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CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	5
II.	OBJECTIVES	6
III.	FINANCE	9
IV.	ORGANISATION	11
V.	ACHIEVEMENTS	..	..	..	13

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of rural development is not new in India. In fact, long before Independence, it was tried out by workers associated with Mahatma Gandhi and by Tagore through rural reconstruction programmes. In Baroda, as also in Madras, it was worked out in some form or other. Later, various experiments were made in the pilot projects at Etawah, Gorakhpur and Nilokheri. But these were sporadic efforts and had obvious limitations. Out of all these pooled experiences came the Community Development programme as an integral part of the Five-Year Plans. It was bold in conception, as well as extensive in operation. Considering the growing magnitude and the importance of the work, a separate Ministry for Community Development was established in September, 1956.

The programme was initiated on October 2, 1952, with the launching of fifty-five community projects, each covering about 300 villages, with an area of 450 to 500 square miles, a population of about 2,00,000 and a cultivated area of about 1,50,000 acres. The project area was divided into three development blocks.

The experience of the first Community Projects and the popular enthusiasm that they aroused emphasised the need for a rapid extension of the programme to other parts of the country. But the country's resources were not enough to sustain a comprehensive programme of the same magnitude, as contemplated in the first 55 Community Projects. The Government, therefore, decided to launch, alongside the Community Development projects, a programme which was somewhat less intensive in character, called the National Extension Service. The two programmes were complementary. Out of areas developed as National Ex-

tension Service blocks, selection was made periodically for intensive development under the Community Development programme.

Two Stages

A Study Team appointed by the Committee on Plan Projects in its Report, published in November, 1957, made a number of recommendations regarding the working of the Community Development programme. As a result, the programme has been revised and has undergone a number of important changes. It has now been decided that development activities in the rural areas must be intensive, continuous and of substantial duration so that the urge among the masses for a better and richer life may be met adequately and the economic level of the villages raised. To attain such a sustained and accelerated tempo of development, the programme will be implemented in two stages of five years each, instead of the existing three phases which are N.E.S., C.D. and Post-intensive. The existing N.E.S. blocks are automatically converted into Stage I blocks with an increased budget provision. However, before the first stage commences in the block, there will be a pre-extension period of one year for preparatory work exclusively in the field of agriculture.

II. OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the programme is to develop the social and economic life of the community. Since the prosperity of rural India is dependent largely on agriculture, it had the pride of place in the programme from the very beginning. In fact, this emphasis on increased agricultural production is more marked at present. Under the second Five-Year Plan increased attention is also being given (1) to the development of cottage and small scale industries as a means of providing fuller and increasing employment, (2) to the development of co-operatives, (3) the promotion of Pan-

chayats as the basic institutions for local self-government, (4) improved village communications, (5) the promotion of education, health and recreation in the villages, and (6) the provision of improved techniques and designs for rural housing and housing in rural-cum-urban areas.

The success of the programme depends, to a very large extent, on the urge and the ability of the villagers themselves to improve their lot through voluntary effort. Self-help and co-operation are the principles on which the movement rests, the Government offering guidance and assistance financial as well as technical. The success so far achieved indicates that what started as a Government's programme with people's participation is gradually becoming a people's programme with Government participation.

Progress

Community Development is described as the method and National Extension as the agency through which transformation of the social and economic life of villages is to be achieved. As against an allocation of Rs. 91.3 crores under the first Plan, a sum of Rs. 200 crores was earmarked for Community Development and National Extension Service programmes in the second Plan. The target during the first Five-Year Plan was the coverage of a fourth of the rural population in 1,200 blocks—700 under the Community Programme and 500 under the Extension Service—comprising 1,20,000 villages. This was achieved.

While drawing up the second Five-Year Plan, it was envisaged that the whole of the country would be covered by N.E.S. blocks by 1960-61, of which 40 per cent would be Community Development blocks.

However, with the revision in the Programme, envisaging only two stages of blocks of five years' duration each, a certain staggering of the programme has become inevitable. The complete coverage will now be achieved by October, 1963 instead of April, 1961.

The revised schedule has also been necessitated by a continuing shortage of trained, basic and supervisory per-

sonnel. The new arrangement is expected to tone up the work of the programme by avoiding recruitment of workers of marginal calibre and qualifications.

