After the introduction of the Panchayati Raj pattern of administration in India, there has been a complete cycle of hopes and expectations reposed in the system and dismay and despondency accruing from it.

As mentioned earlier this system came into light after the report of the Committee, headed by late Balwant Mehta which recommended for democratic decentralisation. It won the active support of the late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who saw in it a device to bring the Community Development Movement closer to the people. Due to his support the new pattern was first introduced in Rajasthan on October 2, 1959 and later on in Andhra Pradesh on November 1, 1959 and so on.

Basically the new pattern has three tiers of administration - the Village, the block and the district. While the first and third had been in existence for many decades the block was a new regional demarcation which was considered to be a more suitable unit for development administration.
At each of these levels elected assemblies were constituted, some of which were directly elected and others indirectly. Each of these three bodies had an elected President (or Chairman) who was provided with considerable executive authority. The functions allotted to these bodies also varied. While the Panchayat was concerned with basic amenities in the village, the block level Samiti was charged with rural development and the Zila Parishad with major roads, secondary education and other subjects that had an impact over a large area. Inevitably as the movement spread from state to state, there were variations in the basic pattern. Thus, while in Madras the Zila Parishads were not set up and only advisory development councils functioned at that level; in Mysore, the taluk was retained as the middle tier, which to a certain extent, came into conflict with the traditional unit still used for revenue collection and land record purposes.

Both Maharashtra and Gujrat carried the pattern to its logical conclusion of making the district level as the highest executive authority for supervision of the developmental programmes in the district. In most states, however, this function continued to be exercised by the official functionary, the District Collector or the Deputy Commissioner — in consultation with the Zila Parishad. The block level Samiti has emerged in those states as the most important tier of the Panchayati Raj pattern and the
Presidents of these bodies have begun to command considerable influence and prestige in their areas. The Panchayats have tended to remain as somewhat weak bodies with inadequate financial resources and limited scope of operations, and have been unable to play as significant a role as was envisaged for them.

Now that the Panchayati Raj system has been adopted almost all over the country, one may well ask what its impact has been and why it gained popularity so quickly. As mentioned earlier, the late Prime Minister P. Jawaharlal's support was a powerful factor in its ready and universal acceptance. To him it was logical extension of the democratic framework to rural areas to enable the people living there to participate more fully and effectively in matters that concerned them. This became particularly significant and purposeful after the inauguration of Community Development movement, since it sought to change the living conditions which were admittedly in a pitiable state. It was realised that unless education, health and sanitation were improved it would be difficult to raise agricultural production appreciably, which was a necessary prerequisite for rural prosperity. What the Community Development movement attempted to do was to change the state of stagnation which was prevalent in the rural areas and quicken its pace with a newly acquired tempo of development.
Although the Community Development movement began in a mood of high expectations and with a few zealous and dedicated workers, it was quickly realised that in general an important element identified as popular enthusiasm was missing. Unless the public accepted the movement as their own and participated in it, there was little hope of making quick gains expected from it. More specifically it was expected that the Panchayati Raj system would bring about a greater speed in decision making. Decentralisation of administration would bring the decision making levels progressively closer to the people and the Panchayati Raj machinery would be able to respond to the needs of the situation quickly and what is equally important, with greater relevance.

Finally it was felt that good government was no substitute for self government and that local participation would bring to administration greater support from the people. Panchayati Raj would thus become the standing evidence of the power of the people's will to transform themselves and to usher in a new era of progress and prosperity in the traditional atmosphere of Indian villages.

It is comparatively difficult to make an assessment of the spectacular achievements through Panchayati Raj in a country subjected to foreign domination for a long time.
However, Panchayats in their short span of existence have done remarkable work in different spheres. In the first and second five year plan periods Panchayats accomplished many things in relation to construction of roads, drains and community buildings like schools, Panchayat Ghar, Sinking of wells etc. etc. In addition to this Panchayats have established village Libraries, Community centres and have contributed towards adult literacy classes. Since the beginning of third five year plan the emphasis has changed from amenities programme to the production programme, Panchayats are coming forward in this direction too. They are encouraging the use of improved agricultural practices through demonstration, meetings and crop competitions. They have also organised voluntary help for the construction of tanks, small embankments and other minor irrigation works. Now the focus is slowly shifting towards social change. In the beginning the change may have been un-spectacular, but certainly is more basic, more significant and therefore more purposeful. "Growth with social justice" has to be the main object of rural development and Panchayati Raj which has been accepted as the pattern for local development administration necessitates, fuller and more active involvement in this process of economic development and social advancement.
In the light of the above facts the working of Panchayati Raj during the last 12 years and its achievements or otherwise have been discussed below.

**ASSETS**

**SOCIO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Socio-political implications of Panchayati Raj may be evaluated in terms of people's reaction towards these institutions, mass participation, leadership pattern, voting behaviour, role of political parties and the overall impact of these conditions over the weaker section of the rural society, who are supposed to be the main beneficiaries of all developmental programmes.

Empirical surveys have brought out the fact that substantial number of rural people have now an awareness of Panchayati Raj institutions and are conscious of their power of vote. Political consciousness has spread among all classes, though this is less marked among the weaker sections of the society, such as the scheduled castes and tribes.

In general people's reaction to the Panchayati Raj is encouraging and favourable. According to a survey* conducted by the National Institute of Community Development

* See Local government Institutions in rural India NICD Hyderabad, page 83.
in 1965 covering the entire nation with a sample of 365 villages and about 7,000 respondents, it was found that:

The image of Panchayati Raj in the people's mind is extension of the regular administration rather than as people's organisation. However Panchayati Raj institutions are accepted by an overwhelming majority of the people as permanent institutions and the over all reaction to Panchayati Raj is favourable and people want them to be strengthened. Some of the most frequent reasons given by the respondents for their acceptance of Panchayati Raj are: (a) because it is a government supported programme, (b) because it provides an agency to solve petty differences of opinion or disputes at the village level (c) because it provides a channel through their own leaders to secure governmental help and to communicate with government.

A detailed study made by Jadeja of Bagi Gaon Sabha in Doiwala Block in Dehradun supports the above findings. A brief summary of the findings is as below:

1) There is a general lack of awareness among villagers towards the village panchayat's rights and responsibilities.

2) Once the village Panchayat is elected the villagers feel that their duties have ended and they cease to take interest there in.

3) There is lack of interest and general unwillingness among villagers to bother about or participate in the programmes of village Panchayat.

4) There is general apathy among the people who are not sure about the village Panchayat as their own institution and their expectations of it.

5) Peoples belonging to higher socio-economic level have a more favourable image of the panchayat than the people belonging to the lower socio-economic strata.

It cannot, however, be doubted that the Panchayati Raj pattern has brought administration closer to the people. In the area covered under this study there was a greater awareness amongst the rural people. They felt that the government is no longer at a distance from them. No doubt in different states public may have a sense of relief due to the creation of Panchayati Raj bodies which looks into their grievances.

The National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad, undertook a research study on Awareness of Community Development in village India. The result showed that 86.6% of the respondents know about Community Development programme, 61% knew the Village Level worker. About 30% contacted the Block Development Officer, 9% contacted the Agricultural Extension Officer, 16% contacted the Cooperative Extension
Officer, 47.2% of the respondents reported to have adopted chemical fertilisers, 36.4% improved seeds, 31.3% insecticides and 18.9% improved ploughs. 58% listened to the radio including community radios, 69% acquired membership of Cooperative Societies of different types. Panchayati Raj is primarily responsible for this awareness. Panchayati Raj pattern has also generated greater acceptance of the new responsibility of self government and willingness to respond to local needs with the result that people's participation has definitely increased. In fact villager tends to lose interest in Panchayats as a developmental institution, when they are told that it is to be treated as exclusively a developmental agency. However, if the basic necessities like drinking water wells and irrigation are provided for, he may show much more interest in the developmental activities.

Following are some of the principles, which can be made applicable to secure people's maximum participation in development programmes.

Programmes of public cooperation are to be initiated through the established institutions and agencies of the people themselves. A clear understanding and awareness of the programmes and problems on the part of the people is very important and requires their involvement in consultations and group discussions - a beginning of people's Participation. The process of public-cooperation
involves the entire community—men, women, youth through various agencies as local bodies, Mahila Mandalas, youth clubs and other voluntary agencies. The targets should be laid down and clearly known to the community, so that local resources are generated to achieve the targets rather than to depend on outside help. Undisputed leadership and the devoted type of volunteers engaged in development programmes are also important factors in increasing people's participation.

Public-cooperation is a continuous process and therefore, should be used as an instrument for all round progress and development of the whole community on continuous basis. It is possible to maximise people's participation, if the principles and methods of public participation are followed through a band of trained, devoted and mature workers. Areas, institutions and people retarding the work should be clearly identified and ways means are to be found to remove these obstacles.

Political participation consists of not only making decisions of local development programmes, and contribution towards construction of local development works like schools, community halls etc., but also voting behaviour in Panchayats as well as national elections.
An electorate that is well informed and actively participated in the political process for the public good and is motivated by a sense of civic duty is the first need of a democracy. Such an electorate has yet to be created through political education; the process of such education has just begun. But Panchayati Raj system has played its role well in accelerating this process and in arousing political consciousness among the people and has been successful in involving them in its activities.

The second fundamental requirement of political participation is leadership. The right type of persons must be chosen for public positions. The socio-economic conditions in rural India have not yet led to the appearance of leadership needed by democratic local governments. The rural leadership which emerged in the wake of Panchayati Raj was more traditional than modern; more used to the language of hierarchy than the modern language of politics which envisages the withering away of what the sociologist would call "sociological pathologies" - caste, religious, ethnic, linguistic and communal groupings. Yet the process of adaptation has been set in motion. With the passage of time the interaction between these modern institutions and environmental settings is becoming more and more apparent. Consequently new leadership has been emerging in many places and this temporary phase of factionalism and conflict might be termed as transitory. Though in general the young and better educated leadership is emerging, the traditional and informal leadership based on caste, age, wealth, and heredity still matters at the village level. But at the block level the traditional leaders
of small groups do not find a place, because of the greater area, the varied interests in the block and the new demands of leadership under community development programmes. Thus the block leadership pattern is different from that at the village level. The block leaders are educated, rich persons and leaders of factions.

It is a fact that the Panchayati Raj institutions are responsible for the emergence of local leaders, who now occupy seats of power. In the words of Prof. Iqbal Marian "A new traditional leadership, not completely possessed by tradition, not entirely modern but drawn to and bargaining ahead towards modernity, coming from comparatively younger age groups and having a distinct material benefits orientation as its base, is in the offing. This is an earnest for the rural elite of the future, who would form the back-bone, both of the developmental administration and politics at the rural levels and would become a link between rural and urban politics and ultimately exercise a deterministic influence upon district, state and national level politics from bottom upwards, which may growingly become 'rural-urban' and shed its present day 'urban rural' character."

A few common characteristics of rural leadership have been brought out in studies as follows:

1. The leaders hold more progressive ideas and more liberal

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3. Sen & Roy (1967); Narain (1967); Mahta (1963); Robin (1967); Arora (1969); Bhattacharjee (1969); Asthana (1967); Sharma (1963); Rout (1967); Sirziker (1964); Chaudari (1964); Thorat (1962); Local Govt. Institutions in Rural India, N.I.C. D. Hyderabad, P. 91
attitudes;
2. Their contact with extension agents is higher;
3. They travel more and visit urban centres more frequently;
4. The proportion of literates and educated among them is higher;
5. They are more exposed to mass media such as radio and cinema;
6. They participate more often in voluntary organisations;
7. They are more efficient in the use of labour and other resources in farming, and
8. They adopt more scientific techniques of agriculture.

For some years after independence, the seats of power were monopoly of urban people, but with the introduction of Panchayati Raj a large number of people acquired political power in rural areas. The posts of Pradhans of Panchayat Simitis have become prize posts captured by the emerging local leaders. Not only this, but they are also aspiring for advance. The results of many studies reveal that the Presidents of Panchayati Raj specially of its intermediary tier are proving potential M.L.As. (A reverse trend is also visible. The leaders of strong Zila Parishads having a preference for this body in comparison to State Assemblies).

