CHAPTER-IV

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF GRAM PANCHAYAT
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4.1. GRAM PANCHAYAT

Gram Panchayats are local self-governments at the village or small town level in India. The gram Panchayat is the foundation of the Panchayat System. A Panchayat can be set up in villages with minimum population of 300. Sometimes two or more villages are clubbed together to form group-gram panchayat when the population of the individual villages is less than 300.

Table 4.1
Number of Panchayats in India

<p>| Sl. No. | State / Union Territory     | Gram Panchayats |
|--------|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1.     | Andhra Pradesh              | 21843          |
| 2.     | Arunachal Pradesh           | 1770           |
| 3.     | Assam                       | 2202           |
| 4.     | Bihar                       | 8463           |
| 5.     | Chhattisgarh                | 9734           |
| 6.     | Goa                         | 189            |
| 7.     | Gujarat                     | 13738          |
| 8.     | Haryana                     | 6083           |
| 9.     | Himachal Pradesh            | 3243           |
| 11.    | Jharkhand                   | 4438           |
| 12.    | Karnataka                   | 5628           |
| 13.    | Kerala                      | 999            |
| 14.    | Madhya Pradesh              | 23012          |
| 15.    | Maharashtra                 | 27920          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>State / Union Territory</th>
<th>Gram Panchayats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Meghalaya*</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Mizoram*</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Nagaland*</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>6234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>12800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>9177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>12618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>51914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>7541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>3351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>A &amp; N Islands</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>D &amp; N Haveli</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Daman and Diu</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Puducherry</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total   | 238090                  |

**Source**: Yojana, February -2011

Table 4.1 which shows number of Panchayats state-wise in India reveals that Uttar Pradesh (5191) has the highest Panchayats followed by Maharastra (27920), Madya Pradesh (23012) Andhra Pradesh (21807). Least number of Panchayats in Lakshadweep (10)².
Table 4.2

District-wise Number of Gram Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Village Panchayats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Adilabad</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Anantapur</td>
<td>1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chittoor</td>
<td>1381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>East Godavari</td>
<td>1012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Guntur</td>
<td>1016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Karimnagar</td>
<td>1194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Khammam</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kurnool</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mahbubnagar</td>
<td>1348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Medak</td>
<td>1109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Nalgonda</td>
<td>1178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Nizamabad</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Prakasam</td>
<td>1036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Rangareddi</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>SPSR Nellore</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Sriakakulam</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
<td>944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Vizianagaram</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Warangal</td>
<td>1014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>West Godavari</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Y.S.R.</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 21843

Source: Commissionerate of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh.
Table 4.2 depicts number of Gram Panchayats district wise in Andhra Pradesh, Chittoor district has the highest number of Gram Panchayats followed by Mahaboobnagar, Kharimnagar, Nalgonda. Least number of Gram Panchayats are in the Ranga Reddy district.³

4.2. GRAM PANCHAYAT AS A POLITICAL UNIT

A Gram Panchayat shall consist of such number of elected members inclusive of its Sarpanch as may be notified from time to time, by the Commissioner in accordance with the following Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gram Panchayat with a population at the last census</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upto 300.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 300 but not exceeding 500.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 500 but not exceeding 1,500.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 1,500 but not exceeding 3,000.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 3,000 but not exceeding 5,000.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 5,000 but not exceeding 10,000.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 10,000 but not exceeding 15,000.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding 15,000</td>
<td>Between 19 and 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994

In Andhra Pradesh, a Gram Panchayat has a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 21 members; a member is elected from a population of 200 and more. The election to the post of Sarpanch is direct. Reservation of seats to the marginalized sections, the SCs, the STs, women and the Backward Classes has been ensured at all the three tiers. 1/3 rd of seats are reserved for women, 1/3 rd for BCs, not less than 22.5% for the SCs and 6% for the STs. The term of membership is for five years.⁴
4.3 FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES

The Gram Panchayats being grass root democratic institutions are responsible for coordinated community action for all round development in rural areas. The Gram Panchayats are focal points for accelerating the pace of development by involving people in the planning process so that the needs of the citizens and their development aspirations are fulfilled.

As a step in that direction the Government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to constitute the following five Functional Committees for every Gram Panchayat, in supersession of Functional Committees constituted in G.Os of Andhra Pradesh.

- Functional Committee for natural resources management (including Agriculture, horticulture, dairy, fisheries and water conservation).
- Functional Committee for human resources (Education, health, women and child welfare and all other related subjects).
- Functional Committee for employment generation and self help groups.
- Functional Committee for finance and planning.
- Functional Committee for works and infrastructure development.

The aim of the above-mentioned functional committees is to make the Gram Panchayats responsible to evolve suitable programmes, mobilise and distribute resources, and oversee the implementation of the developmental programmes and strategies. The composition of each of the Functional committee will be as follows:

The Gram Panchayat Sarpanch shall be the Chairman of the Functional Committee. In the absence of Sarpanch the Upa Sarpanch will Chair the functional committees meeting.

Since the minimum number of ward members in a Gram Panchayat is seven (7) and the maximum twenty one (21), at least one ward member and a maximum of five ward members will be co-opted as members of the functional committees. As far as possible all ward members will be equally divided among five committees, Panchayat Secretary will issue orders constituting functional committees in every gram a Panchayat based on the Grama Panchayat resolution.
➢ Of the ward members co-opted for each committee, at least one should be from SC/ST/BCs/Woman category.

➢ No member of the Gram Panchayat other than Sarpanch shall be a member in more than one functional committee at a time.

In such of those Gram Panchayats where there is only one MPTC member in a Grama Panchayat, the said MPTC member will automatically be co-opted as a member in all the five functional committees.

In such Grama Panchayats where there are more than one MPTCs, the Gram Panchayat will decide which MPTC will be a member of which functional committee, subject to the condition that no MPTC member can be a member of more than two functional committees.

In such cases where there is only one MPTC for more than one grama panchayat, the said MPTC will be a member of all the functional committees of all such panchayats that he represents.

Two leaders of women self help groups active in the Gram Panchayat shall be co-opted as members.

Each functional committee will opt 2 persons having expertise in the subject. Spouses of Sarpanches, MPTCs and Ward members and their family members cannot be co-opted as members in the guise of "experts".

Cutting-edge level functionaries of all the line departments and agencies working at the Panchayat level like Anganwadi workers, MPH(A), MPH(M), Multipurpose Extension Officer (MPEO) of agriculture department, Head Masters (HMs) of the local schools and any other functionaries can be co-opted as members by the village panchayat in such of those functional committees that require their services.