The number of blocks at present in operation total 2,361 as indicated in the table below :

STAGE I BLOCKS :			Total
(a) Community Development Blocks converted before 1-4-58	399	}	1,935
(b) Special multipurpose blocks	43		
(c) Old N.E.S. blocks which were in operation on 1-4-58	1,493		
(d) Blocks to be inaugurated in April, '59 (1959-60 se- ries) with pre-extension period of one year. ..	150		

STAGE II BLOCKS :

Old post intensive blocks	426	426
Grand total :		<u>2,361</u>

So far 2.99 lakh villages with a population of 16.1 crores have been covered under the Community Development programme. In other words, more than half the rural population and the total number of villages in the country have already come within the ambit of the movement.

The year-wise phasing of the future programme upto October, 1963 is as follows :

April, 1959	150
October, 1959	150
April, 1960	200
October, 1960	200

April, 1961	250	Third Five-Year Plan.
October, 1961	..	..	250
April, 1962	..	..	300
October, 1962	..	..	300
April, 1963	..	..	400
October, 1963	400	
Total			2,600	

III. FINANCE

Allocation of Expenditure

The resources for the blocks are drawn both from the people and the Government. For each block area, the programme indicates a qualifying scale of voluntary contribution from the people in the form of money as well as labour, and in kind. Where the State offers financial assistance for the execution of the projects, the expenses are shared by the Central and the State Governments, the proportion being 3 to 1 in the case of non-recurring items. The recurring expenses are shared equally between them.

For productive works like irrigation, reclamation, etc., the necessary funds are advanced by the Central Government to the State Governments in the form of loans. The Central Government will continue to bear 50 per cent of the recurring expenditure on personnel employed by a State in the development blocks during the rest of the period also. The Centre's contribution will be half the total expenditure, subject to a maximum of Rs. 6 crores per year.

Expenditure on Each Block

Originally the expenditure on a National Extension Service block and a Community Development block for the second Plan period was placed at Rs. 4 lakhs and Rs. 12 lakhs respectively.

Under the revised programme of covering the country

with development blocks in two stages, the budget provision has also been revised. Now Rs. 12 lakhs have been provided for blocks in the first stage of five years and Rs. 5 lakhs in the second stage of another five years.

Expenditure under the two Plans

The total allotment for the programme taken up during the first Plan was Rs. 96.5 crores. The estimated expenditure was Rs. 52.4 crores leaving a spill-over to the second Plan of Rs. 44.1 crores. The second Plan has an allotment of Rs. 200 crores for the programme.

External Assistance

In the gigantic task of transforming the rural areas, India was also receiving assistance from the Government of the United States of America and the Ford Foundation. Under the Technical Co-operation Mission Operational Agreement No. 8 on the Community Development programme and the supplements thereto, the U.S. Government had made available a total sum of 14.24 million dollars for the import of equipment for the Community Development blocks.

Indents covering the entire amount have been placed on the Indian Supply Mission, Washington, out of which equipment worth about 11.50 million dollars has been received and distributed to States. Supply of the remaining equipment worth approximately 2.74 million dollars is expected to be made during the year 1958-59.

From the beginning, the Ford Foundation has also been assisting India in training thousands of project workers. The Ford Foundation also provided assistance in the launching of 15 pilot projects for rural development.

PROGRAMME

The National Extension Service is envisaged as the permanent pattern of rural development administration in the country, the development block being the unit of development. The State development departments are accord-