The democratic decentralization has opened a channel between

+ The same research findings on the socio-economic background of elected leaders, however, show that a large proportion of them belong to upper caste and upper economic strata.
local and state levels as well as between state and central levels, thus providing a chance of advance to grass-roots leadership.

These leaders have been asking for more powers. Even the Sarpanch and Panches of village Panchayats would like the Panchayats to be an all purpseive institution, solving their revenue, law and order problems besides catering to their developmental needs. It is a logical corollary of democratic decentralization, which among the rural population in general and among politically inclined local persons in particular has infused a new feel of power.

As far as the election is concerned democracy is fast coming to age. Direct election is allowed by the various State Acts for Village Panchayats. Only Assam and Mysore allow direct election for Simitis and Maharashtra, Gujarat as well as Uttar Pradesh for Zila Parishads. (Nehta Committee gives the right of extension to the State Governments). None of the Committees appointed from time to time by the central as well state governments made specific recommendation that the elections to the Panchayati Raj institutions must be held on the expiry of their normal terms.

* Maharashtra Cabinet has also decided to hold Panchyat Simiti Elections directly and to link them with the Zila Parishad Elections on the lines of Lok Sabha and Assembly Elections, Hinduatan Times, Sept. 11, 1972.
* In U.P. last Panchayat Elections were held in 1972 after 1961.
Though the idea of contesting election has been legally accepted by the State Governments, preference for unanimous election is openly propagated by offering financial incentives to village Panchayats. Sen and Roy\(^1\) (1967) report, on the basis of a nation wide survey reveals that out of about 7,000 respondents sampled from 365 villages, 56 percent have preferred unanimous elections as compared with 21 percent who wanted contested election. But there are regional variations also. A survey conducted in Punjab by the Indian Institute of Public opinion (1961) showed a reverse trend, the majority in this case wanted contested elections.

An overwhelming majority of our village people think that the elections are fair and the officials conducting the elections are impartial (1964). This favourable image is primarily responsible for heavy turn out. It also implies that the initial problem of acceptance has been successfully solved. "As far as elections are concerned, democracy is fast coming to age, if it has not already done so. But peaceful and orderly elections and high polling percentage is only one aspect of democracy, we can say that it is the exterior of democracy. The inner aspect is of real and vital importance, and we have yet to catch the spirit and soul of democracy."\(^2\)

1. Local Govt. institutions in rural India, p. 58, N.I.C.D. Hyderabad, p. 58
The introduction of Panchayati Raj has greatly affected the voting behaviour in the rural areas. Although voting in the Panchayat elections along factional lines is quite common, caste, kin and family ties exert the most powerful influence. But sometimes factions cut across caste and kinship lines. There is abundant evidence to show that upper caste has sought alliance with lower castes in order to offset the dominance of another upper caste. Voting pattern in Aligarh (U.P) Lok Sabha constituency in recent 5th Lok Sabha election confirms the fact.

According to Rotzlaff the immediate effect of the election on village society is divisive. The heat generated during the campaign, preceding the election leaves a more permanent impact on the village society. But there is also a long term effect, not immediately visible, but is much more permanent in nature. That is the changed social and power relationship between the upper and lower castes. Apart from the small benefits which weaker sections get, because of their political alliances, they are now in a better bargaining position with the upper castes. This has affected the traditional status relationship among castes and the lower castes have definitely gained.

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*Brahmin and Scheduled castes voted en block for Congress (R) while R.K.D. got complete support of Jat Community particularly in Khair and Iylas Constituencies of Aligarh district.

1. Rotzlaff Ralph. H.Village Cott.. in India case study, Bombay, Asia. Publishing house. 1962,*
Economic advancement has been a contributory factor in accelerating the process of changed relationships. Though a Punjab Agricultural University survey shows that mechanised farming and the affluence resulting from the Green Revolution have not weakened religious beliefs, people generally are more interested in improving their lot through economic means than leaving things to fate or depending on religious rituals. The most respected people in the Green Revolution today are not priests, as in the past, but those possessing technical skill and know-how.

In another survey conducted by an agricultural expert of the Punjab Agricultural University in four villages near Ludhiana, a large number of farmers with mechanised farms said that they spend more on buying agricultural implements and inputs than on buying anything else. Another important item on which they spend money is education, even advanced education for their children. It is an important departure from the traditional way of living, a social change directly resulting from the economic advancement.

In the Green Revolution area there is a general demand for more seats in schools, for institutions of advanced studies, particularly in the vocational field, more link roads and implementation of projects like the Beas River Link and the Tractor Factory at Nangal. A political party, which, the voters feel, is serious about giving the state all these and other amenities will get the people's support.

The expenditure pattern according to the same survey placed housing and family comfort third and fourth respectively in importance. It also noted that 64 per cent of the farmers questioned could be called liberal in the matter of observing caste norms from among those engaged in mechanised farming. It showed that mechanisation was leading to a modification of the outlook of farmers regarding inter-caste relations. Voting for candidate of one's own caste only is, therefore, not likely to hold good specially in the areas touched by Green Revolution.

Political parties are actively participating in the process of political education but from the very inception of Panchayati Raj the role of political parties vis-a-vis Panchayati Raj institutions has been a subject of great controversy. It was thought unhealthy to bring in party politics in our already fragmented village societies. But the actual situation indicates the involvement of political parties whether direct or indirect at all levels. An 11-P0 Survey\(^1\) conducted in Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Rajasthan showed such involvement at the village as well as at higher levels. A recent survey of Maharashtra during the 5th Lok Sabha election by Basheer Talib confirms the hold of political parties, particularly the ruling party at the grass roots. As the ruling party is primarily responsible for the implementation of all welfare programmes and schemes, it gives it an edge over the parties in opposition. It is through the various rural institutions and the benefits provided by them, the party in power exercise an effective control at the lower levels.

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1. All India Institute of Public opinion.
In the words of Rashid Talib, "This system institutionalises the power structure of the State level all the way down to the grass roots. It thus places in the hands of the ruling party in the State a direct lever of power at the district, taluka and village levels. Naturally, the pattern of power at the top level tends to reproduce itself at the lower levels. Not for nothing is it sometimes said that the President of the Zila Parishad is the counterpart of the Chief Minister at the district level and the various members of Zila Parishad committee are like so many District Ministers in charge of various portfolios."  

However, this system is not without its advantages particularly in a developing society. Prof. Joshi has rightly said "It has ensured political stability and continuity in administration, two of the most important prerequisites of peaceful economic and social growth. By being inclusive, the Congress has given representation to regional and sectional interests, thereby minimizing social discord which might have threatened the integrity of the new state. Finally, the preponderance of one party, along with a small but active opposition, has also resulted in making the administrative apparatus relatively efficient and responsive."  

2. Ibid.
Party politics has come to stay in villages, but the political socialisation has produced in the rural areas is desirable and likely to contribute towards national integration. Probably with the passage of time frictions would be minimised. In the words of Weiner "those who argue that local bodies should be given more powers, but at the same time there should be no politics amidst them - involving either political parties, castes or factions - are taking contradictory position. Whenever there is power there must be politics - a law as fundamental in political science as supply and demand in economics". Factionalism and caste as well as political parties inject ideological issues in these traditional disagreements. Due to land reform, higher literacy, adult franchise, growing power of local bodies, higher standard of living and many other social and economic changes, conflicts in our villages are bound to increase. From the practical point of view as Weiner suggests, the question is not how to eliminate conflict (as Sarvodaya leaders suggest), but rather how to manage and channelise it. The major weakness of the Sarvodaya stand is that in the name of non-partisanship, the common people is disarmed in their fight against the local gentry who is likely to transform Panchayati Raj as the instrument to serve their interest. With the non-participation of political parties the individual would become the centre of power. It is only an organised political party system which promotes discipline and coordination between the State and the Panchayati Raj institutions.

A healthy effect (discernible at national and state level also) of the involvement of political parties at the lower levels, which is gradually becoming obvious, is the polarisation of political forces; the weaker sections coming nearer to the progressive forces, while the traditional groups siding the rightist elements.

As mentioned earlier all this awakening and political participation is less marked in the weaker sections of the rural society, while the upper socio-economic strata in our villages has captured the political power in the panchayats. Even then as a result of the various development programmes the status of lower strata in general, is gradually changing. Construction of new roads, improvement of old ones, increasing transport facilities are bringing the rural centres, closer to the urban ones and influencing their way of thinking in several ways. Abolition of Zamindari and distribution of land among cultivators has given status to many hitherto landless workers in the villages. Spread of education and introduction of Panchayati Raj made them more conscious of their democratic rights indirectly affecting their attitude towards upper castes. A case study* of village situated at the border of Lucknow district, confirms that the low caste people are becoming conscious of their own worth and have

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*In his case study of Harijans of Tamil Nadu A Vagiswani finds Harijans as owner cultivators. Giving comparative figures of per capita income per Harijan and non Harijan house holds he explains that relatively speaking the position of Harijans is not so shocking as often depicted in the popular press or public platforms. Vagiswari,A. "Income earning trends and social status of Harijan Community in Tamil Nadu", Sangan Publishers, 11 Sunkurama S, Street, Madras.

started behaving like free citizens of a democratic country; there is a visible occupational diversification and the realisation of the value of education as an important means for upward social mobility. The consciousness of the power of vote has placed them in a better bargaining position with the upper classes than before. Adult suffrage and voting by secret ballot have enabled the weaker sections of the community to assert themselves and to influence the choice of village leaders. They have also broken the hold of the dominant castes. Factions among the dominant castes have had to cultivate the weaker sections in their struggle for power to retain their privileged position. Traditionally dominant groups have begun to be attentive to their needs. Such attention bears witness to the power in their hands.

Village society is undergoing a gradual transformation. There is a definite change in the social status and economic condition of the scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes. There has also been a marked rise in their expectations. The new political system has been a powerful contributory cause of the change. The weaker sections have begun to participate in the political process; though the degree of their participation is yet rather limited as compared with that of the dominant castes in the village society.

+ In this connection the result of the recent Haryana Panchayat elections is most encouraging. According to a report of the Panchayats Directorate, the Panchayat elections presents a new sociological pattern promising the uplift of the scheduled castes who had always been looked down upon by the high castes. Out of the total of 28,000 Panches the number of the scheduled castes Panches is 5,400. The Hindustan Times, August, 24, 1971. Panchayat elections in Andhra Pradesh in June 1970 also testify that not only a large number of young men, but also a considerable number from the scheduled tribes and Harijans and in some villages women had been elected as Sarpanches. Bharat Kshetra - October 16, 1972.
The process of transformation is accelerated by the green revolution in the country, which has widened the gulf between the upper and lower classes of the rural society and thus has directly helped in promoting the political consciousness among the weaker sections and made them more conscious of their present position. As an impact of green revolution, the traditional pyramidal structure in the villages is being eroded. "The hold of the leaders of different factional groups in less homogenous villages is also declining. Several factors are responsible for this. The first and foremost is the growing political consciousness of the landless- a direct result of the dramatic increase in their bargaining power and a not so dramatic improvement in their economic condition due to the increasing demand of labour resulting from multiple cropping and intensive farming." The small farmer is subject to all kinds of caste, kinship and regional pressures that pull in separate directions. The impression one gets is of certain determination on the part of the smaller cultivator to free himself from these issues.  

Among lower caste villages (generally found among the landless) the idea of leadership is growing. Having lost their traditional advantages, but having secured constitutional rights, they are more united than before, and are choosing

their own leaders. Whereas the landowning classes may vote one way, it is felt, the landless may vote another. The landless are more likely to vote for parties with progressive policies likely to benefit them.

The fear that "it may not even be safe to devolve power to the so called Panchayati Raj bodies because such power would make the existing exploitation more ruthless" in the absence of communitarian spirit and that "These bodies are bound to operate to the detriment of the weaker sections as their powers do not accrue from sanctions from below but are handed from above"¹, seems unfounded on the basis of past experience.

The criticism that the new political system has made the rich richer and the poor, poorer is also not valid. The poor may not have become poorer but the widening disparity gives such an impression. Especially with the village leadership having passed into the hands of the rich peasants, their power and influence are more directly felt.

