CHAPTER X

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND NATIONAL EXTENSION SERVICE IN U.P.
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HISTORICAL STUDY & IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Community Development Project Programme is a new chapter in the fascinating story of rural India. A new drama is being played in our broad fields and in our innumerable villages. The actors in this drama are the tens of thousands of our village workers, organisers etc. Of course the cost should include every man and woman and child.

The Community Development Programme and National Extension were officially launched in India on Gandhi's birthday, the 2 October, 1952 to help the rural communities in promoting social justice and improving the standard of living of the people. The expression "Community Development Project" is new but the concept is very old. The prime idea is underlying the National Extension Movement VIZ : intensive development through reaching every family in the country side and securing ordinated development of rural life as a whole is not new. It was tried in its own way in the past. One can

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refer to the efforts of the constructive workers trained by Gandhiji or by poet Tagore at Shanti Niketan, or Mr. Spencer of Y.M.C.A. at Martandam, or the rural reconstruction schemes of the former Baroda State, or the experiments conducted by Mr. P.L. Braye in Gurgaon district in the Punjab or in more recent times the Mahewa Pilot Project in U.P. and Sarvodya Scheme in Bombay. The Grow More Food campaign launched by the Government of India was also an effort in this direction although it suffered from the limitation of its original objective.

For the purpose of experimentation the U.P. Govt. started the work in 1948 in a few selected villages of Etawah district. The project was named as Mahewa Pilot project. Intensive Development in economic social and agricultural spheres was done in this area. This Project provided intensive to the Government to open other projects of rural Development were known as community projects. The National Development Council Communiting on these projects said that the National Extension Programme was older towards the establishment of a welfare State. These were the agencies through which rural life could be revitalised in the spheres of social and economic development, after a careful review of these efforts the Grow More Food Enquiry contd...
committee recommended in 1952 to the Government of India to launch the Community Development Programme on a large scale. On the basis of the recommendations of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee, which was later endorsed by the Planning Commission, the Govt. of India in consultation with the state Govt. inaugurated this programme in 55 projects, out of which six were Rural-Cum-Urban Township projects all over India on the October 2, 1952.

The community Development programme is a movement to enrich the lives of the under development rural masses. It emphasised the qualitative aspect of human development. A community Project is an instrument for exploiting the human and material resources of community. It is process to create conditions of the social and economic progress for the whole community. It is a cautioned process through which the rural people are stimulated to develop creative self activity. It aims at developing efficient production, marketing of farm product, cohesion of natural resources, comfortable homes, improved health and satisfying family and community life. An emphasis is laid on the development of self-reliance in the individual and initiative in the community so that the people are able to manage their own affairs for making the village into self

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governing units of the large Indian Democracy. The basic elements of Community Development are as below:

1. A planned development programme on the total needs of village community.

2. Encouragement of self help.

3. Technical Assistance.

4. Integrating the various specialities, such as animal husbandry, agriculture, social work, public health, transport, communication and housing.

The concept of Community Development has emerged as one approach to social and economic problems. It is not merely a programme—it is a living movement that involves pulsing struggling human beings.

The scheme has been regarded as the panacea of our chronic village disease as shall be evident from new remarks which are quoted here:

"Community Project Programme is a small seed which will grow into a huge and mighty tree. It is a yojana and it is in this spirit of Yojana that...

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the work has to be undertaken and accompanied."
Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Pt. Nehru hailed
the programme as, this is a peaceful silent,
revolution and would prove to be of stupendous
character. A really great earth shaking revolution
it would be". The All India Congress Committee has
called the community project as "A very apt instance
of the Ghandhian way of reconstructing the country side."

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Let us see now the aims and objectives of this
scheme, these cover a wide variety of activities and
are as follows:

A. Agriculture & Allied Field:

i. Reclamation of available virgin and waste
land.

ii. Provision of water for irrigation.

iii. Provision of quality seeds and technique.


v. Provision of improved agriculture,
marketing, credit facilities and assessment
of these results, and,

vi. Development of fisheries, fruits and
vegetables,

vii. Provision of soil research facilities
and Co-operatives.

