

CHAPTER - VI

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The Panchayati Raj institutions are sandwiched today between two trends - democratisation of bureaucracy and bureaucratisations of non-officials. If bureaucratisation of non-officials, which is just a nascent trend today, becomes a reality, the democratisation of bureaucracy will naturally receive a set-back. There may develop a sort of non-official rural bureaucracy with all the disadvantages of administrative bureaucracy and added political overtones. This is a development which has to be seriously watched and sincere efforts made to see that trends in this direction are nipped in the bud.

- Professor M.V. Mathur
("Panchayati Raj in Rajasthan")

CHAPTER

SIX

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

For the study of the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the administration of primary education in the Mehsana District, the investigator had formulated twelve hypotheses. The hypotheses pertained to the leadership, programmes and achievements of the Panchayati Raj Administration in the sphere of primary education. In order to determine variations in the three grade or quality level Panchayats, the Panchayats especially the Gram Panchayats, were classified into 'A', 'B' and 'C' types on the basis of pooled results of some twenty evaluative criteria. The Gram Panchayats were especially given a greater focus, because they are the base of the Panchayati Raj. They being in a greater number, it was more significant to divide them into three groups to study

their administrative behaviour and educational inputs and outputs. However, the Taluka Panchayats and the District Education Committee were also studied in such details that were feasible for the Investigator to collect. The effort of the investigator was to obtain as full, comprehensive and objective data as were possible and to arrive at some definite conclusion as regards the impact of the Panchayati Raj System. The findings of the investigation are briefly, but in a connected and integrated way, summarised in the next section.

A comprehensive and broad based project like the Panchayati Raj can neither be judged objectively and fully to have totally succeeded nor to have altogether failed. In social phenomena, apart from physical phenomena, there can never be completely full success. The social phenomena to a large extent deal with change and change is a slow process. The tide of change may turn one way or the other - the change may be positive or negative. Where the change process involves quantitative gains, it can be speedy and can be translated into facts and figures. To this extent, the identification of change and the measurement of expansion or progress becomes tangible and, therefore, easier. The quantitative side of the impact of the Panchayati Raj is the expansion of school provision, increase of the

pukka school buildings, increase in furniture, equipment and instructional material and aids, increase in school curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, increase in student welfare programmes, reduction of the rate of wastage and stagnation in schools, increase in school enrolment, improvement in school attendance and intensification of measures for prosecuting the defaulters and breakers of the Compulsory Primary Education Law and extension of educational facilities among the rural weaker-sections. All these could be measured quantitatively and, therefore, in these spheres, it is comparatively easier to measure the impact of the Panchayati Raj System. It is also possible to collect evidences as to whether the initiative, interest and actions of the local rural community have been stimulated or not in the spread of education among the villages, the extent to which the community and the school are brought closer to each other and also the extent to which the community efforts have actually been secured to expand and improve the education of rural children of the school-going age and the adult literacy and social education of the grown-ups in the village community.

But there is qualitative dimension of the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the administration of primary education.

It includes factors like effectiveness of leadership, change pattern in their beliefs, attitudes, values and actions, the moral fibre of the persons involved in the administration, the quality of primary education imparted in schools in terms of syllabus, textbooks, methods of teaching, assessment and evaluation, the standards of students' achievement, etc. which cannot be exactly determined and to that extent, the results of the study will remain general, broad and not quantified. However, the Investigator has used the technique of pooled ratings by a good number of persons on a variety of situations, who have seen the system functioning closely and who are in a viable position to weigh, judge and evaluate things. Thus, the results of the investigation in quantitative aspects of the impact may appear more convincing, valid and objective than the qualitative ratings and conclusion drawn from such ratings. But by putting together both the quantitative results and also the results of pooled ratings on which the testing of the various hypotheses rest, it is possible to get a fairly dependable picture of the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the administration of primary education in the Mehsana District.

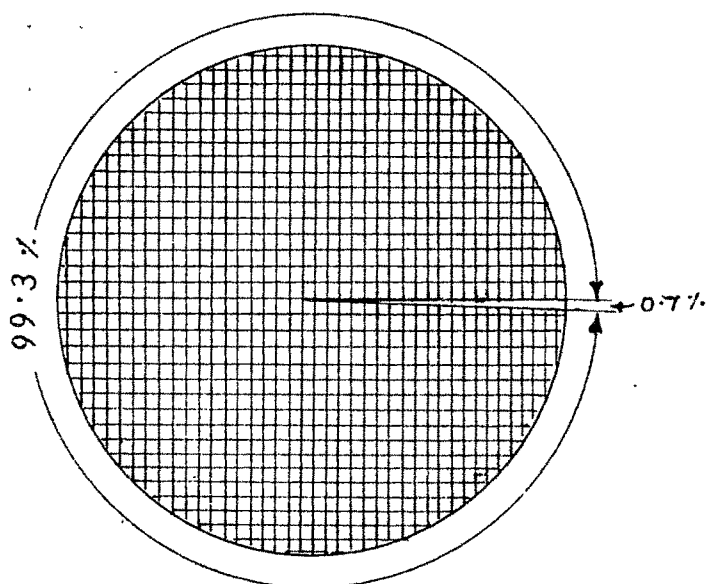
6.2 THE MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

The results of the present investigation are summarised in relation to (a) the attainment of the goal of universal, compulsory and free primary education in the age-group 6-14 years, (b) improvement of the quality of primary education being imparted in the rural schools of the Mehsana District, (c) enrichment of village schools' cultural pupil welfare, health and other activities and programmes, (d) the improvement of educational climate at the primary school level, (e) the quality of leadership in the Panchayats at all the three levels, (f) characteristics of highly rated Gram Panchayats, Taluka Panchayats and Jilla Shikshan Samiti and (g) general evaluation of the success of the Panchayats at the three levels.

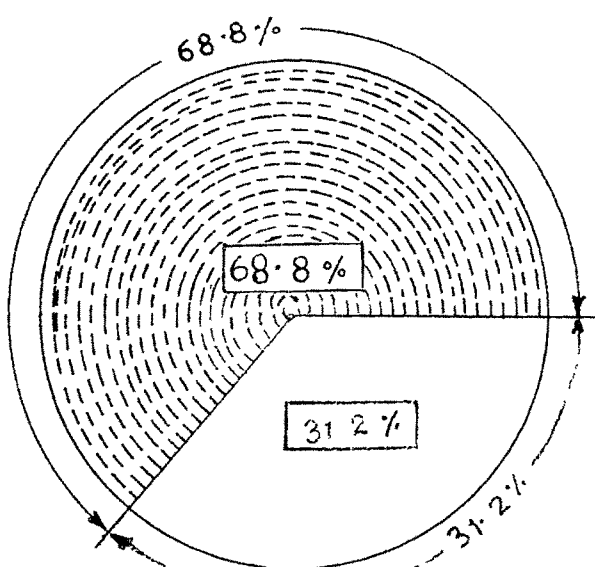
(a) Attainment of the Goal of Universal Primary Education:

In the administration of primary education at national, State, regional or even district level, the most important goal is the fulfilment of the Constitution Directive contained in Article 45 that the State should strive to provide free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years. This was to be achieved by 1960 in all cities and villages, ~~in all districts~~ in all districts, in all States and Union Territories and in the nation as a whole.

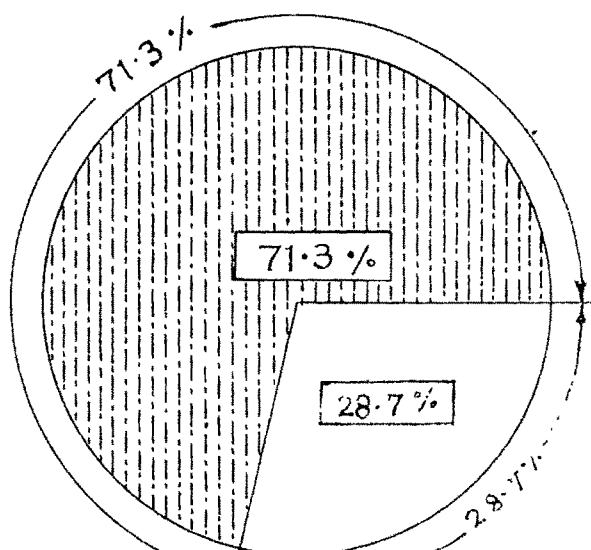
EDUCATIONAL SCENE IN THE MEHSANA DISTRICT



PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES.



PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS ENROLMENT.



WASTAGE & STAGNATION
PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS.

The attainment of the goal of universal, free and compulsory primary education depends on success in three spheres, viz., (i) universality of school provision, (ii) universality of school enrolment and (iii) universality of school retention.

As regards the first requisite of universality of school provision is concerned, it is accomplished definitely at the lower primary stage. Even in 1969, the percentage of facilities in the Mehsana District for primary education in their own habitation within one mile distance from the residence of each child of 6-11 age was as high as 99.30. In the course of next five years, the facilities of primary schools have improved; but still ⁱⁿ 60 of the total 1,081 villages in the district there are no schools. It can, therefore, be said that in the Mehsana District, most of the children of the compulsory age have the opportunity to receive education in the habitation itself or at a walking distance of a mile from his or her residence. In the higher age-group of 11-14, the ideal is that the school facility should be within a walking distance of not more than three miles from the residence of the school child of this age-group 11-14. Here, not upto date data are available in the Government published reports and documents. But the statistics given in the Census Report, 1971 of the Mehsana District (page 18) do give one an impression that the universality of school provision at the upper primary

stage in the Mehsana District has not been achieved, as only 145 villages out of the total 1,032 villages in the district were reported to have the facilities of full fledged primary schools at a distance of less than five k.m. and 461 villages at a distance of less than ten kms. from the nearest urban centre.

The Annual Administration Report of the Mehsana District Panchayat for the year 1971-72 states that schools have been provided in about 97 percent of the total villages in the district (vide, page 21). This much can be said about the success of the Panchayati Raj in the sphere of universality of school provision that in all villages excepting very small ones, primary schools of classes I to IV do exist and in the villages of normal size even schools with classes V to VII also exist. The investigation revealed that in the sampled 95 centres of Gram Panchayats, 99.30 percent of villages had primary schools with classes I to IV and 94.2 percent of villages had primary schools with V to VII classes. This clearly shows that in the universality of school provision, the Panchayati Raj Administration has succeeded to a very great extent at the lower primary stage and to a fair extent at the upper primary stage.