The conclusion, that the weaker sections have not reaped the benefits of Panchayati Raj and have not won positions commensurate with their number, would seem to be premature. It is to be remembered that social change in a

traditional society is never spectacular and is often imperceptible. Men are judged as they are, institutions will become what men make of them. Now what is needed in India is to adopt the attitudes of the people to the changing circumstances. "The defects stem from lack of education and excessive interplay of political, regional and cast factors should be remedied to bring in improvement and ensure that there will be no square pegs in round holes".

Economic Implications:

Coming to the economic implications of Panchayati Raj the first thing which draws attention is democratic planning through democratic decentralisation.

Democratic Planning through Democratic Decentralisation:

The problems faced by us are difficult and the development problems are many while the possibility of mobilizing required resources by way of central and state revenues is so limited that for maximization of effort it is essential to explore the possibility of local mobilisation of resources for local development.

The sectors in which our development has to be specially active and vigorous are agriculture, small scale industries and related sectors. A central plan can only provide certain broad guide-lines for development in these sectors. But for effective results to be obtained, specific

1. Douglas Ensminger - "Rural India in transition." All India Panchayat Parishad.
schemes of development have to be formulated on the basis of detailed knowledge of the local situation. Development of various kinds of activities, such as industry, agriculture, transport, social services etc., have to be coordinated so as to ensure balanced development of these sectors by maximum utilisation of the potential created. Urban, Semi-urban, and rural areas in a given area have to be thought together when the possibilities of further development are worked out. This requires integration of sectoral development programmes not only at the national and state level, but also at the local levels. Surprisingly enough the Community Development programme which was launched in order to achieve village transformation was given more or less the same administrative apparatus which had been built up by the British to rule over a slave country. Some exceptions were however, noticed in some blocks where the enthusiastic and zealous workers in the official and non-official sectors combined and worked with devotion. But ultimately these patches became show pieces. The villages remained passive and indifferent to these changes. This led the Mehta Committee Report which recommended Democratic Decentralisation. The concept of planning from below was a part of the process of Democratic Decentralisation. The idea was that the state Five Year Plan and the Annual Plan should be broken into district and block plans under which each village should have its own development plan, to give willing acceptance to its objectives by millions of small farmers in order to enlist their active participation.
Here it is also necessary to have a clear perspective of the planning process. "Planning is basically a backward and forward process - an exercise in successive approximation as well as successive coordination. While the tentative targets go from the Planning Commission to the Central Ministries, States, Districts and block planning bodies, it is the modified proposals of these authorities which subsequently come back to the Planning Commission that forms the base of the formation of the final plan. Planning at Village, block, district or State level presupposes oneness of mind at various levels and, on a fairly long term basis regarding the main objectives of the plan. Detailed and searching surveys of the problems involved are called upon at every process of planning. Planning requires fitting in of numerous details and analysis of facts. It also requires experts and technical people with adequate knowledge, experience and objectivity to chalk out a plan of action."\(^1\)

Therefore it is not within the means of such elected bodies, as village Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis or even Zilla Parishads to prepare the detailed working plans. Yet the final responsibility for planning must be taken by the people's representatives and the final say has to be theirs. Panchayati Raj has made a substantial advance in providing political education to the people and creating psychological receptivity in the village to look vigorously for the solution of the problems faced in the field of planning.

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Another notable achievement in this connection is the newly emerging pattern of coordinated district development. With the advent of large scale planning on the one hand and Panchayati Raj on the other, all national, regional and local agencies are coming closer to one another, and the different governmental and quasi-governmental operational agencies within the district, have developed an awareness for coordinated and integrated approach in programming and implementation. There is growing consultation both vertical and horizontal between agencies discharging related functions. For example, Life Insurance Corporation has to seek the assistance of Gram Panchayats, Cooperatives and local leadership for the mobilisation of rural insurance and the regional officers of Khadi and Village Industries Boards have to keep themselves in close contact with the local institutions for the purpose of coordinated programming and their implementation, and the result is the emergence of a new pattern of areal organisation. This new pattern of areal organisation is to work on more concrete lines, when the ideology of "Growth Centres" is fully developed and covers the whole country.

Panchayati Raj & Agriculture:

As Panchayats are the agencies for the socio-economic development, therefore, they are closely related with the economic problems of the rural folk. Thus they look after the interests of agriculturists, artisans and labourers etc., apart from the multi-tuped activities which have been assigned to them.
With the implementation of Panchayati Raj, Panchayat Samiti has been made responsible for planning and development of the area. The technique of planning adopted by these Samities is similar to regional planning or area development planning. Now these newly constituted panchayats have under them a wide range of rural activities covering almost all the aspects of rural life with particular emphasis on agricultural development. Agriculture being the mainstay of rural folk has a prior claim and no economic, social or cultural revolution is possible without agricultural revolution. With this view the Third and Fourth Five Year Plans of India have given considerable weight to agricultural development. To achieve this end the system of VILLAGE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION PLANS has been introduced. The village panchayats have been associated with this work. This has involved the village community in the task of the development under the guidance of Panchayats. The Mussoorie Conference on community development also recommended that "Each village in block should have an agricultural plan and targets for each item of agricultural production should be worked out on the basis of funds available for this purpose from various sources." For a rapid balanced development it is necessary to seek help of the gram panchayats, Cooperative Society as well as other social and functional agencies in

1. See proceedings of Mussoorie conference on Community Development
the preparation of village plan consisting of agriculture, industry, education, social and cultural development. This plan is to be implemented through various committees, under the overall supervision of Panchayat because village as a unit is under the Panchayat. The Panchayat Samiti being the planning and development body at the block level, prepares an estimate of the resources such as fertilizer, seeds, credit, manpower, irrigation potential etc. The block authorities collect data from each village regarding land utilization, waste land, population, cultivation pattern. This helps in preparing the plan of the block and checking any imbalances in the village plan which is to be a digested form of plans approved by the Gram Sabha.

It is necessary that the production plan should consist of realistic items of work, practices and demonstrations to be adopted in the village. The Third Five Year Plan has mentioned the following in connection with the agricultural production plan at the village level:

1. Full utilization of irrigation facilities, including maintenance of field channels in good condition by the beneficiaries, repair and maintenance of community irrigation works and economy in the use of water.

2. Increase in area under multiple cropping.

3. Multiplication in the village of improved seed and its distribution to all cultivators.
5. Programme for composting and green manuring.
6. Adoption of improved agricultural practices, e.g. soil conservation, contour bunding, dry farming, drainage, land reclamation, plant protection, etc.
7. Programme for new minor irrigation works to be undertaken in the villages, both through community participation and on an individual basis.
8. Programme for the introduction of improved agricultural implements.
9. Programme for increasing production of vegetables and fruit.
11. Animal husbandry, e.g. supply and maintenance of stud bulls, establishment of artificial insemination centres and castration, of scrub bulls, etc.
12. Programme for the development of the village fuel plantations and pastures.

These programme would differ in regard to areas where there are major and medium irrigation works or where there is adequate rainfall and in regard to unirrigated dry areas. The following are some of the basic criteria for selection of works to be included in the village production plans:

a) These must be practicable and achievable by most of the cultivators in the village.
b) These should concentrate on the use of local man-power and readily available resources.
c) These should, as far as possible, be of short-term duration so that their results are immediate and effective.

d) These should not involve excessive financial outlays and considerable dependence on outside materials which are difficult to secure.

e) These should reflect exact utilisation of outside assistance in the form of seeds, services, etc. ensured to the villagers from above.

These programmes fall under two groups; (1) supply of credit, fertilizers, improved seeds, assistance for plant protection, minor irrigation, etc. for which a measure of assistance has to come from outside the village, (ii) programmes such as digging of field channels, contour bunding, digging and maintenance of village tanks, development and utilisation of local manurai resources, village fuel plantation, etc. which call for an effort on the part of the village community or beneficiaries.

The effectiveness of the production plan depends upon various factors e.g.

1. Administration of work and Management.
2. Technical guidance.
4. Adequacy of loan, etc.
The Gram Panchayat is responsible for the Administration and Management, technical guidance, arrangement for supplies of seeds, fertilizers, implements etc. Theoretically speaking, all this is within the resources of the village panchayat. As regards credit facilities, the cooperatives are expected to follow closely the village production plan. However, practice shows that coordination of activities of bureaucratic Government officials, local self Government officials and democratic organisations and cooperatives is a SINE QUO NON of the progress of rural India. In many spheres of activities village panchayat has to look upon the support of cooperatives but no serious thought has been given to the problem of coordination of their activities. This is why in all the developmental activities whether GROW MORE FOOD CAMPAIGN OR IADP the progress achieved has been below expectations.

The Intensive Agricultural Development Programme which was initiated in 1969-61 has now proved that the village production plans can go a long way in increasing

1. Seminar on problems of Panchayati Raj (N.I.C.D. Hyderabad, 1969) recommended the close collaboration between Panchayats and Cooperatives at the village and the higher levels. It suggested that a reasonable percentage of of loanable funds of cooperatives should be earmarked for assistance to the weaker sections, e.g., small farmers, artisans, and landless labourers and the rate of interest subsidised by the State Governments. The Panchayats on its side would prepare special programmes for the benefit of the weaker sections to be implemented as Panchayati Raj Programme.
farm productivity provided the package of farm facilities is easily available to the farmer.\(^1\) The I.A.D.P. Evolution Reports\(^2\) further witness that the results have been poor due to lack of coordination in the activities of Block Samiti, Cooperative Institutions, Government Departments and Panchayats. In a case study Dr. Sami has clearly pointed out that in Aligarh the causes of slow progress of I.A.D.P. have been the neglect of cooperation department and cold war between the officials of agriculture and cooperative department.\(^3\) Every one wanted to snatch powers at the cost of the programme. Thus the I.A.D.P., could not succeed in the early period of its implementation in Aligarh. However, later on panchayats were involved in the task of rural uplift with the result that-

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1. I.A.D.P., was to be worked in selected district (district being the key of administrative unit was considered the focus of agricultural development) which had maximum irrigation and minimum natural hazards. The programme would provide all the essential elements needed for increasing production including credit to all participating cultivators and would also demonstrate the most effective ways of increasing production by the application of scientific know-how. The most essential feature of the programme is to provide timely, qualitative and adequate credit and other farm requisites including plant protection material on the basis of production capacity and cultivators' needs, not on the basis of his credit worthiness, securities offered, land valuation and mortgages etc., etc.

2. Intensive Agricultural District Programme II Report (1960-65) Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Community Development, Cooperative (Department of Agriculture),

3. Dr. Sami Uddin "Scope and Problems of Cooperatives in India", Aligarh Muslim University, Publication 1964 page 37.
The Panchayats have carried the message of GREEN REVOLUTION to masses to boost up agricultural production. The Community Development and N.E.S. Programmes coupled with other special programmes of agricultural development for example I.A.D.P. (Intensive Agriculture District Programme), I.A.A.P.\(^1\) (Intensive Agricultural Area Programme), S.F.D.A.\(^2\) (Small Farmers Development Agency), and M.F.D.A.\(^3\) (Marginal Farmers and Agriculture Labourers Development Agency) being successfully implemented through Panchayati Raj institutions has gone a long way in giving a general face lift to the village economy and changing the outlook and approach of the agriculturist who now considers agriculture as agri-business. There has been a marked shift from subsistence farming to commercial and mechanised farming.

The Green Revolution is not a myth but a reality now. The total production of foodgrains in India has increased from 54.9 million tonnes in 1949-50 to 99.5 million tonnes in

1. The idea behind this programme is to plan the development strategy of a particular area according to its potentiality. A certain area may have enough potential for dairy or cattle breeding whereas other areas may be more potential for fruit growing and some other areas may be more suited and potential to cereals.

2. The Small Farmers Development Agency is in Central Sector. A provision of 67.50 crores has been made for 4th plan for this purpose for 46 projects. Under this scheme districts are to be selected keeping in view the adequate number of small but potential viable farmers, a strong cooperative base and reasonable irrigation facilities. A small farmer has been defined as one holding 2.5 to 6 acres of land.

