

**THE FIFTH EVALUATION REPORT ON WORKING OF
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND N.E.S. BLOCKS, 1958**

1. The Study

A rapid survey of a sufficiently large number of blocks was conducted by the Programme Evaluation organisation aiming at primarily to assess the general progress and to bring out problems experienced in the functioning of the Blocks. This study threw light on the organisation and operation of the Community Development and the N.E.S. programmes, the organisation & working of the Panchayats, the dissemination of improved agricultural practices and the growth of people's participation and the maintenance of records in the development of blocks.

2. Objectives

- i) To obtain general information on progress, method of working and problems experienced in working of the blocks;

To obtain an appraisal of the programme in large number of blocks situated in different economic and administrative conditions.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of the Sample

The selection of blocks for this study was confined to the C.D. and NES blocks which had completed one year of working on 30th September, 1957. All the blocks in a state considered for selection were divided into two strata - CD and NES. - and were further sub-divided into geographical regions. From regions one block was selected at random. A blocks - 37 CD and 47 NES were selected. The enquiry could not be conducted in two blocks of Bombay. Therefore, 82 blocks - 36 CD & 46 NES were finally covered in the study. For selection of villages 5 Gram Sevaks were selected at random in the block and each Gram Sevak was asked to name two villages which were easily accessible, average in performance. Out of these two, one village was selected at random.

4. Reference Period

The field work for the enquiry was conducted between October 1957 and January, 1958.

1. The study revealed that on an average a block was 25% larger than the programme's norm in terms of population, and the personnel and finance of a block were not proportionate to its size. This had led to dilution of the programme in these blocks.

2. The staffing of different blocks did not seem to have been done with serious reference to their special needs and circumstances. Moreover, in many instances, the programme did not touch some of the basic problems of the block and its impact on the block's economy and people was limited. The programme had also been ineffective in tribal and hilly areas.

3. There was little extension work outside agriculture. The health experts were not enough in number to run the, rural dispensaries, they could not evidently take up extension work.

4. Most of the problems with which the block level specialist was worried were administrative. The contacts between the Block Level Specialist and the Gram Sevak in fields were few and far between; most of these specialists were engaged in routine work in their fields while the Gram Sevak was pre-eminently an extension worker who was not well enough to act as a channel for the transmission of technical assistance to the villagers.

5. Block development had suffered from under budgetting and under-spending of the budgetted amounts. The main reason for the latter had been procedural; funds had not been sanctioned and sanctioned amounts were not made available to blocks at the right time.

6. The Harijans and the backward classes were benefitted alongwith others from the construction of village roads, the digging of drinking water wells and the setting up of village schools.

7. A proportion of the cultivating households seemed to have no knowledge of improved seeds; that cultivators had taken to the use of improved seeds much more in the case of cotton and sugar cane than of wheat, **paddy**, potato and jowar, and that among these adopting cultivators those with the larger holdings predominate.

8. Only 15 per cent of relevant households had taken to Japanese method of paddy cultivation and that **the households** which had not taken to it mostly pleaded ignorance.

9. The enquiry revealed that a much smaller percentage of the cultivating households had taken to the use of fertilizers than of improved seeds.

10 The enquiry also revealed that the benefits of the co-operative credit societies had gone mostly to the large cultivators in the villages, who also played the dominant parts in the panchayats.

11. The standard of literacy among the members of the Panchayat was very low.

12. The maintenance of records coverage and checking was neither uniform nor satisfactory.

6. Major Suggestions

1. The blocks should be increased in number only when the supply of personnel increases.

2. The status of the Block Development Officer and his qualifications should be higher than they are at present.

3. The programme and the **staffing pattern of the** Blocks should be in accordance with the special needs of the areas where they were located.

4. Stress should be given to the development of extension work in all fields besides agriculture, and specialists relieved of administrative work.

5. The rapport between the Block specialist and the Gram Sevak should be developed. The role and jurisdiction of the latter should be more clearly thought out.

6. The programme must be reoriented considerably in favour of the non-agricultural or rather non-land holding classes in order to extend more benefits to under-privileged sections of the rural society.

7. Greater extension effort was required especially for non-cash crops among the smaller cultivators.

8. Improved methods should be propagated more extensively and carefully especially in the case of the Japanese method and where possible, in combination with improved seeds and fertilizers.

9. Provision should be made for the systematic education of the members of the Panchayat on their duties and responsibilities.

10. Progress reports prepared by the Gram Sevaks should be uniform in content and maintained at his headquarter village.---

11. The procedure involved in making funds available to the block requires simplification.

12. The issues involved in people's **participation in the** programme requires thorough study by all concerned.

13. The extension service should also be re-oriented with emphasis on convincing the doubting farmers on the real superiority of the improved varieties and on better arrangement for supply rather than on the provision of finance. More attention has to be given to the long term suitability of the fertilizers to the soils of the areas where they are recommended as also to their prices relatively to their yields on the average farm.

14. Every possible attempt should be made to bring in the poorer sections of the rural population within the fold of the co-operative movement.

15. The contact between the Block Specialist and the Gram Sewak should be developed.

16. Progress reports should be checked on the spot with a view to verify their correctness and there should be clear directions in this regard to the B.D.O., the extension Specialists and the Progress Assistant.