The second requisite for the success of a programme of universal compulsory and free primary education is the universality of school enrolment. That means, that all

the children belonging to the age-group 6-14 should be enrolled in the school. This is one of the most challenging problems in universal primary education. The purpose of making primary education compulsory is to achieve this universality by compulsion where the universal school enrolment does not take place on a voluntary basis.

The figures for 1969^m given in the Perspective Plan of Gujarat (1974-1984) for districtwise position of pupils in classes I to IV and V to VII and their percentages to the population in the corresponding age-groups 6-11 and 11-14 do not make encouraging reading. In 1969, 88.1 percent of the age-group 6-11 and 44.0 percent of the age-group 11-14 were enrolled in schools. The latest corresponding percentages in the two age-groups are not available for the district. It may be nearer to truth to assume that about 10 percent of the children of the age-group 6-11 and between 50 and 55 percent of children in the age-group 11-14 are not enrolled in schools in the Mehsana District. To this extent, the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the expansion of ^{universal} primary education is ~~the universalisation~~ of seven years of primary education for children in the age-group of 6-14 years. ^{is low or weak.} If this test is applied to the Panchayati Raj System in the Mehsana District, it can be broadly said that the District has reached only half way in the case of universal enrolment of children of 11-14 age-groups. In the programme of

universal primary education of seven year duration, the achievement of the Mehsana District lags behind several districts like Ahmedabad, Amreli, Kaira, Broach, Rajkot, Bulsar and even Sabarkantha. Projection of additional enrolment in classes I to IV during the decade ending in 1980-81. in the Mehsana District, as was visualised in the "Perspective Plan of Gujarat (1974-1984)" was 0.99 lakh and 1.33 lakhs respectively (vide page 92-93). This lends additional proof to the conclusion drawn that the Panchayati Raj in the Mehsana District still has a lot of ground to be covered in achieving the goal of universal primary education in the age-group 6-14.

The third aspect of the problem of universal primary education is the universality of school retention. This means that every child who is admitted in Class I goes to the next class and promoted to the next higher class and remains in the school till he passes class VII successfully. In this, the figures from official quarters do not agree among themselves. For instance, the wastage percentages for boys and girls in the Mehsana District (1963-64 to 1966-67) given in the "Perspective Plan of Gujarat (1974-1984)" were 46.74 and 57.35 percent respectively for Classes I to IV and for classes V to VII (1966-67 to 1969-70) 62.68 and 63.90 percents respectively. The figures published in the report of a study on 'Wastage and Stagnation' by the State Institute^e of education, Ahmedabad in 1970 covering a period

of seven years from 1963-64 to 1969-70 and the seven classes from I to VII show a high percentage of (83.9) for wastage and stagnation, the sex-wise break-up being 77.23 percent for boys and 90.59 percent for girls. In another study reported by Dr. H.R. Joshi in his doctoral study (p.469), the percentages of drop-outs for the Mehsana District were 57.50 and 53.63 for boys and girls respectively. In the present study which gives figures ranged from 27.5 percent to 39.9 percent for upper caste children, from 33.1 percent to 45.6 percent for backward class children and for other communities from 40.4 percent to 51.6 percent. The percentages of wastage range from 30 in the 'A' type Panchayat schools to 70.7 in the 'E' type Panchayats' schools for upper caste children, from 39.8 in the 'A' type Panchayats' schools to 75.6 in the 'C' type Panchayats' schools for backward caste children and from 39.5 in the 'A' type schools to 75.8 in the 'C' type schools for other communities. The percentages of wastage fluctuate between 27.0 to 63.1 percent and for girls from 45.8 to 84.9 percent in the 'A', 'B', and 'C' types of Gram Panchayats' schools.

Whatever may be the variations revealed by the figures about wastage and stagnation yielded by different sources regarding the wastage and stagnation that occur in the

village schools of the Mehsana District, the fact, none the less, stands, that universality of retention has not been achieved. This constitutes the most crucial and challenging task. It was expected that with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj and with the delegation of duties and responsibilities in the sphere of education to the Panchayati Raj leadership and the institution, this obnoxious problem could be met with to a great extent. It was stipulated that the Panchayati Raj would stimulate to a greater degree the local interest, initiative, understanding, and action-programme in combating the twin evils of stagnation and wastage. It was felt that the local community leaders occupying the position of power, authority and prestige in the Gram Panchayats would be able to persuade the local parents not only to cause their sons and daughters of the school-going age to register in the local village school, but retain them till they attain permanent literacy by passing Std. IV or at the best they would be well equipped to play their role as enlightened citizens by passing Class VII examination. But these hopes are belied. To this extent, the impact of the Panchayati Raj can be considered to have been "not effective" or "weak".

(b) Improvement of the Quality of Primary Education :

The possible variables in determining the quality of primary education are the quality of school building, the school equipment, instructional materials and aids, the teacher-pupil ratio, the proportion of trained teachers, the provision of the inservice teacher training, the teacher morale, the educational climate and the low rate of stagnation.

In order that a school has a reasonable chance to impart effective instruction, it should have a pukka building constructed for the school purpose. This is the function assigned at the Taluka Panchayat level, and the minor repairs are assigned at the level of Gram Panchayats. The present study revealed (vide Table 5.9, item No.10) that the achievement in this respect is good. The mean rating of 4 assigned to all the three types of the Panchayats tends to indicate that the improvement of school buildings has received fairly good attention by the Panchayats of the District under study. The mean ratings are also quite high on items dealing with the Panchayat's functions of making adequate provision of school equipment, making efforts to expand the school playground, and to procure more land and material for school garden. (vide Table 5.9, Items No. 11 to 13). However, the chi-square values as well as the frequency distribution of the 'A' type Panchayats tend to indicate that most of the respondents do not differ among

themselves that the 'A' type Panchayats have achieved a greater degree of success in this respect than the other two types of Panchayats. In 1972, there were 2,85,003 school children taught by 7,695 primary school teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio works out to be 1 : 37. This should be regarded as fairly satisfactory from the point of the maintenance of adequate school standards.

Items No. 5 to 10 in Table 5.20 refer to a number of factors that have bearing on the role of the Panchayat bodies in the improvement of school quality and standards. The chisquare values of 'A' type Panchayats on these items show that the respondents agree among themselves that the 'A' type Panchayats have been successful to a greater extent in regard to all these items pertaining to the improvement of quality of schools and of their educational output. The 'C' type Panchayats have achieved only a moderate degree of success in this sphere. But it can be said that speaking in general terms, the impact of the Panchayati Raj Administration on the maintenance of school quality at an adequate level of satisfactory standard has been positive, at least so far as the Mehsana District is concerned.

One measure of the improvement of quality is the percentage of trained primary teachers in the rural primary schools of the district. In 1969, there were 6,502 primary teachers

in the district, of which 5,698 or 87.6 percent were trained. This figure looks fair compared to the figure of 87.8 percent of trained teachers in the whole State. The Mehsana District was ahead of Kutch (54.7 percent), Gandhinagar (80.1 percent), Jamnagar (80.0 percent), Dangs (76.2 percent), Banaskantha (80.0 percent), Bharuch (80.0 percent) and Rajkot (74.0 percent) districts in the stock of trained primary teachers. In 1969, there were 804 primary teachers without training. In 1972, the Annual Administration Report of the Mehsana District reports a remarkable improvement in this situation. "Of the total 6,662 primary teachers under the Jilla Shikshan Samiti, only 77 teachers are untrained. Thus, around 99 percent of the teachers of rural primary schools are trained" (page 19). This indicates that the Mehsana District Education Committee is pretty keen about the improvement of the training qualification of the teachers in its primary schools.

Apart from the improvement of training of the primary school teachers, the Jilla Shikshan Samiti also takes interest in their inservice training. This it does by organising refresher courses, seminars and workshops. During 1971-72, a short term refresher course in the new syllabus was organised at Anand, seminars and workshop of two days duration were organised for different groups of teachers on girls' education, Basic Education, curriculum planning, development of model schools, etc. The primary schools of

the district have also been concentrating on examination reform. The inservice training programme has given an impetus to the development of ordinary primary schools into "Model Schools". In 1971-72, 26 primary schools and in 1972-73 another set of 30 primary schools had reached a level of quality when they could be selected as model schools. Thus, it is true, that the educational climate of the primary schools of the Mehsana District has been improving owing to the ~~efforts~~ efforts of the Jilla Shikshan Samiti to expose more of its primary teachers to inservice training programmes. But still the impact in this field is limited. The measure is small. One is not sure how much professional growth of primary school teacher could take place in two or three day meetings in a large number. The inservice training is valuable and indispensable. In order that lasting [benefits to the teacher community from such programmes should result, training programme in specific areas should be arranged for a longer duration in some central places in the district itself.

But the morale among the primary teachers of the district seems to be still low. The Investigator during his field studies found a feeling pervading among the community of primary school teachers that the Panchayati Administration is not just and fair, merits are not recognised, partisan spirit, factors like caste, community, political

affiliation, flattery, exploitations and even bribes operate in appointment, transfer and promotion of teachers, and the teacher community does not feel secured. A feeling has been gathering strength ^{that} no useful purpose is served by the devolution of administration of primary education to the Panchayati Raj bodies. The teacher has been the principal victim in this delegation. His morale and spirit are broken. His focus has been displaced. The remedy lies in restoring the former type of autonomous District School Boards and putting on them knowledgeable persons as members rather than politicians.

One serious threat to the maintenance of quality of primary education is the high rate of stagnation. In 1966~~67~~ the percentages of wastage and stagnation in classes I to Iv in the Mehsana District for boys and girls yield^{ed} by one study were 46.74 and 57.35 percent respectively and in classes V to VII in 1969-70 were 62.68 and 63.90 percent respectively. In another study, the wastage and stagnation rate was found to be in 1969 71.2 percent in the Mehsana District. In the present investigation the stagnation percentages in the 'A', 'B', and 'C' types of Panchayats for boys ~~and~~ were found to be 27.9, 32.8 and 37 .6 respectively and for girls 39.5, 45.3 and 53.8 ~~percent~~ respectively. These figures are for the year 1972. This shows that the incidence of stagnation has been quite high in the primary schools of

the district. To this extent, the impact of the Panchayati Raj on administration of primary education has been low.