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B. **TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATION**

i. Provision of pacca & kachha roads,

ii. Improved animal transport,

iii. Provision of motor transport,

iv. Encouragement of mechanical roads,

C. **EDUCATION**

i. Provision of compulsory and free elementary education for the children between ages of 6-14 years.

ii. Provision of middle and High Schools,

iii. Social education for adult and developing proper health, hygiene, public sanitation, civil and social outlook.

D. **HEALTH**

Provision of sanitation and public health measures, inoculation and treatment against malaria small pox, cholera and provision for maternity aid.

E. For research, extension assistants, supervisors, village level workers and health workers.

F. **EMPLOYMENT**

Encouragement of cottage and small scale industries.

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G. SOCIAL WELFARE

Provision of community entertainments, local and other sports, melas and cooperative and self movements.

H. HOUSING

Provision of houses of improved types and construction of pucca houses.

I. ADMINISTRATION

Community projects have at the top central advisory Board with the community Projects Administrator as the person for direction, control and coordination of the country side projects. The administrator was assisted by the experts on matter of agriculture, irrigation, health, education, industries and housing. At the state level, there is "State Development Committee" for each state comprising of the Chief Minister, the Minister Incharge of the Department concerned and the State Development Commissioners. At the districts there is District Development Committee and on each individual project there is a project Executive Officer. Thus there is a well knit and systematised body of organisation right from

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top to bottom. However on 9th September 1956 a separate Ministry for the Community Project has been created known as the Ministry of Community Development” with Mr. Surendra Kumar Dey as the incharge of the ministry. The press Note on the setting up of the new ministry, issued by the cabinet secretariat said, “Having regard to the growing magnitude and importance of this work, it has been found necessary to place the community projects administration, under a separate ministry to be called the ministry of Community Development”.

The programme of community development in its present form was launched in 2nd October, 1952. It aimed at the individual and collective welfare of India’s vast rural population. For undertaking the programme an operational agreement was made with the Government of the United States of America under the “Technical Co-operation Programme” was started in 55 selected projects, areas, each project covering an area of about 500 sq. miles with about 300 villages and a population of 16.4 million was covered. The main aims of these projects were to increase agricultural output by

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every possible means, to tackle the problem of unemployment in rural areas, to improve village communications, to faster primary education, public health and recreation in village to improve housing, to promote indigenous handicrafts and small scale industries and to improve the villagers lot through their own voluntary effort. In the of the highly enthusiastic response received from the villagers in all project and the keeness exhibited by the people for community development, the Government decided to extend the programme rapidly to other decided to launch to limited parts of the country. However, due to limited resources the Govt. also along side the community Development Projects, a programme which was some that less comprehensive in character, and to integrate both under one comprehensive service called the National Extension Service. Accordingly the National Extension Service was inaugurated in October, 1963.

There was a provision in the scheme that depend upon the ability of the Govt. agency to take up more intensive work, some of the National Extension

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blocks showing the greatest public response should be converted into Community Development project for more intensive development. The Second Plan envisaged that the entire country would covered by the extension service by 1961.

Because of the feeling that development activities in the rural areas must be intensive, continuous and of substantial duration it was decided to take up steps to adequately meet the urge among the masses for a better and richer life and raise the economic level of villagers. To attain such a sustained and accelerated tempo of development, the programme of community development was revised so that the programme instead of existing N.E.S., C.D. Blocks and post intensive phases.

The existing N.E.S. Blocks were all converted into C.D. Blocks with an increased budget period of intensive developed five years, the public enters the second stage during which development is continued with a relatively reduced budget provision under the community Development Programme for another five years but with increased provision for another five years but with increased provision from the respective subject matter department.

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However, the commencement of the first stage is proceeded by a pre-extension period of one year primarily for initiating Agricultural Production Programme. Now a community Development Comprises generally of 100 villages with an area of 150-200 sq. miles and a population ranging between sixty and seventy thousands.

