(1) Significance and Relevance of the Study

India is a land of villages and her economy is mainly rural. The village is an important unit in the organisation of Indian social life. More than seventy five per cent population still lives in the villages. The concern of the government for the life, liberty and prosperity of the rural people, soon after independence, was reflected in various measures adopted by it to better their lot. As a matter of fact, the prominent leaders of freedom struggle such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Jaya Prakash Narayan had already indicated that the major task of Independent India would be to take democracy at the grass roots level and to involve the rural masses in the task of national reconstruction. Gandhi, for example, advocated that, "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village."  

India will perish, unless we reconstruct, improve and develop the villages. Mahatma Gandhi said:

_if India is not to perish, we have to begin with lower rung of ladder. If that was rotten, all work done at the top or at the intermediate rung was bound to ultimately fall. In the approach to rural development, the city-village antagonism becomes the over-riding issue and exploiting the villages itself is organised violence._

Rabindra Nath Tagore has also the same feelings when he said that the status of mother India has been reduced to that of the maid servant, due to draining of resources from villages to cities. Gandhi maintained that "the blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want this blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the villages." His plea was for radical decentralisation and liberation of the villages

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3 Quoted in _ibid_, p. 9.
from exploitation. The village is the fundamental unit for the development of our country and the state, because the root has to be strong for the growth of the tree.\(^4\)

Mahatma Gandhi had envisaged the vision of self-sustained and self-sufficient village republics capable of managing their affairs. The panchayati raj as postulated by Mahatma Gandhi, was given a place in Article 40 of Indian Constitution under the heading Directive Principles of State Policy. This was really an integral part of the concept of “Pooran Swaraj” and “Gram Swaraj” as being two integrally inter-related concepts. His concept of (Pooran Swaraj) meant several levels of autonomous development of local communities. It also meant that there has to be growth and development of the individual of the local community in every walk of life.\(^5\) Mahatma Gandhi said:

\[\text{The government of the village will be conducted by a panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, males and females, possessing the minimum prescribed qualifications. It will have all the authority and jurisdictions in the accepted sense, this panchayat will be legislative, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office.}\(^6\)

Jaya Prakash Narayan, also cherished to strengthen the grass roots democracy for quite a long time since Sarvodaya movement in 1954. He always stressed the requirements of decentralisation. He emphasised repeatedly that panchayati raj should be strengthened.

He was of the view that:

\[\text{A proper balance must be struck between a state government on the one hand and organs of local self-government, or panchayati raj institutions on the other. For this purpose, it may be necessary to provide for these panchayati raj institutions in the constitution itself and clearly short list their powers, so that they may exercise legitimate powers and remain answerable to their constituents.}\(^7\)

\(\text{\cite{ibid, p.10}}\)

\(\text{\cite{Singhvi, "Public Opinion Is of Utmost Importance", Kurukshtra, Vol. XXXVII, No. 6, March, 1989, P. 12.}}\)


\(\text{\cite{Bhatia, Indian Democracy at the Grassroots, Indian Institute of International Understanding, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 155-156.}}\)
Then Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru proclaimed at a place in Rajasthan called Nagore that panchayati raj institutions were going to be a bedrock for grass roots democracy. He thought that unless this kind of grass roots democracy could be developed there would be lack of public participation in the democratic process, and this lack of participation in the democratic process would also be reflected in an equal or greater lack of participation in the development process. He, therefore, thought of panchayati raj institutions as integral both to democratic self-government and to democratic development at the grass roots and this is how it was conceived.\(^8\) Pandit Nehru said:

Democracy was not entirely new to India, for its roots could be found also in our old panchayat system. This system probably came into being because the village and the people were too distant from the centre of political power. You should work in mutual co-operation. In political life everyone has a vote, in economic matters everyone has equal opportunities, in our panchayats also everyone should be considered equal. There should be no distinction between man and woman, high and low. We have to march ahead in a spirit of unity and brotherhood and with faith in our work and ourselves.\(^9\)

Pandit Nehru again said:

India will progress only, when the people living in villages become politically conscious. The progress of our country is bound up with the progress in our village. If our villages make progress, India will become a strong nation and nobody will be able to stop its onward march if you flinch from your determination and get involved in mutual quarrels and petty factions, you will not be able to succeed in your mission.\(^10\)

Then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said:

Over eighty per cent of our people live in the villages. India is poor because the villages of India are poor. India will be rich if the villages of India are rich. Therefore, the basic problem of India is to remove poverty from the Indian villages. Some years ago, we abolished the zamidari and jagirdari systems in various parts of India

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8 Quoted in L.M. Singhvi, op. cit., p. 13.


10 Ibid. p. 3.
because the villages of India could not prosper under a semi-feudal system of landownershlp. This is not enough. We have to go ahead further. First each village should have a semi-autonomous panchayat. Panchayat should be given greater powers. For we want the villager to have means of real swaraj in his own village.¹¹

Mrs. Indira Gandhi again proclaimed on 3rd April, 1984 that these programmes can succeed only when there is full awareness and participation by the public as a whole, specially by those who are to be benefitted by them. Panchayati raj has a vital role in creating an atmosphere of cooperation of self-help and a spirit of self-reliance. Our villages have been the basic units of administration in India since ancient times, and they can lend a big hand in the uplift of our poor people. We have tried to put village panchayats on a sound footing and galvanise them into live units of administration, vesting in them most of the functions concerning the welfare of village people.¹²

Rajiv Gandhi also visited extensively the village belt, without ignoring even remote corners, where none of the officials dared to visit. He tried to meet directly with each and everyone to have a first hand Information about their hardships, as well as needs of the villagers. Rajiv Gandhi realised that decentralisation of power can, to a great extent, solve their problem. Therefore, democracy at the grass roots was hailed through a process of consultations. Thousands of officials were involved with democracy and development at grass roots level. The need for early devolution of power was fully realized. "Power to the People" was assured to ensure democracy at the grass roots level. Rajiv Gandhi on the floor of Lok Sabha opined:

Democracy in our country neither could be true to Its conception nor proper to Its perception, unless it reaches the grass roots. Although our democratic structure is unbelievably strong, its weakness at the foundation cannot be overlooked. The number of persons holding elective offices in well founded Institutions of democracy have been far too small in relation to the size of our electorate. Once we accord to democracy in the panchayats the same sanctity now enjoyed by Parliament and the State Legislatures, we will be opening the doors to the partlcrpatlon In democratic institutions of something like seven lakhs elected representatives.¹³

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¹² Ibid, p. 5.

¹³ Quoted in S.S. Bhatia, op. cit., pp. 152-54.
Therefore, the subject of panchayati raj acquired a greater significance with the introduction of 64th Amendment Bill by then the Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi on 15th May, 1989, which sought to amend the constitution to ensure a truly representative strong and effective panchayati raj in India. The introduction of the Bill, as Rajiv Gandhi said, was the culmination of a process which began years ago when the need for giving real responsibilities to the panchayati raj institutions, was felt. Although the Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha but it was defeated in Rajya Sabha and could not get majority vote. Yet panchayati raj will continue to be of greater interest in making them catalytic agent of change and development, particularly in rural areas. Even the new government has given top priority to panchayati raj. More importantly as a part of this process of stimulating power involvement, a genuine devolution of power to panchayati raj Institutions will take place. Panchayats alongwith other rural institutions, will bring in the necessary reforms.14

Therefore, the relevance of panchayati raj is greater for rural development. The advantages are derived from its ability to involve people in decision-making, bring in awareness and motivate people, build up development psyche, discover dormant resources and skills and endeavour to activate them. It has also the advantage of realistic appreciation of local needs and participation of people in planning which are crucial to the success of the planning effort. This will ensure the accelerated development of the economy coupled with social justice. Even the world opinion is veering round to the view that local government is essential for national growth and for effective people’s participation and that it is an integral part of the entire democratic process.