Going through the responses of the experts on the impact of the Panchayat Administration on the quality of primary education in the district, one does not get a feeling of satisfaction. At least among the two categories of the respondents - the teachers including headmasters of the primary schools as well as the officers of the Education department, a strong feeling is noticeable that the pace of the improvement of quality has been considerably slowed down as a result of entrusting the administration of primary education to the Panchayat Raj bodies. The reasons attributed to this are : (a) very few Panchayat leaders understand what constitutes the quality of primary education, (b) very few of them have a sense of priority about the programmes of qualitative improvement, (c) the educational inspectors and even the Administrative officer have lost the effectiveness of their voice - their advice is not treated with respect and due consideration it deserves, (d) primary school teachers are badly treated especially in the matter of transfer, (e) no conscious efforts have been made to stimulate their motivation, (f) a feeling has spread among the teachers that the Panchayat leaders recognise no merit in what they know is nepotism, favouritism, casteism, communalism and even corruption.

(C) Enrichment of the Programmes of the Village Primary Schools

The base of a rural primary school is its traditional academic programme. The children are made to go through the mill of learning language, arithmetic, history, geography, and civics and science subjects. The teaching as well ^{as} learning are done in a mechanical way. A climate of dullness and mechanical verbal learning pervades. Even the teaching of crafts is done in a routine, mechanical and lifeless manner. The hub of activities, the joy and thrill of learning, the artistic and creative expressions of children have hardly a place in the rural primary school. When the administration of primary schools was entrusted to the Panchayati Raj Administration, it was expected that this sad picture of lifelessness would yield a place to one of hubbub with activities which would include enriched programmes of work-experiences, activity-learning, cocurricular activities of cultural programme, social service activities, school garden, school playground programmes and there would be many pupil welfare activities like health services, mid-day meals, free supply of instructional materials and even free supply of school uniforms to poor children.

The Annual Administrative Reports of the Mehsana District Panchayat do mention a number of activities going

on in villages and village schools. These activities include the following :

- (a) Children's Library
- (b) Village Reading Room
- (c) Self sufficiency in school uniforms,
- (d) Celebrations of national leaders
- (e) Celebrations of religious, social and national days
- (f) Celebrations of School Foundation Day, Parents Day, Anand Fair, Exhibitions, Science Fair, Children's Fair, Student Self-Government Day, etc.
- (g) Annual Sports and Competitions
- (h) School Drama
- (i) Debates and discussion groups
- (j) Drive for girls' education, etc. etc.

The Annual Administration Reports make general statements regarding these activities. One does not know from these statements to what extent these activities have become an integral and regular part of the school system in the Mehsana District and in how many of the total 1,278 primary schools in the district (1973 figures) have these facilities and how effectively they are being carried on in these schools.

The Table 5.2o shows that the majority of the respondents attribute, in respect of such activities, a slightly more than moderate degree of success to the 'A'

type Panchayats; the opinions of the respondents in the case of the 'B' type Panchayats are distributed in the last three categories of 'average', 'below average' and 'poor' so far as the assessment of these activities are concerned, indicating thereby that the 'B' type Panchayats are not much successful in this regard; and in the case of the 'C' type Panchayats, the opinions are widely scattered, yet the indication is there that the 'C' type Panchayats have been successful in organizing such extra-curricular, cultural and welfare activities. Even then, the general feeling one has after studying the results of evaluation of the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the promotion of the co-curricular, extra-curricular, the cultural, and welfare activities in the rural primary schools is that nothing substantially has been made by the Panchayati Raj in these spheres. This is the case though high ratings on these items have been obtained (vide table 5.9) in terms of these functions ^{being} regarded by the community as very much desirable.

In the matter of supply of school Uniform, the Jilla Shikshan Samiti has arranged that the school children from the backward class communities get their school dress at the cost of Rs.5.25 from all approved Khadi Bhandar^ys of the District to which the Shikshan Samiti gives a subsidy of Rs.2.25 per child of the backward community. The Annual Administration Report of the Mehsana District Panchayat

makes a reference to an amount of Rs. 100,000 spent on giving subsidy for buying school uniform to 60,000 school children in 1971-72. These Annual Administration Reports make no mention of other pupil welfare activities like free supply of mid-day meals or of instructional materials to the children of the backward classes whose number is also not quite big - it is only 69,080 (44,377 boys, 24,703 girls). This item received a low rating of 2 even in the 'A' type Panchayats, of 1 in the 'B' type Panchayats and '0' in the 'C' type Panchayats (vide -Table 5.17)

(d) Improvement of Educational Climate in the Primary Schools

On the issue of the improvement of educational climate in primary schools of the Mehsana District observations can be made with reservations because a large majority of the teacher community is dissatisfied with the manner in which vital questions of teachers' recruitment, transfer and promotions are handled. The climate is not assuring. The teacher community does not seem to possess a sense of security. They do not feel confident that fair justice can be meted out to them in this administration where many factors other than education^{al} exercise decisive influences. At the best, it can be said that improvement in educational climate might have taken place in the primary schools of the 'A' type Panchayats and perhaps in the 27 Model Schools

selected by the District Education Committee. In rest of the primary schools one has a hunch on the basis of the recorded evidence that the educational climate is mediocre.

(e) The Quality of Panchayat Leadership :

The results of the present investigation show that leaderships in the Panchayats rated high, average and low in advancement and effectiveness do show differing patterns of leadership. In regard to the evaluation of leadership characteristics, the mean rating on 9 out of a total 14 personal leadership characteristics, the 'A' type Panchayats obtain a mean score of 4 on a five point scale, while the leaderships in the 'B' and 'C' type Panchayats received a mean score of 3 and 2 respectively. But the overall emergent evaluative picture is that both the 'A' and 'B' types Panchayat leaderships are of a quality which is a little higher than the 'average' and 'below average' respectively. The leadership in the 'C' type Panchayats is of below the average grade. The leadership at all the three levels has not been found to be effective - it cannot measure to the great tasks entrusted to it. That is why the Panchayati Raj in the Mehsana District has not been able to leave its benign impress on the expansion and development of primary education in the district. The results indicate that even in those villages where the educational activities are carried out satisfactorily, the success cannot be much

attributed to the Panchayati Raj leaders but they may be due to the quality of local primary school teachers, their motivation and the leadership exercised by the headmasters of the local primary school. Therefore, the general conclusion that emerges from the present study is that the lack of or inadequate success in the development of primary education in the Mehsana District can be attributed to a great extent to the weak leadership of the Panchayat office-bearers.

The study revealed that in the 'A' type Gram Panchayats most of the Sarpanchas are relatively older in age and in most of the 'B' and 'C' types Gram Panchayats, the Sarpanchas are relatively younger. Whatever progress in the sphere of education that has been made in the 'A' type of Gram Panchayats of the Mehsana District, could be attributable to matured leaders who are older enough to understand the variety and complexity of educational problems through their experiences spread over a period of time. This is in sharp contrast to the existing notion that only young leaders can do more effective work and that old leaders should give way to young leaders.

The study also shows that all the Sarpanch^as in the 'A', 'B', and 'C' types of the Gram Panchayats come from the upper castes, and no Sarpanch belongs to the Scheduled

castes or other backward castes. Looking to the over-all caste-wise distribution of the Sarpanchas, Upa-Sarpanchas and the members of the Gram Panchayats, it is observed from the present study that only the persons belonging to the higher castes wield the power in the Gram Panchayats.

In the matter of educational qualifications of the leadership in the Gram Panchayats, the Sarpanchas, Upa-Sarpanchas and even members of the Panchayats in relatively more progressive and effective Panchayats tend to be more highly educated than their counterparts in less and least progressive Gram Panchayats. Thus, higher educational qualifications go with the greater effectiveness of leadership at the Gram Panchayat level.

The study also reveals that in the 'A' type Panchayats, the leadership is active to a greater extent than in the 'B' type Panchayats and in the 'C' type Panchayats. The corollary is that in order that a Panchayat is able to contribute in any sphere of rural community development, the leadership has got to be an academic and dynamic type. The character of 'activeness' or 'dynamism' lent to either leadership or the membership of the Gram Panchayats seems to come from these persons' long experience and involvement in the fields of social work and political activities. The 'A', 'B', and 'C' types of Gram Panchayats have been found

to be in the Mehsana District differing among themselves in respect of the percentages of Sarpanchas belonging to the different political parties. No attempt is made to compare the effectiveness of the Sarpanchas of 'B' and 'C' types Panchayats according to their political affiliation. It appears that the distribution of Panchayats in a wider range of political affiliation may prove to be an obstacle to effective work.

The over-all conclusion of the present study is that effectiveness of the leadership in the Gram Panchayats is related positively to factors like age, caste, educational qualifications, participation in social service work and political affiliation. It is not possible to control these variables. The best that can be done is to educate the rural community in selecting their representatives on the Panchayat bodies who are active, who are well educated who have a good record of public service and who are not controversial figures in politics.

(f) Characteristics of Highly rated Panchayats:

The study has yielded some characteristics which can be identified in the Panchayats that are advanced, progressive and effective. Even the presence of these characteristics in a Panchayat make it possible for one to predict the progressiveness and effectiveness of a Panchayat.

The first characteristic of a highly rate Panchayat is

that it would have an Education Committee. Under the present Gujarat Panchayats Act, 1961 as amended upto 30th November, 1973, constitution of an Education Committee is a voluntary Act for a Gram Panchayat; in a Taluka Panchayat the functions of an Education Committee are discharged by its Executive Committee, and only the District Panchayat has a firm, compulsory provision to elect its Education Committee. The study associated the constitution of an Education Committee with the effectiveness of a Panchayat. The implication is that a Panchayat can do more effective and efficient work in the field of primary education in a village, if it has an Education Committee to plan, deliberate and decide issues, needs and problems of rural community's educational development.

The second characteristic denotes that it is not only necessary to have an Education Committee, but it should have as its members such persons who themselves are well educated, who understand the changing needs of the society and teachers in respect of materials and programmes of school and who have a vision and determination to use education as a means of social change and as a means of bringing about silent social revolution. The Education Committee should be alert and dynamic, must be vigilant about the standards and should understand educational research enough to sponsor it to get a feedback from the results to

reconstruct both the matter and method of primary education. The Committee's efforts should be directed to make education forceful, purposive and life-oriented and it should not lose itself, as it happens ⁱⁿ ~~to~~ most cases in appointment and transfer of primary teachers. In the investigation, even during field-work and interviews, a revolutionary suggestion was made that the voters to elect the members of the Education Committee should be teachers alone. Only then it would be possible to have an Education Committee in a Panchayat that can really deliver goods.

In the 'A' type Gram Panchayats, the percentage of respondents who favoured the formation of Education Committee is 55 percent. But this percentage is higher than 24 percent that was found favourable to the proposition in the 'B' type Panchayats and it was higher than 8 percent respondents in the 'C' type Panchayats who endorsed the idea that a Panchayat should have invariably an Education Committee.