Once the community development got astride, it became clear that the demands from the people were going much faster than the optimum capacity of the Government Organisation. What was worse people were growing more dependent on the Govt. Organisation for relief and assistance. They were getting further from being self reliant and self compelling organisms. More over at the centre as well as in most states the Panchayat and Rural Development Programme were looked after by separate ministries or Departments. The need for integrating these two programme was left for some time. The Salvant Raj Mehta steady team, which went into the working of the community development made pointed recommendations in this directions. The team suggested that there should be devaluation of powers and decentralization of administration, so that the responsibility for planning and execution of the development programme should be exercised by popular representatives of the local areas.

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In pursuance of this suggestion Panchayat Raj has been ushered in the state of Andhra, Tamilnadu, Assam, Orissa, Rajasthan, Punjab and U.P. with the introduction of statutory Zila Parishads at the District level, Gram Panchayats at the village level. Other states are expected to follow suit in the near future.

Till the end of the January 1962, 3589. First and second stage blocks had been set up covering about 4.16 lakhs villages and population of 23.17 crores. There were also 680 pre-extension blocks functioning in the country. The whole country has been delimiting into 5223 blocks and will be covered by the programme by October, 1963.

ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCE STRUCTURE

In the past there was some overlapping in the activities of the various development departments. In drawing up the organisation for the execution and implementation of the community development programme, care was taken to evolve a setup which would co-ordinate the activities of the various development departments. The administrative structure thus evolved can be studied under the followings heads:

i. Centre
ii. State
iii. District
iv. Blocks and Village

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The necessary funds for the projects are being contributed jointly by the Govt. of India and the American capital under "Indo-American Technical Co-operation Programme". On each basic type of rural community project, the estimated expenditure over three years is Rs. 65 lakhs, out of which Rs. 58.48 of lakh is rupee and the balance Rs. 6.52 lakh is dollar expenditure. The expenditure on a composite type of project is in the neighbour hood of Rs. 111 lakhs.

ORGANISATION AT THE CENTRE.

The decisions on policies at the highest level are taken by the national development council and the central community development committee. The council with the Prime Minister as chairman and Chief Minister and authority of the country and deals with major question of policy, relating to the 5 year plans. The council's discussion of the community with might effect and scope and content of the five year plans. In the matter of basic policy, the community Development programme is under the central committee on community development programme, which consists of members of the Planning Commission, Minister for food and Agriculture and the Prime Minister who is the chairman of the committee. The committee is both a policy making and co-ordinating body of the community development programme. It meets quarterly and apart
from discussing important question of policy, reviews the progress made. There is also and informal consultation committee of the Parliament which is consulted by the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayat Raj and Co-operation from time to time in the formulation of various scheme.

The organisation over all incharge of the programme is the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayat Raj and Co-operation. In the earlier phases of the programme the body named as community Project Administration and was working under the planning commission. Later considering the growing magnitude and importance of state for community development was established in September 1956. Later in March, 1958 the Ministry took over from the ministry of Health the work relating to village Panchayats. By a Presidential order in December, 1958 the work relating to co-operation was transferred from the Ministry of Food & Agriculture to the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation with the increased emphasis on Panchayat Raj, the Ministry has recently been renamed as Ministry of Community Development, Panchayat Raj and Co-operation.

The Ministry is responsible for the detailed preparation of data for policy formulation for guidance and assistance to the states in the implementation of programme, Administration of Training Centres for Official and non official personal, publication of literature
on community development, Panchayat Raj and co-operation. It provides co-operation between the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayat Raj and Co-operation and Ministers which contribute to the overall community development programme, such as the ministers for Food and Agriculture, Health, Education and Commerce and Industry, a number of permanent co-ordinating committees have been established, composed of the mentioned ministers and their senior staff.

It may be said that the role of the Ministry at the Centre is primarily that the advice and co-ordination and that of the States is to implement the programme. However, the Centre provides the States with the broad outline of the programme to be undertaken and gives considerable financial assistance.

The Ministry is organised into two Departments, viz. 
(i) Department of Community Development and Panchayat Raj and 
(ii) Department of Co-operation.

The department of Community Development has given division viz. (A) The Administration (B) The Programme (C) The Training (D) The Administration intelligence and (E) The Panchayats. These are following subordinate Offices under the Ministry:
1. The National Institute of Community Development of Mussoorie.