3. The scheme is introduced for helping landless labourer whose 50% or more income comes from Agricultural wages and sub-marginal farmers with holdings not more than one hectare. The participants are paid 33 1/3 % subsidy under the scheme for investment in (i) soil conservation and land levelling (ii) Poultry development (iii) Piggery and Dairy Development. The other important feature of the scheme is the construction of link roads, storage tanks etc. During the 4th plan 40 such projects are to be set up with a provision of 47.50 crores in different parts of the country.

N.B. The S.F.D.A. and M.F.D.A. are financing agencies but they are working in cooperation with the Panchayati Raj bodies for effective financing and implementation of their
1969-70. Even more significant is the fact that per hectare yield has increased from 553 kilograms to 805 kilograms.

High yielding varieties were first introduced on a large scale in 1966-67. The area under them has made a substantial increase from 1.9 million hectares in 1966-67 to over 14 million hectares in 1970-71.

Minor irrigation covered 12.9 million hectares in 1950-51. By the end of 1969-70 it was extended to 19.6 million hectares.

Fertiliser consumption was stepped up to 17.6 lakh tonnes of nutrients in 1968-69 and about 21.6 lakh tonnes in 1970-71.

The gross area benefited by Plant protection measure has increased from 18.6 million hectares in 1965-66 to 40 million hectares in 1968-69. In 1970-71 it is expected to be around 52 million hectares. Further increase in the production can be managed by multiple cropping. This programme was first introduced in 1967-68 and covered about 17.5 million hectares by the close of 1969-70. ¹

The area sown more than once is about 19.6 million hectares or just about 15 per cent of the cropped area. A major part of the double cropped area about 16 million hectares lies in the rainfed areas, and the remaining 3.6 million hectares are in the irrigated areas.

Roughly about 15 per cent of the irrigated and non-irrigated area is under double cropping. But, only about 27 per cent of the double cropped area raises more than one irrigated crop.

The increase in the cropping intensity and the irrigation intensity from the present low of 115 per cent and 119.1 per cent to about 150 per cent is calculated to lead to an increase of 8.5 million hectares under crops, and of 12.75 million tonnes of food-grains, and a substantial increase in the production of cash crops.

During the period from January 1970 up to the end of August 1971 small and marginal farmers invested in 2025 tubewells, 3336 dung wells, 1643 pump sets, 1367 units of milk cattle and 419 units of poultry birds with the funds available to them.

Upto the end of August 1971 credit has been disbursed to the tune of over Rs. 562 lakhs on short term, over Rs. 67 lakhs on medium term and over Rs. 192 lakhs on long term basis. S.F.D.A. and M.F.A.L. agencies spent during the same period over Rs. 33 lakhs on risk fund contribution, over Rs. 8 lakhs on subsidies for various programmes, over Rs. 5 lakhs on staff over Rs. 23 lakhs on share capital contribution to cooperatives. The agencies have been able to list over 9 lakhs potentially viable small farmers and over 3 lakhs marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, of whom over 2 lakhs of the first category and 27,000 of the second have been brought into the cooperative fold.

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It is with these achievements that the Union Government decided not to enter into any fresh commitments for the import of food grains from the U.S.A., under the PL 480 Scheme after the expiry of the present agreement in June 1972. The Government also decided to stop all food grains imports by December 1971 in view of the sizeable buffer stock of 8.5 million tonnes of food grains with the centre.¹

In 1967-68 only 18 percent of the wheat average was sown to the new dwarf wheats conceived for the green revolution - but these varieties produced 60 percent of India's wheat crop. In 1968 the national average Indian wheat yield was 1,300 pounds per acre, a 62 percent increase over the average for 1962-65.

In the State of Bihar where famines have been endemic for hundreds of years there are today districts where four-fifths of the wheat grown is of high yielding varieties and yields per acre have increased from 720 pounds to over 1,300 pounds.²


¹ Punjab would contribute 8.5 lakh tonnes of wheat to the central pool in the current year (all time record for the state) and Haryana would give 4 lakh tonnes, thus the two states together would be meeting 50% of the central pool demanded for the entire country. The buffer stock position of rice is gradually improving. The last rice year (November, 1971) opened with a stock of 4 lakh tonnes in the central pool; the current year has 9 lakh tonnes in the central godowns. The main problem now is of storage and food grain movement, Hindustan Times, December 30, 1971.
The Planning Commission has asked States to give special attention to the high-yielding varieties programme relating to rice in the annual Plan for 1972-73 to make a decisive impact on the attainment of the Plan targets for rice production at the State and national levels.

The guidelines issued by the Commission to the States for the formulation of the States’ annual plans underscore the necessity for reorienting them to provide for greater intensification of agricultural activities so as to help in absorbing the unemployed and under-employed in the rural economy.

Besides maximising agricultural production, the Commission has advised the States to provide financial outlays next year for strengthening the share capital of primary credit societies which should be reorganised, for construction of grain storage and for urban consumer co-operative activity in order to maintain price stability. The States have also been asked to establish rural dairy centres to cover smaller towns.

According to Commission, the annual plan for 1972-73 should also enable as large a section of the rural population as possible, including the small cultivator and the farmer in dry areas to participate in development and share its benefits.

Pointed attention would have to be given to the specific programme of multiple cropping and provision should be made for a major thrust forward to increase cropping intensity.

High priority should be attached to the programmes having a bearing on research, extension and development in respect of pulses, cotton and jute.

For financing agricultural programmes adequate plan provision would have to be made to develop the financial strength as well as organisational competence of various financial institutions like land development banks, co-operative banks and credit societies.

Economic plantations for industrial and commercial uses should be given a high priority while determining the allocation for the annual plans relating to forests.
For the applied nutrition programme, the State Governments would have to earmark funds for the production components under 'horticulture', 'minor irrigation', 'poultry' and 'fisheries' in the agriculture sector for the effective community development blocks that would be in operation during 1972-73.\(^1\)

Recently the government has finalised a scheme for setting up Agro-service centres in every community development block, by technically qualified persons who will undergo training conducted by Agro-Industrial Corporations. The main functions of these centres will be hiring and maintenance of farm machinery, soil testing, distribution of fertilisers and other chemicals, undertaking spraying for crop protection, sowing and harvesting with machines, training farmers in the latest techniques and adopt villages on a pilot project basis. The centre will also help in the decentralisation of production and supply of consumer goods in remote areas.

The scheme is to bring about technical know-how to the villages on a national scale and to broad base agricultural input facilities.\(^2\)^

Growth Centres – a necessary corollary of balance development:

The accumulated achievements of Community Development Programme and the new agricultural strategy have brought about, over the last two decades, some basic

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+ So far 95 agro service centres have been started by trained engineers and 53 cooperatives have started functioning. The Govt., hopes to establish 2,500 centres within the next two years – Hindustan Times, May 22, 1972.
alterations in rural economy in India, Agricultural production functions have changed and new demand patterns are emerging both in the sphere of production and consumption. This new approach is embodied in a new and more comprehensive concept, namely the concept of "growth centres". The salient features of the scheme are firstly, the scheme drawn up for different growth centre areas should be based on local resources, conditions and needs. For this purpose the scheme should retain a certain degree of flexibility. Secondly the area development scheme should be an integrated whole embracing the work of all the developmental agencies and projects should be linked with larger plans for economic development in rural areas. The scheme known as "Pilot Research Project in Growth Centres" is centrally sponsored and is being implemented in the fourth plan. An outlay of Rs. 1.45 crore has been provided in the plan. The aim of the Pilot Research Project is to evolve a broad research methodology and pattern for identifying growth centres and to indicate how the growth potential of these centres can be promoted through a comprehensive and scientific study of overall development needs and to weave these centres meaningfully into the framework of the District Plan. The organisation of the countryside should provide channels through which goods and services can move from each rural household to the total society in which they are located. For this the missing facilities have to be arranged. To locate these functional gaps and provide the needed facilities at appropriate place
has been the principal aim of the Pilot Research Project.

In this connection it is necessary to coordinate the recently introduced Crash Scheme* for Rural Employment with Pilot Research Project because the former also interalia aims at the creation of durable assets in the rural sector.

The question of financing and execution of the development programme is fundamental. There is room both for official agencies and the private enterprise. Credit needs in the Growth Centres may largely be met by the Lead Banks District Programme. In this connection the scheme of the State Bank of India to start 150 agricultural branches to meet the needs of agriculture is important. The Industrial Development Bank of India may also find it possible to finance some long term projects. The Agro-Industries Corporations and the State Industrial Development Corporation should also collaborate with the Growth Centres exercise.

Panchayati Raj has been common to all these programmes. It serves as a platform for the execution of these programmes by creating consciousness and desire for the same. It provides better link between the new technology and its feasibility under particular situation, and creates a sense of partnership between the centre and the local institutions for the noble ideal of common good. This paves the way for the ready acceptance of these programmes.

* The scheme has two fold purpose. Rural projects of various kinds should provide employment for 1,000 persons on an average continuously over a working season of 10 months in a year in every district. Secondly each project should produce work or assets of durable nature in consonance with the local development plans. A sum of Rs. 50 crores was allocated for the

(contd.)
RURAL INDUSTRIALISATION

Agricultural development has to be accompanied by industrial development to secure balanced growth of rural economy. P.R. institutions are coming forward in this direction too. Modernisation of agriculture has created great demand for agricultural implements, fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides etc. The demand has to be met by establishment of industrial units and engineering workshops near the centres of demand.

Another important development of the agricultural boom is the prosperity of the agriculturists, enabling them to invest the surplus money in industry, meeting all kinds of local demands for goods and services. A vast variety of consumer goods have to be produced with the fundamental change towards the attitude of life in the rural society. Within a country as vast as India the levels of economic development vary not only from State to State but also from region to region within the state, causing grave social and political tensions. Rural industrialisation is to upgrade wisely the economic levels of the rural and semi-urban areas in the country, and to tackle the problem of unemployment in these areas.

Scheme during 1971-72 and proposals amounting to Rs.46,316 crores for 345 districts have been approved so far. The scheme has been transferred to the Plan Sector as a central scheme with effect from 1972-73 and a provision of Rs. 100 crores will be made during the last two years of Fourth Plan. The Hindustan Times, January 29, 1972. The total expenditure incurred during the year 1971-72 under the SCRE Programme, as reported till the end of June, '72, is Rs. 32,32 crores and this has resulted in the generation of 808,17 lakh man days of employment - Kurukshetra August 1, 1972 p. 19.
Even in advanced countries like the U.S.A. the home of the industrial giants, small units make up 92.5 per cent of the establishments, employ 45 per cent of the country's workers and handle 29 per cent of the volume of business in the country. Sericulture, silviculture and vineiculture in France, dairying in Denmark, toymaking, lace and embroidery works in Italy and Holland, cocoon-rearing and poultry-farming in Japan and watch and instrument-making in Switzerland have contributed to rural prosperity in these countries.  

In the first decade of our national planning which began in 1951 the small scale sector was considered poor in relation to the large scale sector. Nevertheless at the end of the second decade of planning the small scale sector has emerged as a very significant arm of the industrial structure in the country, as reflected by its growth rate, employment as well as production performance.

Rural industrialisation is a three tier structure. At its bottom are the rural artisans who form the infrastructure for the village economy. They comprise diverse occupations like carpentry, pottery, blacksmithy and weaving. Because of little technological input into them these occupations are tended to become stagnant, while on the other hand the needs

of the rural society are becoming more sophisticated, particularly in the areas touched by the "green revolution". It is to help these sections of the people that recently the Government has initiated a rural artisan programme in 86 select project areas of the country. The object is to provide the artisans with special training to upgrade their occupational skills, and to give them suitable equipment and tools that would enable them to meet the challenges of society. An amount of Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakhs is spent in each of project area over a period/five years. The basic elements of this programme are not new and have already been tried in the early days of community development programme.

