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## TRAINING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN INDIA<sup>1/</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

1. One of the major developments in the politico-administrative field within the last decade in India has been the large scale establishment of institutions of local government and devolution of substantial powers to them. Panchayati Raj<sup>1/</sup> has been ushered in already in twelve out of the sixteen States which make up the Union of India; the remaining States have initiated steps to follow suit. It is accepted as a national policy that the growth of local government institutions, especially in the rural areas, is vital to provide a stable base for democracy and to normalize the democratic way of life. It is recognized that these institutions can play an effective role in bringing about economic development and accelerating the process of social change from a tradition-bound to a modern society. They are no longer regarded as merely "municipal" bodies, but as institutions serving the very much wider objective of assisting in the nation's total development. The new significance of these institutions has made it necessary that they should be equipped with the requisite organization and finance and, what is more important, that a proper understanding of the major policy goals of the programme of democratic decentralization and an appreciation of their roles and responsibilities should be developed among both the elected representatives and the career officials. The importance of systematic programmes of training which prepare the officials and the representatives of the people to share in this effort has therefore received wide recognition in India and the process of devolution of power to rural local authorities has been accompanied by the establishment of an integrated training programme, which stretches from the village to the national level.

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1/ Panchayati Raj means the rural local government system which comprises the Zila Parishad at the District level, the Panchayati Samiti at the Community Development Block level and the Panchayat at the village level.

## I. GROWTH OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

2. The nature of the Indian training programme for local government cannot be understood unless the intimate link which exists in the country between community development and local government is appreciated. It is not that institutions of local government did not exist in India before the community development movement started. Indian history bears ample testimony to the fact that, for many centuries, the village panchayat was a virile institution which performed not only civic and judicial functions but often organized defence against invading forces. But, from about the 17th century onwards, these institutions declined in strength under the centralizing tendencies first of the Mughal and, later, of the British Administration. It was for the first time in 1882 that the policy of establishment of a system of local government was enunciated, based on the principle that "political education is the primary function of local government, of greater importance than administrative efficiency".<sup>1/</sup> The reaction of the provincial administrations was, however, lukewarm and, except in some urban areas, little progress was made. Revival of interest in local government came in the wake of the political upsurge for the country's freedom. Owing specially to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress Party, which led the fight for the country's freedom, accepted the establishment of a strong local government system as one of its objectives. It was therefore natural that, when the country won its independence, there was a revival of interest in the development of local government; in many States a comprehensive review of the legislation was undertaken and, in 1954, the Government of India established a Central Council of Local Self-Government.

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<sup>1/</sup> Government of India Resolution on Local Government, May 1882, Para 5.

3. Meanwhile, a massive programme of community development had been launched in India in 1952. It called for a concerted effort to promote better living for the whole community with the active and willing participation and initiative of the rural people. The first few years of operation of the community development programme, however, brought to light certain weaknesses; one of the least successful aspects was in regard to the mobilization of popular initiative and enthusiasm. Attempts which had been made to harness local initiative through the formation of ad-hoc advisory bodies did not prove successful in involving the people in the programme in a sustained manner. While commendable work was done in many areas, the participation of the people remained intermittent and sporadic. These bodies could not produce the type of leadership or gather the strength which was required to make the effort for economic and social development self-generating and to give the movement an on-going character. A high level committee was therefore set up by the Government of India to review the entire position and to make recommendations for a more effective fulfilment of the objectives of the community development programme. The report<sup>1/</sup> which this body made in 1957 marks a major landmark in the history of rural local government in India. It recognized that a genuine community development programme could come into being only through the gradual development of faith in the people and in the efficacy of their own co-operative and community action in solving their local problems, which would be possible only through the organization of elective democratic institutions. It recommended the establishment of a network of local government institutions which would have virtually the sole authority for all those development programmes which were of exclusive interest to the area. With the acceptance and implementation of the general recommendations of this report, local government institutions in the rural areas came to occupy an increasingly prominent position in the political and administrative structure of the country.

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Service, Committee on Plan Projects, November 1957.

