easily measured, it would only be a common sense observation that frequent transfers do no good to the officers or to the government or to the implementation of developmental programmes. Perhaps the government could consider the evolution of certain norms or guidelines for transfers.

A majority of the block level non-officials are unresponsive i.e., they do not respond or say 'Do not know' for questions such as: difficulties in implementing the National Rural Employment Programme, usefulness of the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, opinions of Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, impact of Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment, reasons for implementing of the new Rural Development Programmes through District Rural Development Agency and not through Panchayati Raj Institutions and problems encountered in the administration of Integrated
Rural Development Programme and suggestions. Further, the non-officials betray a lack of proper knowledge on the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in extension and transfer of technology, and the methods adopted in various fields and the machinery available for Panchayat Samithis to carry out this extension work.

A better understanding of the origin, the purpose, functions, finances and powers of Panchayati Raj Institutions and the patterns of Panchayati Raj Institutions in different parts of India or at least in the neighbouring states in general and, in the State of Andhra Pradesh in particular, will go a long way in making the members and office bearers of Panchayati Raj Institutions appreciate their role and make them articulate. Discussions on the pros and cons and details of the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions, District Rural Development Agencies and other administrative agencies involved in the implementation of developmental programmes would enable them to play their role better. The lack of knowledge and articulation by the non-officials points out probably to the inadequacy of the existing facilities for orientation and training. So, soon after the regular elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions the members and the office bearers of the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be given orientation training to acquaint and equip them with relevant necessary knowledge in detail about the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the various developmental programmes in operation in the rural areas, administrativ
procedures, the roles of officials and non-officials etc. The syllabus and methods of training have to vary from level to level. The party in power, Telugu Desam, which has swept the polls in the direct elections to the offices of the Chairman of Zilla Praja Parishad and the President of the Mandal Praja Parishad, has some proposals to orient and train the successful belonging to that party. The proposals are good from the point of view of the party, but it is not enough. The Government in the Department of Panchayati Raj has to take up this work in right earnest.

Some officials too exhibit lack of articulation. They also are not clear of the distinction between programmes like National Rural Employment Programme, and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, or of the role assigned to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in execution. So, the officials too need to be given a better understanding of the theory and working of Panchayati Raj Institutions and different developmental programmes. Exposure to the working of these institutions, and programmes in other parts of the country by visits to states like Maharashtra and Gujarat would be relevant and useful. The existing training facilities for officials and non-officials at the State Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad and the Institute of Administration, Hyderabad, established by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, need to be suitably integrated and updated for meeting this task. The training facilities available in all India
Institutions like the National Institute of Rural Development need to be thoroughly made use of. The importance of such training/orientation has been well recognised by the Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development set up by the Planning Commission, Government of India, which suggested organising such programmes for the different functionaries engaged in rural development programmes. It also suggested the creation of additional training facilities, wherever required and necessary and that the full cost thereof may be borne by the Centre.

The meetings of the Panchayati Raj Institutions are usually attended by more than a majority, but the participation by the members is not much keen. By and large, there is a demand for better mobilisation of resources by the Panchayati Raj Institutions and for modifying the area of Panchayat Samithi. The latter has been effectively conceded by the creation of Revenue Mandalas, which have been considered beneficial, though some consider that there are problems in implementing the system. There have also been demands for changes in the function of Zilla Parishad, the area of Zilla Parishad and the method of elections to the Zilla Parishad. Probably the latest changes i.e., direct election of the chairman of the Zilla Parishad would be welcome to them. The non-officials at the block level were comparatively far more active than those at the district level in mobilising popular support and local contribution for developmental works.
The present financial resources of the Panchayati Raj Institutions are not considered adequate for the performance of functions.

Performance of extension work by the Panchayati Raj Institutions is considered satisfactory by the officials while non-officials on the whole, have a less rosy picture of this. Of the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in educational functions, the officials and non-officials at the district level are more aware than their counterparts at block level and officials are more aware than the non-officials of block level.

The performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions in matters of Rural water supply is highly satisfactory. Both the officials and non-officials are positive about increasing corruption. Non-officials hold the officials in implementing the rural development programmes to be responsible for this, while the administration by non-officials is held to be the reason by some officials.

The officials and non-officials agree that without cordial relations between them, the Panchayati Raj Institutions would not be a success. But the non-officials consider the existing relations in their Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samithi as 'not at all cordial'. Almost all the officials consider the non-officials as helpful. The block level officials consider the chairman and members of Zilla Parishad as unhelpful.
About three-fourths of these officials think that the period 1975-81 when there were no non-officials on Panchayati Raj Institution was completely free from pressures. Thus confirming that the pressures intensify when non-officials occupy positions. The non-officials consider the Deputy District Development Officer as helpful and would rank next the District Collector and District Development Officer in that order. The Block Development Officer, the Extension Officers, the Village Development Officers and the Executive Officers of the Gram Panchayat are considered by all the district level non-officials as helpful.

The non-officials can be expected to favour more involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the programmes of National Rural Employment Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme and Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment than is the case at present. But the position is otherwise. Officials favour more involvement, while the non-officials are against such increased involvement because they probably believe that this would be overburdening the Panchayati Raj Institutions. There is also a feeling that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be entrusted with the new developmental programmes for effective implementation. National Rural Employment Programme and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme have been considered useful, but Integrated Rural Development Programme has been only 'somewhat successful'. Block level officials consider that Integrated Rural Development Programme has been properly utilised by its beneficiaries,
but non-officials and district level officials do not think so. Officials consider the impact of the Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment to be good, but among the non-officials, those who consider the impact to be not good, heavily out number others.

The problems observed during the field work such as the dual control on the block level officers and the absence of meaningful relations among the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the District Rural Development Agency and other agencies involved in performing the functions beneficial, in the long run, to the weaker sections, need to be attended to by the Government for effective rural development.

In the light of our findings, it would be desirable that the Zilla Parishad in Andhra Pradesh, where the Chairman is elected directly by the people in 1987, be entrusted with all rural development programmes including the schemes relating to anti-poverty programmes. This would be in line with what the Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development has recommended and will ensure participation of the elected representatives of the people in the planning of anti-poverty and other rural development programmes and make available the guidance of the local representatives, whose knowledge of the local situation, the needs and aspirations of the people as well as the opportunities and limitations of the local economy and the social situation would be of
immense help, in the implementation of the programmes. Such an arrangement will also create in them as well as in the officers, a sense of accountability to the people. Appropriate administrative arrangements at the state, district and block levels are also necessary to ensure the importance, if not primacy, of development administration. The suggestions made by the Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development deserve utmost consideration of the Government.

An important aspect in this connection is planning for the district. In Maharashtra, the District Planning and Developmental Councils, established by an executive order in the early 1970s have been effectively involved in district planning. To some extent their success inspired the Government of Andhra Pradesh to establish, by statute the District Planning Board in the 1980s. The model of district planning prevailing in Maharashtra spread to other states like Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. This has also influenced the Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development, which suggested the transfer of Planning Functions to the Zilla Parishad. Reorganization of Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh was brought through the Andhra Pradesh Mandal Praja Parishads, Zilla Praja Parishads and Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudh Mandali Act, 1986. The Abhivruddhi Mandals constituted under the Act are to advise the Zilla Praja Parishad concerned on the developmental activities that may be undertaken by the Zilla Praja Parishad and also perform such other functions
as the Government may, by notification, entrust to it from time to time. The composition of the Abhivruddhi Mandali is predominantly of the Legislatures and Members of Parliament from the district. There is a potential for conflict between the Zilla Praja Parishad and the Abhivruddhi mandal in this context.

Whatever arrangements may be contemplated, cordial relations between officials and non-officials are essential. The role of elected representatives and the administrative agencies has to be delineated, so that, healthy, frictionless relationship between the two can emerge. This is the need of the day to which the Government of Andhra Pradesh should address itself.