The reason for the popularity of this field as a subject of research during the last two decades or so are many. First of all, it may be mentioned that central government sponsored National Institute of Community Development (NICD), Hyderabad has conducted extensive and intensive research in this area. Secondly, panchayati raj has been hailed and applauded by many as a mighty experiment and revolutionary step in the direction of national development and national reconstruction. Over and above the aims and objectives it meant to achieve and cherish, it has been seen as an innovation in the field of political institution building at grass roots level in a developing nation. It is an indisputable fact that the political, social and economic development of the millions residing in rural India depends on the successful and effective working of the panchayati raj institution. Majority of people still lives in villages and their destiny is to be moulded and guided to great a

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extent by panchayati raj institution. This, in fact, makes panchayati raj institution a very important field of study and research.\(^{15}\) Therefore, this study, on panchayati raj in Himachal Pradesh is justifiable in terms of its relevance and significance.

The study of panchayati raj in Himachal is socially relevant and academically significant. The major portion of population of Himachal, as elsewhere in India, lives in the villages and the working of panchayati raj institutions in this state has affected the life of the rural masses and they have realized a sense of participation in the democratic functioning of the government. The problems of rural India have recently been highlighted through the panchayati raj leadership in the form of formation of and demonstration by the different Kisan bodies right from the village to the state and central level. In Himachal particularly the problem becomes more interesting and relevant to investigate because various groups are articulating the interest of the landed peasantry. Even the landless are slowly tending to mobilize and organize themselves for higher wages and other related demands. Because of all this, the study of working of panchayati raj in Himachal is significant both at social and academic level. At social level, in the sense, that the problem of rural society of Himachal has been investigated and no work has been done on this problem. Only S.Bhatnagar's work on panchayati raj in Kangra district is an exception.\(^{16}\) But at that time Kangra was a part of Punjab. After 1966, it became a part of Himachal Pradesh.

(2) Survey of Existing Literature

Published and unpublished material on panchayati raj institutions and their functioning in India is really very vast and evergrowing in volumes. So much work has been done and is being done on different aspects of panchayati raj in different parts of the country that any review of literature, however well attempted, will have to remain inexhaustive and incomplete. The reason is that panchayati raj as a landmark in the field of political institution building attracted the attention of political leaders, bureaucrats, academicians and researchers and all of them discussed and wrote on panchayati raj problems. Consequently, the published material in the form of books, seminar


\(^{16}\) S.Bhatnagar's Exceptional Work Is *Panchayati Raj in Kangra District*, Orient Longman, New Delhi,
reports, conference reports, committee reports, group discussion reports, group research reports, individual research work, papers and articles in leading Indian journals, was made available to the reading public.

For the sake of convenience, following categories are made. This categorisation is based on three fold criteria- the form and the content of the work, the type of the data used therein and the approach to the study.

(i) The first category includes books on panchayati raj where textual treatment has been given to the subject, attempting to cover almost all aspects; where the approach is mainly legalistic, structural and descriptive and where all data used are secondary.  

(ii) The second category consists of the books which are panchayati raj problem oriented. A few of them can serve textbooks on the subject but in treatment of the panchayati raj problems, authors have displaced sharp analytical faculty. Though the approach to the study is mainly structural, yet the functional aspects have has not been neglected altogether. Data used are predominantly of secondary nature, but author's personal information, observation and impression have also been used at appropriate points of discussion making these books thematically interesting and informative.

(iii) In the third category are included the books which happen to be the results of the seminars, conferences, symposia, group discussions or compilations of papers contributed for a volume on panchayati raj, collection in such volume are of assorted type; some contributions are based on empirical data collected for the purpose in area and some are purely of reflective types.

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As regards approach, some use structural-legalistic, mainly descriptive, and some use functional approach, while others consider both structural and functional approaches equally important.  

(iv) This category includes publications of central and state governments on panchayati raj in general and on specific issues, and reports of various committees and high power commissions set up from time to time by central government and state government to review the working of panchayati raj in general or specific institution or some problem in its working. In their findings the reports generally show the use of both primary and secondary data; much reliance has been placed on discussion of the committee's members or committee's field investigator, with persons involved directly or indirectly in the working of panchayati raj, solving the practical problems in the working of panchayati raj.  

(v) In this category, all the books which are the reports of research projects on different aspects of panchayati raj. Such projects are the results of the group efforts; generally under the directorship of a scholar in the field, a team of researchers and field investigators carry on the task of field studies and data collection and processing etc. and assist till the finalization of the report. Such

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projects are sponsored and financially supported by various agencies of education, quasi-government and voluntary organisations.\textsuperscript{21}

(vi) This is a category of reports of the individual research project leading to the degree of doctorate and then published in book form.\textsuperscript{22} There are two types of such individual research projects one leading to the award of the degree of doctorate (Ph.D.) and the other post-doctoral research project. Such projects are financed by the agencies like U.G.C. and I.C.S.S.R. Some reports however, remain unpublished.

Reports of these research projects both published and unpublished are altogether a different category from those mentioned earlier. Actually the report of a research project is based on analysis of primary data collected in a specified area according to the decided sample. Though such studies are limited to small areas, their findings may have important implications and utility for wider areas. Therefore, their contributions should not be underrated as studies of such nature may help in the long run, in developing scientific theory of panchayati raj. Such research reports are less structural and more functional in their approach and are generally known as empirical studies.

(vii) This category consists of articles and papers on the various aspects of panchayati raj which have been published in foreign and Indian periodicals from time to time. All types of approaches are adopted but more prominent are the structural-functional approach, the institutional legalistic approach and the reflective normative approach.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{22} See for Instance, Birkeshwar Prasad Singh, Development Administration in India, Janata Prakashan, Patna; R.C. Prasad, Democracy and Development: The Grassroots Experience in India, Rachna Prakashan, New Delhi, 1971; and S.Bhatnagar, Panchayati Raj in Kangra District, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1974.

\textsuperscript{23} For example see, Balvantray Mehta, "Some Recent Trends in Panchayati Raj," The Indian
Thus, there is no end even to mentioning the literature on panchayati raj. Therefore, a brief review of selected literature which helped us in understanding concepts, issues, problems and developing insights for this study are presented in this section.

(i) Review of literature on panchayati raj at India level;

(ii) Review of literature on panchayati raj at state level;

(iii) Review of literature on panchayati raj at Himachal level.

We are presenting the review in each category in chronological order.

(I) At India Level

Malvlya (1956) explains the historical and ideological background of the gram panchayats in India from times immemorial, and focuses as to how the village panchayats in this ancient country developed into a sound system of democracy in accordance with our indigenous traditions and culture. The author concludes with a suggestion that the village panchayats are not the relic of tribalism or feudalism but are the results of mature political thinking through ages. Village panchayats in India could really succeed in bringing about decentralization of economic and political power under the conditions of social and economic equality. Attempts should be made to establish village panchayats in the country with greater powers. Substantial powers should be given only to those panchayats which have brought about redistribution of land, established co-operatives, and have dissolved local factions and groups through more or less unanimous elections and decisions. Less powers should be given to other panchayats, says the author.  