The Chair persons of the existing committees like NSS / School Education Committee / Mothers Committee NO / Watershed Committee / WUA etc., will automatically become members of the relevant functional committee. If the jurisdiction of the above said committee chair persons extends to more than one
grama panchayat, he becomes the member of functional committee of all GPs or he can nominate his representative who is a member of management committee / Executive Committee of the said committee to become a member of that committee.

The Panchayat Secretary will be the member convenor of each functional committee and record the proceedings of the said committees.

The co-opted of the members of the functional committee in the Gram Panchayat meeting shall be through a resolution of the Gram Panchayat.

The decision of the functional committees shall be subject to ratification by the Gram Sabha, which shall have the power to approve, modify, rescind and reverse them.

4.4. GRAM PANCHAYAT AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

The Grama Panchayats are administratively supported by the Panchayat Secretaries. 16000 Panchayat Secretaries have been placed in the entire State. The Secretaries are from five different grades of administration placed at different Gram Panchayats depending on the size of the Gram Panchayat and the magnitude of its function. The Secretary functions under the administrative control of the Gram Panchayat, in keeping with the spirit of the Constitutional Amendment. However, the Secretaries are simultaneously responsible to the revenue department for revenue functions.

The job chart of the Secretary lists 64 'works'. Apart from assisting the Gram Panchayat in discharging its duties, he/she is expected to assist in the preparation of the village plans, prepare a list of households living below the poverty line, maintain lists of beneficiaries under various schemes and mobilise public participation. The day-to-day work of the Secretary is limited to inspecting and ensuring the functioning of the water works (water for drinking purposes), sanitation and streetlights, issuing of certificates, etc. A key function of the Secretary is the management of Gram Panchayat funds. The Secretary, along with the Sarpanch, has cheque-signing power. The Gram Panchayat accounts are also maintained by the Secretary and all deposits and disbursals from the Gram Panchayat funds are done by him.
4.5. **GENERAL POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYATS**

The Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution places as many as 29 Functions within the purview of the Panchayat Raj bodies. They are:

1. Agriculture, including agricultural extension
2. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation.
3. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development
4. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry.
5. Fisheries.
6. Social forestry and farm forestry
7. Minor forest produce
8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries
9. Khadi, village and cottage industries
10. Rural housing
11. Drinking water
12. Fuel and fodder
13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, waterways and other means of communication
14. Rural electrification including distribution of electricity
15. Non-conventional energy sources
16. Poverty alleviation programme
17. Education, including primary and secondary schools
18. Technical training and vocational education
19. Adult and non-formal education
20. Libraries
21. Cultural activities
22. Markets and fairs
23. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries
24. Family Welfare
25. Women and child development
26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.
27. Welfare of the weaker sections, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
28. Public distribution system.
29. Maintenance of community assets.

4.6 Functional Devolution to Gram Panchayats

Devolution of powers to Gram Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh has been weaker than in most other states. Only 16 out of the 29 functions mentioned in the 11th Schedule have been transferred to Gram Panchayats. The list of functions devolved to Gram Panchayats is as given below:

1. Agriculture including agricultural extension
2. Minor irrigation tanks
3. Social forestry, farm forestry
4. Khadi and village industries
5. Drinking water (rural water supply)
6. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries and waterways
7. Non-conventional energy
8. Education including primary and secondary schools
9. Technical training and vocational education
10. Adult and non-formal education
11. Libraries
12. Cultural activities
13. Women and child development
14. Social welfare including welfare of handicapped and mentally retarded
15. Public distribution scheme
16. Maintenance of community assets

4.7. **GRAM PANCHAYAT FUND**

1. All moneys received by the gram panchayat shall constitute a fund called the "Gram Panchayat Fund", and shall be applied and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of this Act and other laws:

   Provided that the gram panchayat shall credit, subject to such rules as may be prescribed, the proceeds of any tax or fee levied under this Act to special fund earmarked for the purpose of financing any specific public improvement. A separate account shall be kept of the receipts into and the expenditure from such special fund.

2. Subject to the provisions of sub-section (1), the receipts which shall be credited to the gram panchayat fund shall include:

   i. The house-tax and any other tax or any cess or fee levied under this Act;

   ii. The proceeds of the duty collected under sub-section(4) of Section 60;

   iii. The proceeds of the duty on transfers of property levied under Section 69 which are paid to the gram panchayat;

   iv. The taxes and tolls levied in the village under Sections 117 and 118 of the Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Area) Public Health Act, 1939, (Act III of 1939); or under the corresponding provision of any other law similar thereto for the time being in force in the State;
v. The amount contributed by the Mandal Praja Parishad to the gram panchayat in respect of markets in the village classified as Mandal Praja Parishad markets or paid by the Mandal Praja Parishad to the gram panchayat towards the latter's share of the income derived from such markets as per the apportionment made under Section 112 and the amount paid by a Zilla Praja Parishad or any of the joint committees referred to 111 Section 57 to the gram panchayat towards the latter's share of the income derived from a ferry under the management of the Zilla Praja Parishad or joint committee, as the case may be, as per the apportionment made under the said section;

vi. Fees for the temporary occupation of village sites, roads and other similar public places or parts thereof in the village;

vii. Fees levied by the gram Panchayat in pursuance of any provision in this Act, or any rule or order made thereunder;

viii. Income from endowments and trusts under the management of the gram Panchayat;

ix. The net assessment on service inams which are resumed by Government after the commencement of this Act;

x. Income derived from village fisheries, vested in the Gram Panchayat including the woods and reeds;

xi. Income derived from ferries under the management of the Gram Panchayat;

xii. Unclaimed deposits and other forfeitures;

xiii. The seigniorage fees collected by the Government every year from persons permitted to quarry in the village for materials including minor minerals other than major minerals;

xiv. All income derived from porambokes which vest in the gram panchayat or the user of which is regulated by the gram panchayat and also the penalty and penal assessment if any, levied in respect of unauthorised occupation thereof under any law for the time being in force;
xv. All income derived from trees standing on porambokes although the user of the porambokes is not vested in the gram panchayat;

xvi. Income from leases of Government property obtained by the gram Panchayat;

xvii. A sum equivalent to one-tenths of the gross income derived by the Government every year from fines imposed by Magistrates in respect of offences committed in the village under this Act, or any rule or bye-law made there under or any other provision of law which is prescribed for this behalf;

xviii. Grants received from the Government, the Zilla Praja Parishad or Mandal Praja Parishad;

xix. Income from investments of amounts taken from the Gram Panchayat fund;

xx. All other receipts accruing from the sources of gram Panchayat revenue specified in this Act; and

xxi. All sums other than those enumerated above which arise out of, or are received in aid of, or for expenditure on any institutions or services maintained or financed from the gram panchayat fund or managed by the gram panchayat.