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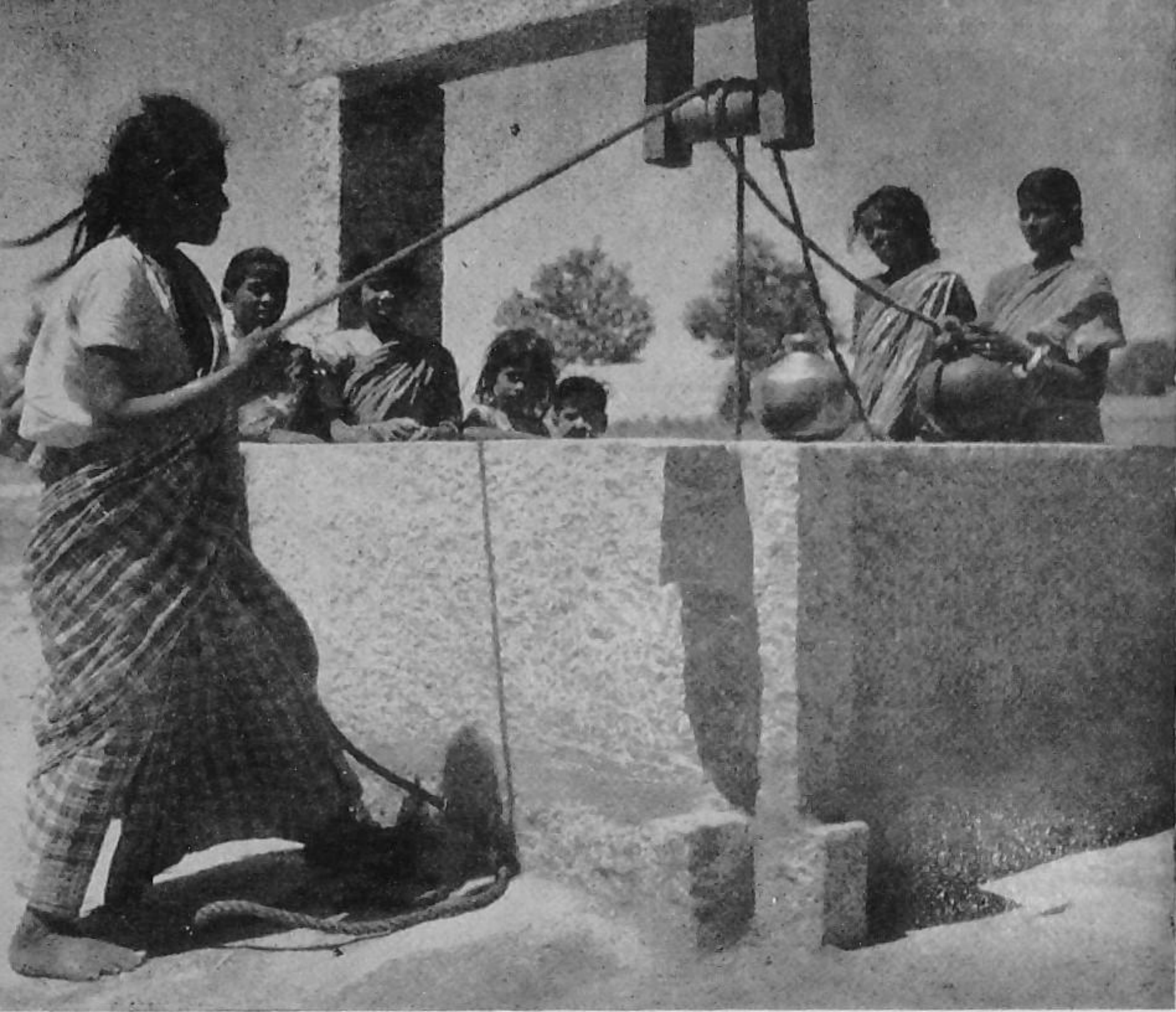




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ingly required to prepare their budgets blockwise, and to carry out development activities through the agency of the extension organisation.

The role of the extension organisation is two-fold :

(1) To carry the proved knowledge or research of practical utility to the villager, specially the farmer. The technique of better-farming and better production, storage and marketing is made known to the farmer, and simultaneously the problems that he faces are transmitted back to the research organisation for special study and solution.

(2) Besides this extension work, the block organisation is also charged with the task of community development by setting up of various institutions, promotion of useful corporate life in the form of co-operative societies, panchayats, better farming societies, Mahila Mandals Four H clubs and Youth Clubs, etc. One of its most important tasks is to locate, train and make use of village leaders in the campaign for greater production and community development.

IV. ORGANISATION

The Ministry of Community Development has the overall charge of the programme. Matters of basic policy go before the Central Committee, consisting of Members of the Planning Commission and the Ministers of Food and Agriculture, and Community Development, with the Prime Minister as Chairman. Co-ordination with the allied Ministries is maintained through special committees and frequent exchange of views.

The actual execution of the development programme is the responsibility of the State Governments. The single authority responsible for the implementation of the development programme in the States is the State Development Committee, consisting of the Chief Minister as the Chairman, the Ministers of the development departments as members and the Development Commissioner as Secretary.

The Development Commissioner, who co-ordinates the activities of all development departments, is a senior Secretary to the Government.

The Collector is the chairman of the District Planning or Development Committee. All the heads of the development departments in the district are represented on the committee which also includes the chairman and the vice-chairman of the District Board as well as many other non-officials.

At the block level, the Block Development Officer is assisted by a team of experts in agriculture, co-operation, animal husbandry, cottage industry, etc., in development work. Finally, there is the Village Level Worker who acts as the multi-purpose extension agent and is in-charge of about 10 villages. While this remains the general pattern of organisation, minor adjustments to suit local conditions have been made in the States to ensure efficient and smooth working.