The present study has also revealed that the effective working of a Panchayat in the sphere of primary education depends upon the leadership to a large extent. More highly rated Panchayats with Education Committees have more effective and adequate leadership. The leadership characteristics that have received high mean ratings are spirit

of public service, honesty, the capacity to understand the needs and problems of the local rural community, readiness to sacrifice one's time, efforts, resources etc. in the larger interest of the community, subordinating a political party's interest to the community interest, ability to rise above the local pressures of casteism, profession etc., ability to budget enough time to be devoted to public work, quick-decision making ability, ability to grasp matters quickly, etc. It is also found in the study that the leadership should not only have an ability to understand the needs, issues, and problems of primary education but should have ^{also} a faith in universalising primary education through resort to compulsion when persuasion fails, should have a dynamism to conduct drives and campaigns for regularity of school attendance, retention of every enrolled child till he ~~reach~~ completes std. VII and Cent percent village literacy. The leadership should inspire the village school headmaster and his staff to improve class instruction, involve pupils more in active learning and reduction of failures in annual examinations. Every case of stagnation and drop out should be constructively and jointly investigated by the leadership and teachers with a view not to finding faults of teachers and guardians but to solving the problem by cutting down the instances of school failures in examinations and school drop-outs. The leadership should

be alert and watchful about the closeness of the school. Community contacts and relationships. Both are to be conceived as social organisations set up in service of each other.

The conclusion of the present study is therefore, that the leadership is more effective and adequate in relatively more highly rated Panchayats and as a result of which the progress of primary education could be found more to a large extent. The effective leadership has its own impact on the development and administration of primary education.

The findings of the study also suggest that the characteristics of effective Panchayats also include either conceptual acceptance or practical provision for mid day meals, free supply of instructional materials and aids to poor and needy school children, free supply of school uniforms to really poor boys and girls who cannot attend school without clothing themselves. Findings of earlier research by Professor D.M. Desai, Dr. J.P. Naik, Prof. R.V. Parulekar and others have shown that compulsion can break a parent to send his son or daughter to school who is in a position to send, but the law itself breaks down the case of a really poor parent who really wants to send his son or daughter to school but is too poor to clothe them so that he or she can go to school and feed them so that

he or she can concentrate on school instruction.

Another characteristic of an effective Panchayat is that therein is to be seen a greater degree of commitment to democratisation and development of primary education.

Further, the rate of wastage and stagnation in primary education varies depending upon the level of the effectiveness of the Panchayats. The study revealed that in the 'A' type Panchayats, the percentage of wastage was 30.0 percent among the upper caste children, 39.8 percent among the backward caste children, 27.0 percent among boys and 45.8 percent among girls. All these percentages of wastage were found to be more high in 'B' type Panchayats than in the 'A' type Panchayats and more high in the 'C' type Panchayats than in the 'B' type Panchayats (vide -Table 5.11).

All these discussions pertained mainly to Gram Panchayats. Surprisingly enough the majority of the opinion collected during the study did not favour revival of the Education Committee at the Taluka level - 58.33 percent expressed themselves in opposition of such a proposition and 41.67 percent favoured it. The opposition is surprising because the opinion is more favourable at the Gram Panchayat. Actually, formerly the Taluka or the Block was considered by the Balwantrai Mehta Study Group (1957) the main tier

where most effective powers were to be decantralised and delegated. Unfortunately, the Panchayat Administration of Primary Education made most of its mistakes at the Taluka level in Gujarat during the decade 1963-1973. The Taluka Education Committee, instead of being a developmental task-oriented Committee, functioned more as a harassment committee for the community of primary school teachers. The teachers called the Taluka Panchayat Committee in disgust as 'Transfer Committee' and the Panchayati Raj as 'Teacher Transfer Raj'. This evil still continues. The cry of the community of primary teachers has gone so high and spread so wide that teachers categorically and bluntly demand ^{as} dissociation of the administration of primary education from the Panchayati Raj altogether. During the interview, hardly any teacher or headmaster of a primary school in the district expressed himself in the favour of the revival of the Taluka Panchayat Education Committee.

As regards the functions to be prescribed at the level of the Taluka Panchayat, the four types of the respondents - the Panchayat members, the Government Officers, the Primary school teachers including headmasters and educational experts - differ in their opinions as to which functions should be delegated and how they should be performed. The study has also revealed that the provision of free supply of mid-day meals is not at all carried out satisfactorily.

The respondents do not differ among themselves about the extent to which other functions such as major repairs to school buildings, conducting adult literacy classes, promoting educational interests of the backward communities, making enforcement of compulsory education vigorous etc. However, the results classified in Table 5.14 show that the opinions of the respondents are spread in all the categories of A, B, C, D, and E of ratings for most of the activities which the Taluka Panchayats are expected to undertake. This tends to suggest that the essential functions and activities assigned at the Taluka Panchayat level are not carried out to the extent as to accrue full benefits by the schooling children and the teachers. Here also, the performance of the 'B' and 'C' types of Taluka Panchayats is more unsatisfactory than is the case with the 'A' type Taluka Panchayats. The over-all picture that emerges from Table 5.15 is that the 'A' type Taluka Panchayats discharge their functions in such a way that their impact on the administration is more positive and productive than is the case with the 'B' and 'C' types of the Taluka Panchayats.

The effectiveness of the leadership of the District Education Committee is found to be of moderate quality. The determinant variables in this respect are the following.

- (a) The membership of the District Education Committee is middle aged; (b) There is a saturation of higher caste

membership; (c) The bulk of the members have only primary schooling as their educational equipment; (d) The members are equally divided into 'rich' and 'middle' income groups; (e) The dominant political affiliation is to the New Congress Party of Smt. Indira Gandhi; (f) the members of the Committee are found to be quite politically active; and (g) the members are also active on the front of social service as well. The proceedings of the Education Committee are also found to be regular and well done. Only that the participation of the members is not full and sustained to the extent to which it is expected to be in a democratic set-up. The functioning or operation of the leadership in the Education Committee so far as the proceedings of the District Education Committee are concerned, can be considered fairly effective.

(g) General Evaluation of the Impact of the Panchayati Raj on the Administration of Primary Education in the Mehsana District.

The experiment of the Panchayati Raj in the sphere of primary education in the Mehsana District - the North Gujarat - appears to be only partially successful. In enrolment, it is more successful in the age-group 6-11 than in the age-group of 11-14. In the age group 6-11 the total enrolment in 1973 was 1,84,617 which comes to around 80 percent of the total school going children in the age-group. In the age-group 11-14 the enrolment was 69,080 which was around

40 percent of the total children in the age-group. In 1969, only 63.8 percent of total girls population of the school going age was enrolled in schools. The enrolment of girls in the district was only 72,230 as against that of boys which was 1,12,387 in 1973 in the age-group 6-11 and was 24,703 as against 44,377 boys in the age-group 11-14. Therefore, the Panchayat Raj has not met with adequate measure of success in universalising primary education of seven years' duration among girls. The other sector of failure is the spread of primary education among the backward communities. In the Mehsana District, out of every 10 persons of the population, 1 is from the backward castes. The population of backward caste children does not exceed much beyond 40,000. But there also, the success is partial. The inadequate measure of success in the sphere of universal primary education is due mainly to only less effective impact of the Panchayat. Only limited success could be achieved in spreading education in the rural weaker sections. This happened as against a larger measure of success expected from the Panchayati Raj, because it was to be people's raj. But it is here that it could not advance with firm and assured steps. The leadership fumbled and faltered in this vital sector.

In 1969, the percentage of facilities for primary education reported for the Mehsana District, in their own habita-

tion or within one mile distance from its habitation was 99.30 percent. Here, the success is spectacular. In the Mehsana District, there were in 1973 a total of 1,278 primary schools. There are 1,081 populated villages in the District. Thus, there is more than one primary school per village in the district. The 1,278 primary schools of the district meet in 4,914 classrooms of which 4,390 are built by the District Education Committee specially for school purpose. Only 485, less than 10 percent, of the classrooms meet in rented buildings and 39 primary schools assemble in rent-free buildings. There are only ⁶⁰ out of the total 1,081 villages in the district which are school-less. These villages do not have facilities for lower primary or high primary education. These villages without schools are concentrated in Kheralu, Patan and Kalol Talukas. To this extent, the effectiveness of the Panchayats remains unsatisfactory.

It is now being held that in order that the quality of primary education improves, the teachers should be women in lower primary classes and the teachers should be at least matriculates. Of the total 7324 primary teachers in position in 1973, as many as 5,630 or around 70 percent are S.S.C. qualified, 109 or 15 percent university graduates and 46 with post-graduate qualifications. The number of untrained teachers is only 86 or around only 1 percent. The number of women teachers ^{is} ~~are~~ 1,940 or around 26 percent. Thus, in the