4. Thus, it was community development which gave the maximum impetus for local government and prepared the ground for it. Indeed, in the Indian context, the two have become inextricably inter-linked and Panchayati Raj has given an institutional shape to the efforts for community development. While the distinction between community development and local government is understood, the country has tried to evolve a happy coalescence of both, with each programme supporting the other. In terms of personnel also the link is intimate, the leader of the extension team in the Community Development Block functioning also as the Chief Executive Officer of the Panchayat Samiti and the Village Level Worker functioning, in some States, as the Secretary of the Village Panchayat. The integral relationship between community development and local government is naturally reflected in the programme of training for the latter. Indeed, training for community development and training for local government is a single and combined effort. Just as the community development programme in India acquired new dimensions and became indistinguishable from Panchayati Raj, the network of training institutions built up for community development has required only some modifications in their programme and content to meet the new emphasis and additional demands created by the establishment of Panchayati Raj. It is essential that this is kept in mind when looking at the Indian training programme for local government, because it is in the network of training institutions for community development that training for Panchayati Raj is mostly imparted.

## II. THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

5. How is training for local government organized in India? Naturally it is geared to the needs of its local government system. We may therefore first have a glimpse at the present structure of local government.
6. In the urban areas local government units have been established in practically all the cities and towns; it was estimated<sup>1/</sup> in 1963 that there were over 2,000 such institutions functioning in the country. There has been a steady expansion in the size of the older towns and a constant increase in the number of new towns and even the phenomenon of metropolitan conurbation has made its appearance during the last few decades, but the urban institutions have continued to be primarily "municipal" institutions concerned with maintenance of local roads, water supply, drainage, sanitation, recreation facilities and so on.
7. It is in the rural areas that material changes in local government have taken place in recent years. Structurally, the general pattern<sup>2/</sup> consists of three tiers of institutions - the bottom tier being located at the village level (for a single village or a group of small villages), the middle tier at the Community Development Block level and the top tier at the district level. These institutions are inter-linked in their constitution and functions. The range of functions with which they are entrusted is wide and comprehensive. It includes not only the traditional function of providing civic amenities but a whole range of developmental activities in the local area. This apart, these institutions act as planning agencies at their respective levels and actively participate in the preparation of local plans which are later fitted into the State and National plans.

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the Committee on the Training of Municipal Employees, 1963 (mimeographed), p.5.

<sup>2/</sup> There are variations in the structure and functions of Panchayati Raj institutions in the different States, but these do not affect the general theme of this paper.

8. The key position assigned to Panchayati Raj institutions has made it imperative that, for their success, there should be, among other things, a training programme touching both the elected representatives and the career officials at all levels. On the one hand, the official class had not had the experience of discharging its responsibilities in a political framework and of acting with a sense of partnership with the people's representatives rather than with a sense of authority. Many of the elected representatives, on the other hand, have yet to realize that responsibility and power go together and that they must look at problems not parochially, but from the point of view of the interest of the entire community. For the successful working of Panchayati Raj new approaches and attitudes have therefore to be developed. While experience is a good teacher, it is essential especially in the early stages, that a deliberate attempt be made to inculcate desirable attitudes and develop an understanding of one's duties and responsibilities. This is all the more necessary in the case of the elected representatives who will have to provide leadership, establish standards and build up healthy traditions. It is not only the personnel who need the training, but even other political and administrative leaders too. Experience in India has shown that unless the superior officers and members of legislative bodies at the State and the national level are also oriented, they do not provide the guidance and encouragement which the actual functionaries require. The Indian training programme therefore includes in its purview those who function at the field level as well as those who occupy supervisory positions or operate at the policy-making levels.

9. The Appendix lists briefly the different classes of training institutions, the nature of courses they offer and the types of personnel they train. At the apex of the training network is the National Institute of Community Development where senior officers, members of the national Parliament and State Legislatures and office-bearers of the top level Panchayati Raj institutions receive training. A step below, there is a set of institutions - roughly one in each State, which cater for the needs of the intermediate level personnel - both official and non-official.

At the base, there is a host of training institutions which train the ground level functionaires in specialized institutions.

10. The position regarding training for urban local government<sup>1/</sup> is not equally happy and facilities are very limited. Few Indian Universities offer a course specially designed for municipal employees and leading to a diploma. In a few other Universities which offer a diploma in public administration, municipal administration is only one of the subjects of study. Outside of the Universities, there is practically only one institution, viz, the All-India Institute of Local Self-Government, which offers courses in local and municipal administration for municipal employees as well as others. This Institute, which was established in 1927 in Bombay, has done pioneering work and their courses are now available at a number of provincial centres. But these courses are mainly for clerical and junior executive levels and the higher categories of employees are not covered. An attempt to fill the gap has been recently made by the All-India Institute of Local Self-Government by the starting of a post-graduate course for supervisory personnel. This course is offered only at Bombay and enrolment has not been very encouraging. Lastly, the Indian School of Public Administration, which is another private body, occasionally runs short-term courses for high level executive officers of municipal bodies, designed for the special needs of the trainees. In brief, training facilities in the urban sector still remain inadequate while its rural counterpart has expanded in a large way, thanks mainly to the community development programme which gave a big push to local government.