The next tier in rural industrialisation are the basic village industries generally looked after by a statutory body, the Khadi Village Industry Commission, whose technical personnel provide guidance to those engaged in these industries. These industries are processing of cereals and pulses, Ghani oil, leather and tanning, the cottage match industry, Khandarai and Palm Gur, non-edible oil and soap, hand made quality paper, Gober Gas, manufacture of shellace, fruit processing and preservation, bamboo and cane work, manufacture of gum resins and industrial extracts from minor forest produce. The commission is also maintaining a research centre at Wardha to devise improved tools and techniques for use in agricultural operations.
The total production of such industries looked after by the Khadi Commission is estimated to be about Rs. 78 lakhs in 1969-70 of which about Rs. 65.5 lakh is being sold. Nearly one million persons are being employed in such industries. \(^1\) Rs. 27 crores are distributed as wages. The programme is spread over 1.25 lakh villages all over the country. The commission has to enlist the full support of the Panchayati Raj bodies in making the programme a success. In Orissa, Panchayat bodies have taken up industrialisation in an earnest manner and extension officers have been appointed for this purpose. They have even initiated a prize scheme under which the first two panchayats in every district are awarded a prize of Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 25,000 for establishing industries of their choice. At the state-level again, three best panchayats are awarded prizes of Rs. 50,000, Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 10,000. \(^2\)

Another facet of the programme of rural industrialisation is the modern small scale industry, comprising the small units whose technology is basically similar to the large units as in the urban areas but with lower capital investment. Such industries are now being set up in 49 Rural Industries Project areas all over the country. The programme was initiated in 1962. On an average

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2. Khadiagramudyog, July 1967. Similar type of schemes may be practiced by the P.R. Institutions in other states also.
each project area covered three to five C.D. Blocks with a population of three to five lakhs. The programme is however confined to town and villages having a population of 15,000 or below.

The approach adopted for the programme was to organise basic and essential services and facilities for the development of existing industries and crafts, through improved technology and productivity, and to promote new modern small scale industries.

The most significant achievement of the programme is the growth of small industries and the widening range of their activities even in some of the most difficult area. By the end of March 1971, more than 30,000 small industries were provided financial and technical assistance. Of these about 14,000 units were set up for the first time. The industries in the project areas belong to more than 150 types of industries ranging from traditional items to modern industries. This group accounted for 67 percent of the gross value of production and generated 43 percent of the employment opportunities.

Keeping in view the main objectives of rural industrialisation, (i) enlarging employment opportunities (ii) raising incomes and standard of living of rural communities; (iii) diversification of rural occupation;
(iv) reducing exodus to urban centres; (v) eliminating regional economic imbalances; (vi) reducing inequalities in wealth and income; and (vii) securing social justice, the results achieved even in physical terms are quite satisfactory.

The progress of expenditure since the inception of the programme is given in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Loans</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>79.57</td>
<td>35.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>176.15</td>
<td>101.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>234.11</td>
<td>129.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>222.97</td>
<td>127.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>197.54</td>
<td>105.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>228.32</td>
<td>126.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70(Estimated)</td>
<td>147.72</td>
<td>48.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>614.43</td>
<td>674.51</td>
<td>1288.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kurukshetra, December, 1970

A total expenditure of Rs. 13.75 crore has been incurred on this programme during the period 1962-63 to 1970-71. This comprised Rs. 6.81 crore for implementation of promotional schemes, viz., provision of training and common facility services, and staff etc. and Rs. 6.94 crore as loans to artisans, entrepreneurs and industrial cooperative societies.

The expenditure of Rs. 13.75 crores, both on promotional services and loans, has resulted in a total investment of Rs. 18.58 crore towards the fixed and working capital of the industrial units set up in the project area.

Nobilisation of rural savings can be termed as another important contribution of RIP. Training, provision for technical and financial assistance, supply of improved tools and equipment have resulted in increasing the value of production per worker, which has enhanced the capacity to save.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>No. of workers</th>
<th>Production per worker (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>32,190</td>
<td>275.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>48,775</td>
<td>620.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>68,798</td>
<td>808.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>78,705</td>
<td>878.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>1052.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>1,16,500</td>
<td>1866.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>1,33,343</td>
<td>1981.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE : Kruksbstra October 1, 1971

By the end of March, 1971 nearly 1.3 lakh persons have been provided with gainful employment opportunities by the Rural Industries Project Programme. The 49 Projects cover an area of 234 Community Development Blocks which
roughly equal to an area of about 15 districts. Hence it worked out that on an average 8,889 jobs were provided for a district in a period of seven years. This has been achieved with a total expenditure of only Rs13.75 crore or an expenditure of Rs.1,031 for one work-place. Taking only the expenditure of Rs.6.81 crore on promotional schemes and services, the expenditure per work-place worked out to be only Rs.513. It is estimated that it would be possible to create at least 5,000 new employment opportunities per district in existing projects during the Fourth Plan and about 15,000 work opportunities per district in 104 projects during the Fifth Plan period. The total employment opportunities that are likely to be created in the 104 Rural Industrial Project areas by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan thus worked out to be more than 20 lakhs. 1

Encouraged by these achievements the programme has to cover 50 new districts in each plan period commencing from Fifth Five Year Plan, with the object of covering the entire country in about 25 years.

A definite policy has been adopted by the Government to provide more incentives for entrepreneurs setting up industries in backward districts/areas selected

by the Planning Commission for this purpose. These incentives are (i) Outright subsidy amounting to one-tenth of the fixed capital investment in new units having a total fixed capital of not more than Rs. 50 lakhs in the back-ward districts. The maximum amount of this incentive being Rs. 75,000 as outright subsidy; (ii) concessional finance provided by various financial institutional to the nearly 200 backward districts and eight union territories, selected by the Planning Commission; (iii) transport subsidy equivalent to 50 percent of the transport cost of both the new materials as well as finished products; and (iv) facilities provided for import of machinery and raw materials for new industries in rural backward areas.

To take up the technological issues and problems in detail, the Ministry of Industrial Development has recently set up an appropriate technology cell in the Ministry.*

Credit facilities are being extended to the small scale industries under the various schemes of State Bank of India, Commercial banks, specially nationalised commercial banks and 'Lead Banks' in all the 335 districts all over the country.1

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1. In order to accelerate the pace of banking development the Reserve Bank of India is implementing a scheme under which a specialised commercial bank is to be designated as lead bank in respect of a particular district.

* Development of technical and managerial aspects of small scale industries is looked after by the Small Scale Industries Development Organisation at the Central level and by the State Directorate of Industries at the State level.
Thus the main purpose of rural industrialisation is to overcome the teething period having many strains and stresses on the economy of the country, and to fulfil the national objective - the establishment of a socialist society with dispersed growth, better distribution of wealth and income and the creation of a balanced agro-industrial structure. The rural institutions have to play an important role to secure the objectives; without their assistance it is not possible to enlist the participation and cooperation of the people. They have heavy responsibilities in the execution of all these developmental schemes; their performance in utilising the rural talents for the development of rural economy is quite encouraging. The extension officers (industries) working in the districts and blocks are to carry forward the massive programme of rural industrialisation. The responsibility now rests with Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Panchayats to utilise the services of these extension officers for promoting the growth of small scale as well as khadi and village industries and thus pave the way for harmonious and balanced development of the rural economy.

Role of Village Panchayats during Emergency:

In ancient India Panchayats played the role of small units of self-contained and self-reliant groups of people. The central and provincial governments came and went but the social, ethnic and caste structure of the
village communities remained the same. They nurtured a sense of identity and were not perturbed by whatever upheavals took place even at the district levels. They gave the villagers a sense of belonging and local customs and traditions kept them self-satisfied. In medieval India also they were left undisturbed in their limited spheres.

In Independent India Panchayats played successful role during the Chinese and Pakistan aggression. Not only did they create consciousness for increased agricultural production and Industrial output but arranged for the supply of goods through service cooperative and cooperative stores; collected funds for national defence, mobilised public to donate blood and join army. Even after the emergency they look after the village volunteer force and the Defence Labour Bank Scheme. Through their Cooperation Famine Relief work can also be carried out successfully and national reserves can be built up. The important work which can be done by Panchayats is to keep the morale high in the hours of distress and prepare the masses to meet any emergency.
How to sum up the achievements of Panchayati Raj institutions it can be safely concluded that India won Independence as a poor nation. Poverty was everywhere in the life of 350 million people, in the form of meagre food and crowded huts, bare feet and broken pots; and their deepest aspirations were of economic betterment. However today it presents the picture of a gigantic effort to these aspirations. In 560,000 villages of India where nearly 80 per cent of our population live, the tremendous upsurge in growth is most evident. The Indian farmer is no longer alone and helpless. A variety of extension services—expert—guidance backed by increasing supply of irrigation water, fertiliser, improved seeds and implements—are available to him through the Community Development Programme. This programme revitalised by the village Panchayats has enabled the villagers to participate more fully in the task of nation-building.

As a result of all these efforts today, there are not many villages which do not have a school, a dispensary and a well or hydrant for clean drinking water; and access roads. To a number of villagers even these basic amenities were unknown ten years ago. Electricity is reaching the countryside, lighting villagers' homes and working their water pumps.

For some important physical achievements of Panchayati Raj in U.P. see Appendix G
Much in our villages is however still old. Mud huts, cow-dung cakes and bullock carts are there; but some new things have come in; tractors, farm machines, wrist watches, bicycles, sewing machines, ready-made shirts, radio sets and even jeeps. No doubt the higher attainments of science and technology have yet to reach the villages. But the process of change has begun.

The rise in literacy and the spread of education has brought about an explosion of ideas and a new intellectual ferment. Radio and films have progressively enabled even the illiterate among the rural population to be in touch with social and political changes. And this change is following downward in a democratic framework.

Under the impact of political forces released and nourished by the emergence of a democratic secular society and by the growth of representative institutions like Panchayats and co-operatives in rural areas, social status and political power is passing from the hands of the old urban elite to the hitherto less-privileged sections. A new leadership - in science, in commerce, in industrial enterprise, in politics - is rising from the grass-roots; it is more responsive to new ideas; is better equipped to acquire and handle new tools.
In short what we are witnessing is transition from primitive and feudal to modern. Here is diversification of skills and re-deployment of faculties which hundreds of years ago achieved the finest in art, philosophy and social organisations. There is economic development operating as an instrument of social change. This social change is in turn stirring the process of equalisation of opportunities and further accelerating economic growth. A long distance has been covered; a longer road lies ahead.¹

¹ Krukshetra, August 16, 1971.
Along with some of these significant gains, some stresses and strains emanating from Panchayati Raj have become more pronounced. An unfortunate consequence of Panchayati Raj has been the "Politicization of village politics, the village which had survived from early time independently of the power politics that went on the capital was now drawn into political whirlpool. This in turn was grafted on to the traditional common rivalries that exist in the villages, hence paradoxically, Panchayati Raj has unwillingly given a new lease of life to entrenched vested interests and a new rationale to them to impose their tyranny on the people below them."

Initially few had expected the new institutions to gather strength and prestige so rapidly, but as government devolved more powers on them, the Sarpanch and the President of the Samiti acquired a new status in the eyes of his fellow citizens. He was not merely a respected non-official whose words carried weight with the District Collector or the State Minister; in many instances he was himself the executive authority to make

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appointments, to make transfers of teachers, or grant loans to agriculturists. He had with him the entire apparatus of administration, a team of officials, a jeep and all the other prerequisites of office. These offices, therefore became coveted ones and when the time for the elections to these posts drew nearer there was intense canvassing in which political parties became prominent and considerable expenditure was incurred. There was also marked corruption in the techniques of election (not excluding kidnapping and murder to ensure victory at election. "Thus by the mid-sixties, the earlier group of non-officials who had come into Panchayati Raj to do service were replaced by more 'hard boiled' veterans who had fought their way to these offices", and so Panchayati Raj system which in the first few years "attracted some devoted and dedicated men with idealism, quickly became a pawn in political squables and party manoeuvres".  

Instead of enthusiasm from the lower level reaching up to the Zila Parishad it has been experienced in almost all the states that politics has travelled down to the village level from the Zila Parishad. The programme evaluation organisation in its several report had made it clear that factions and feuds have got accentuated by

1. Ibid.
Panchayati Raj. The impact of Panchayati Raj become more far reaching, as conventions regarding politics at the rural level are yet to be established and the price of political interference at times is to be paid in terms of development. As a result "in the working of its institutional framework evidence of both creative liberty and destructive licence have become discernible, and it has precipitated rise of power; power that invades the vacuum left by receding social authority. When traditional authority appeared to crash down or subverted, it began to seek the security of organised power, and Panchayati Raj institutions provided this."¹

Having come to power with the backing of these traditional groups of people, the newly elected Sarpanch or Samiti President generally satisfy themselves in many ways - transferring officials and teachers according to their choice and making available loans and grants which are known to be misused. For example, for obtaining application the extension personnel have to disseminate the information among the ryot which the generally do not. The Gram Sewaks who are the nerve centres of the development process have no attraction in their job because of stagnation and lack of promotional prospects, with the result that whenever a new scheme is taken up for implementation at the block level,

the Gram Sevak brings it to the notice of the Sarpanch first and next to one or two prominent ryots only of the village who are in touch with him.