3. All moneys received by the Gram Panchayat shall be lodged in the nearest Government Treasury:

Provided that the amounts received as funds under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme or other Wage Employment Schemes shall be lodged in the nearby Nationalised Banks or Co-operative Banks or Post Offices in such manner as may be prescribed.

4. All orders or cheques against the Gram Panchayat Fund shall be signed by such authority as may be prescribed.
EXPENDITURE FROM GRAM PANCHAYAT FUND

1. The purposes to which the gram panchayat fund may be applied include all objects expressly declared obligatory or discretionary by section 75 of Act or any rules made there under or by any other laws or rules and the fund shall be applicable there to within the village subject to such rules or special orders as the Government may prescribe or issue and shall, subject as aforesaid, be applicable to such purposes outside the village if the expenditure is authorised by this Act or specially sanctioned by the commissioner.

2. It shall be the duty of every gram panchayat to provide for the payment of
   i. Any amounts falling due on any loans contracted by it;
   ii. The salaries and allowances and the pensions, pensionary contributions and provident fund contributions of its officers and servants;
   iii. Sums due under any decree or order of a court;
   iv. Contributions, if any, levied by the Mandal Praja Parishad subject to such limits as may be specified by Commissioner, and
   v. Any other expenses rendered obligatory by or under this Act or any other law.

3. A gram panchayat may, with the sanction of the Government, contribute to any fund for the defence of India.

4. A gram panchayat may, with the sanction of the Commissioner, also
   i. Contribute towards the expenses of any public exhibition, ceremony or entertainment in the village;
   ii. Contribute to any charitable fund, or to the fund of any institution for the relief of the poor or the treatment of disease or infirmity or the reception of diseased or infirm persons or the investigation of the causes of disease;
   iii. Contribute to the funds of any institution established for promoting community development or the aims of Panchayat Raj; and defray any other extraordinary charges.
4.9. GRAM PANCHAYAT FINANCES

Section 74 in the Panchayat Raj Act of Andhra Pradesh clearly provides for the constitution of the 'Gram Panchayat Fund' where all monies received by the Gram Panchayat would be pooled and disposed from. The Gram Panchayat fund is to be used to spend on all obligatory functions and any other discretionary functions that the Gram Panchayat assumes as well as own staff salaries (Sec 75). The four major heads under which the revenues come in are:

1. Own sources –
   a. Mandatory taxes: House taxes, Kolagaram, advertisement taxes and special taxes on services provided.
   b. Optional taxes:
   c. Fees and fines: Licence fee, Encroachment Fee Private, Scavenging Fees, Warrant and Distraint Fees, Seignorage Fees for Quarrying, Fees on Commercial Crop, Fees on Numbering Vehicles, Layout Fee, Permission Fee for Buildings, Fee on animals, Penalties on Dogs & Pigs, Cattle Shed / Cattle Pond, Monthly Fee on Tap Connections, Fines
   d. Rents:
   e. Leases and other remunerative enterprises: Marketing Receipts, Cart Stand Receipts, Slaughter House Receipts, Avenue Receipts, Sale on Rubbish and Compost, Fishery Rentals, Income from lease of Govt. land, Ferry Rents, Receipts from sale of Pesticides, Etc., Income from Fairs & Festivals, Sand Auctions, Other receipts.

2. Assigned - Cess and surcharge collected.


4. Donations and contributions - voluntary funds donated by people.

A Gram Panchayat has three compulsory taxes - house tax, kolagarum (a tax on the village produce sold by weight) and advertisement taxes and two optional taxes, namely, vehicle tax and tax on agricultural lands.
Among the various receipts, some funds are specially earmarked for expenditure on specific objects and which cannot be diverted for expenditure on any subject other than for which they are collected. These are:

1. Water tax levied u/s 254 of AP Public Health Act, 1939
2. Tax on agricultural lands levied u/s 60
3. Special tax levied u/s 71 of the Act
4. Loan funds
5. Special grants received from government, Zilla Parishad and Mandal Parishad sanctioned for specific purposes
6. Receipts derived from sale of capital assets
7. Income from endowments and trusts
8. Deposits

The Gram Panchayat has an annual budget which is approved without any need for outside sanction. But the estimates need to be precise to the extent possible and provisions need to be made for obligatory charges. According to G.O.No.69 dated 29.2.2000, no Gram Panchayat can have a deficit budget or incur any item of expenditure which is not included in the budget. All allotments made in the budget lapses at the end of the year. In addition, a working balance of not less than 5% of estimate receipts has to be maintained.

4.9.1. Revenue Expenditure

Section 75 of the Gram Panchayat Act specifies the purposes to which the Grama Panchayat fund may be applied – this includes all objects expressly declared obligatory or discretionary by the Act or any other rules that may be framed.

The major heads under revenue expenditure are administration expenses, obligatory activities including lighting, communications, sanitation and public health, water supply, and discretionary activities such as provision of other amenities, specific developmental activities and remunerative enterprises.
The state government has given the weightage for important components of a Gram Panchayat expenditure vide GO.Ms No.69 dated 29.2.2000 as follows:

1. Establishment – 30%
2. Sanitation – 15%
3. Street lighting – 15%
4. Water supply – 15%
5. Roads and drains – 20%
6. Miscellaneous – 5%.

The G.O clearly states that 65% of total expenditure is to be towards the obligatory functions of a Gram Panchayat. But in practice that only 40% is spent on sanitation, street lighting, water supply and roads & drains taken together. Remunerative enterprises and other amenities have nothing spent on them.

4.9.2. Administrative Expenses

The following expenses are included under the administrative expenses.

- Salary and Allowances
  - Provincialised Staff
  - Non-Provincialised staff
  - Part-timers and others
- Contribution to Pension Fund
- Contingencies
- Honorarium to Sarpanches
- Travelling Allowances
- Cost of electoral rolls
- Law charges
> Interest on and re-payment of debt

> Repairs to buildings

> Other Miscellaneous expenses

Salaries and allowances account for a major proportion of the total revenue expenditure of a Gram Panchayat in Andhra Pradesh.