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<sup>1/</sup> For a detailed account, see Report of the Committee on the Training of Municipal Employees, op.cit.



### III. HIGHLIGHTS AND PROBLEMS

11. We may now turn our attention to some of the highlights of the Indian programme, the problems which were met with and the manner in which they have been tackled. Naturally, many of the problems and solutions are unique to the Indian background.

#### Vast number of persons to be trained

12. The biggest single problem which the Indian training programme faces is the enormity of the number of persons requiring to be trained. In rural India, there are over 200,000 Village Panchayats, over 5,000 Panchayat Samitis and over 300 Zila Parishads. The number of elected representatives alone will be of the order of two million; this apart, there are large numbers of official functionaries and auxiliary workers who have also to be trained. Obviously, the same kind of training is neither possible nor necessary for all types of persons. The educational and intellectual level which could be expected in different kinds of personnel to be trained, the nature of the job to be performed by them and the degree of responsibility vested in them have to be taken into account to devise different kinds of training courses. At the same time, it is clearly not possible to have a large variety of training courses which would suit every single class of personnel. A pattern of training has therefore been evolved, which broadly meets the requirements of the major categories of personnel but keeps the number of kinds of courses within manageable limits. This is constantly reviewed to take into account the backlog of persons to be trained and the changing emphasis in the main programme. Thus, for instance, a major change in the pattern of training of intermediate level personnel has just been decided upon to provide accelerated coverage of those still requiring initial training, as also to provide refresher training at five-yearly intervals.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> Instructions have been issued by the Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation on Feb. 27, 1965.

But the general problem of meeting the needs of large numbers still remains at all levels and has to contend against limitations of finance, availability of suitable trainers and other similar factors.

#### Content of training

13. It has not been easy to determine the relative emphasis to be laid in the training programme on the imparting of knowledge and on the moulding of attitudes. There has been some criticism<sup>1/</sup> that the training syllabi are excessively heavy and that they tend to be programme-oriented rather than aimed at developing the right attitudes and understanding of the basic philosophy and objectives of the programme. Admittedly, training is different from education. Also, for the successful working of local government, the administrative ethos has to be something quite different from that of a colonial authoritarian regime. In terms of training, this means that the training programme should lay adequate emphasis on teaching new ways of work, new ways of dealing with people and a sense of commitment to the broader goals of the programme. While this is recognized, it has been found necessary to make the training courses serve partly also as educational and informational courses. Some of the higher administrative personnel, who are drawn from urban areas, do not have an adequate understanding of the rural people or knowledge of the rural areas. It is particularly necessary that this deficiency be corrected. In addition, the training has to pass on information regarding government policies and schemes so that the workers can visualize more clearly the setting in which they have to operate. The solution lies not in reducing the syllabus but in extending the duration of the courses. As the initial phase of expansion is completed and the number of persons freshly to be trained diminishes, it is possible to proceed in this direction. In fact, a decision has just been taken to slightly extend the duration of training of the Block Development Officers.

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<sup>1/</sup> For opposite points of view, see J. Paul Leagans, "India's Experience with Training in Extension Education for Community Development", New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, 1961 and B. Mukerji, "Community Development in India", Orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1961.

14. The federal nature of the Indian Government raises a somewhat peculiar problem for inter-regional training centres. For many years past it has been found useful to have training centres for intermediate and higher level personnel, where people from different States get together for common courses. The advantage of such an arrangement has been not only an economic and optimum use of trainer-material, but also that such courses have offered opportunities for exchange of mutual experiences and broadening of the mental horizons of the participants and thereby added to the value of the training. With the establishment of Panchayati Raj, however, some difficulty has been met with in running such courses. Local Government not being a federal subject, each State has passed its own law and there are considerable inter-State differences in rules and procedures, accounting systems, etc. Non-official leaders do not always have a working knowledge of English and speak a variety of local languages. Therefore, while the advantages of running inter-regional courses are recognized and the pattern of such courses is being maintained as far as possible, a decision has recently been taken that such institutions will also run a few courses in a year for participants from a single State in the appropriate language.