2. Organisation Training Centres.

There are 10 centres in the country situated at the following places:

1. Nilokheri
2. Hyderabad
3. Bakshi Ka Talab (Lucknow)
4. Ranchi
5. Udaipur
6. Mysore
7. Jabalpur
8. Kalyani
9. Junagadh
10. Bhav Nagar and
11. Coimbatore.

3. Social Education Organisers Training Centres, Ranchi.


ORGANISATION AT THE STATE LEVEL

The state have virtual anatomy in the administration of health, education, agriculture and co-operative and rural industries and therefore, have to plan their own internal co-ordination in Community Development as well as Co-operative with the centres in these fields. The state Development Committee comprising of the Minister incharge of all the Development Departments with Chief Minister as the Chairman Co-ordinates and Supervisor the Activities in the State. The Development Committee
Commissioner Acts as the Secretary of this Committee. On the lines of the informal Committee a parliament, a similar Committee of a state legislature is attached to the State Planning and Development Department. The Development Commissioner is at the head of a team of Directors and Secretaries of various Development Department. He gives the final shape to co-ordinated plans and programmes of extension work with the advice and assistance of Departmental heads. He also supervises the activities of District Collectors in the field of development. The Heads of the Departments supervise the technical work carried out by their district-officers in the field. As the work of the Development Commissioner is highly responsible, usually a senior secretary to the State Govt. holds the post. In some states the Chief Secretary himself performs this function.

ORGANISATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

The District Collector functions as the District Development officer (when the D.C. is not the District Development Officer, a gazetted officer functions as the District Development Officer and works under the supervision and guidance of the D.C.) in most of the states. He is the Co-ordination Officer and the Captain of a team consisting of technical Officers of the respective
Development Departments. He supervises all the Development week in addition on his normal duties pertaining to law and collection of revenue. But the main responsibility or to the execution of programme in the district lies with the statutory zila parishad. The District Collector as an Officer deputed by his acts as the secretary of the Zila Parishad. The Parishad in thus established collaboration with the District Collector and the technical Departments at the District Level Officers, guidance and assistance to the Panchayat Samities, lying with in the Jurisdiction subjects of Development there are functional sub committee comprising of the Parishad.

The Parishad consists of elected representatives of the people, including the present of the Panchayat samities of the district. In most of States the M.P.'s and M.A.L.'s of the District are also associate numbers. With the establishment of Zila Parishad, the district Boards and such other Bodies have been abolished.

ORGANISATION AT THE BLOCK LEVEL

The Block Development Officer(B.D.O.) is the chief Executive agent responsible for implementation of the programme at the Block level. He is at the upper and of the ladder in the block hierarchy. His functions
is to Co-ordinate at the activities of the members of his team and to serve the needs of the villages. In such stage one Block, in addition to the Block Development Officer there are eight Extension Officers one each in the fields of agricultural- animal husbandry, Co-operation, Panchayats, Rural industries, Rural Engineering, Social Education and Welfare of women and children. Other staff consists of the gram sevaks, two stock men (Veterinary), two messenger (Veterinary), one medical officer, one Compounder, one sanitary inspector, one lady health visitor, four midwives and ten clerks and other staff.

The Staff in the Stage II Block comprises of a Block Development Officer, eight Extension Officers, Ten Gram Sevaks, Two Gram Svikas, One Progress Assistant and Eight Clerks and other staff.

The statutory Block Panchayat Samiti composed of representatives of the Panchayats within its jurisdiction is over all in charge of the programme. Govt. Official working Block as well as financial and other resources have been placed at the disposal of Samiti. This new body directs the Community Development Programme and thus replaces the Block Development Committee. The Block is the unit of the Development, the Samiti is its policy making and implementing body. To look after individual subjects of development, functional sub-committees
individual subjects of Development, functional sub-committee are formed.

ORGANISATION AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL

For establishing direct contact with villagers there is one gram Sevak for every ten villages. The functionery is a multipurpose worker, who promotes the community Development with such Programme in villages. As the first aid man, he helps the villagers in all fields in rural Development such as agriculture, animal husbandry, public health, village industries, Co-operatives and Panchayats. In his work he is helped by the socialistics at the block level who assists in the execution of the programme and is solving problems as and when these arise.