4.9.3. Expenditure on Obligatory Functions

Expenditure on obligatory functions is captured under the following accounting heads:

> Lighting: this includes electricity consumption charges, purchase of street lighting material, and other related expenditure

> Communications: this includes maintenance of roads, choultries and rest houses, and other related expenditure

> Sanitation and public health: this includes expenditure on public conservancy, maintenance of drains, private scavenging, etc.

> Water supply: this includes consumption charges, repairs to pipe lines, etc.

> Other amenities such as playgrounds & parks, reading rooms & libraries, etc.

4.9.4. Expenditure on Development Activities

A Gram Panchayat also spends on developmental activities over and above the expenditure made on obligatory functions. This is accounted for through the sub-head given below:

> For works (State Grants & Own Sources)
  
  o Gram Panchayat Funds
  
  o State Government Grants
  
  o State Finance Commission Grants
  
  o Other Funds
➢ For works (Central Grants)
  o Union Finance Commission Grants
  o JRY/JGSY/SGRY Grants
  o Other Funds
➢ Social Education
➢ Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
➢ Women Welfare Activities
➢ Other Developmental Activities

4.10. GRAM SABHA

The 73rd constitutional Amendment in 1993 for the first time provided a statutory imperative for the establishment of Gram Sabhas in rural India. In order to provide the Gram Sabha a key place in the overall system of Panchayat Raj, specific outline has been provided in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment through Article 243 (b) which reads as follows: “Gram Sabha” means a body consisting of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to a village comprised within the area of Panchayat at the village level. Its role has been laid down in Article 243A which states, A Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the Legislature of a State may, by law, provide.

The Government of India declared the year 1999-2000 as the “year of Gram Sabha” to set the process of decentralized democracy in motion, with human development as the core objective of planning. This signified the importance and potential with which the institution has to serve as the basic unit of village governance and could be most effective mechanism to involve people in planning, implementing and overseeing the village development activities.
The Rural Development Ministry has requested all the Chief Ministers to consider taking the following steps as the "minimum package" during the year of Gram Sabha:

1. The relationship between the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat may be same as between the Legislature and the government. The Panchayat should be accountable to the Gram Sabha in unequivocal terms. The members of Panchayats should hold office only so long as they enjoy the confidence of Gram Sabha.

2. The Gram Sabha should have full powers for determining the priorities for various programmes in the village and approval of budget. Prior approval of Gram Sabha should be made mandatory for taking up any programme in the village. Certification of expenditure and also about proprietary in financial dealings should be made mandatory.

3. The management of natural resources including land, water and forest by any authority whatsoever should be made subject to the concurrence of the Gram Sabha. Consultation with the Gram Sabha should be made mandatory before acquisition of land for public purpose and other forms of land transfer.

4. The Gram Sabha should be vested with full authority to manage all affairs concerning intoxicants including their manufacture, sale, transport and consumption, and also enforcement of total prohibition, if Gram Sabha so desires. Participation of women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes members in the Gram Sabha should be made mandatory with suitable provision for their presence in the quorum of Gram Sabha meetings.

5. The Gram Sabha should have the power to evolve its own procedure for conducting its business including decision-making following the principles of natural justice. The rules and regulations which may be issued by the government in this regard from time to time should be deemed to be as guidelines.

The Gram Sabha is a statutory body and integral part of Panchayat Raj System in all the States. It serves as an Assembly of the village, acts as a watch dog working for the Gram Panchayat and facilitates people's participation in the decision-making process.
4.10.1. Membership

Provisions in different Acts in respect of membership have been made. While in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gram Sabha is composed of all the voters on the electoral roll, in Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan all adults residing in the area of Gram Sabha are considered to be its members. The membership of the Gram Sabha varies from State to State ranging from 250 to 5000.

4.10.2. Meetings

A Gram Sabha should meet compulsorily for as many times in a year as provided in the Panchayat Raj Acts of different States. The meeting of the Gram Sabha is to be presided over by the Chairperson of Gram Panchayat. The Secretary of the Gram Panchayat acts as Secretary of the Gram Sabha and prepares the resolutions and places them in the Gram Panchayat meeting for follow-up action.

The provisions regarding the number of Gram Sabha meetings vary from State to State. However, most of the Acts provide for at least two meetings in a year.

4.10.3. Quorum

For any meeting of the Gram Sabha, a prescribed number of members form the quorum. But usually no quorum is necessary for a meeting adjourned for want of quorum. However, it is the duty of the Sarpunch and members of the Gram Panchayat to ensure that large number of residents attend the meetings of Gram Sabha. The States have different provisions regarding the quorum for Gram Sabha meetings. In Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, the quorum for Gram Sabha meeting is one-fifth of the total number of members, whereas in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, it is one-tenth. There is no quorum in Haryana for Gram Sabha as far as general meetings are concerned but for any extraordinary meeting of the Gram Sabha on tenth of the total number of its members shall form a quorum.

4.10.4. Functions

There is a diversity of provisions with regard to the functions of the Gram Sabha, however, there are some common features in the Panchayat Raj Acts of most of the States. A study of different Panchayat Raj Acts across States reveals that each
of the States has accorded a specific status to the institution of Gram Sabha in terms of powers and functions. A synthesis of various powers and functions assigned in different States in Panchayat Raj System shows the following broad areas of powers and functions:

i. Examine annual statement of accounts and audit report;

ii. Discuss report on the administration of the preceding year;

iii. Review programme of work for the year or any new programme;

iv. Consider proposals for fresh taxation or for enhancement of existing taxes;

v. Select schemes, beneficiaries and locations;

vi. Mobilize voluntary labour and contribution in kind and cash;

vii. Identification of beneficiaries for the implementation of development schemes;

viii. Undertake programme for adult education and family welfare within the village;

ix. Promote unity and harmony among all sections of society;

x. Examine last audit note and replies made thereto;

xi. Consider the budget prepared by the Gram Panchayat and the future development programmes and the plans;

xii. Consider and scrutinize the existing schemes and all kinds of activities;

xiii. Maintain a complete register for all development works undertaken by Gram Panchayat or any other department;

xiv. Approve village plan.

After the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, most of the State Legislatures provided for the establishment of Gram Sabhas, but the statutes remained vague, hazy and blurred about procedural practices. Many States have empowered Gram Sabhas through statute for developmental planning and social Audit.
However, whatever its limitations, the law has already opened unprecedented spaces for the exercise of direct democracy by rural communities. There is enormous untapped potential in this for the poor to gain greater control over decisions and processes that critically affect the extremely difficult conditions of their lives. The challenge on the one hand is to push the frontiers of these legal spaces both through enlightenment of political opinion and pressure from below in order to persuade the political leadership in various States to vest the Gram Sabhas with a wider range of powers for the exercise of direct democracy. On the other hand, even the greater challenge is to facilitate the actual exercise of participatory democracy through creative and resolute use of whatever legal spaces are available, through massive mobilization, political education and capacity building.