#### Methods of training

15. One of the aspects which has received considerable attention is the refinement of methods of training for different classes of persons. In every training course, an attempt is made to have a judicious combination of lecture and discussion methods so that while, on the one hand, some knowledge is imparted, on the other hand, there is a stimulation of an analytical approach. As the level of trainees goes up from ground level workers to supervisory and high level personnel, the lecture gives way in an increasing measure to the discussion and syndicate techniques. Sometimes, there has been comment<sup>1/</sup> that there is an over-emphasis on the lecture method and that the teaching at the training centres tends to be too largely

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<sup>1/</sup> J. Paul Leagans, op. cit.

descriptive, with too much emphasis on acquiring knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the educational and informational aspect of a training course cannot be done away with altogether, in the circumstances prevailing in the country. It is therefore appropriate that there should be a proportion of talks or lectures in every training course. What is really necessary and is being attempted is to improve the quality of lectures. It has, however, to be admitted that there is more of a tendency to "teach" than to "train". This is probably a reflection of the tradition of class-room teaching which pervades the entire Indian education system. To counter this tendency, it has been found necessary to teach the trainers themselves (during trainers' training) to recognize that inductive or problem-oriented methods of training are more effective and that they must allow active participation of the trainees in their own training. But effective use of the discussion technique in a free atmosphere has yet to be developed and the importance of developing initiative and ingenuity among the workers and guarding against excessive reliance on training has yet to be appreciated by some of the trainers.

16. An issue which has sometime been debated in India is whether there should be different training institutions for different categories of functionaries or whether a team approach should be adopted in training, i.e. a single training institution should offer simultaneous training courses to different categories of personnel. The latter technique has no doubt certain advantages as it helps to develop a common understanding of the philosophy, objectives and methods among all the categories of persons who have to work together for the smooth functioning of local government. But there are severe limitations to such an approach, especially when dealing with the training of ground level personnel. At this level the training has to provide the worker with skills and knowledge which give him functional competence. It is hardly possible to provide in one institution the variety of teaching staff, equipment and ancillary facilities required for training different categories of workers. The general pattern which has been adopted in India in such cases is to have specialized training institutions, located wherever possible in a common

campus. This enables them to arrange for common lecture or discussion programmes, to draw upon the faculty resources of one another and to provide a measure of common social life, so that the training takes place against a common background to some extent. In the training institutions for intermediate and high level personnel, a different approach is followed. Each course is designed to bring together the generalist-administrator, the technical expert and the elected representative. The cross-fertilization of ideas which results thereby has helped considerably to diminish the tensions which arise inevitably between officials and non-officials in the wake of democratic decentralization, by giving them a better insight into the roles and responsibilities of one other.

17. One of the lessons which has been learned in the past few years is that a worker profits much more from the training if he is brought for training after having been in the field for sometime than he would if he is sent for training immediately after his recruitment. If he can first be posted as a supernumerary or extra hand for a couple of months and then posted for training, the maximum benefit would be obtained. On account of the additional cost involved, however, this type of arrangement is being implemented only in a restricted way.

#### Field orientation

18. As the ultimate test of training is efficiency of performance in the field, it is apparent that training has to remain in tune with the operation of the programme in the field. Without such field orientation, the training content is bound to get too theoretical and remote from field conditions and the quality of training will deteriorate. That, even under the best of conditions there is bound to be a gap between the ideal conditions pictured by training and the actualities of the field, is true. It is indeed such a gap which motivates the field workers to make their practice approximate more and more closely to the basic ideals that underlie the programme. At the same time the gap should not widen into a hiatus and the general endeavour has to be to see that it is as narrow as possible. In India several measures have been taken with this end in view.

There are periodical conferences in which the heads of training institutions and programme administrators examine jointly whether any revision in the scheme of courses is necessary to meet the changing needs of the programme. Similarly, programme administrators sit on the managing committees of individual institutions. Apart from these administrative arrangements, linking of different aspects of training with a variety of "practicals" has been given considerable attention in designing the courses at the training centres. But it is seen from experience that the educative value of these practicals is not always recognized by the trainers. The practicals are often handled in a mechanical manner instead of treating them as activities intended to provide significant educational experiences. Only recently the position was reviewed by workshops of heads of training institutions and programme administrators and they have recommended that "practical experience, in or outside the campus, should in the ordinary course precede and form the base for every item of class-room work".<sup>1/</sup> While it may not be possible to treat every subject in this fashion and such a procedure may not also be appropriate for the training of high level personnel (for whom the training course has to be really in the nature of an extended seminar), there is no doubt that a carefully worked out plan of field visits and field placements improves the quality of "job training" of the field workers.