The adult population of the village constitutes the Gram Sabha which elects the Gram Panchayat.

The Panchayat establishes the non-official link between the village and the block. In few of the states the Gram Sevak is the Secretary of the gram panchayat. The Panchayat in broad terms, helps the Gram Sevak in Executing the Programme.
Executing the Programme. It also formulates its plan and forwards them to the block Panchayat Samiti for approval, sanction of finance and final implementation.

The Gram Sevika and teacher employed of the Samiti for various purposes however do not come directly under the central of Panchayat. On the lines of Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti functional sub-committees are formed in the Gram Panchayat to look individual subjects of Development.

Besides the Panchayats and the functional sub-committees associate voluntary organisations like the "Yuva Mandal", the "Bal- Mandal", "The Mahila Mandal", the Dastkar Mandal, etc. are formed to enlist the active participation of as many people as possible for the development of the community. This is in brief the administrative structure at various levels for the implementation of development schemes under community Development Programmes.

CHANGING PATTERN OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

1. COMMUNITY PROJECTS:

The scheme of community projects drives its inspiration from the rural development schemes carried
on in Etawah, Gorakhpur, Faridabad, Nilokhari, each project consisted of 300 villages, covering an area of approximately 500 Sq. miles and 1.5 to 2.0 lakh of population. The project area consisted of 100 villages, covering an area of about 150-170 sq. miles with an approximate population of 66 thousands. Each block was sub-divided into 4 or 5 Mandi units. These mandi units were again divided into groups of 5 to 10 villages, which were put under the charge of a village level worker. Experts in all fields of rural Development were appointed to guide the level worker. The period for implementation of the project was 5 years consisting of stages of conception. Rural 65,000 lakhs were to be spent on each project during the period of 3 years.

2. NATIONAL EXTENSION SERVICE PATTERN

Due to financial stringency and block of trained personal the concept of National Extension Service Block was evolved in 1953. The community Development Programme was being carried till recently in 3 phases. The N.E.S. State. Intensive Development Stage and past intensity intensive stage. The N.E.S. Stage normally runs for three years during which a limited programme of development
was executed with a budget ceiling of Rs. 4.00 lakhs. This was followed by another three years of intensive Development with the full complement of the staff and a budget provision of Rs. 8.00 lakhs. Thereafter the block entered the post intensive stage when only Rs. 30.00 was available for expenditure annually.

**B. FIRST AND SECOND STAGE PATTERN**

In place of the above, the team led by Shri Balwant Rai Mehta which was appointed by the Committee on Plan, projects to study the working of the Community Development Programme recommended a revised programme envisaging two stages of 5 years each, and abolishing the distinction between the N.E.S., Intensive Development and post Intensive Development stages. This recommendation was accepted and revised operational patterns came into existence on the 1st April, 1958. The team suggested that during the First stage the financial provision for a Block should be of Rs. 12 lakh for a period of 5 years and that during the second stage it should be of Rs. 5 lakhs.
Stage First is the intensive Development phase in which peoples participation would be promoted as the method of community development and Panchayats intimately connected with the formation of plans for their respective areas. Accordingly, stage IIInd which the post intensive phase has been designed to intensify the operation of the method of Community Development in its fuller amplitude, and the comparatively small schematic budget proposals to make provision only for such items in which the emphasis is more on Community Development rather than on Development programme as such.

4. PRÉ-EXTENSION PHASE

It has been decided that in view of the renewed emphasis on agricultural production, each Block allotable from April, 1959, should have had one year period of pre-extensive activity exclusively in the field of agriculture provision has therefore, been made for one Block Development Officer, one Agriculture Extension Officer and Five fully Gram Sevaks for each such Blocks. The amount available for pre-extension period for Agricultural Development is Rs. 18,000.
STAFFING PATTERN

The following staff will be provided for

Stage I Block -

1. The Block Development Officer;
2. 8 Extension Officers viz. One each for Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Co-operation, Panchayat, Rural Industries, Rural Engineering, Social Education Organiser and Mukhya Sevika (Women welfare worker);
3. 10 Gram Sevaks, 2 Gram Sevikas, 1 Progress Assistant, 2 Stockmen (Veterinary), 2 Messengers Veterinary, Medical Officer, 1 Compounder, 1 Sanitary Inspector, 1 Lady Health Visitor and 4 Midwives.
4. 10 Clerical and other Staff including Cashier, Sweepers etc.