4.11 Gram Panchayat Organization

The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, framed in the light of the Constitution's 73rd Amendment, came into effect in May 1994, setting up a three-tier PRI structure with a Zilla Parishad at the district, Mandal Praja Parishad at the intermediate and Gram Panchayat at the village level. It also provides for the constitution of village Gram Sabhas made up of all registered voters in the village.

Fig. 4.1: Organisation structure of Panchayat Raj
The Commissioner, Panchayat Raj and Rural Employment is required to supervise the working of 22 Zilla Parishads, 1093 Mandal parishads and 21,843 Gram Panchayats.

At the erstwhile block level, which consists of about three mandals, there will be an Extension officer (Panchayats). There are 330 Extension Officers (Panchayats in the State. Each extension officer will have about 40-50 Panchayats in his jurisdiction.

At the Revenue division level, there will be a Divisional Panchayat Officer to supervise the work of about 300-400 panchayats. There are 82 Divisional Panchayat Officers in the State.

At the District level, the department organisation has one District Panchayat Officer. There are 22 District Panchayat Officers and each District Panchayat Officer has about 900 to 1000 Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction.

At the state level the Head of the Office is the Commissioner, Panchayat Raj and Rural Employment.

At the village level, there will be Gram Panchayats. They are administered by the Executive Authorities. In the case of Notified / Major Gram Panchayats there will be exclusive Executive Officers and in the case of Non Notified / Minor Gram Panchayats, the Sarpanch himself is the Executive Authority.

There will be a village Development Officer for a group of five to six villages to look after the developmental works.

At the intermediate level, i.e., Mandal level there will be Mandal Parishad. The Mandal Parishad Development Officers are not only the Executive Authorities for the Mandal Parishads, but are also the Executive Agencies for various other Departments / Organisations which do not have executive agencies of their own.

At the District level, there will be Zilla Parishads. It is the apex body at the District level as far as developmental works are concerned. It has several wings such as General Administration, Engineering, Education, Accounts etc.
4.11.1. Organisation of Panchayat wing

The departmental organisation at the District level consists of four levels - first the executive officers of Panchayats at the village level, second at the erstwhile block level which is headed by an Extension Officer (Panchayats), at the divisional level headed by a Divisional Panchayat officer and at the District level headed by the District Panchayat Officer. All the above said officers deal with the subjects relating to Gram Panchayats only.

4.11.1.1. Administration of Panchayat at the village level

There are two types of Gram Panchayats viz., notified Gram Panchayat (Major Gram Panchayats) and Non-Notified Gram Panchayats (Minor Gram Panchayats). This distinction between the Gram Panchayats is brought about basing on the average income of the Gram Panchayat.

As per existing rules, a Gram Panchayat where an Executive Officer is appointed is called a Major Panchayat. Whereas, a Gram Panchayat which has been not notified for appointment of an executive officer is called a non-notified Gram Panchayat or a minor Gram Panchayat. There are 1472 notified Gram Panchayats and the remaining 20,471 Gram Panchayats are non-notified Gram Panchayats.

As per the existing rules a Gram Panchayat with income of Rs. 40,000/- per year and more can be notified as Grade-II, Notified Panchayat and an Executive officer Grade-II is appointed. Whereas, a Gram Panchayat with an income of Rs.60,000/- per year and above can be notified as Grade I notified Gram Panchayats, and an Executive Officer Grade I is appointed. However, these Gram Panchayats which have either full time or part time staff.

Further, the full time employees of the Gram Panchayats are provincialised and the Government is meeting the expenditure on their salaries and the salary grant is being regularly released by the Government.  

4.11.1.2. Administration of panchayats at the erstwhile block level

At the erstwhile block level on an average one Extension Officer (Panchayats) is posted for three Mandalas and there would be about 50 to 60 Gram Panchayats under each Extension Officer. He is now a Gazetted Officer.
4.11.1.3. Administration of gram panchayats at the division level

The jurisdiction of a Divisional Panchayat Officer is coterminous with the jurisdiction of a Revenue Division. A Divisional Panchayat Officer has about 300 to 400 Gram Panchayats under his jurisdiction. Also, the span of control would be over 6 to 8 Extension Officers (Panchayats).

4.11.1.4. Administration of gram panchayats at district level

The Gram Panchayat administration at District level will be under the supervision of District Panchayat Officer. On an average there will be about 900 to 1200 Gram Panchayats in a District. A District Panchayat Officer is required to inspect all the Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction between two ordinary elections, inspect all notified Gram Panchayats annually. Functions of Extension Officer (Panchayats) are to

- Exercise supervision over and provide guidance to the Gram Panchayats and their executive authorities in his jurisdiction in the administration of Gram Panchayats.
- Visit all the Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction not less than twice a year for the purpose of inspection and superintendence irrespective of his visits for holding enquiries etc. and shall visit all Gram Panchayats once in a quarter as such each Extension Officer has to do 100 to 120 inspections per year.
- Hold enquiries and submit reports to higher authorities on complaints of maladministration of Gram Panchayats.
- Maintain necessary statistics about the working of Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction and submit periodic reports.
- Bring to the notice of the District Panchayat Officer and the Divisional Panchayat Officer, the disqualification of members, sarpanches of Gram Panchayats and the casual vacancies in a Gram Panchayat and also, conduct elections.
Provide guidance to executive authorities of Gram Panchayats in the matter of preparation of annual administration reports, periodical returns, replies to the audit reports, budget estimate, attend Gram Sabha meetings etc., and

Assist the Gram Panchayats wherever necessary in the matter of realisation of taxes, fees or other sums, due to the Gram Panchayats.

4.12. PANCHAYAT SECRETARY - EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

It shall be within the powers of the sarpanch to exercise controlling authority over the Panchayat Secretary himself starts acting an independent authority ignoring the Gram Panchayat or acts in such a manner that he prefers the directions of the District Collector Divisional Panchayat Officer to the directions and orders of the Gram Panchayat, the same would amount to imposing extra legal authority on the Gram Panchayat, which is never the intention of the constitutional amendment or the Act.  