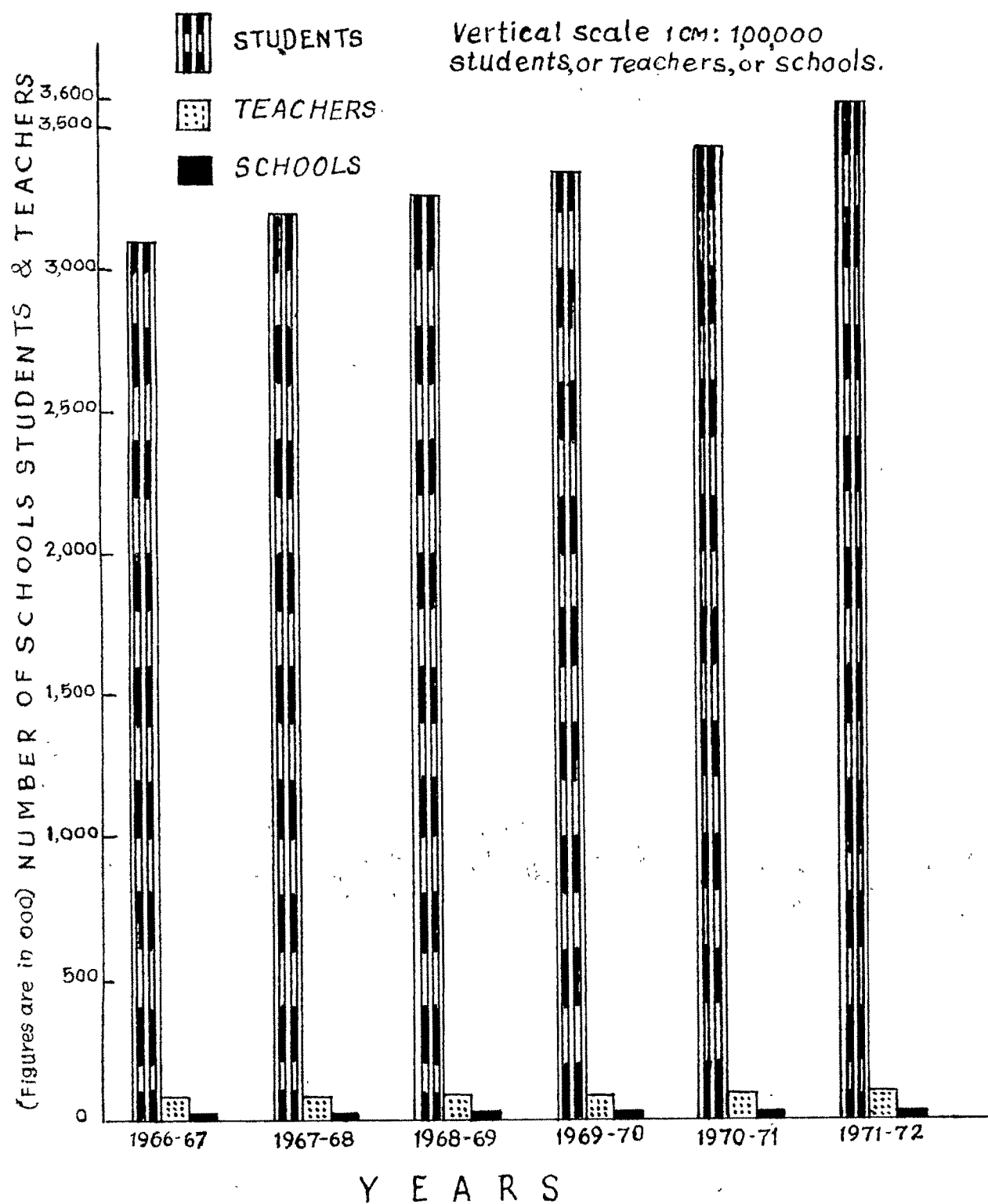
matter of teachers, the success is to an appreciable extent.

As regards the provision for inspection and supervision work over the primary schools of the district, there are 32 inspectors or supervisors. On an average each inspector has to supervise 50 primary schools in a year. This load should be deemed reasonable in a developing district like Mehsana.

There are 227 group schools for the total 1,278 primary schools. The percentage of the group schools ^{is} 17.7. In group schools, it is more economic and expedient ~~to~~ to provide better instructional materials and aid and organise more frequently and more effectively inservice programmes for school teachers. The percentage of group schools should at least be twenty-five if not more. The Panchayats of the district should move in this direction.

There are other activities or programmes of primary schools in which the impact of the Panchayati Raj appears to be of more or less effectiveness:

- (1) Enrolment of Harijan children;
- (2) Enrolment of girls;
- (3) The understanding of the value of schooling by rural community;
- (4) Enrichment of school instructional ^{aids} and materials;
- (5) Improvement of school playground;

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- (6) Improvement of school garden;
- (7) Supply of raw materials for teaching crafts in rural schools;
- (8) Supply of mid-day meals to poor children;
- (9) Free supply of instructional aids and materials to backward class children;
- (10) Supply of school uniforms to backward class children;
- (11) Improvement of the educational climate of schools;
- (12) Improvement of teacher morale;
- (13) Maintenance of school standards at adequate degree of effectiveness;
- (14) Reforms in school examination;
- (15) Innovations and change.

One gets an impression from the study that though the provision of universal primary education in the age-group 6-11 has considerably improved, in several other "essentials" of primary education the success achieved is moderate if not mediocre. Most of the primary schools continue to have unattractive school building and school environment. They wear a traditional outlook. One does not feel that they are modern types of primary schools. The climate in the school appears dull, drab, and lifeless. In rural schools in quite a number of them, pupils sit on floor on carpet seats, the equipment does not go beyond a blackboard and among instructional materials hardly they have some maps, a few charts and a handful of books. The walls are dull

and drab. The learning is mechanical and mostly rote type of learning. Children are hardly mentally very much stimulated. There is a lot of drill and fixation. The student-teacher interaction, pupil activities, pupils' questioning, group work, project work, pupil assignment, pupils' creativity, pupils' resourcefulness, utilisation of play-methods, slides, film strips or films, experimentations, innovations, in what characterises a modern primary school ^{school} ^{also} are seen very seldom, in primary ~~/~~ in urban and ~~/~~ private schools and not in rural Panchayat primary schools. Here, the Panchayati Raj seems to have not succeeded.

6.3 Challenging Task of Improvement of Education and Economic Growth among the Rural Weaker Sections

There is no denying the fact that ideologically the Panchayati Raj is the most progressive and welcome measure introduced in the field of community development and consequently in the sphere of primary education which in the ultimate analysis, is the education of the people. Democracy and development are the two ideologies woven in the texture of the fabric of the Panchayati Raj. And these ideologies are the most modern, progressive and essential for a developing country like India. Democracy is a fine ideology but a very difficult practice. It is so because the various interwines of social, economic, political, religious and educational forces make it extremely complex,

subtle and difficult to operate. It requires maturity and growing up in democracy which comes to a community after a considerable period of training and experience. Development of education and growth in national economy helps the process of democratisation being speeded up. Economic prosperity brings broadness, liberalism, adventureousness, experimentation and a sense of urgency for enrichment and improvement. In both these essential conditions of development, India's record is slow. It is particularly quite small in the rural India. When education and economic prosperity are inadequate, several other ugly forces spring up and emerge as prominent and dominant influences. That is what has happened in the sector of the Panchayati Raj. The tide of democracy and development has been considerably weakened by the emergence of undesirable social forces of casteism communalism, dominance, status, social hierarchy etc. economic forces of individualism, selfishness, corruption, exploitation, bribes, amassing of ill-gotten wealth and tendency to prosper at the cost of the people who are intended to be helped and served, and political forces of party affiliation, power, dominance, groupism, serving the interest of the political party rather than of the community. Democracy actually should mean decentralisation, service, sharing, participation in decision-making and a sense of community good and welfare. But this connotation has got distorted. The self has come to the fore and

the 'people' have receded into background. In order that democracy and development have a fair chance to succeed in the country all those weak spots in social, political and educational life of the community should be strengthened. This is an extremely slow and difficult process. But the remedy is not to get disheartened at the magnitude, complexity and difficulty of the challenges involved therein, but to try all the more harder. As said earlier, the efforts should be directed more towards spreading more education and bringing about more economic development in rural areas. And this is what is being done under the country's Five-Year Plans. Unfortunately, to the great misfortune of the country, the Five-Year-Plans are not so much educationally and economically regarding to the extent to which they were expected to be. The planning mechanism as well as the strategies are not so firm, determined and down to the earth which they should be. There are frequent changes of the focuses. The unhelpful nature and the terrific rate of population growth in the country have upset planning more than rural India, the most unhappy and unfortunate are the rural weaker sections, Consisting of agricultural labourers, Harijans^{and} Scheduled tribe persons. The depth and extent of rural poverty is a reality. The distress seems to be mounting and is engulfing larger and larger chunk of the rural population. Without making allowances for change in

income fractiles, the percentage of rural poor on account of rising cost of living and population growth works out to 57 percent in 1974. Some estimates seem to make allowance for changes in rural income fractiles and put the proportion of the rural poor in 1973 between 60 to 66 percent. The minimum consumption needs in value terms in 1974 would be around Rs.45/- per capita per month for the rural weaker section. Under this circumstances, the economic factors overpower and diminish the possibilities of spreading to a satisfactory extent education among the weaker rural section and the Panchayati Raj suffers eventually. Much of the ills that are attributed to the Panchayati Raj spring from these facts of poverty. It is easier to exploit the rural weaker section which economically has become quite poor owing to the spiral rise in the prices of consumer goods. Only 10 percent of rural communities are rich. Therefore, the destiny of about 60 to 66 percent of the rural weaker section is controlled by the 10 percent rich among the villagers. It is natural that amidst such economic inequality, the democratic Panchayati Raj does not succeed and many social, economic and cultural ills result. This appears to be the story of Panchayats in Gujarat. Whatever plans of improvement and strengthening of the Panchayats that are to be made have to be thought about against this naked reality of the poverty of the rural areas in the state

which may be slightly better off than those in the country, but not very much different. The rural poor is much or less the same in the country.

6.4 Improvement of the Leadership in the Panchayati Raj

Though the abject economic poverty is the difficult proposition to deal with, something could be done to improve the quality of leadership emerging in the Panchayat bodies. This leadership has to be thought about in a broader perspective, i.e. the leadership of the non-official heads of the Panchayat bodies at all the three levels - the Gram, the Taluka and the District as well as the Panchayat members.

The findings of the present investigation indicate that the leadership in the Panchayats at all levels continues to emerge from the higher castes in the Mehsana District. In a democracy, when leadership is elected on the basis of adult franchise, one cannot prevent anybody to get elected if he has the confidence of the voters. The higher castes have usually more education, they are economically much more better off, they have more leisure time to devote to the service of the public, they have more social work experience and they also understand the needs and problems of the rural community much better. To say that they should give place to the leaders from backward castes and weaker

sections of the society and allow them to sit on the Panchayat Raj bodies and take all decisions about community welfare is not a realistic proposition. The Amendments of the Gujarat Panchayats Act, 1961 have given the weaker sections of the rural community more assured position on the Panchayats at all levels by providing for them at least one reserved seat each for the Harijan community, the scheduled tribes and women. This is what the Zeenabhai Darji Committee (1973) described as a step towards the building up a socialistic pattern of society. But the investigations on the Panchayati Raj done in Gujarat by Joshi (1973), Shinde (1974) and others and also in other States like Rajasthan show that the representatives of the rural weaker section merely decorate their presence as the members of the Panchayat bodies, they are dumb during the most part of the proceedings of the Panchayats and they are not able to influence to a great extent the decision-making that takes place, or goes by default as a result of no body championing their cause overtly, vigorously and largely. Thus, by giving more or assured representation to the weaker rural sections, one cannot hope to have improved quality of leadership in the Panchayats. The investigator was told by several community leaders connected with primary education, as well as the Panchayati Raj government officers that the only way to improve the leadership of the Panchayati Raj is to lay down higher educational qualifications beyond primary

education and make some experience in the sphere of school education as a pre-condition for membership of the Education Committees of the Panchayats. A dominant note that was heard from the knowledgeable persons in the rural community about primary education is that if it is contended that universal primary education and qualitative primary education are crucial for both democracy and development, then the leadership should be chosen not merely on the basis of adequate representation of the weaker rural section on the basis of the strength of their population, but the criterion of the selection of the leadership should be higher level of education, technical knowledge of education and administration and the possession^{of} leadership qualities. One cannot have a better quality and programme of universal primary education, unless the administration of primary education is placed in the hands of community leaders who understand both administration and the primary education. While it is not suggested here that teachers alone should sit on the Panchayati Raj bodies to decide matters relating to primary education, but the implication is there that higher and stricter educational qualifications be laid down for the members of the Shikshan Samitis^{of} of the Panchayats at all the three levels.

