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PEOPLE'S

PROJECT

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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 pro-

gramme 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 project, a programme which is somewhat less intensive in character, called the National Extension Service. The two programmes are complementary. Out of areas developed as National Extension Service blocks, selection is made periodically for intensive development under the Community Development programme.

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 *Panchayats* as the basic institution 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 rapidly becoming a people's programme with Government's 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 crore under the first Plan, a sum of Rs. 200 crore has been 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 1200 blocks—700 under the Community Programme and 500 under the Extension Service—comprising 1,20,000 villages. This has been achieved.

By the end of the Second Five Year Plan *i.e.* by 1960-61, the whole of the country will be covered by NES blocks; of these 40 per cent are to be converted into Community Development blocks.

The number of blocks in operation and already

allotted totals 1,797 as indicated in the table below :

Series	Number of Blocks allotted	Number of Blocks started	Villages covered by blocks	Population (in lakhs)
<i>Intensive Development Blocks</i>				
1952-53	206	206	27,388	169
1953-54	53	53	8,682	44
1955-56	152	152	21,438	124
1956-57	250	250	35,752	183
<i>N.E.S. Blocks</i>				
1954-55	105	105	13,906	79
1955-56	252	252	35,797	177
1956-57	496	496	49,600	327
1957-58	283	—	28,300*	187
TOTAL	1,797	1,514	2,20,863	1,290

Out of 2,20,863 villages with a population of 12.9 crore people, 93,260 villages with about 5.2 crore people have been covered by the Community Development programme, while 1,27,603 villages comprising over 7.7 crore people have come within the orbit of the Extension programme.

For the remaining period of the second Five

*Estimated.

Year Plan, they ear-wise phasing of the programme for the country as a whole is as follows :

Year	Number of NES blocks	Number of NES blocks to be converted into Community Development blocks
1957-58	367 (balance)	200
1958-59	750	260
1959-60	900	300
1960-61	1,000	360

FINANCE

Allocation of Expenditure

The resources for the projects are drawn both from the people and the Government. For each project 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 shape of loans payable in full with interest. The Central Government will continue to bear 50 per cent of the recurring expenditure on personnel employed by



GRAM SEVIKAS AMONG THE VILLAGE CHILDREN

VILLAGERS BUSY CONSTRUCTING A NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE





WINNOWING BY VILLAGE WOMEN

AN ADULT EDUCATION CLASS IN PROGRESS





A MODEL WELL BUILT BY THE VILLAGERS

BETTER HOUSING THROUGH CO-OPERATIVE EFFORT



Expenditure under the two Plans

The total committed expenditure (excluding short-term credit) on the programme taken up during the first Plan was Rs. 96.5 crore. The estimated expenditure was Rs. 52.4 crore leaving a spill over to the second Plan of Rs. 44.1 crore. The second Plan has an allotment of Rs. 200 crore for the programme.

External Assistance

In this gigantic effort to transform the rural areas, India is also receiving assistance from the United States of America and the Ford Foundation. Under the operational agreement No. 8, on the Community Development programme and the 4 supplements thereto, the US Government agreed to make available to the Indo-American Technical Co-operation Fund, more commonly known as Fund 'A', a sum of \$ 12,771,860 for the import of equipment required for the Community Projects taken up in India during 1952-53 to 1956-57. Indents covering about \$ 12.015 million, have been placed on the Indian Supply Mission, Washington, out of which equipment worth about 9.723 million dollars has been received and supplied to the State Governments up to December 15, 1956. The services of a few experts were also made available to the Governments of India and the States to help them in the implementation of the programme.

From the beginning, the Ford Foundation has been assisting India in training thousands of project workers. The Ford Foundation also provided assis-

tance in the launching of 15 pilot projects for rural development.

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. Generally, each State has a single authority for the implementation of both the Extension Scheme and the Community projects. This body, known as the State Development Committee, consists 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 the 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 man and is incharge of 5 to 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.

