

## A STUDY OF A FEW ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF PANCHAYATS IN VARANASI DISTRICT

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THE FAILURE of community development programme to enlist active participation of the people in the formulation and execution of the development plan led to the appointment of a committee under Mr. Balwantraji Mehta. The committee pinned high hopes on village panchayats and suggested a three-tier system of democratic decentralization to bring democracy from Lok Sabha to *gaon sabha*. This has led the village panchayats to shoulder increased responsibilities and contribute to the development of rural areas. A five years' period since the inauguration of panchayat raj in Rajasthan in October 1959, is too small to assess the performance of these village democratic bodies. Several attempts have been made by various researchers to study the village panchayats in action in order to find out whether the march towards a genuine village democracy is in a right direction and with right pace.

This is an attempt to present a broad picture of the economics of panchayats in Varanasi district. It discusses the pattern of income and expenditure, and the various activities carried out by the village panchayats in the district. The inquiry conducted for this purpose covered 22 randomly selected village panchayats from all the four tahsils of Varanasi district. The sample-size was about one per cent of the total 2135 village panchayats in the district. A two-stage stratified-random-sample design was used for the selection of the sample. The district of Varanasi was stratified into four strata coinciding with all the four tahsils. At the second stage all the village panchayats in these four tahsils were further stratified into groups; the first group having population below 1000; second group, between 1000 and 2000; and the third group, above 2000. Twenty-two village panchayats were then selected at random from all the four tahsils and all the three population-zones with due consideration to this tahsilwise and zonewise distribution. Information collected by survey method by filling up schedules on the spot mainly related to the pattern of in-