Perhaps, the prescription of higher educational qualifications and making the technical knowledge or experience

in the sphere of education a pre-condition for election to the membership on any Panchayat Shikshan Samiti alone will not solve the problem. The elected members of the Shikshan Samitis should be exposed to intensive training with a view to developing among the members a conceptual ideology as well as, a practical sense of urgency as well as competence in tackling the problems of the development of primary education in the rural setting. Their training should include the following :

A. Theory (General)

- (1) The rural sociological setting and the interplay of various sociological factors and forces;
- (2) The major factors, trends and influences in rural economic field and how they affect people's perceptions, habits, attitudes, interest-patterns and activities;
- (3) The traditional Indian society and the emergent problems inherent in changing the traditional society into a science and technology based modern society;
- (4) The social and psychological processes of how individuals operate in a group, crowd or a society's setting;
- (5) The psychology and sociology of group dynamics;
- (6) The leadership behaviours and skills;

- (7) The communication process;
- (8) The process of coordination, evaluation and feedback the process of improvement and change;
- (9) The process of diffusion of educational innovations and experimentations;
- (10) The technique of action research and how to use it in administration of primary education under the Panchayati Raj Administration;
- (11) Human Relationship;
- (12) General planning and institutional planning.

B. Theory (Problems of Primary Education)

- (1) Construction and repairs of school buildings;
- (2) The essential school furniture and equipment;
- (3) The minimum essentials in educational technology that could be used in rural setting, in rural economy and in rural schools;
- (4) The educational and technical sides of developing school play grounds and school gardens;
- (5) The organisation, administration and financing of pupils welfare services (mid-day meals, free supply of instructional materials, free or subsidised supply of school uniforms, etc.)
- (6) Inservice teacher education;

- (7) Organization of drives or campaigns for enrolment, school attendance, adult literacy, school beautifying, school fund, etc.;
- (8) Organisation of annual sport competitions, cultural celebrations and social service camps;
- (9) Combating the twin evils of wastage and stagnation;
- (10) Better teaching through better school examination (the Educational Evaluation Approach focused on the integral relationship among instructional objectives, learning experiences and assessment as well as evaluation of both instructional inputs and out-puts).

C. Practicals and skill orientation

Such a training programme for leadership in the administration of primary education for the leaders as well as members of the Shikshan Samitis of the Gram Panchayats, Taluka Panchayats and Jilla Shikshan Samitis should also have a considerable focus on the practical experiences and skill-orientation if not skill-development. This facet of the training programme should include the following :

- (1) Seminars;
- (2) Workshops;
- (3) Panel discussions;
- (4) Role playing;
- (5) Improvised meetings of the Panchayat Shikshan Samitis

at all the three levels, demonstration in the conduct of the proceedings and the follow-up discussions;

- (6) Practical experiences in drafting agenda, proceedings, etc.
- (7) Case studies of 'A' type and 'C' type Taluka Panchayats and Jilla Shikshan Samities;
- (8) Situational case studies of some leadership acts , guidance to Panchayat members, activising their participation or involvement in Panchayat meetings, decision-making process, communication process, human relationships, group dynamics or group activising, enforcement of compulsion, etc.
- (9) Practical work in the use of planning techniques and procedures, action research, evaluation of performance, etc.
- (10) Preparation of plans for conducting drives or campaigns, enforcement of compulsion, etc.
- (11) Demonstration
- (12) Audio-Visual presentations including films, exhibitions, short-circuit T.V., using modern educational technology, etc. etc.

This may appear to be an ambitious programme of training. But as there is so much at stake in the experiment of the Panchayati Raj in democracy and development that the efforts have got to be made to equip the leaders properly and adequately so that they are able to acquit themselves

effectively and justly and gear the rural community that is traditional, conservative, slow, immobile and fatalistic into action. They have indeed the vitality, but it has been sapped on account of cultural, sociological and economic adverse forces operating for centuries in Rural India. If the Communist China could arouse its slumbering millions in rural community, into a mighty dynamo of action in a short span of two or three decades by the communist ideology and practices, India should also be able to arouse and harness the tremendous rural manpower it has. In this respect, leadership will play a crucial role. The emergent leadership should be trained to play their part.

This is being done in Gujarat State to some extent. There are rural training centres and even Panchayat training centres. But they are of general character imparting the necessary know-how and training in performing tasks in community services and development. Primary education forms a small part therein, and also there the orientation is not directed to change the perceptions, attitudes, value system and interest in the field. The Sarpanchs and others go through the drill of this training, but basically in their attitudes, interest and behaviour patterns they are not much affected by training. A training programme as suggested above is likely to influence the Panchayati

leaders much more internally and vitally by reorienting their values, perceptions, attitudes, interests and even their behaviours - action patterns by giving them new skills. The programme should be spread over for four sessions, each one being of a month's duration. The sessions should be in winter and summer vacations. In imparting the training, the University Departments of Education or Educational Administration, the Social Work Faculty, the State Institute of Education, and the Training Centres for Panchayati Raj Personnel should be involved. It is much better to give the responsibility of organising, conducting and research work to a university institution of Education, as it has resources both human and materials, and considerable experience and competence in training. In training in business administration, real or hypothetical situations or case studies have proved more effective than mere lectures or discussions. This technique should be experimented, and is likely to prove itself to be more effective, atleast in leadership training and in attitude or skill reorientation.

If this is done, the leadership in the Panchayati Raj will be better prepared and equipped to play its developmental role. This would eventually result in the improvement ~~xxxx~~ of the public image of the Panchayati Raj leaders. Their solid work will speak more than mere their political propaganda. Service is a better investment than display of

power and distribution of patronages and favours. There is an urgency of the need to improve the image of the Panchayati Raj leaders, especially in the sphere of the administration of primary education. There has been growing discontent, and even resentment bordering on hostility to the callousness, arrogance, vengeance and even insulting attitudes and actions of the Panchayati Raj leaders to the community of primary school teachers that they have been publicly announcing that they should be freed from the suffocating and humiliating clutches and grips of the Panchayat leaders. They demand either autonomous corporation of primary education or constitution of strong and autonomous school boards with considerable elements of independence, democracy and devolution of powers injected therein. Teachers demand knowledgeable persons with either technical knowledge in primary education or considerable experience of administration in primary education to sit on these Boards as people's and their representatives. They demand direct representation of headmasters of primary schools and primary school teachers to sit on the school Boards to decide the development programmes, methods and materials, techniques and tools, plans and projects, finding the programme and other related problems of recruitment, service conditions, transfers, inservice training, job satisfaction, etc.

6.5 Elimination of Political Element

It is sometimes suggested that as the Panchayati Raj is more a community service organisation, political affiliation and infiltration of political influences should be banned. The fundamental thesis put forward here is that it is the political manoeuvrings that vitiate the Panchayat's atmosphere and corrupt its climate. When politics comes in, power follows, and when power is vested in leaders, there is bound to be display of powers, distribution of patronage and favouritism, group and individual alliances, internal plotting and strategies, struggle for position and authority. As Jayaprakash Narayan has said in his 'Foreward' to 'The Panchayat Raj as the Basis of Indian Policy' that "as a result of a certain form of industrialisation and economic order, the society itself has become an atomised mass society. Political democracy naturally reflects this state of affairs, and political democracy is reduced to counting of heads: It is further natural in these circumstances for political parties, built around competing power-groups to be formed leading to the establishment, not of government by people, but of government by party; in other words, by one or another power-group".

(p.10)

There is another view. It is organic or communitarian view. This view was implicit in Gandhiji's sociological, economic and political thought. This view treats man as a living cell in a larger organic unity. The emphasis evidently here is more on responsibility than on right. According to this conception, when an individual lives in a community with others, his right flows from his responsibilities. But the Panchayati Raj, as it operated and functioned in the last decade, has not sustained this organic view. On the contrary, the inorganic or atomised view of the society has emerged and it has been sustained. Here, sociology and politics have joined hands. It would be difficult now to separate them or streamline or purify both the forces so ^{that} ~~as to~~ political parties keep themselves away from social and economic fields which actually give them power, prestige and a strong hold on people. Political parties actually ^ssubsist on manipulation of social and economic factors to feed and strengthen themselves. It appears, therefore, almost impossible to persuade political parties to keep their hands off Panchayati Raj election and the consequential power-base they acquire in hundreds of villages on which they can build up their super structure of political influence, power and dictation. Quite often, the battles among the national or state level political parties are fought on the battle-fields of the Panchayati Raj.

In a number of western societies, political parties continue to have their influences and pulls at the election of local bodies. But once the members are elected to a public body, especially a local education authority or a school board, the political party goes out in background, and the interest of the community comes to the fore.

Dr. H.R. Joshi in his study of the participation in the decision-making of the international local communities in the administration of school education has pointed out that in Western Countries, especially in the U.S.A.,

"A School Board election does approach the ideal of non-partisan election. Usually, there is only one legal requirement for being a candidate for a School Board, and that is to be a qualified elector in the School district where the election takes place. Similarly, there is only one ethical requirement for a school Board member, and that is a sincere desire to serve the school. Motive for candidacy is very important. Democrats, Republicans, Socialists, or Communists, as such, are not wanted on School Boards in this country. Neither New Dealers, nor labour leaders nor Capitalists, nor Americans. First, as such are needed to assume responsibility for public education in the United States." (Tyrus Hill Way, quoted by Joshi, p.22)

If this spirit can be caught by the candidates fighting elections to get memberships in the Panchayat Education Committees, the cause of primary education of the rural communities can be better served. In this, the State and District committees of the Political Parties - in Gujarat of the New Congress, Old Congress and ~~Kimlo~~ Party of Shri

Chimanbhai Patel - should accept this as an ideal. No more political manoeuvring and infiltration of political conflicts in the proceedings and decision-making pertaining to primary education should be their honourable commitment to the community and the nation. This would not only improve the modus operandi of the Panchayati Raj leader in relation to primary education, but their contribution and service to the rural community and the universal, qualitative primary education of seven years' of duration of their children will undoubtedly improve considerably. In the U.S.A., as Dr. Joshi concludes in his study on the contribution of the Panchayati Raj to primary education, the democratic devolution of control and authority in administering school education to School Boards has gone a long way in universalising primary education through the execution of compulsory primary education, in making the standards continuously high and providing community school children a varied and enriched school programme including transportation services, school cafeteria, lunch services, health services, psychological and testing devices, sports and recreation and safety (p.23)

6.6. Improvement of the Impact

Before the present study is concluded, the investigator would like to make some pertinent suggestions with a view to improvement of the impact of the Panchayati Raj on the

administration of primary education. These suggestions hold good for the Mehsana District as well as any other district in the Gujarat State or even in the country. These are more in the sphere of programmes rather than in the domain of ideology, organisation, coordination, leadership communication, training, planning or evaluation.