STAFFING PATTERN FOR STAGE II BLOCK

1 Block Development Officer, 8 Extension Officers, one each for Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Co-operation, Panchayat, Rural Industries, Rural Engineering, Social Education and Mukhya Sevika under the new set up of democratic decentralisation. Some of the States have abolished the post of Social education Organiser or it has been merged with the Panchayat Development.
In Rajasthan Education Extension Officer is looking after the jobs of the Social Education Organiser. 10 Gram Sevikas, 2 Gram Sevikas, 1 Progress Assistant and 8 Clerical and other staff including Cashier.

REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Development Blocks have done so many works to fulfill the above mentioned objective. The number of Development Block in U.P. is increasing day by day. At the end of the First Plan, there were only 161, the Development Blocks while at the end of Second Five Year Plan the number was 506 and the Seventh Five Year Plan the number was increased to additional 895 Blocks.

The following table gives the clear idea of work done by these Development Blocks in U.P. and their further targets in respect of various steps:-
## Work Done Under Community Development K.N.F.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>IPlan</th>
<th>IIPlan</th>
<th>IIIPlan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Block Development Blocks</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>895</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tubewell Numbers</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Rice cultivation under</td>
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<td>U.P. method (in 000 acres)</td>
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<td>Wheat cultivation under</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.P. method (In 000 acres)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multipurpose co-operative societies</td>
<td>8953</td>
<td>37678</td>
<td>15627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water wells</td>
<td></td>
<td>48810</td>
<td>167567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building of food paths in yard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2784870</td>
<td>20000000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pucca Roads Build by Shramdan (In Miles)</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>2417</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kachha Road Build by Shramdan (In Miles)</td>
<td>6557</td>
<td>16972</td>
<td>65670</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Buildings</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>25427</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panchayats Buildings</td>
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<td>14229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Education Classes</td>
<td>2965</td>
<td>36196</td>
<td>75194</td>
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<td>Number of male Educated person persons</td>
<td>82531</td>
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<td>1758575</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mandal Dal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building of Food Paths (in Yards)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2784870</td>
<td>35636700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information Department U.P.
The ushering of Panchayat Raj in the State marked the First Five Year of the Seventh Five Year Plan. A number of significant steps were taken during the year for formulation of plans at lower level so as to ensure their better implementation. The concept plan for from below "Took Concrete shapes through the transfer of adequate responsibilities to local people at the village, Block and District Levels.

The year under review under might well be regarded as a landmark in the animals of Community Development and Panchayat Raj. With the enforcement of U.P. Kshetra Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act the responsibility for Development was to a great extent has been transferred to the Panchayats, the Block Development increased by about 6% compared to previous year. Besides the normal activities to be carried out in block area under the Third Five Year Plan following items will be given more emphasis:–

1. Preparation of simple village production plans which involve all the cultivators in the village.

2. Speedy Development of Democratic institutions at the district and Block level to assume wider responsibilities for planning and implementation of Development programme.
4. **Speedy Development of co-operative Movement** in all its facts such as service co-operatives, co-operative farming, credit facility, marketing co-operative etc. to strengthen the village economy.

4. **Encouragement to small scale and cottage industries** to provide new employment avenues for the villagers and landless labourers.

5. **Acceleration of women and youths welfare activities** in rural areas.

6. **Speedy Development** of rural and backward areas.