By the time the small farmer comes to know of the benefit, the opportunity is already grabbed by the Sarpanch and his followers. Even if there is a little chance for the small farmer to get benefited, he is hesitant to come out because of the fear of subscription to national savings, sale of T.B. seals or some benefit drama ticket imposed by the Gram Sevaks to achieve their allotted targets.

At the Samiti level also the Sarpanches being the members of the standing committees concerned, are in a position to adopt resolutions conferring the benefits on their own relatives or followers leaving little chance for the small farmers, to get benefited by the developmental activities of the Samiti. The Oil engines, agricultural implements, pesticides and fertilisers are distributed on loans basis but the major portion of these schemes has always been taken away by the people, sufficiently well off, with the small farmer remaining a passive onlooker of the developmental activities.
As a consequence Panchayati Raj system, acting as a means of patronage, has meant concentration of economic and political powers in the same hands, with the result that political haves have turned into economic haves. Following are the findings of a case study in Andhra, the Panchayat Samiti is the important unit and its President the key figure in the area. The Samiti President has the power to give administrative sanction to non-recurring expenditure up to Rs. 30,000 for minor irrigation works, school buildings, village roads etc. For recurring expenditure the limit is Rs. 10,000. Besides he can also give grants-in-aid. These power establish his primacy in decision-making at the block level. Since most of the public activities in the area are within his financial calling, he is virtually supreme.

The Samiti and its standing committees also select sites for development programmes and decide such matters as inclusion of villages in the package programme or operation of the intensive manuring scheme. All this adds up to a sizeable power of patronage. The medium and small farmers remain beholden to the Samiti President for one gesture or another. There is much give and take in the operation of this key lever of power.

In most cases, the Samiti Presidents either belong to or are with the ruling party and especially its dominant faction. An interesting development recently has been that educated young men from rich peasant families are taking an active part in panchayat politics. It is regarded as the first step on the path to political career. Very often, all the levers of influence are in the same family or group of families.”

The same experience is supported by Rasheed Talib in his study of Maharashtra State. "The Zila Parishads in Maharashtra are thus not only powerful tools for rising local politicians to entrench themselves in rural politics; they are also a rich source of dispensing patronage. An American scholar, Mary C Carras, has observed after careful study that like other states, the functions entrusted to the Zila Parishad in Maharashtra were entirely of a developmental nature (projects in public health, agriculture and so on) economically the Zila Parishad was and is largely dependent on State Government funds to carry out its duties. However, the powers with which it was invested - or which it otherwise assumed - to make decisions regarding the distribution of benefits in project and spheres of activity entrusted to it, gave to the Zila Parishads in Maharashtra considerable political weight as relatively independent dispensers of patronage."

1. Rasheed Talib, Sugar Syndicate or One Party State
"Parallel to the development of the Zila Parishads has been the growth of the cooperative movement in Maharashtra. As part of a package of agricultural reforms, predating the green revolution, a whole series of State-inspired cooperatives have sprung into existence since the first sugar cooperative was set up in 1955 at Parwara.

Thus there is no doubt that the Zila Parishads and Cooperatives Societies are important sources for dispensing patronage in the Maharashtra countryside."

"The control over the government machinery and its capacity to dispense patronage at different levels down to the grass roots, places the ruling party in most advantageous position. "Through the programme of community development projects, the national extension service and Panchayati Raj institutions, the ruling party is in a position to influence the implementation of welfare activities. It is also in a position to see that opposition parties are not given opportunities to undertake such activities. The result is that those who are excluded from power also get excluded from the benefits of it. In rural areas to oppose party in power often amounts to being cut off from patronage. One hears complaints that the supporters

1. Ibid.
of Congress have used their position in Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads to penalise whole villages which voted for opposition candidates by delaying or denying them approach roads, dispensaries, cooperatives, fertilisers or corrugated sheets.\(^1\)

This partisan approach has got accentuated as political rivalries increased and brought disrupr to the entire Panchayati Raj system of administration. The situation has further aggravated by the fact that in the Panchayati Raj Acts passed by the various states, there are no specific provisions to make the office bearers of the Panchayati Raj institutions accountable for the misuse of power, perhaps because of a mistaken notion, that elected bodies, at whatever level, were supreme and could not be interfered with. Though various legislations provide for the suspension of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Zila Parishads and Samitis and other non-official office bearers, but the provisions are quite vague. To ensure that the P.R. bodies exercise their powers objectively and impartially it may be worthwhile to establish a Panchayati Raj tribunal as suggested by the Sadiq Ali Committee\(^2\) Report to examine

\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Panchayat and Development Deptt. Study Team on P.R. Report, Sadiq Ali, Chairman, Jaipur Rajasthan, 1954
the cases of malpractices and abuse of power against
the non-officials. This tribunal may consist of judges,
preferably the retired high court judges. It is absolutely
necessary that elected bodies like the non-officials are
also made answerable for their malpractices or corrupt
practices. The Seminar on problems of Panchayati Raj
has rightly recommended the establishment of a Statutory
Panchayati Raj Board in each state, composed of senior
officials and non-officials "to watch, review and control
the various aspects of Panchayati Raj bodies."

The process of politicization symbolizes itself
into power politics. The establishment of Panchayati Raj
which has divided every Panchayat Samiti and almost every
village into a dominant and opposition group, the former
ruling to the disadvantage of the latter; presents a picture
of power built up from bottom to top. As Iqbal Harain has
observed "Political consciousness has, however, not
crystalized as yet into civic consciousness. This can easily
be born out from the predominance of self-regarding
impulse, overwhelmingly distinct, power orientation of rural

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1. Seminar held under the auspices of the National Insti-
tute of Community Development, Hyderabad - 1969
leadership, and its monopoly of power at the higher echelons of authority, the deepening of political factionalism in rural India, the discriminatory and uneven distribution of developmental benefits by the ruling elite by way of patronage among their camp-followers and consequent apathy (which at times assumes the form of open hostility, to developmental programmes, power rivalries between such allied institutions as Panchayats and Cooperatives; the tension between officials and non-official and so on.1 +

The two important aspects of this power—politics are (a) Relationship between bottom and top leaders and (b) State and Panchayati Raj institutions.2

The first symbolises the relationship between Sarpanch and Pradhan, Pradhan and Pramukh, Pradhan and M.L.A., Pramukh and M.P. and also the pattern of their cross relationships.

Rivalries between Sarpanch and Pradhan have drawn Sarpanch into Panchayat Samiti politics more and more, thereby neglecting Panchayat affairs. Bare personal equation factor is stronger than organisational linkage.


+ There has been a definite change in that position during the recent past, with more emphasis on various development programmes for the weaker sections of the rural society and increasing polarisation of political forces, considerable improvement is marked in this direction. The achievements of Green Revolution are the result of the joint efforts both of the officials & non-officials.

2. Panchayati Raj and Planning and Democracy. Edited by M.V. Rathur, and Iqbal Narain, p375s.
With the emergence of Panchayat Samiti as the 'King pin' of Panchayati Raj the Pradhan has emerged as the key political figure overshadowing the office of the Pramukh, though with the gradual transfer of power to the parishad, (a recent trend) the latter may assume greater importance. A closer contact or clash has also been heightened in the relationship between the Pradhan and the M.L.A.s. In most cases the Pradhan is to be wooed or ousted by the MLA. The role of M.P. in Panchayati Raj politics is limited at the most to the Zila Parishads. In the first place the constituency of the M.P. being larger, party affiliations being more clearly defined and disciplined, he is steady in his behaviour; hence no clashes occur. At times he keeps the local politics constantly on national track. In the second place, local factors (caste, tradition, personal influence etc.) being more important in case of Panchayati Raj institutions, the impact of state politics on these institutions is only indirect and limited.

In many states where the original scheme of decentralisation is followed and the M.L.A.s or district officials can be directly elected or nominated to serve on the Panchayat Samitis or Zila Parishads, the chances for the assertion of a purely local initiative are greatly reduced.
Coming to the second aspect of power politics which symbolises the relationship between Panchayati Raj institution and state government, the working of the former explains, that they act as the state agencies with a line of officers of the State Development Department, exercising supervision and control over them. Motivated by party politics ministers use their power as a "pole axe" to suppress opposition rather than as a "spur" to promote self-government. Centralisation and bureaucratisation are inconsistent with democratic decentralisation. One of the basic requirements of Panchayati Raj was a complete integration between Community Development and local-self government. It is a pity that at present there is a devolution of responsibility and not devolution of power. While the terms 'devolution of power and responsibility and Panchayati Raj are synonymous, delegation of power and Panchayati Raj are contradictory to each other. The Panchayati Raj institutions are acting merely as the agents and limbs of the State administrative machinery and are subject to basic assumptions and limitations of the traditional local-self government. There is neither democratisation, nor decentralisation as far as existing Panchayati Raj system is concerned. No doubt in the under-developed economy due to illiteracy, ignorance, poverty etc., the scope of people's participation is limited.
therefore, the government has to intervene to create leadership. But once the government intervened it never withdrew.

For dynamic rural development it is necessary that there should be downward decentralisation. Discretionary authority should percolate to the lower echelons and the lower staff at the village level should be given more freedom of work so that leadership is encouraged.

The Seminar<sup>3</sup> on problems of Panchayati Raj recommended that the states should eventually divest themselves of development as well as regulatory functions at the district and lower levels, leaving the local bodies to assume complete responsibility for all developmental and welfare work and local socio-economic planning with particular emphasis on agriculture, small industries, family planning etc.

A review of the working of Panchayati Raj institutions has been taken up by some of the voluntary non-governmental organisations like the Indian Institute of Public Opinion and association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, in addition to the evaluation done by the respective state governments and the programme evaluation organisation of the government of India. According to the various reports dealing with the working of the institutions, it is reported that the relationship between the officials and the non-officials is not very cordial, harmonious or happy, with the result that there is a set back in the efficiency of these institutions. The reason is simple, all the political happenings as a result of the introduction of democratic decentralisation had its own impact on the moral of the officials working in the system; the good ones becoming confused and dejected and the

<sup>1</sup> Seminar held by I.I.C.O. Hyderabad 1969
bad ones taking full advantage of the situation.

Prof. Iqbal Narain, a member of the Sadiq Ali team, points out the phenomenon of politics demoralising administration. Administration under Panchayati Raj, almost at all levels, again differences of degree apart, can be called a case of alienated administration, because the departments and functionaries whose powers have been transferred to non-officials under Panchayati Raj, have developed an injured psychology born of sense of loss of power, authority and prestige. This in turn has engendered a sort of built in resistance in the departments and the official functionaries to adjust with the change and to own their responsibilities and obligations under the new set up, which has naturally affected their own performance."

"As a logical corollary of the alienated and split character of development administration, the institutional and administrative behaviour has tended to be competitively bi-model, more atomistic than integral, more negative than positive. This versus that has at times appeared to be emerging as the political idiom of Panchayati Raj."  