(1) Opening of schools in School-less Villages: This is a basic need. Under the compulsory law, a child cannot be forced to be enrolled in school if there is no lower primary school (classes I to IV) within one mile walking distance from the residence of the child. In the Mehsana District, there are only 30 school-less villages. They are located in about four Talukas of the district. These villages are small and have not enough population to supply adequate school enrolment to run a school economically. In that case the alternatives are to open single-teacher schools or to set up central schools to which children from school-less villages be transported by bus for instruction. The idea of busing the children to school has not taken root in the country. But a welfare state will have to move, sooner or later, in that direction, ~~or~~ the institution of moving or peripatetic teachers should be tried-out on an experimental basis. In the erstwhile Bombay State, the peripatetic types of teachers were used with a considerable measure of success in the districts of ~~Maharashtra~~ ^{Mahā}ashtra. Even

schools on wheels should be tried. In a welfare state, economic arguments should not be put forward to justify inaction to provide the minimum schooling facilities to a community living in whatever remote and scattered habitations. Efforts should be made to provide as much and as best as possible primary education to the school-going children of these talukas that have within their boundaries school-less small villages.

(2) Drives for Improvement of Enrolment: This is also another crucial measure. If universal primary education, as directed under Article 45 of our 'Constitution is to be made a fait accompli, the efforts have to be made to enrol all children of school going age. This necessitates accurate and vigorous census-taking every year of all children of the school-age. Usually, primary school teachers are assigned the responsibility of taking school census. This is what it should be. But ignorant and backward communities fight shy of this census and quite often conceal facts about the age of their children. Here, the members of the Gram Panchayats should move with the teachers and persuade all rural parents to give the correct information about their children to aid the census-taking process. Here, the Sarpanch should exercise its leadership. The Census-taking should be preceded by some broadcasts, film showing, processions, posters, Katha-like public discourses to

persuade and motivate parents to help constructively in the census taking operation.

The Census operation should be followed by enrolment drives and campaigns. The Gram Panchayat members and even teachers and school children as well as other prominent community leaders should move from house to house and persuade and prevail upon the parents to register in school their each child of the school age. Here, more than anything else, the personal contact, persuasion and exhortation help.

Experiments and research findings have indicated that pupil welfare measures like free supply of mid-day meals, free supply of school uniforms and even free supply of slates, pens, books etc. help in the lower income group. Food to starving poor children has proved to be the most irresistible pull for children to register in schools and even attend classes regularly. Besides enrolment, nourishing food will improve children's health. It aids mental development which, in its own way, stimulates motivation and intellectual or scholastic participation.

(3) Improvement of School Attendance : It has been found both in this State and elsewhere both within and without the country that even after the children are enrolled or registered in the village primary schools, they do not attend the schools. Inadequate and irregular attendance

has been the bane and major element of weakness of our education at all stages apart from primary schools. But it becomes all the more crucial and critical at the primary stage as it constitutes the minimum, compulsory education for masses for citizenship training.

The vigorous enforcement of the law on compulsory education does help in the case of those guardians who have fear about Government laws and their punishment. But the uneducated, ignorant, illiterate, backward communities quite often are habituated to disobey or break laws. This particularly happens in certain backward communities which were dubbed as criminals. But it has been found that the earlier "police methods" do not help much. It would be well to follow or practise what is being done in advanced countries :

"The typical police officer is on his 'way out' as a modern attendance worker, Standards in the way of training are being demanded of those responsible for enforcement of compulsory attendance legislation.... Now there is being developed a group of people responsible for enforcing school-attendance legislation who do it not by the 'iron hand' but by so knowing youth that they 'sell' the school to them. This is done upon the basis of discovering why there has been non-attendance and then eliminate that hindrance"(W.S. Morac : Encyclopedia of Educational Research, pp. 335-6)

This ideology and practice of 'selling' the school to the non-attending school children have paid rich dividends

in western democracies. They can help in our country also if (a) Panchayat leaders are properly oriented by exposing them to suitable training programmes, (b) primary school headmasters, and teachers are also trained to this end, (c) pupil welfare services are introduced in village primary schools, (d) a climate for universal primary education and cent percent village literacy is created, (e) village level workers are also properly trained to serve this end, and (f) careful supervision, checks, persuasion, assistance etc. are made use of to motivate as well as enable the weaker rural section to cause their sons and daughters of the school age attend school on a full time basis and regularly. The idea of the ungraded primary school, the policy of careful and effective instruction but no failures and stagnation, making school a place of joy and happiness to children, introduction of films in school, increased provision of playground facilities and programmes - all are likely to help in making school attendance regular and effective.

(4) Reduction of Stagnation : Stagnation has been a great evil of the system of primary education. In the present investigation also, the rate of stagnation was found to be as high as 32.4 percent for boys and 46.2 ~~girls~~ percent for girls. The Kothari Commission has emphasised some very significant facts about the incidence of stagnation in

primary schools. The same facts are supported by several research findings in this sphere. The Kothari Commission's conclusions are as under :

- Stagnation is highest in Class I;
- It is reduced considerably in Class II and then remains fairly constant in Classes III and IV;
- At the higher primary stage , stagnation decreases still further;
- On the whole, stagnation among girls is greater than among boys;
- The extent of stagnation shows considerable variations from area to area"

(para 7.2o)

The findings of the present research are also on the similar lines. Stagnation is over 60 percent in Class I , It does not get reduced considerably in Class II and III - it continues to be around 48 percent; it falls down to 40 percent in class IV and much less, around 20 percent in classes V to VII. The proposals that are being now made by educational experts - and which were also made by some of the persons who were interviewed by the investigator - may appear revolutionary in the present context of the developing stage of primary education. The university teachers of education and also research workers have categorically told the investigator that according to them the best solution of the problem of stagnation in lower primary

classes lies in abolishing examinations in classes I to III and the primary schools should be helped to switch over to ungraded system wherein the first two and three and four or even first three or four classes be regarded as continuous grade or a teaching unit, within which each child can progress according to his own pace. One of the experts told him that he saw this practice being followed in the elementary schools of England and Wales and he detected no slackness of pupils' efforts in learning or even weakening of Standards of primary schools. Apart from other benefits that accrue from schooling, complete primary schooling be regarded as social training and benefits, and pupils should not be failed in examinations at this stage of fundamental education and deprived of social benefits. However, the primary school teachers and some of the parents especially from the business community expressed the view that examination serves as an incentive for children to learn and for teachers to teach, and if examinations are abolished in lower primary classes, no good will result to children as well as to the school system.

The reduction of the rate of stagnation would require a reorientation in the examination procedures, the standard or grade system, the methods of teaching (which should be more activity-based) adopting play-way techniques, and the attitude of teachers to school children. This ^{is} a challenging task for teachers, supervisors, training colleges

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and even administrators and administration bodies . The Panchayat leadership and membership should understand, this new philosophy and approach. That 'masters should be educated' would prove more true here. Orientation courses for all concerned would be the need of the day.

(5) Reduction of Wastage : This is another intriguing and challenging problem. There are several variables that emerge in the present study regarding the rate of wastage that takes place. These emerged variables are age, sex, parental education, parental interest or care, home environment, upbringing, children's friends and companions, the quality of instruction, interpersonal attitude and relationships, the home-school contact, the social and economic factors, etc. Stagnation itself has operated as a cause of wastage especially in lower primary classes. The rate of wastage is more among girls than among boys, more in backward castes than in advanced castes, more in illiterate castes and labour classes and in migrating population. It was shocking for the investigator to find that in some villages girls were withdrawn from schools as the parents were too poor to clothe their daughters adequately to be able to send them out of their huts and to schools.

The impact of the Panchayati Raj appears to be quite small on the reduction of the rate of wastage in village

schools. It is practically nil in backward ^{areas} talukas of Sami, Harij, Kheralu, Chanasma and Vijapur. The Taluka Shikshan Samitis of these Talukas should be particularly alerted, properly oriented and financially helped to provide economic incentives to poor and backward castes to continue their sons and daughters till they complete schools in Std. VII.

The national Conference on Action Programme for reducing wastage and stagnation at the primary level that met in January 1970 at N.I.E. Campus, New Delhi, considered the action programmes listed below to combat the evils of wastage and stagnation.

- "- Ungraded school system; multiple class teaching; effective teaching of beginning reading; closer supervision of schools;
- Flexible school schedules, viz., three hour schools, pahar pathshalas, part-time and continuation education schools;
- Ancillary services, viz., free supply of mid-day meals, free supply of textbooks, slates, stationery, etc., free supply of school uniform clothing, provision of medical services for children;
- Action programmes for reducing wastage and stagnation, among girls, and scheduled castes and tribes;
- Basic literature related to action programmes for reducing wastage and stagnation, its development, its rendering in regional languages, its dissemination.

- Action programmes by schools, supervisory officers and teachers training institutions;
- Action programmes for reducing wastage and stagnation through : (i) Institutional planning; (ii) School complex; and effective coordination of inter-state and infra-state programmes".

(Report , p.6)

These are indeed valuable signposts to direct efforts to reduce wastage and stagnation. It appears to the present investigator that the State Department of Education and Education Committees of District Panchayats should take a policy decision about adopting the ungraded primary school system. As one of the educationists whom the investigator interviewed said " Incidence of wastage can be considerably reduced if the first two classes of the primary schools are integrated and an ungraded unit for the first two years be introduced." Another educationist said that "single teacher schools are indeed evils but they are unavoidable units in economically poor and socially backward villages. They are the sources of wastage. But then ^{the} all single teacher schools should be made ungraded".