4.12.1. Panchayat Secretary Services

The Panchayat Secretary service shall be constituted from the following cadres:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Category I</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Grade-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Category II</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Grade-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Category III</td>
<td>Village Development Officer, Grade-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Category IV</td>
<td>Village Development Officer, Grade-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Category V</td>
<td>Village Development Officer, Grade-III, qualified Village Administrative Officers after obtaining their option, Junior Assistants, Junior Assistant-cum-Bill Collectors/Bill Collectors working in Gram Panchayats in sanctioned provincialised posts with regular Time Scale and are entitled to draw their salaries from Treasury, Supernumerary Junior Assistants from Revenue Department after obtaining their option. Surplus Junior Assistants consequent on abolition of the post of Extension Officer (Panchayats).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panchayat Secretary</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.12.2. Method of Appointment

Appointment to the posts specified in column (1) of the table below shall be made by the method specified against the corresponding entry in column (2) thereof:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Category (1)</th>
<th>Method of Appointment (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Category I Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>By transfer from the Executive Officer (Gram Panchayats) Grade-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Category II Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>By transfer from the Executive Officer (Gram Panchayats) Grade-II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Category III Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>By transfer from the Village Development Officer, Grade I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Category IV Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>By transfer from the Village Development Officer, Grade-II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Category V Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>By transfer from the Village Development Officer, Grade III, qualified Village Administrative Officers after obtaining their option. Junior Assistant, Junior Assistant-cum Bill Collectors/Bill Collectors working in Gram Panchayats, in sanctioned provincialised posts with regular Time Scale and are entitled to draw their salaries from Treasury, Supernumerary Junior Assistants from Revenue Department after obtaining their option. Surplus Junior Assistants consequent on abolition of the post of Extension Officer (Panchayats).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Category VI Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>By transfer from Surplus Man Power Pool provided by Finance Department, surplus identified by Collectors as per G.O. Ms. No. 24, Finance (SMPC) Dept., Dt. 09-01-2002 and Memo. No. 3887-B 1 3621 SMPC/2001, Dt. 28-02-2002 &amp; re-deployment from other Government Departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Category VII Panchayat Secretary</td>
<td>On transfer from the cadre of qualified Village Servants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A quota of 20% of the posts of Panchayat Secretaries shall be filled up by the qualified Village Servants out of the arising vacancies from the category of Panchayat Secretaries which are held by Village Administrative Officers. This sub-rule pertains to Category VII Panchayat Secretaries only.

The posts from which the Panchayat Secretaries are drawn as indicated at column (2) in Table of Rule 3, shall cease to exist in the Parent Department as and when the candidate join as Panchayat Secretary in Gram Panchayat.

1. There will be no common seniority for the post of Panchayat Secretary. The original promotional channels of different feeder categories shall be protected as such.

2. All the Panchayat Secretaries from Categories I to VII shall be posted out side their native Mandals.

3. Village Development Officer (Men) and Village Development Officer, (Women) shall be treated as one category and posted as Panchayat Secretaries.

4. The Un-qualified Village Administrative Officers shall be designated as Part-Time Assistants to Gram Panchayats.

4.12.3. Unit of Appointment

For the purpose of appointment by transfer for categories I and II Panchayat Secretaries, zone shall be the unit of appointment:

For the categories III to VII Panchayat Secretaries each District shall be the unit of appointment.

4.12.4. Appointing and disciplinary authority

For categories I and II Panchayat Secretaries, the Commissioner, Panchayat Raj & Rural Employment, shall be the appointing and disciplinary authority. For categories III to VII Panchayat Secretaries, the District Collector shall be the appointing and disciplinary authority.
4.12.5. Transfers

The Commissioner, Panchayat Raj & Rural Employment, shall be the transferring authority in respect of categories I & II Panchayat Secretaries, within the Zone and the District Collector shall be the transferring authority within the District. The District Collector is the transferring authority in respect of categories III to VII Panchayat Secretaries within the District.

4.12.6. Qualifications

No person shall be eligible for appointment by transfer to the post of Panchayat Secretary unless he or she has passed S.S.C. Examination or its equivalent.

4.12.7. Training

Every person appointed to the service shall undergo training as per requirements of the duties to be performed by them including field visits for such duration as may be prescribed by Government from time to time and the training shall be imparted under the supervision of Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development.

4.12.8. Probation

Every person appointed by transfer to any Category of Panchayat Secretary shall be on probation for a total period of one year on duty within a continuous period of two years.

4.13. FUNCTIONS OF PANCHAYAT SECRETARY

4.13.1 Administrative Functions

1. He / She shall maintain the required registers of the Gram Panchayat and collect taxes promptly.

2. He / She is subordinate to the Gram Panchayat and shall function under the control of the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat.

3. He / She convenes the meeting of the Gram Panchayat as directed by Sarpanch.
4. He / She shall attend the meeting of the Gram Panchayat or any committee thereon.

5. He / She shall implement the resolutions of the Gram Panchayat and of the committees thereof.

6. He / She shall take the responsibility of the protection of Panchayat lands and properties.

7. He / She shall report of encroachments, damage or misuse of Panchayat lands and buildings if any to the higher authorities.

8. He / She shall assist authorities during the floods, cyclone, accidents, etc and take up preventive, relief and rehabilitation work.

9. He / She shall report any outbreak of communicable diseases especially Malaria, Japanese encephalitis and Gastroenteritis and other such diseases to the nearest primary Health Center immediately.

10. He / She shall assist the integrated child development scheme functionaries in implementing their various activities.

11. He / She shall maintain births and deaths registration primarily as per act and rules and also issue Birth and Death Certificates. Supply copy of Birth and death information to the Revenue Department (concerned Tahsildars/Dy.Tahsildars) by 5th of succeeding month with proper acknowledgement.

12. He/she shall assist Gram Sabha in the identification of beneficiaries, disbursement of loans and their recoveries.

13. He/she shall perform election duties.

14. He/she shall report outbreak of epidemics.

15. He/she shall report cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

16. He/she shall report on the atrocities against women and children to the authorities concerned and to take action within 24 hours.
17. He/she strive for eradication of un-touch ability by providing access to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in temples and removal of discrimination in all forms against the Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe population.

18. He/she shall assist in giving information to the concerned officials about any black market sales of seeds fertilizers and pesticides.

4.13.2 Functions under Community Welfare and Development

1. He/she shall assist in work relating to payment of old age pension, widow pension, disabled pension.

2. He/she shall furnish the particulars about implementation of developmental activities.

3. He/she shall prepare the draft list of heads of households under the poverty link, keeping the names starting with the lowest levels of income and upward.

4. He/she should identify the needs of village and assist in preparation of village plans.

5. He/she shall motivate the women for formation of new self help groups by encouraging the habit of thrift, impart best principles of group management in the self help groups through regular training and capacity building.