Alongside the official set-up, non-official participation has been secured in the implementation of the Community Development programme. At the Centre, Parliament provides guidance and direction. In the States, this function is performed by the State legislatures. At other levels also it is realised that, for the programme to become a people's programme, it is essential that the power of making decision regarding the planning and implementation of development programmes should be with the people. Block Advisory Committees, now to be known as Block Development Committees, are taking such decisions. The Block Development Committees are to help in the planning of the programme for the block through village panchayats and other village institutions.

But to give a sound basis to the programme for enlisting people's active support, the Study Team on Community Development and National Extension Service appointed by the Committee on Plan Projects recommended what is called "democratic decentralisation". It envisaged at the block level the establishment of statutory bodies consisting

of representatives of the people. Such a body to be called the Block Panchayat Samiti would be in charge of the total development programme in the block. The extension staff at the block would also be at the disposal of the Panchayat Samiti. At the district level, the team visualises a people's body called the "Zila Parishad" which will have powers of general supervision, guidance and co-ordination.

State Governments have agreed to the objective and are examining the proposals with a view to implementing them in the light of local conditions and requirements.

V. ACHIEVEMENTS

Tribal Blocks

Fortytwo special multi-purpose Tribal Blocks have been started with special programmes for intensive development of selected blocks in tribal areas. An expenditure of about Rs. 27 lakhs has been provided for each block for 5 years.

Industrial Estates

Nine Industrial Estates (major) and 20 small and rural type of Industrial Estates have been started in C.D. Blocks. The object is to decentralise small industries and encourage small entrepreneurs by providing them with equipment and facilities which they cannot otherwise afford.

Rural Housing

Under the first phase of the Village Housing Scheme of the Works, Housing & Supply Ministry, one hundred Rural Housing Projects have been started in as many blocks throughout the country. Each project covers 5 villages on an average and 500 villages have already been covered under this Programme. Rural Housing cells are being set up in the States with Central assistance to prepare these projects and offer guidance in their implementation.

Co-operation

More co-operative societies are being opened in the project areas. Up to December, 1957, 97,000 co-operative societies were functioning and 6.07 million members had been enrolled.

The following figures highlight the achievements in various fields, up to December, 1957, in the Development blocks :

Agriculture

Chemical fertilisers distributed :

(’000 mds.)

29,094

(1,086,000 metric tons)

Agricultural demonstrations held :

(in thousands)

4,318

Improved seeds distributed :

(’000 mds.)

12,730

(475,000 metric tons)

Pedigree animals supplied

(’000 nos.)

33

Pedigree birds supplied

(’000 nos.)

471

Health and Sanitation

Rural latrines constructed (’000 nos.)

276

Wells constructed (’000 nos.)

101

Wells renovated (’000 nos.)

143

Drains constructed (lakh yds.)

144

(13,230 kilometers)

Village lanes paved (’000 sq. yds.)

6,181

Social Education

Adult literacy centres functioning

(’000 nos.)

80

Adults made literate (’000 nos.)

2,197

Community Centres such as recreation

Centres, panchayat ghars, etc.,

(’000 nos.)

58

Units of people's organisations developed including Youth Clubs, Farmers' Clubs Unions, Mahila Samities ('000 nos.)	53
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Communications

Kachcha roads constructed :

(i) New roads constructed ('000 miles)	65
	(104,000 kilometers)
(ii) Existing roads improved: ('000 miles)	66
	(106,000 kilometers)

Arts and Crafts

Number of persons provided with additional part-time employment ('000 nos.)	943
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Number of persons provided with additional full-time employment ('000 nos.)	382
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These results have been made possible by the active participation of the people. Till December, 1957, the value of the people's contribution to the programme by way of land, cash and labour amounted to Rs. 51.5 crores as against an actual expenditure of Rs. 84.8 crores by Government. In other words, the people's contribution was 61 per cent of the Government's expenditure.

For the strengthening of the village organisations like panchayats and the building up of local leadership, the necessity of revitalising panchayats has been increasingly stressed in the Five-Year Plans. During the first Plan period the number of village panchayats increased from 83,087 to 117,593. By the end of the Second Plan the number is expected to increase to 2,50,000.