Khanna (1956) deals with the structure, machinery and working of panchayati raj institutions in India in historical perspective. He says that panchayati raj has been suffering from a
crisis of confidence and a low level of self-esteem. The panchayati raj system also suffers from some other difficulties like inadequate financial resources, inegalitarian attitude of officials, mass illiteracy, ignorance, class consciousness, party strife and limited financial and administrative autonomy and lack of faith in grass roots democracy. But despite all these defects and deficiencies, the institutions of panchayati raj have added a 'new dimension' to rural development and has brought socio-economic democracy to the door-steps of the common man in Indian villages. The author suggests that the basic needs of panchayati raj are (i) sound, scientific and properly articulated structure of government; and (ii) an effective administrative machinery geared up to operate 'without friction', so that the panchayati raj institutions can function as the organs of civic and socio-economic democracy, and instruments of rural development.25

Mathur and Narain (1969) concentrate basically on two issues: (i) panchayati raj and democracy and (ii) the politico-administrative aspects of panchayati raj. They are of the view that there is a conflict between panchayati raj and parliamentary democracy. The entry of political parties in rural politics has been considered both an inhabitable and desirable. The need of close linkage between panchayati raj institutions and community development approach is emphasised. They conclude that the problem of official and non-official relationship is not so baffling as it is made out to be. They suggest that the training and education programme for the elected representative is essential for the success.26

Desai (1969) deals with the political struggle on the basis of caste and class in the context of panchayati raj. He says that the panchayati raj has provided a new framework for political caste struggle between rival landlords jealous of the prestige of each other and determined to maintained their strength at the cost of the rival group. On the positive side of the panchayati raj system, he maintains that the villagers are becoming election minded because it represents their choice.27

Meddick (1970) in respect of rural local government in India discusses that the panchayati raj is playing the great role in certain areas, particularly in promoting social change, economic

26 M.V.Mathur and Iqbal Narain (eds.) Panchayati Raj, Planning and Democracy, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969.
development and intelligent administration of representative government. But all these can be adversely affected if panchayati raj is ineffective or becomes a vehicle of partiality, nepotism and corruption. The author suggests that there must be co-operatives, voluntary associations, private firms and individuals and government agencies dealing with different aspects of rural development, all of which have to contribute to the process of plan fulfilment. In India, the rural government should be democratic and effective. This is possible only, if panchayati raj is organised and guided to serve its long term objectives.  

Maheshwari (1971) describes the structure, personnel, finance and functioning of rural as well as urban local government. He concludes that inadequate financial resources, low pay scales, incompetent personnel, excessive interference by the state government impeding thereby, a healthy growth of local governmental politician in the day to day administration, wide spread corruption, nepotism and favouritism in the local civil service are cited as one of the major causes of ineffectiveness of local government's development. He suggests that there should be a deliberate policy to encourage experimentation and allow variation to suit local government so that they may develop their roots.

Tak (1973) describes the present pattern of panchayat organisations and outlines the village social structure. He concludes that the present structure of village panchayat under the three tier system of panchayati raj is not based on the 'Lokneeti' (people's policy), and hence a number of new problems have emerged. The present set up is not fully agreeable to the basic spirit of Gramraj. For making the Gramraj a reality, it is essential to organise Gram Sabha in every village with sufficient powers, resources and representation.

Rai and Singh (1975) study the panchayati raj system from Community Development Programme to Balvantray Mehta Committee Report and Its implementation. They conclude that the present system of election is not conducive to the growth of healthy popular participation at the local

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level. To strengthen participation they suggest that the head of the local educational institution and office bearers of different political parties should be associated with the panchayati raj bodies. They can supply, more correctly, different shades of social opinion about the pertinent problems and the needs of the locality. They conclude that the whole drama seems to be an affair between the pluralistic, ascriptive and selfish non-official, indifferent, negligent and non-committed administration and disintegrated state government's authority. The ignorant, poor, backward and helpless constitute the audience. In such a situation participatory democracy in real sense of the term cannot flourish. Co-operation and participation of every section of the community is needed for the success. Panchayati raj body cannot be replaced in the foreseeable future by any other structure to secure this co-operation and participation. We should try every possible way to work the present institutions of the official and non-official functionaries. Efforts will go a long way towards initiating the people to involve creatively in the political process and thus facilitate the growth of the participatory democracy.31

Sharma (1976) has attempted to study the reforms in panchayati raj in the country since independence. The author has summed up analytically the major findings of the reports of the different committees, study teams etc. having a bearing on the problem of the democratic decentralisation and panchayati raj institutions. He has also indicated the emerging trends and the unfinished business. The study gives a brief but critical view of the various issues and inadequacies in an academic style.32

Rao and Hazarika (1978) conclude in their article that the local bodies are not entirely democratic. There is not genuine decentralisation of powers and functions to them. Therefore, the term democratic decentralisation is not real.33

Hooja (1978) makes an attempt to review the genesis of the twin concepts of panchayati raj and democratic decentralisation in the context of their historical perspective and in the light of the


32 Sudesh Kumar Sharma, Panchayati Raj in India, Trimurti Publications, New Delhi, 1976.

development on the eve of independence and since. He suggests that there is a need for harmonious working relations between the panchayat institutions and the district administration. The issue, therefore, needs an approach from a different angle, that the agencies of the district administration and the panchayati raj bodies have to work as mutually complimentary and supporting units of one and the same democratic administration at the state level and not as rivals or contenders for each other's powers.

Bhatnagar (1978) analyses the issues and problems that have emerged from the functioning of the system. He says that the problem of the sluggish growth of 'Gram Sabha' is a deep-rooted problem. It will, therefore, be necessary to develop the Gram Sabha as a forum where people could discuss all their problems relating to the village. Further, it is suggested that the urgent need of the hour is to strengthen the institution of the 'Gram Panchayat'. The political impact of panchayati raj has brought about a revolution. For the success of democracy, there is a need to decentralise power to the grass roots. The local government should also be constitutionally recognised and protected in the same way as the central and state governments.

Bhargava (1978) deals with political and administrative roles in interacting situations in a given system. It was inferred that linkages between politicians and administrators may be vertical as well as horizontal. These may vary from situation to situation and level to level in panchayati raj system and in interaction with the bigger system. The political linkages, thus function as one-sided in a vertical order, in which high level politicians influence and pressurise the local leaders.

Bhargava (1979) has discussed issues and problems in regard to panchayati raj movement in the country in general and Karnataka in particular. Efforts have been made to discuss major recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee with a view to highlight issues and problems of great significance in reforming panchayati raj. Finally he suggests that there is a need for rural

development to strengthen the rural infrastructure for development, faith in panchayati raj and timely elections to these bodies.37

Jain et al., (1985) examined the structure and suitability of the institutional arrangements that have been made for the delivery of rural development programmes, especially to the poor. This study identifies the extent to which and the reasons why the rural extension organisations (its structure, functions, powers, personnel, procedures, styles of functioning, contact and relationship with the community) is an impediment in the satisfactory and speedy delivery of the intended development benefits. Another context for the study is the introduction of a number of few programmes which are based on the belief that programme innovation will overcome past weaknesses. The study, therefore, also looks at selected programmes to observe the performance in relation to their stated objectives. The authors find out that poverty and inequality are on the increase. The basic reasons for the failure of rural development and poverty elevation programme is the exclusion of the people from participation in the development process and abandonment of the institution of democratic decentralisation and the related electoral process. In the circumstances, the only solution is the democratic decentralisation.38