6. He/she shall attend monthly staff meetings, convened by President, Mandal Praja Parishad and Mandal Parishad Development Officer and other meetings convened by District Officers.


8. He/she shall assist agricultural development in implementing its programmes and disseminate extension information.

9. He/she shall assist in implementation of Indiramma Programme, Indira Prabha and Employment Guarantee scheme.
10. He/she shall organize to collect the details of seedling planted in each location, motivate the concerned to protect them and collect percentage of survival periodically.

11. He/she shall assist the education department in their enrolment drive.

12. He/she shall assist in conducting the literacy classes.

13. (a) He / she shall assist in maintaining and up keeping of Gram Panchayat Information Boards.

(b) He/she shall assist in maintaining of information Boards relating to assets in the village.

4.13.3. Functions of Co-ordination

1. He/she shall maintain list of beneficiaries under various schemes and mobilize the public participation for joint forest management / community forest development.

2. He /she shall organise meetings and group discussions among villagers for Community work.

4.13.4. Miscellaneous Functions

He/she shall attend to any other duties as assigned by the authorities from time to time.

4.14. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF EXTENSION OFFICER

The powers and functions of Gazetted Extension Officers (Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Grade-I and Extension Officers (Panchayat Raj and Rural Development) are as follows:

4.14.1. The Administrative Powers of Extension Officer

i. He should review the tour diary of Village Development Officers working in the Mandal;

ii. He should tour 20 days in a month and submit his tour diary to the Mandal Parishad Development Officer every month;
iii. He will act as in-charge Mandal Parishad Development Officer in the absence of Mandal Parishad Development Officer under the orders of Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad;

iv. He shall initiate performance reports of Village Development Officers working under the control of Mandal Parishad Development Officer;

v. He shall exercise supervision and control and provide guidance to the Gram Panchayats and their executive authorities in his jurisdiction;

vi. He shall inspect all non-notified Gram Panchayats in every half year, and see that defects pointed out by the Inspecting Officers are rectified by the executive authorities, immediately within two months. He shall visit all the Gram Panchayats once in every quarter, once for inspection and once for rectification of defects, irrespective of other visits;

vii. He shall hold enquiries and submit reports to higher authorities on complaints of mal-administration in non-notified Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction;

viii. He shall review regularly the implementation of Gram Panchayat works and programmes important schemes like Jawahar Gramina, Samriddhi Yojana, Finance Commission grants, maintain necessary statistics about the working of Gram Panchayats including Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, and other Government grants;

ix. He shall be responsible for the implementation of all other directions and instructions issued by the higher authorities on the administration of Gram Panchayats;

x. He shall submit reports to the Mandal Parishad Development Officer on the disqualification of members or Sarpanches of Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction;

xi. He shall verify and prepare the list of casual vacancies of members and Sarpanches of Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction and submit to Mandal Parishad Development Officer.
xii. He shall conduct the cursory inspection of notified Gram Panchayats in every month and submit reports, as per rules.

xiii. He is the authority competent to sanction casual leave to the Executive Officers of Gram Panchayats.

4.14.2. The Financial Powers of Extension Officer

1. He is empowered to forward the proposals submitted by the Village Development Officers to the Mandal Parishad Development Officers after thorough scrutiny of them;

2. He shall certify each proposal furnished by the Village Development Officers before recommending or rejecting them to the Mandal Parishad Development Officer;

3. He shall be the joint signatory along with the Mandal Parishad Development Officers for the funds operated in grounding of Development Schemes;

4. He shall extend co-operation to the Bankers in recovery of loans and also participate in Joint Mandal Level Bankers meeting;

5. He shall be responsible to intimate Mandal Parishad Development Officer immediately on the occurrence of misutilisation of funds in different schemes implemented through Mandals;

6. He shall guide the Executive authorities of Gram Panchayats in the matter of preparation of annual budgets, administration reports, periodical returns, progress reports, replies to audit reports, and execution of works;

7. He shall assist the Gram Panchayats, wherever necessary in the matter of collection of taxes, fees and others amounts, due to the Gram Panchayats;

8. He shall attend the auctions and sales conducted by the Gram Panchayats and authenticate the bid amounts, as per rules;

9. He shall guide the Gram Panchayats in augmenting the resources of the Gram panchayats to strengthen the financial position of Gram Panchayats;

10. He should countersign the traveling allowance bills of Sarpanches and Executive Officers of Gram Panchayats and their staff.
4.14.3. *Extension Officer shall be responsible to arrange Programmes and undertaking Trainings.*

1. He should attend all training programmes arranged at District level along with the Mandal Parishad Development Officer;

2. He shall make efforts in publicity of schemes implemented in all Villages of that Mandal and also organise infrastructure training and technology inputs for beneficiaries under Government Poverty Alleviation Programmes;

3. He shall communicate latest information and technical knowledge of the implementation of Government Schemes to all Sarpanches and Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency members;

4. He shall feedback the views of Sarpanches on implementation of Government Schemes;

5. He should arrange training to Sarpanches at Mandal Headquarters bi-monthly with the co-operation of Mandal Parishad Development Officer duly inviting District Officials of District Rural Development Authority (DRDA), Scheduled Castes (SC), Backward Castes (BC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Housing etc., who are well versed with the subject for the implementation of Government Schemes effectively;

6. He shall depute Village Development Officers for training arranged at District and Divisional level;

7. He shall prepare plans, conduct surveys for all Government programmes;

8. He shall motivate rural women for formulating Self Help Groups (SHGs);

9. He shall plan marketing of Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) products.

4.14.4. *Co-Ordination*

1. He should maintain cordial relations with Mandal and District level sectorial officers for successful grounding of different schemes;

2. He should also be in constant touch with the Bankers situated in the Mandal area;

3. He should act as Liaison Officer between Sarpanches and Mandal Parishad Development Officer.
4.14.5. General

He is responsible for effective communication and implementation of different public welfare Government schemes implemented through Mandal. He should be also a co-ordinator between officials and non-officials related to the Mandal activities.

4.15. FUNCTIONS OF DIVISIONAL PANCHAYAT OFFICER

- Exercise supervision and control over the Extension officers (Panchayats) and their offices within his jurisdiction.

- Exercise supervision and provide guidance to Gram Panchayats and their executives in his jurisdiction in the administration of Gram Panchayats.

- Visit all the Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction at least once a year for the purposes of inspection and superintendence, irrespective of his visits for the holding enquiries etc.,

- A Divisional Panchayat Officer has to inspect about 300 Panchayats in a year.