(6) Introduction of Ancillary Services in Primary Schools

It has been found in some experiments conducted in some States, especially in the Tamil Nadu State, that the introduction of the pupil welfare services in primary schools

helps pupil enrolment, regularity of school attendance, reduction of stagnation and wa^stage and in greater participation and achievement standards of school children. It is here that the Panchayats in Gujarat have not much succeeded. In backward districts; some headway is done in respect of free supply of lunch packets or milk with the help of grants from the World Organisation CARE. But in other districts, very little is being done in this respect. The reasons are mainly financial.

The Panchayats are not being able to raise sufficient funds to finance these welfare services. According to the calculations used by the Kothari Commission in 1966, to work out the estimates for financing primary education in the country, Cost per student per year for provision of mid-day meals at 25 paise per meal for 200 days in a year as Rs.50/, for the provision of health services Rs.5 and free supply of school uniforms Rs.25. This works out to Rs.80 per year per s^tudent. Cost per student for free supply of instructional materials would be additional Rs.20. This comes to Rs. 100 per year according to the estimates made in 1966. Now this figure would go high upto Rs. 200 per student at least. Considering the proportion of farm labourers, and scheduled castes in the total population of the Mehsana District, these benefits will have to be provided at least to 35 to 40 percent of the total school

going children which will be at 21 percent of the total population about 1.75 lakhs. The annual cost of providing these services would be around Rs. 3500 lakhs. The Panchayats of the District should be helped by way of special grants for ancillary services to enable them to meet this extremely important expenditure.

It should be recognised that at present the District Education Committee has been able to provide only some subsidy to the poor and backward children to buy Khadi Cloth to stitch their school uniforms.

The solution lies with the Central Government and the State Government. They should assist the Panchayats to enable them to provide pupil welfare services for children of the poor and backward castes and communities.

(7) Making Village Primary Schools Community-Centred : The school and the local community should be drawn closer. The present day isolation between the school and the local people should be broken. It was thought that with the adoption of the Panchayati Raj system, it would be easier to stimulate the local village community which is otherwise passive, traditional and to some extent even idle also, to action. It will start taking interest and initiative in matters of public concern and importance, and the community's village ~~should~~ would be a meeting place for children to learn and

the people to meet for continuing education, recreation, community service work and even for social gatherings. The school's library and reading room, its playground, its radio, its audio-visual services, classrooms, and other facilities could be used with advantage by the community when they are not in use by school children. This kind of association will tend to endear the school to the people, they will develop a feeling of belongingness to the school, they will readily come forward to contribute funds for the expansion and enrichment of the schools resources and services and thereby play their part in the development of the school, they can also offer their manual labour and technical know-how for the construction or the major repairs or addition to the school building, construct the much needed fence around the school playground including the school garden to prevent the stray cattle making the school ground their resting place. Such community-school closeness and links also help vitally in the improvement of school enrolment, regularity of school attendance, reduction of stagnation and wastage, school climate and school quality. Here, the climate and the tone will have to be set by the Panchayat leaders. This they can do by a democratic process of dialogue, cooperation and service.

(8) Conducting Literacy Classes and Campaigns : In order that democracy lives and gets entrenched in the life of the rural people, they should be first literate. Rampant illiteracy is the bane and the blot on the life of our rural communities, labour class and backward castes. People should be motivated to improve themselves by first learning to read and write. Once the lamp of knowledge is lighted, the engulfing and paralysing darkness in spheres of social, economic, political and cultural life could be melted away. Village people are averse to literacy because they do not perceive any relevance of it in their life; they do not feel the need of it; they have no time in the morning or in the day to attend literacy classes as they go to their work quite early in the morning and return home late in the evening; by habits they have become slow and sluggish and not much inclined to expose themselves to mental exertions; they have also developed a kind of an attitude that at their age it is too late to start reading and writing. In this situation, it becomes very difficult to spread literacy among farmers, farm labourers, Harijans, Scheduled tribe people and in women of the intermediate and low castes. The only hope lies in the community itself taking interest and initiative in educating its own people. The Panchayati Raj leaders can arouse interest and enthusiasm for the acquisition of literacy among the illiterate people. ^{The} personal talks, persuasion, some incentives, etc.

might help. Processions with light and torch, with a bang, pomp and noise also stimulate rural peoples interest in literacy. The squads of the educated people, including children of the upper primary classes be set on the task of imparting literacy to the illiterate. The mass communication media like the radio, television and even movie films could be used with advantage by giving the rural people recreation, social education and thereby creating some motivation and climate in an indirect and subtle way to learn to read and write and unlock the treasure of light and knowledge. The ideology of each one, teach one should be revived in rural habitations.

(9) Combating the Evil of Transfer: This has become a major issue today in the administration of primary education by the Panchayati Raj leaders. Some of the respondents who cooperated in this study pointed out to the investigator that the Panchayati Raj has fast degenerated into 'the Transfer Raj' and it has no justification to continue at least in the sphere of primary education. They allege that the said Transfer Committees of Education Committee have become an arena of conspiracy to humiliate, harass and make the life of primary teachers extremely unhappy and uncomfortable. The way in which transfers of teachers are effected smells of callousness, lack of humaneness and a social sense on the part of the Panchayati Raj leaders, in whose authoritarian and striking hands, the

officers of the District Education Committee and of the Education Department play their part as stooges or the puppets. The mechanism of teacher transfers has become a source and a means of politics and plotting. It is also used to amass ill-gotten wealth by bribes, gifts and other foul means.

In order to improve upon the present ugly situation, the respondents in this investigation have made a number of useful suggestions:

- (1) A teacher should not be transferred ordinarily before he completes a period of 10 years in a village;
- (2) The transfer should be at a place which is nearer to the native place of a teacher;
- (3) The teacher's request for a transfer to a place of his convenience should be sympathetically considered whenever it is possible and feasible to do so;
- (4) On the Transfer Committee, teachers should have their representation;
- (5) All cases of teachers' complaints or appeals should be investigated and treated with impartiality, sense of responsibility and justice;
- (6) In effecting transfers, the suggestions of the School Administrative Officer be borne in mind;

(7) All charges of bribes, influences, favouritism, political affiliation, caste alliances etc. should be properly probed into before a teacher is transferred from a place of convenience to a place of discomfort and inconvenience;

(8) Rules for transfer be made on rational, humanitarian/^{grounds} and they should be then strictly enforced without partiality or without allowing any extraneous considerations to prevail;

(9) Cases where the rationale for a teachers' transfer is academic are to be adequately supported by beat supervisors' reports and also by the school headmasters' reports; and

(10) There should be a Transfer Committee at a Taluka level whose advice and comments should be available to the District level Transfer Committee before taking decision.

(10) Panchayati Funds for Primary Education : The State Government of Gujarat has always been taking pride that it has been supporting the cause of primary education in rural areas by giving a grant-in-aid to the extent of 96 percent over the approved expenditure of the District Shikshan Samitis. Even this amount has proved to be inadequate. Pupil welfare services and the improvement of quality in rural primary

schools have suffered to a considerable extent because of paucity of funds. As the late Professor R.V. Parulekar said some thirty years back that in primary education money should not merely 'tickle but pour'; primary education needs not only liberal funds but expanding funds every year.

In 1973-74, the budget estimates for primary education of the Mehsana District Education Committee were 22.66 lakhs, of which Rs.22.57 lakhs or around 99 percent came from State Government Grants and a little less than one percent came from the receipt of the Local Fund Cess from which 8 paise in every rupee are diverted to primary education. But this income has proved to be too inadequate to foot the rising bill of primary education. At present the Mehsana Jilla Shikshan Samiti spends around Rs.13 per child in the primary school annual. Of this about Rs.10 per child comes to be only the administrative expenditure including the salary of teachers and other Panchayati Staff. Education as such receives a bare Rs.3 per year or 25 paise per month per child. This financial position of primary education should be improved. The following suggestions have come forth from the respondents. They follow broadly the recommendations made by the Zeenabhai Darji High Power Committee on the Panchayati Raj (1973):

- (1) The Village Corporation should reserve 10 percent of its "free" or uncommitted funds for primary education;

- (2) The Taluka Panchayat should, at least, set aside 8 paise per every rupee of its receipt from the land revenue;
- (3) The Jilla Panchayat should divert from its income of Local Fund Cess at the rate of 10 paise in every rupee to be allocated to the head 'primary education' in its budget;
- (4) From the income of the Local Fund Cess, 5 paise in every rupee should be earmarked for expenditure on educational items pertaining to women, ^{pre-}primary school child, adult education and such other programmes;
- (5) The State Government should pay to each District Education Committee a Capitation Grant to the tune of 100 percent on the salary of non-teaching staff of the Panchayat and at the rate of Rs.2 per every attending child to be finally fixed in such a way that this receipt does not exceed two-third of the total expenditure of the District Education Committee.
- (6) In general or non-specially areas 100 percent full attendance grants be paid for schools where the total attendance is not less than 80 percent of the enrolment; in backward areas the criterion personcentage of school attendance be lower, i.e. 60 percent.

- (7) For Datum Grants should be reviewed every year;
- (8) For every primary school, the District Education committee should be paid advance grants in the beginning of the school year.

6. Conclusion.

The Panchayati Raj has come under serious attack from teachers, public leaders, social workers and political parties. There are conflicting claims of success and allegations of failure. There seems to be a tendency in official quarters consisting of Government - State Ministers and the Panchayat leaders to extol the achievements of the Panchayati Raj; the people say that the story is different. The Panchayati Raj Administration is authoritarian, politically affiliated, self-complaisant and even corrupt. In the sphere of primary education, it is blatantly alleged that more harm than good has emanated from the Panchayati Administration. Primary education has become quantity - oriented at the cost of quality; political influences have been allowed to infiltrate instead of keeping political parties at an arm's length, it has substituted Panchayat popular leaders' bureaucracy in place of the erstwhile bureaucracy of Government officers; Ignorance and personal whims of Panchayat leaders have triumphed over technical advice and decision-

making; lightness rather than seriousness has coloured the Panchayat proceedings; and a number of allegations for corruption, partisan approach, nepotism, casteism etc. are freely levelled against the Panchayati Raj Administration and leaders. There may be some grains of truth in all these allegations. But the Panchayati Raj is not as black^{as} it is popularly painted. Considerable good has accrued from it. In the sphere of primary education, the Panchayat Administration has contributed largely to expansion, somewhat to the improvement of social climate for the village school, to some appreciable extent to school health services, ~~community~~ and to some little extent in the improvement of school quality and standards, pupil welfare services, reduction of stagnation and waste^s but it has worsened teacher transfers, teacher morale and school organizational climate. The solution lies not in scrapping Panchayati Raj Administration of primary education but improving it by greater financial support and training of the Panchayat leaders.

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