Harish (1986) discusses the issue of village panchayats in India and causes for the failure of panchayati raj institutions. He says that the first cause of its failure is that people regard it as a tool of rural development. Second reason of its failure in executing the plans, programmes and projects of rural development due to lack of finance, personnel, trained technical support. Thirdly, there is a too much of change in the administrative set up in quick succession, like three tier system, two tier system and so on. Lastly, there are too many programmes which demand the attention of the village panchayat which are ill equipped in all terms. With these main drawbacks, village panchayats have become an experiment fields rather than tools for development. He suggests that the state government should have a definite purpose to impose their programmes at the local level through village panchayats. The village panchayats should not be over burdened with the programmes. The government should stop at once bringing new legislations with the change of government. There is

also a need to amend our constitution, so that, a defined purpose, finance, personnel etc., all flow directly from the constitution to the village panchayats.39

Sahib and Swinder (1986) make an attempt to provide a comprehensive and objective analysis of both the rural and urban segments of local government. They have also presented a comprehensive picture of the different aspects operating in various states in the form of charts with special treatment of the prevailing patterns in Punjab and Haryana. The various problems and issues emerging from their functioning have been analysed and examined. The recommendations of the various committees appointed by the central and state governments from time to time have been discussed. The authors point out that the majority of political leadership at the state level still considers the local level as a rival centre of power. The states are continuing with the process superseding panchayati raj and urban local government institutions. Power jealous state politicians are using the absence of constitutional guarantee to cripple these institutions and are not likely to desist from doing so in the future. The authors are of the view that two major hindrances i.e. inimical state politicians and a suffocating dyarchy at the district level are still very much evident. Consequently, efforts to activate local government Institutions are likely to face serious challenges.40

Shah (1986) makes an attempt to discuss the functioning of panchayati raj and difficulties faced by these institutions. He analyses that the panchayati raj Institutions did not succeed in inducing the desired socio-economic and cultural transformation in the rural society because of many inadequacies and non-consistencies of the Act to be the major limitations for attaining desired transformation of rural society through Gram Panchayats. Due to this situation, only the educated, the landed ruralites were benefitted more from these Institutions. Therefore, in order to make the panchayati raj Institution an effective instrument of rural development, the provisions which are non-consistent and inadequate with development have to be rectified. He also suggests for the regular elections of panchayats and for the direct elections of all tiers. There is also a need to create new


administrative service to streamline the panchayati raj system and augmenting the resources, proper allocation, budgeting and proper utilization calls for supervision and control.41

Singh (1986) discusses the three tier structure of panchayati raj and their functioning in his article, "Revitalisation of Panchayats." He gives a few suggestions for the revitalisation of panchayats. He suggests that the Gram Sabha should be made a statutory in all the states to act as the foundation on which the upper tiers of panchayati raj would rest and from which they would derive strength and vitality. The Panchayati Raj Acts should stipulate for mandatory quarterly meetings of Gram Sabha to discuss matters of Importance and follow up their implementation. Statutory provision also needs to be made for compulsory panchayat elections once in five years conducted by the Chief Election Officer of the state with the consultation of Chief Election Commissioner. There should be a statutory provision for recall of panchayat members who by their conduct forfeit the trust of the electorates. These institutions should be provided with adequate resources. There is also a need to constitute a state level Panchayati Raj Finance Commission, once in five years to aware its recommendations for purposes of fair distribution of resources of panchayats. Lastly, he says that the strength and effectiveness of village panchayats will depend upon an intelligent, enthusiastic and sustained interest and participation of village community.42

Hirway (1989) in her article, "Panchayati Raj at Crossroads" studies the concept of panchayati raj. She examines the inadequacies of these concepts and the potential of panchayati raj in our political system. She has analysed the experiences of different states and drawn lessons from these experiences. Then she has critically examined the 64th Amendment Bill and made some inferences about the implication of strengthening panchayati raj in the country. She concludes that panchayati raj structures set up in our country are not doing very well and that there is a need to revitalise them. Changing the existing structure, or at least strengthening the position of the poor against exploitation is an important requirement for the success of panchayati raj. She says that the 64th Amendment Bill was at best partial and weak attempt to save panchayati raj. It was more likely to be misused by the centre than help the process of decentralisation.43

42 Sita Ram Singh, Revitalisation of Panchayats, Kurukshetra, Vol. XXXIV, No. 6, April, 1986.
Seminar is a monthly journal which seeks to reflect through discussion, every shade of Indian thought and aspiration. In this journal every month a single problem is debated by writers belonging to different persuasions. Seminar 360 is a symposium on the decentralisation of governance. This issue of Seminar focusses on the need for the democratic decentralisation by the creation of additional layers of representative governments, looks at the experiences of the panchayati raj institutions in some of the states and discusses the proposed Panchayati Raj 64th Amendment Bill.\(^{44}\)

Mishra (1989) says that various countries have different approaches to achieve the target of rural development. In Indian context, he examines the three tier system and stresses the need of people's participation in policy formulation and its implementation. He suggests that the proper use of local resources (men, money and material) is necessary for the achievement of the goal.\(^{45}\)

Bhalla (1989) in his article "Panchayati Raj-An Appraisal", makes an attempt to discuss the gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads and their functioning. He also discusses the problems faced by these institutions. He concludes that the election system introduced in the panchayati raj system has divided the villagers into parties/groups. There is no co-operation among the villagers, members of panchayats, samitis and zilla parishads. The lack of will, determination, dedication and missionary zeal amongst the members to take up various development activities is other major reason for little success of this system. There is also a general impression among common masses since no honorarium is paid to the elected representatives in the system, and they sometimes adopt practices which leads to misappropriation of the funds. There is also a problem of uniformity, in the structures of panchayat systems. He suggests that reasonable honorarium should also be paid to the representatives by the government. There is also a need for co-ordination between the popular and bureaucratic elements. This system can be successful if the rural people are enlightened about the meaning of democratic decentralisation and they are able to realise that

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development can be achieved only by the people’s participation in community development programmes.\textsuperscript{46}

Gangrade (1990) traces in his article the evolution of panchayat raj institutions in the country and describes the power to the people degenerates into power to the powerful. He says that in most of the states, the panchayat structure continues to be the domain of the well-off. Participation of the weaker sections is not guaranteed in the panchayats. The author says that long years of silence has bound them to a state of fear and silence. The author calls for earnest effort to ensure that village based local bodies are made vibrant instruments of service to the community and not hot-beds of factional fights, power struggle and corruption. He suggests the right to recall pradhan and panches if they are found corrupt.\textsuperscript{47}

Zamora (1990) has traced the historical development of panchayats (Village Councils) from the vedic age to 1962. The author analyses the interaction between the ancient panchayats and the new elective panchayats. He studies the role of cultural variables (caste, value, descent, etc.) in directed political and social change in rural India. He also offers a historical perspective of the panchayat performance and promise as a unit of India’s community development programmes in Senapur village of U.P. upto and on the eve of panchayati raj inauguration. He has also briefly discussed similar measures by the government of Philippines, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan and Pakistan.