- Visit Offices of the Extension officers (Panchayats as often as necessary and not less than twice a year for the purpose of inspection, the number of Extension officers under each Divisional Panchayat officer would be between 4 to 6.

- Hold enquiries and submit reports to higher authorities on complaints on mal-administration of Gram Panchayats.

- Maintain necessary statistics about the working of Gram Panchayats in his jurisdiction and submit periodical reports on progress of works of NREGS and Tenth Finance Commission.

- Inspect works under the matching grants and revision of taxes.

- Maintain personal files of (1) Executive officers within his jurisdiction, (2) Extension officers (Panchayats) and (3) Divisional Panchayat Officers;

- Review the audit replies to audit reports only in respect of the notified Gram Panchayats.
4.16. **SARPANCH**

The Sarpanch or Chairperson is the head of the Gram Panchayat. The elected members of the Gram Panchayat elect from among themselves a Sarpanch and a Deputy Sarpanch for a term of five years. In some places the panchayat president is directly elected by village people. The Sarpanch presides over the meetings of the Gram Panchayat and supervises its working. He implements the development schemes of the villages. The Deputy Sarpanch, who has the power to make his own decisions, assists the Sarpanch in his work.\(^{15}\)

4.16.1. **Responsibilities of Sarpanch**

1. Looking after street lights, construction and repair work of the roads in the villages and also the village markets, fairs, festivals and celebrations.

2. Keeping a record of births, death and marriages in the village.

3. Looking after public health and hygiene by providing facilities for sanitation and drinking.

4. Providing for education.

4.16.2. **Powers and functions of the Sarpanch**

1. Make arrangements for the elections of the Upa-Sarpanch within one month from the date of occurrence of the vacancy;

2. Have full access to the records of the Gram Panchayat:

3. Exercise administrative control over the Executive Authority, if there is one, for the purpose of implement of the resolutions of the Gram.

4. Exercise all the powers and perform all the functions specifically conferred or imposed on the Sarpanch by this Act or the rules made there under;

5. Have power to require any Executive Authority of any village within the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat to furnish any information on any matter within such categories as may be prescribed in respect of such village or any person or property therein, required for the purpose of this Act:
6. Intimate to the District Panchayat Officer, every case where any member has incurred any disqualification.

7. Act only within the terms of sanction given in any resolution of the Gram Panchayat.

4.16.3. Emergency Powers of the Sarpanch

In case of emergency, the Sarpanch, may, in consultation with the Executive Authority, if any, direct the execution of any work or the doing of any act which requires the sanction of the Gram Panchayat or any of its communities and the immediate execution or the doing of which is, in his opinion, necessary for the service or safety of the general public, but he shall report the action taken under this section and the reasons thereof to the Gram Panchayat or the concerned committee at its next meeting.

Provided that he shall not direct the execution of any work or the doing of any act in contravention of any order of the Government.

4.16.4. Devolution and delegation of Sarpanch's powers and functions and filling up of vacancies in the office of Sarpanch

1. When the office of Sarpanch is vacant, the Upa-Sarpanch shall exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Sarpanch until a new Sarpanch is declared elected and assumes office.

2. If the Sarpanch has been continuously absent from jurisdiction for more than fifteen days or is restrained by an order of a Court from exercising the powers and performing the functions of the Sarpanch, or is incapacitated for more than fifteen days, his powers and functions during such absence, restraint or incapacity shall devolve on the Upa-Sarpanch.

3. When the Sarpanch is under suspension or when the office of Sarpanch is vacant or the Sarpanch has been continuously absent from jurisdiction for more than fifteen days or is restrained by an order of a Court from exercising the powers and performing the functions of Sarpanch or is incapacitated for more than fifteen days and the Upa-Sarpanch also is under suspension or there is either a vacancy in the office of Upa-Sarpanch or the Upa-Sarpanch has been
continuously absent from jurisdiction for more than fifteen days or is restrained
by an order of a Court from exercising the powers and performing the functions
of the Upa-Sarpanch or is incapacitated for more than fifteen days, the powers
and functions of the Sarpanch shall devolve on a member of Gram Panchayat
appointed by the Commissioner in this behalf.

The member so appointed shall be styled as the temporary Sarpanch and he
shall exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Sarpanch until a new
Sarpanch or Upa-Sarpanch is declared elected or either the Sarpanch or the Upa-
Sarpanch ceases to be under suspension or returns to jurisdiction or ceases to be
restrained by an order of a Court or recovers from his incapacity, as the case may be:

4. The Upa-Sarpanch or the temporary Sarpanch appointed under sub-section (3)
shall report to the District Panchayat Officer, any vacancy in the office of
Sarpanch within one month from the date of occurrence of such vacancy.

Subject to such rules as may be prescribed, the Sarpanch may, by an order in
writing, delegate any of his powers and functions, with such restrictions and
conditions as may be specified in the order, to the Upa-Sarpanch or in case there is a
vacancy in the office of Upa-Sarpanch or the Upa-Sarpanch has been continuously
absent from jurisdiction for more than fifteen days or is restrained by an order of a
Court from exercising his powers and performing his functions to any member.

4.17. SUMMING UP

It is to the credit of Gram Panchayats that, inspite of weak financial support
from the State, they have managed to generate significant level of own resources.
This, however, does not take away from the fact that greater financial devolution to
Gram Panchayats is desirable. In comparison to other states such as Kerala, West
Bengal, Maharashtra and Karnataka, financial devolution in Andhra Pradesh is
significantly lower.

The limited number of functions transferred to Panchayat Raj institutions has
resulted in greater departmental control at the local level. Although the Government
of Andhra Pradesh has announced the devolution of all 29 functions mentioned in
the Eleventh Schedule, the complementary devolution of funds and functionaries is
yet to take place.
In a multi-tier government system with sharing revenue pattern, the local government at the grassroots may be required to be fed from below to a certain extent. However, the level of financial support extended to local governments must be commensurate with the degree of functional autonomy granted. Therefore, the functions taken up by local governments from State departments must be complemented with due funds out of the departmental budgets.

Although, the constitutional amendment was an empowering tool for local self governance in India, it was not a panacea for all the problems being faced by the Panchayat Raj system. The power rooted in caste, class, gender and sometimes even religion determines the very functioning of the Panchayat Raj system. While, legal reservations for the disempowered classes allows them access to the Panchayat system, it does not necessarily remove the larger power structure, which continues to determine who will have the final say in the functioning of the Panchayat. The real change will occur when the informal power structures become more egalitarian.
REFERENCES

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