19. Another step which has been taken to provide a field corrective to what might otherwise become an over-theoretical training has been the combination of an action programme in selected villages with the training responsibilities of the teaching staff. This has proved useful in keeping the trainers attuned to changing field situations, has provided a testing ground for new techniques and offered opportunities for field work to the trainees and thereby has contributed to the general improvement of the quality of the training courses.

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<sup>1/</sup> Report of the Regional Workshops held at Rajpur, Udaipur and Mysore, Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation, 1964, p. 16.

20. Absence of suitable teaching material has been one of the handicaps from which the training programme suffers. Naturally, textbook material will not be readily available for new programmes like Panchayati Raj and it takes some time before a body of material can be gathered and processed in a way in which it can serve as a teaching aid. To overcome this deficiency, the National Institute of Community Development has launched a scheme for the preparation of textbooks and guide-books on various relevant topics, with the assistance of experts in the respective fields; this is being supplemented by encouraging the trainers to take up simple field investigations and thereafter to prepare case studies, which are exchanged with other training institutions, thereby building up a body of useful material. Another source from which teaching material is being gathered is the research programme which the National Institute of Community Development has initiated. While the research is intended to serve a much wider purpose, many of the research studies offer valuable material which, if imaginatively used in the training courses, can constitute good teaching material. The lack of teaching material is particularly felt by the training centres for ground level personnel because what little material exists is in English. There is a scheme under which English publications can be obtained translated into and published in different regional languages, the cost being shared by the Central and State Governments, but the advantage of this scheme has not been fully utilized to build up teaching material in the regional languages.

21. Other steps have also been taken to prevent the training staff getting out of touch with the programme, as we shall see presently.

22. In spite of these measures, one cannot say with confidence that the gap between field and training has been reduced to the minimum. To some extent, this appears to be due to certain shortcomings in the field conditions themselves. There are many problems in the field the origin of which lies in basic defects in the programme and its organization, for which training alone can provide no solution. Perhaps such a situation is inevitable in the early years of a new programme like Panchayati Raj.

It seems necessary that greater thought and attention should be paid to analyse to what extent the difficulties of training arise from the field situation and how the latter should be improved.

Staff of training centres

23. One of the major problems in setting up the training programme especially in the initial stages, has been that of finding suitable trainers. The country did not have much experience in carrying out developmental programmes through local institutions and there were few persons who could claim to have expertise in this field. Even today it is hard to find a sufficient number of individuals who combine in themselves adequate field experience and requisite theoretical knowledge. To overcome this difficulty, both methods are being tried - getting academically qualified persons and giving them field training, and selecting persons who have proved successful in the field and giving them theoretical grounding in some of the basic social sciences. It has not yet been possible to evaluate the relative levels of performance of trainers drawn from these two categories and at present trainers drawn from the field for fixed tenures outnumber those who have been directly selected.

24. It had been recognized quite early in the community development programme that the training of trainers was itself a major need and that if the trainer had to make an impression on his trainees and develop new attitudes in them, he must himself display those attitudes in dealing with them. He had to be weaned away, especially from the authoritarian tradition which characterized Indian administration till the country's independence, and had to be taught new methods of training which recognized that the actual training process was largely one of self-education, only the superficial training situation being under the trainer's control. The importance attached to trainers' training has, if anything, been strengthened after the introduction of Panchayati Raj. In the first place, a number of new training institutions have been established, which means that there are more trainers requiring to be trained. Then, again, Panchayati Raj has introduced new dimensions to community development and the trainers



themselves have to get oriented to the new situation. The duration of the trainers' training at the National Institute of Community Development has therefore been extended, since 1963, from 3 to 4½ months, which has enabled the inclusion in the syllabus of a special course on Panchayati Raj and a set of basic courses in social sciences of significance to local government and community development, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Social Psychology, Rural Economics and Public Administration. These measures, it is hoped, will help to improve the competence of the trainers.

#### Utilization of training capacity

25. We have seen earlier how India has to face the challenge of training a vast multitude of persons and the way in which it is trying to meet it by setting up a variety of training institutions offering different types of courses. Unfortunately, even the training capacity which exists at present is not being fully utilized and attendance by both official and elected participants has remained inadequate. The State administrations which have to depute official trainees to these institutions suffer from certain handicaps of an administrative nature and often find themselves unable to utilize their quotas to the maximum extent. For certain categories training reserves have been constituted, which has helped to mitigate the problem. But this step has not been taken for the others, as it means extra cost. Effort is, however, being continued to remedy the situation.