The author concludes that there is a change in the structure, form and function of the Indian panchayats from the traditional caste councils which were mainly concerned with social control of their members to a government directed, legal formal and well defined entity of judicial control and socio-economic development. All the factors such as the problems of the vested interests, communication cost, factionalism, caste discrimination, need and personality taken together, accounted for the ineffective functioning of the official panchayat of Senapur village.\textsuperscript{48}


Desai (1990) deals with a responsive administration in rural areas for their integrated development, contains source readings about panchayati raj and its problems. Thus, the study of panchayati raj has been analysed in its historical perspective. An attention is also given to social and economic thought which other surveys, concentrating on political thought, have generally omitted. He studies systematically the varied issues of panchayati raj and its administration which will provide the necessary momentum to development in India and pleads for accelerated development of rural areas which is essential for a balanced growth of Indian Economy. He also emphasises the importance of panchayati raj in the implementation of multi-directional programmes in rural development. He analyses the relevant problems of functions, finances, management and the organisation of programmes initiated to improve the living conditions of the rural people. He contains relevant suggestions and management for speedy rural development.49

(II) At State Level

Mathur, et al. (1966) examine the emerging institutional leadership, behaviour pattern and the interests of the members; its functioning into the specific context of ‘planning from below’ and implementation of development programmes, and the baffling problems of ‘non-official’ relationships; the financial and administrative challenges facing it and finally its overall impact in one district of Rajasthan. They conclude that the panchayati raj has not so far fulfilled the expectations at grass roots level. This is born out by the emerging neo-rich leadership. Villagers admire the panchayati raj as a concept but are disappointed and disgusted with the operational aspect of panchayati raj Institutions. They say that if their suggestions are implemented, the working of these Institutions will improve. It will also help the people in gaining the confidence in rural India.50

Khanna (1966) attempts to study the structure, functions, finances and working of panchayati raj in Punjab and Haryana. He has also made suggestions for improving the working of panchayati raj through democratic measures 51

51 R.L. Khanna, Panchayati Raj in Punjab and Haryana, Mohindra Capital Publishers, Sector
Narain, et al. (1970) have covered the panchayati raj institutions in Madras, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Various functional spheres economic, social, political and administrative and their way to strengthening their roots in the soil of rural India have also been discussed. Their main argument is that still the panchayati raj institutions have not achieved the stage of "Take off" and they have certainly made a number of lapses and mistakes and these are due to the system of control and supervision largely handled by the permanent executive of the state governments. The structure and operation of the network of control and supervision over panchayati raj system in these states shows that each panchayati raj Institution is subject to a variety of internal self regulation. Finally, it is suggested that unless the state governments are convinced that they also bear partial responsibility for the failure of panchayati raj Institutions, they cannot be in a position to gave correct approach and attitude towards the panchayati raj Institutions. 52

Inamadar (1970) has attempted to study four village panchayats in Maharashtra State. He has dealt with the working of this basic unit of government and administration in all its varied aspects: elections, personnel (elected and appointed), functions, finances, gram sabha and most important: its leadership. The four case studies examine how far the purpose underlying the village panchayat Act of 1958 of Maharashtra state, is realised in practice. The Study points out the gap between 'The ideal' and the 'the real' and thus contributes to a deeper understanding of the village panchayats that have now achieved a more significant role in laying the foundation of a socially awakened and economically secure democracy. He emphasises that the successful functioning of the village panchayats depend upon the availability of resourceful, imaginative and active panchayat leadership. 53

Prasad (1971) studies twin process of democratization and development in village Awa of Bihar. He concludes that while the village panchayat has stimulated the process of political democratization, it has not accelerated the pace of economic development in the villages. 54


52 Iqbal Narain, Sushil Kumar and M.V.Mathur, Panchayati Raj Administration, The Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, 1970.


54 R.C.Prasad, Democracy and Development :The Grass Roots Experience in India, Rachna
Reddy and Seshadri (1972) make an attempt to study the panchayat elections in Andhra Pradesh during 1970. The authors point out that the efforts to bring about compromises between contesting parties, the elections could not be avoided because politics has steeped down to panchayat level. There is a sharp line that divides the elite from masses and the voters, have a vivid perception of it. While leaders believe that voters choice is determined by caste and wealth, voters admit to have been prompted by requirement of general welfare and ideological considerations. Emergence of younger leaders indicate the decline of historical leadership. Factional conflicts within the Congress are known for their impact on its electoral fate, but the existence of factionalism in CP(M) in the area helped the Jan Sangh to consolidate its position. It is generally recognised that panchayati raj holds bright prospects of general development in the region.

Grover et al. (1972) inquires into the nature and extent of supervision and control which the state government of Rajasthan has been exercising over the panchayati raj bodies through both formal and informal media with special reference to their efficacy and utility. The findings of the study are based on acts, rules and regulations concerning panchayati raj and development department, various technical departments regional and district level offices and offices of the zila parishad, panchayat samiti and gram panchayats. The study confirms that the higher bureaucrats have shown scant regard for and casual, half-hearted interest in promoting the objectives of panchayati raj. The control and supervision exercised is the traditional bureaucratic type, lacking creativity, imagination and understanding. The conclusions underline the attitudinal dimension of the problem and aptly warn that the basic weaknesses lies in the routine approach, the lethargic and indifferent attitudes on the part of officials and consequent lack of supervision. No doubt, other wider forms of supervision are required to provide guidance for both the technical supervision, education and encouragement can hardly be over emphasised in the existing system of control and supervision.

The authors only casually mention the need for attitudinal orientation perhaps through some kind of training and do not explain the kind and content of training they have in kind for both.

Prakashan, New Delhi, 1971.


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official and non-official associated with panchayati raj. It would not be out of place to add that the most difficult aspect of training is the necessity of developing the training in the proper attitude towards panchayati raj in relation to development and inculcating a realization of required initiative for development.

The authors while making suggestions for improving the system of supervision and control of panchayati raj refer to a controversial point of lump-sum grant to stop what they term non-utilization, misutilization and forced utilisation of funds. But they have failed to make out a really convincing case for this innovation.

One important finding is that the objective of any system of supervision and control must be the expeditious development of panchayati raj to that level of maturity of thought and behaviour which will enrich the national policies by local adaptation. Therefore, the motto must be encouragement, education, guidance, influence, supervision and control. All this only underlines the plea already made for an extensive programme of education and training for all those connected with panchayati raj. On the whole this is a useful study and with some improvement can become a worthwhile contribution to the growing literature on panchayati raj.56

Bhatt (1974) says that a new tendency has entered the village life after the introduction of panchayati raj. The panchayats which really constitute the base of the panchayati raj has become politically more active. The panchayats have not been able to contribute to the productive sector like agriculture and these involve in the non-productive activities which incur the high costs on the part of government because of political involvement. The peaceful and united villages have been divided into factions and groups. Despite these shortcomings, the working of the rural local bodies have justified their establishment.57

Kumar and Venkataraman (1974) examine the administrative, financial and technical aspect of supervision and control in Tamil Nadu. It has been realized that the way in which control is


exercised depends, very much on the linkages of officials and non-officials who are concerned in the panchayati raj movement.  

Lakshminarayana (1976) focusses on the conditions and problems of rural people, their institutions and way of living under the impact of planned social change after the initiation of the Community Development Programme in Mandya District of Mysore state. These villages have been integrated with the wider economic and political system and have many linkages with the outside world. These linkages have been provided by communication and other institutional networks. The improved means of communication, community development programmes and the panchayati raj have played a significant role in modernizing the villages. He concludes that the political set up has politicized the traditional society. But this has not affected the social structure of the village.