Training of Personnel

The successful implementation of the development programme depends, to a large extent, on the availability of

trained personnel. A comprehensive training programme side by side with the development programme has, therefore, been initiated by the Government to meet the country's requirements. Those selected by the State Governments are sent to the training centres in different parts of the country for training. At present there are 75 Extension Training Centres for the Village Level Workers (Gram Sevaks). Basic training in agriculture is also imparted by 82 basic Agricultural Schools and 20 Agricultural Workshops. For the training of the Gram Sevikas there are 25 Home Economics Wings attached to the Extension Training Centres and two Home Economics Centres.

There are 13 training centres for Social Education Organisers and four for the Block Development Officers. For the Block Level Extension Officers (Co-operation), there are eight training centres in the country. For the Block Level Extension Officers (Industries), 12 such centres are working at present.

Health personnel are being trained in three Training Centres. Besides these, there are 71 institutions for the training of auxiliary nurse-midwives and nine centres for the training of lady health visitors and six others for the training of midwives.

The position up to April, 1958, in regard to the training of various categories of project personnel was as follows :

TRAINING OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PERSONNEL

<i>Category</i>	<i>No. of personnel trained</i>	<i>No. of per- sonnel under training</i>
1. Village Level Workers (Extension)	19,370	2,977
2. Village Level Workers (Basic)	13,790	4,891

<i>Category</i>	<i>No. of personnel trained</i>	<i>No. of per- sonnel under training</i>
3. Gram Sevikas	816	446
4. Social Education Organisers (Men)	2,272	398
5. Social Education Organisers (Women)	991	249
6. Social Education Organisers (Tribal)	163	31
7. Block Level Extension Officers (Industries) :		
(i) Small scale Service Institutes	778	251
(ii) Khadi Board Mahavidyalayas	465	287
8. Block Level Extension Officers (Co-operation)	1,153	464
9. Block Development Officers	1,985	168
10. Health Personnel :		
(i) Orientation	1,366	20
(ii) Auxiliary Nurse Midwives	521	1,209

Gram Sahayaks' Camps

In addition to training different categories of governmental functionaries, a programme of giving training to non-officials has also been drawn up to enable them to play their proper role in Community Development. Thus at the village level, while the Gram Sevak (Village Level Worker) functions as the Extension Worker from the official side, Gram Sahayaks (functional village leaders) are being trained to supplement his effort from the non-official side.

For the training of Gram Sahayaks, camps are being held of three days' duration in every V.L.W.'s circle in the country. In the beginning only camps on the agricultural

group of subjects are being held. These will be followed by camps on other groups of subjects also. At these camps about 50 Gram Sahayaks drawn from each of the villages in the V.L.W.'s circle discuss the problems of the area. A specially trained staff supported by heads of Development Departments in the district gives talks to the campers and helps them to find solutions to their problems. Gram Sahayaks on return to the villages explain to others the improved techniques learnt by them at the camp by holding group discussions and arranging practical demonstrations in the field. It is expected that by October, 1958, 1,076,000 Gram Sahayaks will be trained in the Agriculture group of subjects. Up to March, 1958, over 5,050 camps had been organised and 217,534 Gram Sahayaks trained.

Seminars

The Ministry of Community Development used to hold subject-matter Seminars for the workers engaged in the implementation of the programme. These provide an important forum for the workers, both officials and non-officials, to share their knowledge and experience. Such Seminars were organised at the district and State levels by the State Governments and at the national level by the Union Ministry of Community Development. Now, however, it has been decided that the Ministries concerned will hold seminars in their particular subjects.

Training of School Teachers

The village school teacher is an important member in the life of the village community. To acquaint these teachers with the Five-Year Plans and the Community Development Programme, the Ministry of Community Development has drawn up a scheme of instruction. Each State has organised peripatetic teams consisting of two members, who have first been given orientation training of one month by the Union Ministry of Community Development. These trained teams organise camps of a month's duration in each block. Fifty teachers are invited to attend

these camps where leading officials and non-officials help the peripatetic teams to acquaint the teachers with various aspects of development plans. The teachers on return to their villages educate the school children and the villagers about the development plans and explain to them how they can help in their implementation.

The Central Institute on Community Development was opened this year in Mussoorie to provide training to key personnel, administrative as well as technical, particularly in group methods and sociological aspects of the Community Development Programme. The training will be of six weeks' duration for each batch of 50, including non-officials. Zonal research institutes, after they are set up, will take up pilot experimentation in methods of approach and will evaluate results with a view to correcting mistakes and making the programme more effective and economical.

A Women's Advisory Committee has been set up to advise the Government on the programmes for women and children. A scheme for the production of basic and cultural literature for rural areas and village libraries is also under preparation.

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