

MCQ Question · mcqquestion.com

Community Development Programmes

Free · Share

Community Development Programmes

Soon after independence, the government tried to lift village life through one programme. It worked through administrative Blocks. It did not give villagers real power. That gap led to Panchayati Raj.

2 Oct 1952 The Community Development Programme began on Gandhi Jayanti, with 55 projects.
2 Oct 1953 The National Extension Service began a year later.
24 Nov 1957 The Balwant Rai Mehta report proposed a three-tier system.
2 Oct 1959 Rajasthan, at Nagaur, was first to adopt Panchayati Raj.

Development Block: The basic unit of the programme. It covered about 100 villages.

Block Development Officer: The official who ran the work of one Block.

Village Level Worker: The frontline staff member who linked the government with villagers.

Elite capture: When well-off local groups take most of the benefits meant for everyone.

Gram Sabha: The village meeting of all adult voters of a Gram Panchayat area.

1 What was the Community Development Programme?

Must Know · Understand the words · Topic 1

The Community Development Programme began on **2 October 1952**, which is Gandhi Jayanti.

It started with **55 Community Development Projects**. It was independent India's first major rural development effort.

It was part of the First Five-Year Plan approach. It mixed government help with local effort and community participation.

It was not only about farming. It also covered health, sanitation, education and village infrastructure.

Activities included improved seeds, irrigation, schools, adult literacy centres, health centres and roads.

Self-help was central. Villagers were expected to give their own effort and resources, not just receive services.

Misconception: some students think it dealt only with crop output. It did not.

> **Quick check 1.** The Community Development Programme began in 1959. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

2 How did a Block work on the ground?

Must Know · Understand the words · Topic 2

Each project grouped **three Development Blocks**. So 55 projects meant **165 Blocks**.

A Block covered about 100 villages and roughly 60,000 to 70,000 people. These were planning norms of that time, not a fixed legal rule.

A **Block Development Officer** coordinated the development work of the Block.

Village Level Workers were the frontline staff. They linked the administration with village communities.

Each worker covered four to five villages. They were meant to carry new farming methods and services to villagers.

Extension officers gave specialist help in fields such as agriculture, cooperation, industries and education.

Misconception: 55 projects did not mean 55 Blocks. Each project held three Blocks.

> **Quick check 2.** The first 55 projects meant only 55 Development Blocks. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

3 What was the National Extension Service?

Must Know · Understand the words · Topic 3

The **National Extension Service** began on **2 October 1953**, a year after the first programme.

It gave basic staff and a smaller development fund. This let self-help spread over a wider area.

Both used the Block as their working unit. The new service was less intensive.

Selected Blocks could then receive more intensive help under the first programme.

Help also came from abroad. The United States and the Ford Foundation supported training and the supply of resources.

The Ford Foundation opened its New Delhi office in 1952, at the Indian government's invitation. Its early work included community development.

S.K. Dey, the official who built and ran the programme, trained as an engineer at Purdue and Michigan in the United States.

He later became independent India's first Union Minister for Community Development, Cooperation and Panchayati Raj.

4 What did the Mehta Committee find?

Good to Know · Follow the history · Topic 4

Officially, the programme had two goals. One was to raise farm output and rural infrastructure.

The other was to change village society through people's own participation.

The government appointed the **Balwant Rai Mehta Committee** on 16 January 1957. It reviewed both programmes.

The committee found that the programme had not roused genuine "popular initiative". It judged both programmes too bureaucratic and too top-down.

It also flagged **elite capture**. Larger cultivators gained most. Artisans and agricultural labourers were largely left out.

The committee said people needed bodies through which they could take responsibility and lead. Public participation should work through statutory representative bodies.

It submitted its report on **24 November 1957**.

Its main idea was a **three-tier** system of democratic decentralisation. The tiers were village, Block and district.

By name, these were the **Gram Panchayat**, the **Panchayat Samiti** and the **Zila Parishad**.

The Panchayat Samiti had executive work. The Zila Parishad coordinated, supervised and advised.

The National Development Council accepted these recommendations in January 1958. It left States free to work out suitable structures.

Rajasthan went first. Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated its system at **Nagaur** on **2 October 1959**.

For more, see Panchayati Raj Institutions in India.

Remember: CDP 2 Oct 1952, 55 projects · NES 2 Oct 1953 · Mehta report 24 Nov 1957 · Nagaur 2 Oct 1959.

Quick check 3. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended a three-tier Panchayati Raj. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

5 Why did a well-funded programme still fall short?

Good to Know · Follow the history · Topic 5

The real flaw was not money or intent. It was who held authority.

A centrally appointed Block Development Officer ran every Block. He answered up a state chain, not to the villagers below.

Panchayati Raj turned that line around. It put elected representatives at all three tiers.

They answer to voters, not only to a department above them.

Planners drew a lasting lesson. Top-down delivery cannot replace real local participation.

That lesson shaped later reforms. For the full story, see The Founding of Panchayati Raj: From Committee to Constitution.

You can also read Panchayati Raj and Local Government Finance and Planning Commission and Five Year Plans.

Think it through. Suppose a village gets improved seeds and irrigation. How would you find out whether landless households also gained?

Show the explanation

Money reached the Blocks, but power stayed with officials. Villagers had little say, so local elites took the benefits. You would check who actually received the help. Real change needed elected bodies, not just more funds.

6 How did Panchayati Raj gain constitutional protection?

Good to Know · Follow the history · Topic 6

Article 40 tells the State to organise village Panchayats as units of self-government.