Along with the official set-up, non-official participation in the implementation of the Community Development has been secured. At the Centre, Parliament provides guidance and direction. In the States this function is performed by the State Legislatures. While non-official Advisory Committees have been associated with the Block Development Officers at the block level, the key person in the organisation, the Village Level Worker functions in collaboration with the *panchayat* or the village development Council. Voluntary organisations like the Bharat Sevak Samaj, Mahila Mandals, etc., are also playing an important part in bringing about the revolutionary change in the countryside.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The following figures highlight the achievements up to September 30, 1956, in the Community Development and National Extension blocks :

Agriculture

Chemical Fertilisers distributed (thousand mds).	14,026
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Agricultural demonstrations held (in thousand)	2,646
Improved seeds distributed (thousand mds.)	6,146
Area brought under fruit and vegetable cultivation (thousand acres)	773
Key Village Centres started (Number)	3,838
Pedigree animals supplied (in thousand)	20
Pedigree birds supplied (in thousand)	295
Area reclaimed (thousand acres)	1,667
Additional area brought under irrigation (thousand acres)	2,850

Health and Sanitation

Primary Health Centres set up (Number)	981
Maternity and child welfare centres (Number)	947
Rural latrines constructed (in thousand)	147
Wells constructed (in thousand)	58
Wells renovated (in thousand)	82
Drains constructed (lakh yards)	87

Education

New Schools started (in thousand)	20
Schools converted into basic ones (Number in thousand)	7,794
Adult education centres started (in thousand)	53
Adults trained (in thousand)	1,284

People's Organisations

Community Centres started (in thousand)	155
Units of People's organisations developed (in thousand)	110

New Co-operative Societies started (in thousand)	41
Number of new members enrolled in Co-operative Societies (in thousand)	2,330

Roads and Communications

Pucca roads constructed (miles)	7,135
Kacha roads constructed (thousand miles)	42

Arts and Crafts

Production-cum-training centres started (Number)	2,040
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PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

These results have been made possible by the active participation of the people. Till September 1956, the value of the people's contribution in the programme by way of land, cash and labour amounted to Rs. 33 crore as against an actual expenditure of Rs. 56.3 crore by Government. In other words, the people's contribution was 59 per cent of the Government's expenditure, working out at Rs. 3,768 per one thousand persons.

Emphasis is laid in the Community project blocks and National Extension blocks on the strengthening of the village organisations like *panchayats* and the building up of local leadership. The necessity of revitalising *panchayats*, which could function as effective local self-governing bodies, is also stressed in the second Plan. 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 48 Extension Training Centres for the Village Level Workers (*Gram Sevaks*). Basic training in agriculture is also imparted by 55 basic agriculture schools and 20 Agricultural workshops. For the training of the *Gram Sevikas* there are 25 Home Economics Wings and 2 auxiliary Home Economics Cells attached to the Extension Training Centres. Twenty-seven training centres to train Group Level Workers are also functioning in the country at present.

There are 9 training centres for Social Education Organisers and 3 for the Block Development Officers. For the Block Level Extension Officers (Co-operative) there are 8 training centres in the country. For the Block Level Extension Officers (industries) 9 such centres are working at present.

Health personnel are being trained in three Training Centres. Besides these, there are over 39 institutions for the training of auxiliary nurse-midwives and 9 centres for the training of lady health visitors and 6 others for the training of midwives.

The position as at the end of December 1956, in regard to the training of various categories of project personnel is as follows:

Training of Community Development Personnel

S. No.	Category	Number of Personnel Trained	Number of Personnel Under-training
1.	Village Level Workers (Extn.)	16,816	5,390
2.	Village Level Workers (Basic)	8,106	3,656
3.	Group Level Workers	2,115	203
4.	Social Education Organisers (Men)	1,537	337
5.	Social Education Organisers (Women)	634	130
6.	Social Education Organisers (Tribal)	51	19
7.	Block Level Extension Officers (Industries)		
	(i) Small scale Service Institutes	143	145
	(ii) Khadi Board Mahavidyalas	..	210
8.	Block Level Extension Officers (Co-operation)	155	434
9.	Block Development Officers	1,268	88
10.	Health Personnel	926	9

Training and Research Institutes

The Central Committee on Community Development has approved the setting up of a Central Institute in Delhi which will provide training to key personnel, administrative as well as technical, particularly in group methods and sociological aspects of the Community Development programme.



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