26. The problem of ensuring adequate attendance by the elected representatives is even more difficult of solution. Not being subject to the same type of disciplinary control as career officials, they cannot be ordered to attend training courses. To some extent their poor attendance is due to personal problems which many of them have. The majority of them are practising agriculturists, while some are professionals, like lawyers and doctors, and find it difficult to join long training courses. Some of the leaders like members of Parliament or members of State Legislatures are associated with so many activities, political and otherwise, that even in the off-session periods they find it difficult to spare time for training. What steps can we take to draw adequate numbers of non-officials to the

training programme, especially when the need to train them is so essential? Indian experience has shown that provision of travel and per diem expenses, while essential, is not sufficient. At one stage an experiment was tried of making the payment of salary of trainers in the Panchayati Raj Training Centres (which are institutions for training people's representatives at the ground level) contingent with the hope that the staff in these institutions would evince interest not only in mobilizing attendance initially but in maintaining a high level of training, so that the institutions would build up a good reputation and attract people for training. But this step did not prove successful and only resulted in hardship to the staff and loss of morale among them on account of the uncertainty of their position. This approach has since been given up. A somewhat drastic step has been taken in the State of Rajasthan where the law provides that a member of a Panchayat Samiti who misses three opportunities given to him to undergo training will automatically forfeit his seat. General opinion is not, however, in favour of such a legal compulsion. After all, the essence of local government lies in the fact that it is operated by persons who command the support and confidence of local people as proved through a process of election; such persons should not be unseated on what would at best be a technical ground. Perhaps the only way in which full participation by elected representatives in the training programme can be ensured is by improving the quality of training and demonstrating that the training course has something valuable to offer.

27. There is another special feature regarding training of non-officials. In most local government institutions there are either open political party alignments or groupings around personalities or caste. It has to be ensured that, in taking advantage of the training facilities, a bias does not creep in consciously or unconsciously and that representatives of all parties or groups are enabled to take part in the training courses. The experience of organizing village leaders' training camps in the community development programme showed<sup>1/</sup> that unless some care is taken the less vocal

<sup>1/</sup> See "Evaluation of the Gram Sahayak Programme", Programme Evaluation Organization, 1961, pp. 16-28.

or the less influential persons may not get an opportunity to receive training.

Co-ordination of the training programme

28. We have seen that different types of training institutions have been established to cater for the requirements of different categories of persons. Heterogeneity of institutions and training courses and the large number of such institutions themselves pose a problem, viz., of ensuring that behind this diversity there is a unity of purpose, that the standard and content of training in similar institutions are nearly equal, that there is no duplication of effort and that each category of institutions fits into an appropriate position in the total structure of training. With this end in view various steps have been taken. At the national level a high level council has been established, headed by the Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, in which leading members of the national Parliament, reputed academicians from Universities and key administrators are members. This body takes a general view of the entire training programme to make sure that in its detailed operation the major objectives are not lost sight of. There are similar committees at the State level. While these bodies provide the policy guidance which shapes the overall training programme, more intimate and continuous guidance to the training institutions is provided by the National Institute of Community Development, which occupies the apex position in the total training scheme. As the number of training institutions has multiplied, it has been felt that there is need for an institution which could provide guidance and supervision and help to maintain the quality of training. The National Institute of Community Development performs this function in a variety of ways. It is associated with the initial selection of the training staff and has thus an opportunity to ensure that only persons with the right competence and aptitudes are appointed as trainers. At the next stage it is responsible for the training of the trainers. As part of the follow-up of such training teams of experts from the National Institute visit different training institutions according to a phased programme and

watch the staff in action. The visiting teams thereby evaluate the trainers' training; in addition, they hold seminars with the teaching staff and meet them individually in order to find out in what ways the academic content of the training programme can be strengthened, how the teaching methods can be improved and in what respects individual staff members require assistance in overcoming deficiencies in their knowledge or teaching skills. The National Institute is also associated with the preparation of the syllabuses of various training courses and systematically reviews reports of training courses. As mentioned earlier, the task of preparing textbooks and guide-books has also been undertaken by this Institute. Apart from the institutional support afforded to the training centres by the National Institute of Community Development, the Government of India constitutes high-level teams with prominent administrators and leaders, which visit selected training centres and review the position from a broad perspective. The half-yearly conferences of the heads of training institutions have also helped in this direction and many useful recommendations made by them have been implemented. These measures have helped to hold the vast network of training institutions together and to keep the ultimate objectives of training in focus.