The **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992** came into force on **24 April 1993**. It gave Panchayats constitutional status.

Article 243A says Gram Sabha powers depend on State law.

Article 243B sets village, intermediate and district Panchayats. The intermediate tier may be skipped in States with a population of up to 20 lakh.

Article 243D reserves seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by population. At least one-third of directly elected seats go to women.

Article 243E gives a Panchayat a five-year term, unless it is dissolved earlier.

Article 243I requires a State Finance Commission every five years. **Article 243K** gives Panchayat elections to the State Election Commission.

Article 243G lets State legislatures give Panchayats powers for economic development and social justice.

The Eleventh Schedule lists **29 subjects** for this purpose. They include agriculture, minor irrigation, rural housing, drinking water, roads, education and health.

Actual devolution depends on State laws.

Misconception: some think every Panchayat automatically controls all 29 subjects. It does not.

Scheduled Areas get extra protection. The **Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996**, called PESA, is dated 24 December 1996.

Under it, the Gram Sabha approves development plans before the village Panchayat carries them out. It also identifies beneficiaries and certifies use of funds.

> **Quick check 4.** Every Panchayat automatically got full control over all 29 subjects. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

7 Current Affairs · What is new in village planning?

Current Affairs · Topic 7

As of October 2026, the **People's Plan Campaign 2026-27** is helping Panchayats prepare their plans for financial year 2027-28.

It began on 2 October 2026. On that day, more than 2.42 lakh special Gram Sabhas met.

They discussed citizen needs and government schemes. These meetings also marked the start of the campaign.

The Sixteenth Finance Commission has recommended ₹4,35,236 crore for Rural Local Bodies for 2026-27 to 2030-31. This is a recommendation, not money already released.

A national workshop in July 2026 looked at readiness for performance-based grants.

On **28 October 2026**, the Union Cabinet approved the **Pradhan Mantri Viksit Gram Swaraj Yojana**.

It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for 2026-27 to 2030-31. Its outlay is ₹7,395.55 crore.

The Centre pays ₹4,869.48 crore and the States pay ₹2,526.07 crore.

The scheme brings Central Ministries, Departments and States onto a common digital platform for holistic Gram Panchayat Development Plans.

Its targets include at least 2.55 lakh online audit plans every year. Audits will be completed through AuditOnline.

At a national workshop on 30 October 2026, the Ministry released the People’s Plan Campaign booklet.

It also signed an agreement with Convergence Energy Services Limited. The aim is EV charging and battery-swapping stations on Panchayat land.

The news was published on 31 October 2026. The agreement does not mean stations are already working across the country.

Think it through. A Panchayat uploads its development plan on time. What more would show that women and landless workers shaped its priorities?

Show the explanation

Uploading a plan only shows the work was done. You would look at who attended the Gram Sabha and whose demands were included. Planning is meant to be participatory, so the voices behind the plan matter.

Quick check 5. The People's Plan Campaign 2026-27 prepares plans for financial year 2026-27. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Practice MCQs

1. On which date did the Community Development Programme launch in India?

A. 2 October 1952

B. 15 August 1953

C. 26 January 1950

D. 26 January 1956

See answer ↓

2. What was the basic administrative unit of the Community Development Programme?

A. The Development Block

B. The State Secretariat

C. The Gram Sabha

D. The District

See answer ↓

3. Which committee reviewed the Community Development Programme and the National Extension Service, and in what year did it submit its report?

A. Ashok Mehta Committee, 1978

B. L.M. Singhvi Committee, 1986

C. Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, 1957

D. Sarkaria Commission, 1988

See answer ↓

4. What core failure did the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee identify in the Community Development Programme?

A. It evoked too much local political conflict

B. It focused exclusively on agriculture with no social component

C. Its benefits skewed toward local elites instead of reaching the rural poor evenly

D. It spent too little money on infrastructure

See answer ↓

5. Which state first adopted Panchayati Raj on the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee's recommendation, and in which year?

A. Gujarat in 1963

B. Rajasthan in 1959

C. Tamil Nadu in 1957

D. Andhra Pradesh in 1959

See answer ↓

6. Which committee was set up to study community development programmes and recommend a system of local self-government for independent India?

A. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee

B. The Ashok Mehta Committee

C. The Fazl Ali Committee

D. The Sarkaria Committee

See answer ↓

7. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee recommended a three-tier structure of Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis, and which district-level body?

A. Zila Parishads

B. Divisional Commissions

C. Municipal Corporations

D. District Collectorates

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **A.** The Community Development Programme launched on 2 October 1952, deliberately timed to Gandhi Jayanti. ↑ Q1
2. **A.** The Development Block, each covering roughly 100 villages and headed by a Block Development Officer, was the CDP's basic administrative unit. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, appointed in January 1957, submitted its report in November 1957, recommending three-tier Panchayati Raj. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** The Committee found programme benefits were often captured by already-influential local elites, rather than reaching the rural poor evenly, undermining its participatory aim. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** Rajasthan, at Nagaur on 2 October 1959, became the first state to adopt Panchayati Raj, with Andhra Pradesh following soon after. ↑ Q5
6. **A.** The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was set up to study community development programmes and recommend a local self-government system. ↑ Q6
7. **A.** The committee recommended a three-tier structure: village-level Gram Panchayats, block-level Panchayat Samitis, and district-level Zila Parishads. ↑ Q7

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **True.** ↑ 3
4. **False.** ↑ 4
5. **False.** ↑ 5

Curated by Arsalan Zuberi · mcqquestion.com

Scan to read online

https://mcqquestion.com/articles/community-development-programmes/