Seshadri (1976) analyses the interdependence between the local and higher levels of administration in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat and emphasises the general citizenry as participators and moulders of the political policies and their interconnection with local level leaders. He concludes that the setting up of structures of democratic functioning is not in itself an assurance of democratic functioning, active political parties could have achieved. This end to some extent because even in local level leadership in a political party structure would have to be amenable to the central party discipline. Bureaucracy is another that should be committed to the welfare of the weaker sections. Political will and administrative vigour are required. This is a great challenge and it has to be met if the face of rural India has to change into one of secularism, democracy and socialism.

Sammiuddin (1976) examines the genesis and growth of community development programmes in their broad perspective and has highlighted their relevance to rural economy and democratic institutions of panchayati raj. She emphasises on proper training of rural services and has


stressed the need for providing job oriented education and training in social skills to the personnel working in community development programmes and panchayati raj institutions. Again, there is a need of an equitable distribution of the fruits of growth and modernisation. The grass roots institutions need the revision of the basic objectives of development programmes, structural reforms of organisational pattern, revised administrative techniques and adequate financial resources matching with their responsibilities. Finally, suggestions are given to work hard for growth with social justice with faith in people and to improve the administrative machinery of these institutions and strengthen them organisationally and financially in the rural areas.61

Dubey and Murdia (1976) studies the influence of particular consideration like those of caste, kinship, patron client relationship, party and political affiliations on decision making by panchayati raj leaders in the district of Mana and Shrlpur in Maharrastra. They have selected administrative situations in which locational and distributive decisions are involved and attempted to identify the attributes of all the significant actors in the decision making process and the strategies employed by these actors in trying to influence the final decisions.

This study is valuable but the studies of this type brought out recently are based on Maharashtra when the Maharashtra model of zila parishad dominated panchayati raj. But it is analytical to our country where the panchayat samiti dominated Rajasthan-Andhra Pradesh Model of panchayati raj is prevalent. Besides with the growing emphasis on district planning and integrated area development concepts, the importance of panchayati raj institutions and voluminous literature on them seem to be declining. The authors have come to the conclusions that particularistic, person oriented, consideration override, problem oriented one, that partition, class, caste, kinship and personality factors are determining ones, that procedures, rational, criteria and official advice are often neglected.

The authors have also undertaken a brief comparison of the working of panchayati raj in various states and an attempt has been made to enquire how the decision makers are responsible to their electorates. They conclude that they have to be more sensitive to the needs, wishes, preferences and demands of their supporters.62

61 Abida Sammiuddin, A Critique of Panchayati Raj with Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh, Sahitya Bhawan, Agra, 1976.

Pant (1979) tries to delineate the sources and areas of conflict, cooperation and collaboration between officials and non-officials in Bhagalpur district of Bihar and also tries to find out the reasons of the prevailing state of affairs. He concludes that the structural reforms are not the panacea for the ills of panchayati raj. Placing the officials under non-officials might create problems of greater dimensions. There is a need of committed non-official leadership and efficient, development minded officers. This can only be possible if the larger socio-political culture of officials and non-officials undergoes significant changes.

Darshankar (1979) discusses the interaction between caste and politics, role of money, education and social rank in the working of panchayati raj institutions in Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. He suggests that the success of panchayati raj largely depends on the leaders and they have to be deeply committed to the ideals of panchayati raj. Panchayati raj has not brought all the expected benefits to the common man but have brought new changes in various fields. There is a hope that with the emergence of sound and enlightened and committed leadership, these institutions will function for the betterment of the rural community as a whole.

Sharma (1979) hints at the links between the rural leadership and the needs of villagers in negotiation with the urban administrative centres and political powers at higher level in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. When leadership is viewed over a number of panchayat elections, continuity, discontinuity, re-emergence of leaders appear. Caste remains the same, only individuals change. He says that these castes are the major landowners. The castes controlling powers have maintained their supremacy. Even the opposition comes largely from within the dominant caste and a limited number of Khandans act as operators of political powers whether in authority or in opposition.

Bhargava (1979) examines the achievements and role of political parties in Rajasthan. He maintains that there is too much politics and the benefits of these institutions are only enjoyed by the


leaders and their associates. These institutions are financially very weak and its members look after their self-interest and want to monopolise position and power. Cooperation is not forthcoming from the government officials and slackness and indifference have crept into the members because there have been no elections since a long time in these institutions. The role of political parties in relation to panchayati raj system has not been satisfactory. 'Power Orientation' of political parties is understandable, but not at the cost of the functioning of the system. The author suggested that for raising the 'standards of politics' and performance 'improvement' of the political parties in relation to panchayati raj system, steps should be taken in the direction of its (system's) acquiring reasonable level of legitimacy.66

Rao (1980) states that the success of rural development through democratic decentralization largely depends on two basic factors viz. (a) the emergence and growth of egalitarian power structure in democratic institution at the grass root and (b) economically viable size of these institutions. Therefore, the author deals with the investigation of these two issues at the level of village panchayat in Tamkur district of Karnataka.

The author has attempted to provide answers to two basic questions and how far this reflects the caste and class structure of the villages and what level of population a village panchayat should be considered as an economically viable unit, in terms of resources, to be able to implement the rural development programmes. The author comes to the conclusion that larger panchayats having a population base of 4,000 would be economically viable to implement rural development programmes. In this context he suggests that such a unit of 4,000 persons should form the basis for a panchayat, a cooperative, and other institutions dealing with rural development, a cluster approach has been suggested. Secondly, there is a need to give representation to villagers rather then to population, within the unit so that each village having a population of at least 200 persons will have its representative in the panchayat to take care of its interest.

There is, however, no specific suggestion as to how the dominance of upper economic classes in panchayats could be reduced. This was probably beyond the scope of the study. There is an urgent need for effective implementation of land reforms and improving the spread of education among the weaker sections of society as has been advocated by many authors. The dominance of

the upper economic classes in panchayats and in other local level institutions is well known and is well established fact, as already brought out by other research studies. The further efforts should be to suggest how the local institutions can become more representative and how to ensure that the benefits of development reach the weaker sections in an increasing measure.\textsuperscript{67}

Prasad (1980) focusses his attention on the administrative aspects of the village panchayats, with particular reference to operational dynamics in achieving the objectives of rural development in a village in Andhra Pradesh. He says that the structure of the panchayat tends to be feeble because of inadequacy of powers and resources, lack of trained and competent staff, concentration of powers in the hands of sarpanch, ineffective linkages and channels of communication, improper supervision and lack of guidance etc. He suggests that for the good administration of panchayats, there is a need of more powers and trained staff and proper supervision and guidance to these institutions.\textsuperscript{68}

Sharma (1984) examines the administrative efficiency, political factors and socio-economic background of the elected panchayat non-officials in Bhankrots village panchayat of Jaipur district of Rajasthan. He says that the resultant administrative deficiencies were aggravated by the injection of the political element in the official non-official relationships and changes in administrative policies regarding staffing and transfers. The existing rules are inadequate regarding auditing. He suggests that the Gram Sabha should be given statutory recognition and remain as an advisory agency. Sufficient steps should be taken to see that compliance of audit reports are made satisfactory in time. To make the panchayati raj system as an agency of rural development and local administration, government should hold elections without any delay.\textsuperscript{69}

Singh (1987) presents a historical view of the panchayati raj Institutions in India, together with a discussion on the theoretical, organizational and functional dimensions of the panchayati raj. The gap between the theory and practice of the panchayati raj has been brought to the force and the limits of panchayati raj as a mechanism to effect democratic decentralization and development of


powers have been critically viewed. He says that the existing attempt through fresh legislation on panchayati raj may go some way to bridge the gap between theory and practice of panchayat system as far as the regular elections of panchayats are concerned. This situation can be remedied by strengthening the panchayati raj institution and giving it the necessary powers--administrative, political and financial.