7. **Provisions of minimum amenities to rural areas** such as adequate supply of drinking water, roads linking each village to the nearest main road or railway station and the village school building which may also serve as community centre provide facilities for the village library. On the success of these community projects largely depends the success of Democracy in India. If they fail, with them goes the last hope of success of democracy in the country.
During the Sixth Plan it is proposed to strengthen the process of democratic decentralisation. Irrespective of whatever structural pattern that is existent or that may be devised, effort will be to devolve on these institutions all such functions appropriate to each level which are capable of being planned and implemented at the level. These institutions will be particularly involved in the planning and execution of Integrated Rural Development programme and the National Rural Employment Programme. They will also have prominent role in District and Block level planning and in the planning of Minimum Needs Programme for their area of operation.

Any set of programmes aimed at the transformation of rural societies, with their complex sets of social values and goals, would be meaningless and in facts self-defeating, if they do not involve effectively the rural women. This subject has been dealt with in a separate chapter. Suffice here to say that the women in the villages suffer from a number of social, economic and educational handicaps and inequalities, perhaps even more than their urban counterparts. They share almost the whole burden of household chores, besides significantly helping their menfolk in farming operations. The need for organising and informing the women as will enable them to effect better home management and thereby reduce their own drudgery as well as promote family welfare is imperative. Indeed, with the increased diversification
of agriculture to animal husbandry etc. envisaged in the Plan the role and participation of women in the economic activities of the gets even more accentuated. A useful institutional means for mobilising women in urban-rural areas is through their organisations like Mahila Mandalas centred around both social and economic activities. A large number of such Mahila Mandalas had been formed under the Community Development Programme, estimated at around 66,000. Most of them, however, have languished for lack of proper guidance and follow-up. Even the small complement of two gram sevikas and one mukhya sevika, which was part of the original Block staffing pattern, has ceased to exist in most blocks. It is proposed during this Plan to take up a programme of strengthening activities of interest to women, both social and economic through revitalised Mahila Mandalas in a phased manner in a substantial number of blocks, as an integral part of the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

The Block agency is, and will continue to be, the main agency for implementing or assisting in implementation of various programmes of rural development. The effectiveness of this agency as an instrument for coordination of all development activities has been eroded over time. Now that the Integrated Rural Development Programme is proposed to be extended to the whole country, along with the National Rural Employment Programme and the increased demands of the Panchayati Raj System, this agency in its present weak state will
diversity of the task it will be called upon to handle. The need for strengthening it is, therefore, imperative. The situation, however, varies from state to state. The present status and strength of the block agency will, therefore, be examined State-wise and the State Governments assisted in suitably strengthening it on a mutually agreed basis within the provisions of the Integrated Rural Development Programme. The aim is to devise a compact multidisciplinary apparatus at the block level which will be able to effectively service the needs of diverse rural development activities. The suitable linkages will also be established with the village and higher level functionaries of the T&V extension scheme. To cater to the training needs of the development functionaries particularly at the district and the State levels, the National Institute of Rural Development would be further strengthened in its research and training.

With the launching of large-scale multi-sectoral, country-wide programmes of rural development aiming both at individual households and at the creation of assets in the rural areas the original concept of Community Development could be said to have been substantially restored. This would be further strengthened by the measures already taken or proposed to be taken to strengthen and rationalise the administration and delivery mechanism.
For purposes of the Seventh Plan, Community Development and Panchayati Raj would have to be viewed in this context and would have to break free from the conventional methodology of including a large number of small schemes through minimal budget provisions. What goes by the name of Community Development in the documents would have to be viewed now more in the nature of a scheme for village development which would imply the planning and implementation of a number of residual activities at the village level which do not get covered in the normal sectoral plans and special programmes e.g. village paths, drainage and sanitation. This in turn would have to be done on the basis of local, decentralised planning at the nature village and block levels for which block funds, both in the nature of outright and incentive grants, would have to be placed at the disposal of Panchayati Raj and Community Development bodies rather than by forming sectoral plans for the villages at the State and National levels. This would imply a considerable degree of rationalisation in the drawing up of plans for Community Development and Panchayati Raj and substantial autonomy in their implementation.

In addition, the States would be called upon to activate Panchayati Raj institutions, particularly at the village and block levels, with a view to ensuring their active involvement in the planning and implementation of the special programmes of rural development, particularly those concerned with poverty alleviation and the provision of