#### Research and training

29. A unique feature of the Indian training programme is that research goes hand in hand with training. Thus research constitutes one of the major functions of the National Institute of Community Development. It is realized that, apart from helping the planners and policy-makers to identify factors which impede or favour programmes of economic development and social change, insights gathered through social science research can materially improve both the content and the quality of training. In choosing the personnel for training and in developing a curricula for them, social research can provide important correctives and a definite support. Research can also help in a constant evaluation of efficiency factors in relation to actual functions and working conditions of different types of personnel, thus enabling the training programme to be modified to suit

specific field requirements. The brief experience of the National Institute in carrying out this dual function of research and training has been very encouraging.

Problem of management

30. Local government, as we have seen earlier, calls for a massive training programme which includes both officials and elected representatives. Training its officials is legitimately a function of Government. The implications of a nation-wide training programme for people's representatives under the aegis of government are, however, deeper. In a multi-party democratic system such as prevails in India, a government-directed training programme for elected representatives and leaders may not receive universal approval. Happily, all the leading political parties in India have accepted the Panchayati Raj programme and no difficulty has been felt so far. But in the long-term interest of a healthy growth of the local government system, efforts are being made to transfer the responsibility for the training of non-officials as far as possible either to the local government institutions themselves or to appropriate voluntary organizations. In many parts of the country suitable voluntary organizations cannot be found. The local government system has yet to gain strength and stature to take over responsibility for training. For quite some time to come, therefore, the government's responsibility for training the elected representatives will have to continue. But the ultimate objective of entrusting the management of Panchayati Raj training centres to the State level federal organizations of Panchayati Raj institutions has been accepted. In the meanwhile, the Zila Parishads are being encouraged to take over these institutions. Where this is not possible, efforts are being made to persuade outstanding voluntary organizations to run these training centres. At the national level, a Central Institute of Panchayati Raj, which is a non-governmental body, has been established with financial support from government to act as the focal point of the training programme for non-officials. However, much further progress requires to be made in this direction.

Education for local government

31. As the community development programme and Panchayati Raj were new to the country, it was inevitable that special training institutions had to be established to meet the requirements of these new programmes, as the existing educational institutions like colleges and universities were not equipped to carry out this function. The question arises whether the training programme which has so far been ad-hoc in nature should increasingly get absorbed in the general educational system of the country. During the last few years a considerable amount of interest in these new programmes has been generated in the universities and many of them have taken up research studies connected with them. Also, as the economic development of the country gains momentum, there is bound to be an increasing demand for workers with higher technical competence and professionalization will grow in importance. It is therefore appropriate that as rapidly as the colleges can be prepared the responsibility for "job training" of field workers should be passed on to them because, with proper help, these institutions can eventually provide a quality of training far beyond what is possible in ad-hoc institutions. Steps have already been taken in this direction: Panchayati Raj has been introduced as part of a social science discipline in the graduate and post-graduate classes in some of the Universities and possibly more and more Universities will hereafter offer diplomas in local government. Even then it is doubtful whether "orientation training" can be carried out in the educational institutions. After all, this type of training is purposive and has to be consistent with the programmes and priorities of the time. Universities with their traditions of autonomy may not be the right agencies to provide such training. The future pattern would therefore seem to be that, while professionalism will grow and the educational content in the present training programme may decline in importance, special training institutions which are designed to meet the specific needs of the local government system will have to continue. This problem has not yet become important in India, as the general educational system is only just gearing itself to train professional workers specially for the rural areas. But, in the years to come, it is going to gain prominence and it is necessary that some thought and attention are devoted to it right from now.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

32. We have seen from the foregoing account how training for local government has been evolved in India. Most of the Indian experience relates to the last few years when the policy of democratic decentralization was accepted and the institutions of Panchayati Raj were set up. Indeed, it is in the field of rural local government that much headway has been made. This is perhaps quite appropriate in a country like India where over 80 per cent of the people live in villages. As mentioned earlier, training has received high priority in the Indian programme and, while it may be a little too early to evaluate its overall impact, there is no doubt that the training effort which started first with community development and was later adapted for local government did help to prepare the right climate for Panchayati Raj and has also smoothed the process of adjustment in the career official - politician relationships, in administrative organization and in methods of work. This smooth transition would not have been possible if it had not been recognized right from the outset that there was no one, however highly placed in political life or the administrative hierarchy, who did not require some training. It is also highly significant that it was the federal government which provided and continues to provide the initiative for the training effort even though, constitutionally, local government is a State subject. Without the prestige and influence which the federal government carries with State administrations, political parties and voluntary organizations and the central direction it has provided, it would have been impossible to build up a nationwide training network.