1. Iqbal Narain "Development Administration under P.R."
Indian Journal of Public Administration Vol. XIV, Vo. 1
But apart from politics demoralising administration, the attitude of the officials itself has to share equally the responsibility for this split in administration. Introduced in a background, with strong hierarchical inheritance and caste like attitude of civil servants, who were also aloof from the broad masses, Panchayati Raj administration faced the apathy of the officials at the cost of development. In the words of Krishnamachari "the greatest obstacle to development in India in my views has always been the mental distance between those who are 'educated' and those who are not, 'educated'. I have an impression that this mental distance has been increasing in recent years". Moreover there is deep status cleavage between Indian administration personnel, those who usually have not been posted below the district level and the rest of the government service which has been left, among other things, to man local rural development projects. It was once complained by Ensminger also that "all too frequently the village worker is looked upon and treated as a low grade peon, not as a co-worker." ¹ An important hurdle to development is also/attitude of technical departments. Due to their hurt ego, they are not taking up the role of guiding the Panchayati Raj institutions but only carrying out

¹ Y.C. Halan, "Have we achieved the aims of C.D. Programme" Economic Times, September, 1971. Bombay
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inspections. (At times, it has also been experienced
that technical advice is not always welcomed by the Zila
Parishads; nor it adhered to.) The district level
officers have developed in general an attitude that the
schemes transferred to the Panchayati Raj Institutions
are no more their own and as such they have no sense of
responsibility towards their successful implementation.
At the Block level, the frictions between the non-official
and Block Development Officer is also a known fact. It
is felt that the Zila Parishads and Panchyat Samitis Acts
do not clearly lay down the line of command and responsibility
with regard to the relation of officials and non-officials;
and this has resulted in deepening of tensions. Extension
officers at block level are working under a triennial control;
i.e., the technical control of the department, departmental
control of Block Development Officer; political control of
non-officials; quite a few of them are inclined to take
note only of political control and ignore or take lightly
the other two controlling bodies.

That is why commenting on the weaknesses of
Indian Agricultural Development, Guy Hunter feels that
"the Government has moved too fast in setting up coope-
ratives and Panchayati Raj institutions before the staff
and political environment was good enough to give a fair
chance of success." 1

1. Guy, Hunter, "The Administration of Agricultural Develop-
ment: Lessons from India", Oxford University Press.
Therefore, the changes as a result of the new system call for rationalisation in district administration and fresh definition of functions and responsibilities between officials and non-officials and attitude orientation through carefully drawn training programmes.

Socio-economic consequences of Panchayati Raj

Rural development and weaker sections:

The community development programme expected to make a major contribution towards improving the well-being of India's less fortunate groups, living in the villages - the landless labourers, the holders of small uneconomic farming units, the village artisans and the persons belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes. At first the programme was in the hands of Block development Committee and the district development committee. Though some non-officials were ex-officio and nominated members of various committees, but they were not effective in the implementation of the programme. The officials of Community Development movement having fixed targets did not bother about beneficiaries of the programme. Extension officers naturally picked up the leaders who in most cases represented old feudal element leaving the poor sections out of programme. Quite a good deal of emphasis was placed on development of land and agricultural production which did not benefit the landless. The amount spent on
land, minor irrigation projects, fertilisers, compost, demonstration schemes naturally benefited only, the land owners. Later on the schemes of development were transferred to the Panchayati Raj administration, without any significant improvement in the lot of those people who were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the development programmes.

With successive bad harvests after 1962 and shortfall in agricultural production all attention was focused on agricultural development activities neglecting the other aspects of rural development. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh in his report (1963) has recommended that the village level worker should not be burdened with activities unconnected with agricultural production such as those relating to amenities, social service and other technical functions. The introduction of high-yielding variety of crops has kept all the extension officers busy in the agricultural programme at the expense of the basic objective of rural reconstruction programme - the social change.

The rights and privileges of the weaker sections were guaranteed by the constitution and law. No doubt in a democratic set up the power of vote is supreme, and Panchayati Raj set up was expected to make headway in this direction, but that too has not been able to achieve the desired end. Even though there was some representation
of members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in
the democratic set up due to reservation of seats for them,
there was no safeguard for economically backward classes.
As a result the village headman, the leader of particular
group who was a rich person, managed to win the election,
Besides some qualifications prescribed for standing in the
election as office bearers stood in the way of illiterate
and economically backward classes. The result was that
they were not sufficiently represented in the three tier
structure. Even the persons who manage to get elected
continue to remain back-benchers. Women generally remain
out of the Panchayat Samitis and the Panchayats, mainly
due to the old age tradition of remaining in seclusion
and lower rate of literacy. Here some facts about rural
female literacy may be worth mentioning.

In the 1971 census literacy has been defined
as "the ability to read and write with understanding in any
language." Though the female literacy has shown some rise,
it is mainly due to the concentration of efforts in the
urban areas to the comparative neglect of rural areas in
which the major portion of the population lives. While the
overall national literacy percentage stands at about 30,
the percentage of literates among males is 39.5 and that
of females 18.5 percent of the literates live in the urban
areas and 33.8 percent in the rural areas. Among females,
41.9 percent literates are in the urban areas and only
12.9 percent in the rural areas.

+ Women have been coming out in large numbers as voters, a
general trend noticed recently in Lok Sahha election
throughout the country.
1. Krushcheta September 1, 1972 p.18
The rate of literacy in the rural parts of the country is 12.92 per cent, when we look at the literacy rate for States Union Territories and Other Areas the picture emerges as shown in Table 20.

From this table it can be seen that there are 10 states and Union Territories which have lower rate of female literacy in rural areas as compared to the National average, which is 12.92 per cent. These 10 states, Union Territories contribute more than 53 per cent of the rural female population of the country and cover almost all States in the North-West and Central India. Amongst the southern States, where the literacy rate is considerably high, Andhra Pradesh, trails behind with only 10.88 per cent of the rural females as literates.

**RURAL FEMALE LITERACY RATE 1971**

**TABLE NO. 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State/Union Territory/Other Area</th>
<th>Rural female literacy rate, 1971</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>52.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>L.H. &amp; A Island</td>
<td>30.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>C.D.Diu</td>
<td>30.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>A &amp; N Islands</td>
<td>25.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>23.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>19.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>18.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>18.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>17.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

contd....
This disturbing picture brings into being many problems of state administration, in respect of primary education, allocation of priorities in respect of plan expenditure, and distribution among scheduled tribes and classes and backward areas—pockets of extremely low literacy.

Inspite of a change here and there the social status of low castes has not considerably improved. In many cases, Bernard S. Cohen Survey\(^2\) showed that abolition of Zamindari and adoption of various measures for the uplift of

1. O.P. Sharma, "Variation in R.F.L": Economic Times, Dec. 6, 1971
'low-caste' people had not resulted in any significant improvement in the social status of these people. They had long been subordinated in all economic and political affairs to the Thakur landlords and the patron-worker ties were hereditary. The low caste people continued to do their work as Kabar, Pai, Chamr, Bari or Dhobi in return for bi-annual payments in the form of grain. Approximately 22% of our population identified as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have not received adequate benefits which both the law and constitution have provided for them. There is appreciable evidence that when funds have been available under the provision of constitution & law, these have either not been fully utilised or have been diverted for other purposes. According to a UNI Survey\(^1\) new hopes and aspirations of equality and justice for all. Kindled by the independence 25 years ago are still a mirage for many Harijans living in rural areas. Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat are in the forefront of untouchability and social boycott of Harijans.

The statutory Panchayat members who were envisaged in the community development to play a major role in introducing changes in the socio-economic conditions of the villages, and were required to take welfare measures to help the poorer sections for creating a better climate of social change have belied all the hopes. Instead of acting as the agents of social change, they are considered in general by the community as leaders of the caste groups to which they belong.

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As a result it has become increasingly difficult to obtain support from the poorer sections of the village and the popular contribution to the Programme’s work has failed to match that of the government. At present the local institutions have neither come out as people’s institutions nor achieved social justice and equity. It cannot be denied that if democratic community development as conceived in the community development programme is to succeed in the long run social justice must be achieved.

Economic disparities

An increased stress on agriculture extension services has raised the problem of negligence of non-agricultural sector and increased inequalities in villages.

Agriculture being the main occupation of the rural people, institutional set up of the rural economy is to be determined by the pattern of land ownership. An N.S.S. survey gives the pattern of this ownership as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Ownership-Size Class (in Acres)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of rural house-hold</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of area operated</td>
<td>6.95</td>
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<td>2.50 to 9.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of rural house-hold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of area operated</td>
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<td>10 to 29.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of rural house-hold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of area operated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of rural house-hold</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of area operated</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of rural house-hold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of area operated</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Aukshetra September 1, 1971
The position is still worse in some states, for example, according to the same survey in West Bengal 61.68 of the rural households did not own more than 1.5 acres of land each and 32.23 percent of the households did not have more than 3.6 acres of land while the balance 17.77 percent had holdings sizes of which ranged between 7.5 acres to 45.5 acres. In between them they operated 59.45 percent of the area cultivated.¹

Thus a majority of the people being deprived of land have no option except to be agricultural labourers or share croppers. Their position is more insecure than the position of industrial workers who have trade unions, a number of other institutions and laws on industrial relations.

The abnormally high rent of the land induces the people having surplus money to go in for the purchase of land thus intensifying the imbalances in the pattern of land ownership. Similarly money invested in the agricultural trades generates much higher surplus than the organized

¹ Statistics and some ideas borrowed from the paper of A.H. Bose "Institutional bottlenecks the main-barrier to the development of backward regions" Indian Journal of Regional Science Vol. II No. 1
industry. The differences between high and low prices in such common agricultural produce, such as wheat, gram, rice, mustard seed, raw jute ranges between 23 to 185 percent, (the difference being still higher in case of unorganised rural markets) with the result that the traders thrive on such fluctuations, buying at a time when the price is low but selling when the price shoots up. Being more profitable the system retards industrialisation.

Backwardness of the rural economy creates material conditions for sustaining the money lending class, the rural masses are left at the mercy of the landowner, traders and the money lenders.

The social and political implication of the situation is that the class representing this trinity enjoying social and political prominence takes all the advantages of the facilities provided by the new political institutions.

Thus the green revolution, started in this background has benefited mainly the well to do farmers. In the first place it is not a paying proposition for the small farmers and tenants. The reason is simple; normal expenditure on the quick manuring, high yielding and fertiliser, responsive varities are costly and beyond their reach.

1. Krukshetra, September 1, 1971
Following differences between old and new methods for a single crop were given by Mr. Chester Bowles.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per Acre</th>
<th>Old Method</th>
<th>New Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cost</td>
<td>Rs.300</td>
<td>Rs.1830</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Yield</td>
<td>1.5 tonnes</td>
<td>Rs.5 tonnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total value of yield</td>
<td>Rs.810</td>
<td>Rs.4875</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Net earnings</td>
<td>Rs.510</td>
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In the second place the various loan policies like house building loan, fertiliser loan and other loans actually helped the well to do and influential sections as they were in a position to offer securities, where as in many cases the village artisans could not get any loan for want of these securities. Analysing these inadequacies, The All India Rural Credit Review Committee reported in 1969² that the flow of Credit has been quantitatively satisfactory compared to what it was a few years ago, the gains from these new facilities for those most in need of them have been minimal, partly because of the power structure in the rural areas, that tended to favour the rich and the influential farmers with strong political affiliations and also due to unrealistic expectations of the conventional banking norms in the matter of security and credit worthiness from the more vulnerable sections of the rural community.

A genuine attempt was made by the crop loan system but the credit-worthiness of small farmers and their repaying capacity stands in the way of getting the credit. Moreover other facilities like marketing, storing and processing facilities are also not available to the small farmers having marginal and sub-marginal land.

1. S. Nakkiran, "Green Revolution, new dimensions", Krukushetra, February 16, 1971
2. For detail see the Report of the All India Credit Review Committee, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, 1969.
The yawning gap is constantly widening between the minority of the cultivators, who are in a position to adopt new methods of cultivation and the majority of the farmers holding less than 2 hectares and who constitute more than two-thirds of the total farm population. It is clear by a single example of loans provided by land development banks. In Madhya Pradesh, the small farmers holding below 4 hectares constituted only five percent of the total borrowers in 1966-67. It was 33 percent in Gujarat 40 percent in Uttar Pradesh 42 percent in Andhra Pradesh and 32 percent in Haryana in the same year.

Even the small Farmers Development Agency Programme has covered the small farmers up to a certain level. Allocation by the State of about Rs. 50 crores for community banks, tube wells and river pumping projects, is another programme provided under the fourth plan for the small farmers. The progress of these programmes has been poor during the last three years.

