FIG. 56. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS IN BAIKAL VALLEY ZONE
Agriculture has long since been occupying the prime status in the national economy of India. With all efforts of rapid industrialisation, agriculture still remains the pivot of the Indian economy. It is the single most dominant sector with great multifarious impact on practically every sector of the economy. The development of agriculture can help the development of our economy from the stagnant to progressive stage by increasing gross national product by supplying the physical surplus required by other sectors in the forms of food and raw materials and by providing the economic surplus which constitutes the material basis for economic development. Therefore, the development of agricultural sector is quite a deciding factor in the overall evolution of the national economy.

The New Strategy adopted in the context of Indian agriculture to usher in green revolution since the 60s with the intake of certain exotic and hybrid varieties of seeds combined with the extensive use of chemical fertiliser, pesticides along with assured irrigation facilities and the acceptance of modern science based cultivation call for effective credit support from external sources, since the self-generating capital is scarce. Financial support from institutional sources may pave the way for rapid stride to modern science based commercial agriculture with business like outlook.
Agriculture, however, is the most dominant sector in the economy of Assam contributing about 50% to the SDP and engages about 77% of the working force. Any development, in this sector, therefore, bears special bearing on the overall economic development of the State and the district investigating upon. Despite this importance, the district level agriculture could make little headway in so far as modernisation and productivity are concerned. The various financial institutions connected with agriculture and their performance in the provision of farm finance is far from satisfactory level and this is considered to be one of the major constraints in the process of healthy growth of the district economy. There is positive correlation between institutional finance and the prosperity in agriculture and so the banking sector should be used as a stimulant to such growth.

My endeavour is to assess and analyse the existing financial facilities available to the agricultural sector within the institutional framework such as the co-operatives, commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks and the NABARD in the sphere of Indian agriculture and then relate the same in the context of undivided Cachar district of Assam. The main emphasis given on the study is on institutional arrangements to farm credit with reference to the undivided Cachar district of Assam to assess its quantitative as well as qualitative aspects, estimation of credit gap and the impact of finance on productivity and also to ascertain the multi-dimensional constraints both at the giving and receiving ends and to suggest remedial
Agriculture, though a dominant sector in the economy of Assam and also the district, has its problems and prospects which need thorough investigation. The erstwhile Cachar district of Assam now comprising the districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi has been selected as the case study because I hail from this district. It is also a study on my part to focus light on various aspects such as the people, its geography and its economy. The district is economically backward and agriculture is the mainstay of the people but at the same time it is antiquated in nature. It was the inspiration from my teacher Dr. Anil Kumar Sarma, former Dean of Commerce, Gauhati University, a distinguished scholar that I venture upon the theme of the project "Institutional Finance to Agriculture: A Case Study of Undivided Cachar District of Assam" to assess and analyse the existing sources of institutional finance available to the agrarian sector. I earnestly hope, the study will throw some light on other districts of the State as well since the prospects and problems are much alike varying in degree only. It is further hope that the remedial measures suggested by me will be of some practical importance to the agencies connected with the agricultural sector in the district.

The thesis has been divided into six chapters which have been enumerated below.
Chapter I : Introduction:

In this chapter the importance of agriculture in national economy, national policy towards agriculture, new strategy adopted and the problems have been discussed.

Chapter II : Finance and Agriculture:

This chapter concerns with special features of finance, importance of finance, types of credit needed.

Chapter III : A Profile of the district:

In this chapter an outline of the district embracing its geographical and socio-economic environment has been given.

Chapter IV : Sources of Institutional Finance to Agriculture : A National Over-view:

In Chapter IV various institutions associated with farm finance at the national level have been discussed and analysed.

Chapter V : Financial Organisations at Work in Undivided Cachar district:

This chapter deals with various institutions at work in the district, their role in providing farm finance, adequacy of finance and the multi-dimensional constraints in farm financing.
Chapter VI : Summary of Conclusions and Problems and Suggestions:

This chapter draws conclusions of each chapter and explains various problems in the parcolation of farm finance and suggests remedial measures.

The methodology adopted in pursuing the research project comprises field-study, collection of data and materials from primary and secondary sources.

The research work has been completed under the guidance of Dr. Anil Kumar Sarma, the former Dean, Faculty of Commerce, Gauhati University. Needless to say that I owe a great moral debt to Dr. Sarma whose able guidance had been inspiring me all along in the pursuit and completion of this research problem.

I am also grateful to my respected teacher, Prof. M.L. Saha, Head of the Deptt. of Commerce, Karimganj College for his inspiration and generous assistance to pursue the work. I am indebted to Dr. D. Bhorali, Head of the Deptt. of Commerce, Gauhati University and other members of the department for their help and co-operation to do the research work.

I record my high sense of gratitude and indebtedness to Sri S.K. Adhikary, former Principal and also to Dr. S.K. Dass, present Principal, Karimganj College, my teacher Prof. T.K. Das and my colleagues Prof. S. Datta, Dr. R. Chakraborty who have always encouraged and helped me in the completion of the work.

I am grateful to the Librarian, National Library, Calcutta who
provided me the hostel accommodation and reading facilities at various stages of my work. I am also grateful to the Librarians, Gauhati University, N.E.C. Library, Shillong, Karimganj College Library, District Library, Karimganj who provided the Library facilities in the completion of the work.

I must express my thanks to S. Saha, Lead Bank Officer, Silchar, S. Deb, Lead Bank Officer, Karimganj, S. Bhattacharjee, Chairman, Cachar Gramin Bank, District Agriculture Officer, Karimganj, Joint Director, Agriculture, Silchar, Chief Scientist, Regional Agricultural Research Station, Akbarpur, Karimganj for their cooperation and guidance at various stages of my research work.

I owe heavily to my wife Mrs. Shibani Datta, M.A. and my son Sayantan who created congenial and conducive environment at home and they inspired me to complete this research work.

I am also grateful to the U.G.C. for according me a Teacher Fellowship for 3 years for the completion of the work. In the preparation of the thesis, I have taken extensive help from different books, Reports of various Commissions and Committees appointed by the Government of India and Assam, journals, newspapers etc. and I must record my gratitude to the authors and publishers of such reports, books and journals.

I am thankful to Mr. Bhaben Chandra Das of Gauhati University who typed the thesis with utmost care and sincerity.