33. The structure of training institutions, the methods and content of training as they stand in India today are the product of a constant process of experimentation and improvisation and in a dynamic programme this will have to be an on-going process. No single pattern of training will be suitable at all times in a country and much less for different countries. The substantive programme of local government is itself conditioned by a country's political and administrative traditions and training must keep in

line with it. In India it was community development which led, almost as a logical consequence, to Panchayati Raj and as such training also followed the same pattern. Each country has therefore to evolve a pattern of training best suited to its own circumstances.

34. While India may legitimately claim some credit for the effort it has made to provide training for local government, Indian leaders are conscious of the fact that training alone will not make for the success of local government. For the officials who work in these institutions training will no doubt provide them an initial equipment of knowledge and skills. But the process of training continues right through their careers and it is the "training on the job" that ultimately builds up their competence and determines their level of efficiency and achievement. Similarly, for the people's representatives training may help to develop certain healthy attitudes and give them an understanding of the overall ideals and objectives. But their actual performance and behaviour are bound to be influenced to a considerable degree by the general political climate and by the code of conduct and traditions displayed by the policy as a whole. This calls for a far more arduous effort and it is here that political parties can play a crucial role. It is encouraging to find that this has received recognition in India and that "training" efforts in this direction are also being made.



APPENDIX

Training Institutions for Panchayati Raj and Community Development

Name of Institution	Number of Institutions	Main types of training courses offered	Duration of the course	Categories of persons trained	
				3	4
1. National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad.*	1	Orientation Course for key personnel	4 weeks		Senior administrative and technical officers of the Union and State Governments, Members of Parliament and State Legislatures, Office-bearers of Zila Parishads, Members of Social Science Faculties of Universities and nominees of leading all-India voluntary organizations.
		Orientation Course for S.D.Os.	6 weeks		Sub-Divisional Officers and District Panchayat Officers.
		Instructors' Course	4½ months		Instructors of Training Centres for intermediate level personnel.
2. Orientation & Study Centres	11	General Course	2 weeks		Block Development Officers, Block Level Extension Workers, District Level Technical Officers, and Office-bearers of Panchayat Samitis.
		Job training of BDOs	10 weeks		Block Development Officers.
3. Tribal Orientation & Study Centres	4	Same as above, but oriented to 'tribal' areas.			

\* One wing of this Institute is functioning at Dehra Dun.

Training Institutions for Panchayati Raj and Community Development

	1	2	3	4	5
41. Social Education Organizers Training Centres	6	Job training of SEOs	6 months	Social Education Organizers (Men)	
5. Mukhya Sevikas Training Centres	10	Job training of Mukhya Sevikas	10½ months	Mukhya Sevikas (Women Social Education Organizers)	
6. Gram Sevaks Training Centres	99	Job training of Gram Sevaks	2 years	Gram Sevaks (Village Level Workers)	
7. Gram Sevikas Training Centres	47	Job training of Gram Sevikas	1 year	Gram Sevikas (Women Village Workers)	
8. Extension Education Institutes	3	Training course for Instructors	3 months	Teaching staff of Gram Sevaks and Gram Sevikas Training Centres	
9. Central Institute of Panchayati Raj	1	Training of Instructors	3 months	Teaching staff of Panchayati Raj Training Centres	
10. Panchayati Raj Training Centres	91 <sup>a/</sup>	Orientation Course	7 to 10 days	Office-bearers and Members of Village Panchayats.	
11. Panchayat Secretaries Training Centres	Information not available	Training of Panchayat Secretaries	3 months	Panchayat Secretaries	

**Note:** 1) Most of the Institutions listed above conduct refresher courses and, occasionally, ad-hoc courses designed for special categories.

2) In addition to these institutions there are special training institutions for job training of technical personnel, such as Industries Extension Officers, Co-operative Extension Officers, etc., where Panchayati Raj forms one of the items on the curricula.

<sup>a/</sup> As in May, 1964. More centres are scheduled to be opened.