He concludes that Bihar was one of the first states in India to enact a legislation on panchayati raj (1947), yet regular elections could not be held and devolution of power was not possible. The state government played with the idea of devolution of power as it pleased the politico-administrative bureaucracy. The panchayati raj could not succeed even in eight districts of Bihar where it was launched, the devolution of power to the grass roots level remained a misnomer.

This study holds that the gap between theory and practice continued to remain. However, there are some striking points of the panchayati raj system in Bihar which the author refers to that the panchayat is a training ground at the grass roots level which provides an opportunity for the transformation of local leadership into district and state level leadership. The panchayat remained an institution led by local bureaucracy, and hence, the sense of self-dependence and self-reliance among the rural masses could not develop. And without the necessary financial backing the panchayat remained hollow in its functions. The attitude of the state government towards the panchayati raj institution remained generally indifferent.70

Singh (1987) discusses the regulatory and developmental administration at the grass roots level in a panchayat in Rajasthan. He also focuses on the interrelational and interactional patterns of the change agents and target groups at the grass roots level. Corruption has been found to be deeply entrenched among village level functionaries, such as the patwari, police, village level worker and so on. Accepting bribes is habitual with them. Even the infra-structural facilities for development, such as electricity, road, communication services and health services are grossly inadequate and mismanaged. Old notions and beliefs of traditional farming still persist and people are indecisive about changing over to modern agriculture technology. The functionaries responsible for developmental administration have been found to be generally authoritarian and overbearing.

The author further points out that neither the people, nor their representatives, nor the state government seem to be genuinely concerned about the gram panchayat as basic to developmental needs of the rural society. The concept of citizen administration, participation in development remain largely unrealized. The village community has been severely hampered by factional tendencies and conflict, and a sort of vicious circle has been created. Even after more than 40 years of Independence, the masses are distrustful and afraid of the patwari and the police. This general distrust mars the relationship between the village people and the agricultural development functionaries.

The author suggests that there is a need to create an atmosphere in which the panchayati raj institution could function effectively and justify for overall rural development. The attempt to give constitutional status to the panchayati raj institution is a move in this direction.71

Zaidi (1988) attempts to analyse the political power structure and leadership pattern at the Mirapur Village panchayat in Bara^banki, one of the backward districts in Uttar Pradesh, besides analyzing the role of political parties in local politics. The author has also discussed the role of caste and religion in rural politics and the role of political parties in panchayat elections. He concludes that family background, caste and religion equally effect both the traditional and modern political institutions at the grass roots level. On the basis of his field work, the author says that the political parties have virtually no role to play in rural politics and panchayat elections. What matters in panchayat elections is the personal qualities of an individual member of the village panchayat, and not his political party affiliation. The power factors in the rural society are distributed along social, economic and political lines. There is no significant correlation between caste and politics, or religion and politics, in Mirapur village panchayat, although the caste organisations are important and are now trying to achieve leadership and power positions in village panchayat. Yet the traditional hold of family background, personal qualities of an individual member of the villages community is stronger in the formation of a village panchayat of statutory type.72

71 Chandra Maulli Singh, Dynamics of Rural Development Administration, Spick and Span Publishers, New Delhi, 1988.
(III) At Himachal Level

Bhatnagar (1974) deals with a case study of panchayati raj (Rural Local Government) in the district of Kangra in Himachal Pradesh. He has covered the period before the re-organisation of Punjab in November, 1966 when Kangra was not yet merged with Himachal Pradesh. In the first place, he discussed the elected leadership of the three tier institutional complex of the Panchayati Raj, social background of the new leaders, their attitudes towards their role and their understanding of the developmental problems. The process of decision-making and the nature and role of emerging rural bureaucracy of these institutions have also been examined. He points out that the villagers have not developed a sense of involvement with panchayati raj institutions and they do not actively participate in the deliberations of the gram sabha. The participatory democracy does not make much headway in the countryside even with the emergence of new leadership through the panchayati raj. The system suffers from factionalism and lack of systematic understanding of the rural problems. He supports the view that factions based upon personal rivalries or castelism would weaken only when well organised and progressive political parties effectively participate in the election to the rural institutions and, later on provide a proper direction to them.

He suggests the re-organisation of panchayati raj, bureaucracy and change in attitude of higher authorities to make these institutions strong to face the challenge of the developmental process. He stresses on institutions rather than the operations of the theory. He is very critical about the attitude and policies of the state government towards the panchayati raj institutions. He says that in actual practice also, the attitude of ministers and higher bureaucracy towards these institutions has been that of scepticism and half heartedness. The financial resources placed by the state government at the disposal of these institutions have also been inadequate when compared to their responsibilities and functions. He vigorously pleads that the panchayati raj legislation as well as the attitudes of the higher authorities must change if these institutions are to become viable agencies of the development and gain enough strength to meet the problems and challenges of tomorrow.

No such study, at least in this part of the country had been carried out. Though the study covers only one district and limited period of five years (1961 to 1966). Yet the author has pointed out the deficiencies from which the system suffers at that time. This is highlighted by the fact that even after the publication of this book, no work has been done on panchayati raj in any other part
of Himachal Pradesh. So, this book even today remains the solitary piece of work on panchayat raj in Himachal Pradesh.

Still the book can be criticised on various grounds. First of all, the universe of the study is only one district which is too small and the time period for the study i.e. five years (1961 to 1966) is too short. Secondly, the author has used only the structural-functional approach along with the historical approach. There are some deep rooted reasons behind the low participation in Gram Sabha meetings which the author has not highlighted. However, the book, despite some deficiencies is a unique contribution to existing literature.73

Bhatnagar’s (1978) study is to analyse and understand politics at the grass roots level in Kangra district. Therefore, the study specifically focuses on what type of leadership is emerging in the village councils and what type of electoral strategy is utilised by the various contenders for power. The second point of electoral strategy leads to the manifold factions and forces that interplay at the time of elections. He concludes that panchayati raj has opened up politics, and all previously hidden conflicts have not only come to the surface but have acquired political tones. Local politics does not seem to be a closed door game of action and intimidation. It has acquired the character of politicking in which alliances and bargains are made in public. Those who wish to obtain power, should build bridges of understanding with the voters of the constituency. Secondly, he says that village politics is no more an isolated phenomenon of one single locality, but has been integrated with the high level politics in that local leaders have developed political linkages with the state and union level leaders. The panchayati raj institutions seem to have begun supplying leaders of high quality. Finally, he says that grass roots politics has not escaped the attention of the political parties. Political parties stay in panchayati raj. They do not take part in local politics, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly. Though the panchayat elections are held on non-party basis yet the contestants can seek the support of the parties. If parties begin actively participating in local elections, the narrow grooved politics based on family, locality and castes will be gradually secularized and the present trend does not provide an indication of that ultimate development.74


Singh (1987) has discussed the three tier structure of panchayati raj institutions and their functioning in the state of Himachal Pradesh. He has also discussed the developmental activities of panchayats. He concludes that panchayati raj has brought an awakening among the rural masses and with little finances at their disposal, have very successfully implemented small schemes. He also points out that these institutions are facing the problem of postponement of elections generally on political grounds which alienate the people from the panchayati raj. Therefore, he suggests that elections should be held regularly without any political interference. Financial condition should be improved through different sources and collection of land revenue should be entrusted to the gram panchayats. Gram panchayats should be given some judicial powers and independent financial powers for development works. A systematic review of the working of panchayati raj is also required for the success of these institutions.75

From the above review of literature, it is clear that a lot of work has been done on the pattern of panchayati raj and grass roots politics at two different levels- at all India level and State level. But a little work has been done on this theme in Himachal Pradesh. S. Bhatnagar's work is the only exception. But this study is different from S. Bhatnagar in the sense that his study is a thorough study of panchayati raj in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The universe of his study is only one district. But the universe of my study consists of three districts- Una, Shimla and Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh. From each of the district I have selected one panchayat only. These three districts are selected because Una falls in low hill area with agricultural economy. Before 1966, it was a part of Punjab. Shimla is advanced and situated in high hill areas with horticultural economy. Kinnaur is situated in higher hills and is a tribal belt with both agricultural and horticultural economy. Therefore, it is equally important to study the political implications of panchayati raj in Himachal Pradesh.

