PREFACE

On October 2, 1961, Panchayati Raj, upon which is said to rest the future success of our democracy, was introduced in the Punjab. Being a human institution, it is likely to confront a number of problems, both organizational and functional, especially in its initial stages. It is with a view to studying these problems that this study was undertaken.

The scope of this study has deliberately been restricted to the Langra District of the Punjab, largely due to the reason that I belong to that region and, thus quite familiar with the socio-economic life of the people, and more particularly, with their language. This factor has immensely helped me in understanding the viewpoint of the people in a more realistic way. But since I remained away from my home area, on several teaching assignments, I could also study the working of the Panchayati Raj organisation in Langra District with a certain degree of objectivity and comparability.

This study covers a period ending on October 31, 1966, i.e. before the political re-organisation of the Punjab, in which the district of Langra, along with three other hilly districts was detached from the State of Punjab and was merged in the neighbouring Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh.

In undertaking this study, I was inspired and encouraged by Prof. B. S. Khanna, M.A., Ph.D., (London), Head, Department of Public Administration, Punjab
University, Chandigarh, who is taking increasing interest in research, in the field of local government. I was ably guided by him through the various stages of this study. Hence in the compilation of this piece of research, I owe an academic debt of gratitude to him.

I also have a pleasant duty to acknowledge the help which I received from a few Scholars and Civil servants and the elected members of the Panchayati Raj institutions. In this connection, I wish to mention the name of my old teacher, Shri Bodh Raj Sharma (now U.C.C. Teacher in the Panjab University and, formerly, Head, Department of Political Science, Panjab University), who very kindly looked through some of the chapters and made useful comments. Among the civil servants who spared some of their valuable time for discussion with me in regard to the working of the Panchayati Raj institutions, I will like to mention the names of Shri D.C. Verma (ex-Director, Panchayats, Panjab, and now Vice-Chancellor, Kurukshetra University) and Shri N.K. Verma, I.A.S. (Deputy Secretary, Development and Panchayat Department, Government, Panjab).

My two friends in the Department of Public Administration, Panjab University, Messrs. P.V. Thingra and Shital Prakash, who have been involved in several research projects, have also not hesitated in finding time for friendly and intimate discussions with me on the subject of this study. My thanks are also due to them.
I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not thank Messrs. P.C. Dewan, Taxation Officer, Bharanala, D.N. Mehta, Accountant, Panchayat Samiti, Beijnath, Prakash Singh, an official of the Finance Department, Punjab Government, S.K. Bratagar, Harbans Lal Gupta and Gisn Chand Kaitha, who have helped me at various stages in collecting facts and figures.

In the end, I must once again express my sense of high appreciation for the valuable guidance of my mentor and teacher, Dr. D.S. Khanna.

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