As an impact of Green Revolution there is already absolute overcrowding in the agricultural sector manifested in the form of seasonal unemployment, disguised unemployment and under-employment on the one hand and the existence of a large population of landless labour (the group was recently exposed by the catchy slogan of "Land grab movement")

1. Krukshetra February 1, 1971 p.4
sub-marginal farmers, fragmental holdings and widely prevalent subsistence cultivation, on the other. It is estimated that nearly one-fourth of the total working force in the agricultural sector is surplus in the sense that their marginal productivity is either zero or much below the level of their consumption. The total rural unemployment at the end of the Third Plan stood at 11.4 - 8.5 - 3.5 = 16.4 million. 1

The growing unemployment figures and the widening disparities in the income pattern are said to have sharpened the economic division of the rural society. According to a U.N. Study Report April 21, 1969 jointly prepared by F.A.O. and I.L.O. "the land reforms in Asia and the Near East over the past decade have eroded the traditional feudalistic landlordism prevalent before World War II. Commercially motivated farmers are the new dynamic class in Asian Agriculture. But regulation of tenancy and wages, and abolition of unjust labour contracts have been uneven - mainly because governments have been unable to enforce legal provisions favouring the weaker party. With individual ownership land has become more marketable and created in many countries a class of landless labour, and small farmers forced to work, the relatively large farms of some who own and perhaps manage the operation, but do not

work the land themselves, increasing population pressure and inadequate government services have hit the tenant and small farmers especially hard.1 The above mentioned facts can be well supported by two examples both from U.P. According to a recent survey of the state "The new factor in the wind of change is the emergence of the Kulak - with rising land values and the high returns from farming, a new class of capitalist farmers has emerged depending largely on hired rather than family labour. This is especially so in the Terai. And by and large this class of farmers has been the quickest to take up the new technology and has benefited the most from it. In the Rabi of 1970, for instance in the Terai region of Naini Tal district, 91 per cent of farmers with holdings of more than 30 acres had sown the high yielding varieties of wheat. This compared with 70 per cent of farmers in the size group 15-30 acres, 16 per cent in the 7.15 acres category, 2 percent in the 2.5-7.5 acre category and 8 percent in the below 2.5 acre category. The income per sown acre for the smallest farmers was insignificant, while for the 2.5 - 7.5 acres it was Rs.339 as against Rs.628 in the 30 acre and over category".2

"The rich farmers have done well for themselves and this is reflected in their consumption standards. A UPAU survey in the Terai shows for instance that the average spending per farmer on clothes and footwear for the 30 acre...

1. Economic Times - 22.4.69 (Bombay)
2. The Hindustan Times, Weekly Review, March 7, 1971
and over category was Rs. 1,642 per annum as against an average of between Rs. 2,45 and Rs. 581 for smaller farmers (up to 15 acres). Spending on education for rich farmers averaged Rs. 2,815 per annum as against Rs. 13 to Rs. 158 for smaller farmers. 1

The other example is provided by the crash programme in U.P. for rural employment started on October 2, 1970 with Rs. 20 crores which is getting a poor response according to a recent report from the State.

Out of the 54,000 people who are to be given employment at the rate of 1,000 per district under this centrally sponsored programme only about 11,000 could find work so far. Uttar Pradesh has 54 districts. Each district is allotted about Rs. 37 lakhs under the programme. 2

It is because of these reasons that Panchayati Raj System is said to have made rich richer, since it enabled them to capture power, through the new institutions and take advantage of the grants and subsidies which the government was chanelling through these bodies under the various schemes of development. It is an established fact that at the higher levels of new political system the economic interest and political behaviour go hand in hand. Established in such a

background Panchayati Raj system with an object to establish a new social and political order is incompatible with the existing economic institutions.

What is urgently needed is thorough land reforms, their proper implementation, priority given to distribution of surplus and waste land, protection of share croppers and homestead tenants, preparation of record of rights and modernisation of production relations for the extension of economic democracy.

If it is not done the result may be well summarised in the words of Douglas Ensminger, "while each of India's five year plans discussed the desperate plight of the poor groups in programmes, efforts to implement rural works programmes have always been half-hearted and never on a scale adequate to provide temporary relief or provide new opportunities for the poor groups. Consequently, to this date i.e. the middle of the Fourth Plan, India lacks the experience, the technique and the know how which it should have in the national rural works programme.

For most of the fifties and perhaps even into middle of the sixties, the poor groups lived on hopes and promises. To many having schools and health centres for the first time it was a partial though significant fulfilment of some of the promises. But by the middle of sixties, the poor groups began to be restive, seeing little or no evidence that they are better off after 23 years of freedom from foreign rule. What they see in the future is denial of access to economic opportunities to earn a decent level of living".

"While modernising agriculture can provide for intensification of labour and, therefore, more days of work at the moment what the landless laborers and the holders of non-viable acreage see is the very great economic advances being made by the medium and large landholders resulting in their position being relatively less favorable." Thus he warns that "India cannot afford two more decades of neglect of the poor groups in the villages. These people cannot tolerate further neglect. Before they see another generation living and have an opportunity to be educated, they will act in the ways, they think to be in their interest." ¹

The Static. Green Revolution:

Even the so much talked-about Green Revolution has not been free from political pressure and administrative malpractices. The Indian achievement in wheat production leading to a near doubling of the total harvest from a little over 12 million tonnes to 23 million tonnes in four crop seasons has no doubt few parallels in word's agricultural history, but what is more revealing in cold statistics is that unlike wheat and to some extent also in rice grown in Andhra region, the yield in respect of non-cereals has virtually remained stagnant for nearly five to six years.

¹: Ibid.

4: For imbalances in farm growth see the next page.
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The non-availability of high-yielding seed has been mainly responsible for yields remaining stagnant. At the same time, with poor facilities for irrigation and pest control, even the wonder seeds could not have changed the situation much, not at least in crops like rice, Jawar, maize, oilseeds, cotton and pulses. Even with the use of hybrid seeds, national yield in Jawar has increased from 4.4 quintals in 1961-62 to 4.7 quintals per hectare in 1970-71. The present situation is that although a large variety of new and improved variety of seeds have been evolved but few of them have reached the farmer.

In the case of cotton, large scale cultivation of hirsutum varieties, suitable for dry land farming, could have saved the country from the current shortage (almost a million ton a year). This is because more than 75 percent of cotton is grown in rainfed areas and the seed used is of a very low yield capacity. Certain latest variants are capable of mixed-cropping and inter-cropping such as sugarcane/cotton.

+ The new seeds are not merely high-yielding types. The recent accent has been to produce seeds which mature early, enabling farmers to raise, three, four or even five crops in rotation.
The U.A.R. produced in 1968-69, about 2.43 million bales from about 0.6 million hectares, while India produced during the same period 5.82 million bales from 7.6 million hectares.

The farmers complain that they do not get seeds without political pressure or get substandard seeds at too late time. The Green Revolution has been both a political and administrative failure.¹

According to the mid-term appraisal of Fourth Five Year Plan it has been found that the progress in agricultural had also been uneven as between regions. While Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana have accomplished their entire plan target relating to additional food grains production, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Maharashtra and Orissa which by the end of the second year of IV five year plan have failed to reach even the assumed base year levels.²

Among the various factors responsible for this uneven development, the plan appraisal has enumerated inefficient implementation of the programme as one of them.

A study of Panchayati Raj institutions in the sphere of Agricultural production shows,

¹ The Hindustan Times, October 13, 1971.
1. The inadequate involvement of the elected wing in the programme planning.

2. The process of consultation with the level which has to execute the targets of the programme, was not given sufficient importance.

3. Absence of reconciliation between the programmes being framed from below coming from above.

4. Sometimes the procedure for programme planning was started late and consequently the targets were fixed well after the working season was over.

5. Quite often the targets for Kharif and Rabi were decided in the beginning of the year when the figure of the performance of the Rabi season were not available and, therefore, programming of Rabi tended to be rather adhoc.

6. It has been observed that available statistics at present were not reliable and also take seriously the responsibility for timely submission of figures in as accurate a manner as possible.

In connection with the failure of Green Revolution respects in certain, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has brought into limelight an important point, the inadequacy and irrelevance of rural education, which is neither meaningful, nor relevant to the daily life, environment and the economic needs of the farming community. As a result the average farmer-parent has been sceptical about the relevance and usefulness of formal education to his practical needs and occupation. Additionally, sending children to schools means disrupting distribution of labour within the family, and thereby
Creating what a farmer may well consider an avoidable shortage of helping hands. Especially at the middle school level, there have been alarming drop outs and stagnation, the last one mostly due to withdrawal of students during the peak sowing and harvesting seasons. Therefore, to obtain the fullest genetic potential for yield and quality of the new strains by the use of new agricultural technology, we need an integrated application of intellect, physical inputs and management talent at the grass root level. Rural education should aim at making this possible rather than make the villagers "educated" in the conventional sense.¹

Coming to the planning at the grass roots, it was admitted by the planning minister Mr. D.P. Dhar, in the Lok Sabha debate that one of the failures of planning was that the nation's leadership has not been able to involve the people at the grass roots level in the planning process? He also accepted that despite impressive developments, there had been imbalances in the growth, both inter-state and intra-state and the country would have to cover a long way. Experience has revealed numerous inherent and built-in difficulties in the formulation and implementation of well connected plans, through the democratically elected Panchayati Raj bodies. In the first place it is not possible to expect oneness of mind from these bodies because of the mixed elements and groups, - political economic or those based on casts or communities, indicative of struggle for personal power. Secondly the

standing committees of these bodies enjoying a variety of powers are manned by the persons who are politically influential, but lack any perspective for scientific area planning or a scientific subject matter planning on a long-term basis with eyes fixed on state level or national level priorities. In addition to this, on account of the opposing and sometime mutually exclusive interests and point of views and visions, a set back is received in the implementation of the various plans; one failure paves the way for the other and chain reaction is set in. The technical and administrative personnel work just mechanically. The attitudes and propensity required for successful implementation is almost negligible. Panchayati Raj bodies are equipped with very inadequate resources. Time factor in all agricultural planning forms the crux of the matter.

Finally the higher levels which are given the powers of controlling the Panchayati Raj bodies to provide necessary correctives to keep the deviationists on line, poses the practical picture quite often different from theoretical assumption. Panchayat elections have created at different levels an equation between unequals. No political equality is compatible with great economic disparities. The Panchayats and cooperatives are mostly
dominated under the present system by those very interests whom they are supposed to liquidate in the process of socialist planning. These difficulties have no reference to any particular state but are built in the system itself as it operates in the country as whole.

In the light of the above facts it can be easily concluded that the experiment of democratic decentralisation has been a partial failure in most of the states.*

The detailed study of Panchayati Raj institution reveals that the system has not sufficiently stimulated popular participation in the development programmes, a majority of the people has not made any contribution towards these programmes, and is ignorant of the various development schemes. There are complaints of partiality in the administration of various projects and misuse of funds by the persons in power. The system has proved primarily beneficial to the most affluent section of the rural society making the rich richer, though not necessarily making the poor, poorer. Despite over a decade of Panchayati Raj there has not been expected impact in the rural areas in the sphere of social change. The process of this change is painfully slow and people's participation in such schemes like family

* It was on the ground of inefficiency of the Panchayati Raj institutions to participate actively in the cultural, social and economic revolution of the state that the U.P. government suspended the functioning of the Zila Parishads throughout the state.
planning, women welfare, health, sanitation and eradication of untouchability etc. is by all measures negligible.

There is delegation of responsibility without matching delegation of power. And the whole has yet to emerge as a full fledged vehicle of development. Inadequacy of funds is a big hurdle in the successful implementation of the development plans. Being nearer to the people, Panchayats are reluctant to impose taxes.

What has caused so much dismay about the Panchayati Raj System is the fact that its progress has not been even in the country: (a view expressed at a meeting of Parliaments' Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Community Development) and its impact on the people has been even more uneven. While the system has made satisfactory progress in certain states, it had never been tried out in certain other areas. What is even worse is that it was envisaged that the scheme may prove to be self-generating and self-sustaining within a decade, but this has not materialised and the central government is doubtful whether it can perpetually meet the State's commitments in this sphere.¹

A careful study of the balance sheet of Panchayati Raj explains the necessity of reforming the system to yield the desired results. In this connection the next chapter deals with the basic challenges of the system, in order to arrive at certain conclusions.

¹ Hindustan Times, October 30, 1969