(III) Clarification of the Concepts

The understanding of these concepts is desirable because we have repeatedly used them in this work. The concepts which have been discussed here are- democratic decentralisation, Caste, Class and Power structure.

(a) Democratic Decentralisation

It is not possible to standardize the usage of the word 'Decentralisation' by seeking to give it precise meaning that would be acceptable universally. The English language derived the word from latin. The word is used under many different constitutional systems and in different social environments. In fact it is a word of innumerable applications. Though all of them run a common idea, which is inherent in the word's Latin roots, meaning "away from the centre". Therefore, the concept decentralisation is seldom put in a unified manner. It is usually conceived and interpreted for a limited purpose. To an economist, decentralisation means dispersal of industries. To a local government expert, it implies devolution of function and responsibility to small territorial units. To an administrator at the centre, it means discretion for field or regional officer or delegation of responsibility within the same hierarchy. To a managing director or business organisation, it denotes the necessity of starting some new administrative branches in certain areas. All these interpretations lead us to terminological confusions and do not present a full view of decentralisation. Besides, the interpretations have no conceptual framework. The word decentralisation is often confused with delegation, deconcentration and devolution, which is not correct. It is therefore, necessary to explain the difference between delegation, deconcentration and devolution. Delegation of power cannot be equated with decentralisation. Delegation is not a transfer of authority. In delegation the lower level executive machinery, which is in every way subordinate to the higher level machinery, which is responsible for the action of the authority to whom power is delegated. The higher body does not divert itself of certain functions. Delegation is merely a technique of administration or management while decentralisation deals with deep urgencies of democracy. Like delegation, deconcentration is also a technique of administration. It denotes assignments of certain functions to the agent of the central or state government in the field. There have always been difficulties in governing the country from the centre and the government is compelled to deconcentrate certain functions to its agents or officers in the field. Another synonymous term is devolution which is not very much different from deconcentration. The method of devolution is applied to formally constituted local authorities while


78 Rajeshwar Dayal, Panchayati Raj in India, op. cit., p. 20.
deconcentration is applied generally to the field agency or staff. It is, thus clear that delegation, deconcentration and devolution are simply the technical methods of efficient administration. 79

Decentralisation is a twin process of ‘deconcentration’ and ‘devolution’, whereby the government diverts itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves them to some other authority at the local level. It is true that devolution of responsibility cannot be complete without a complete devolution of all the control over the necessary resources. In other words, the process of decentralisation means devolution of powers below the state levels, i.e. District, Mandals and Villages. 80

“The issue of decentralisation”, as Fesler has put it, “is more complex in concept and practice than is generally acknowledged.” 81

Fesler has classified the approaches into four categories: the doctrinal, the political, the administrative and the dual role.

Fesler’s Approaches to Decentralisation

(a) The Doctrinal approach seeks to treat decentralisation as an end in itself through a process of idealisation. The Gandhian concept of village panchayat has thus become a dogma or an article of faith. It has also elevated it to the status of a hardened doctrine.

(b) The Political approach underscores the essentially political character of decentralisation. Devolution of administrative setup is an attempt to set up autonomous governments at the grass roots level. It is thus a major political commitment.

(c) The Administrative approach to decentralisation is motivated by the efficiency criterion. Conscious attempts are needed to re-adjust from time to time the conflicting claims of areas and functions in a decentralised administration.

79 Vijay Ranjan Dutta, op. cit., p. 3.


Fesler’s Approaches to Decentralization

Decentralization of Power

IDEALIZATION AGENCY AUTONOMY EFFICIENCY AREA FUNCTIONING

DOCTRINAL POLITICAL ADMINISTRATIVE DUAL ROLE
(d) The Dual Role approach is a kind of rehearsal of the area function dichotomy in a new setting.

Fasler's penetrating analysis of the concept basically points towards the political and administer aspect of decentralisation.\textsuperscript{82}

Cf. Leonard D.White defines the term as "that process which denotes the transfer of authority, legislative judicial or administrative from a higher level of government to lower."\textsuperscript{83} A.H. Hanson defines the term in a more limited technical sense, "By democratic decentralisation", we mean the transfer of some responsibilities of central government to subordinate agencies which are elected by geographic or functional constituting and which acquire at least some of their powers not by delegation from higher administrative authority but by legislative and perhaps constitutional provisions.\textsuperscript{84} The word 'democratic' and 'decentralisation' form the key to the understanding of the synthetic compound expression democratic decentralisation. The word 'democratic' explains at once the nature and purpose of the concept as also its basic postulates in its institutional aspect. The word 'decentralisation' is essentially indicative of the method to realise the end as contained in the word 'democratic'.\textsuperscript{85}

While bringing out the distinction between the two concepts, Iqbal Narain says that under democratic decentralisation the underlying idea is to widen the area of democracy, by granting both authority and autonomy to the people at the lower levels. Therefore, the attempt is to create democracies within democracies. In contrast to this, under democratic centralism, the idea is to provide a democratic base to the guided autocratic top.\textsuperscript{86} Thus, democratic decentralisation seeks

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, p. 8.


\textsuperscript{84} Quoted in B.S.Bhargava, op. cit., p. 2.


\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, p. 14.
to vest in the institution of local government effective power in a larger measure so that they may be
developed into what Bryce describes as the tiny fountain heads of democracy.\textsuperscript{87}

The pre-fixing of the word "democratic" widens the implication of the term "decentralisation". It, then amounts to the transfer of powers to those bodies which are not only democratically constituted by the people but also function democratically, i.e. at every stage of their working and for every single work of theirs, they are responsible to the people, who in their turn, possess the power of censuring their conduct when they so please. The latter aspect of responsibility is perhaps more important then the former, because democracy in constitution is also implied in another concept namely, democratic-centralisation which is quite opposite to democratic-decentralisation. Democratic centralisation which is an innovation of the communists, means democracy in constitutions and centralisation in decision. Under this system people are free to elect their rulers but once people have elected them and approved of the broad outline of their policy, they can not question them for the decision that they take. They must accept them. Democratic decentralisation, on the other hand, confers upon the people full freedom, both in regard to election of the leaders and the making of the policies and their execution.\textsuperscript{88}

To sum up, democratic decentralisation as a political concept aims at widening the area of people's participation, authority and autonomy through dispersion or devolution of power to people's representative organisation from the top levels to the lower levels, in all the triple dimensions of political decision-making, financial control and administrative management with least interference and control from higher levels.\textsuperscript{89}

\textbf{(b) Caste}

The most developed form of caste system occurs in India. This system in India has been described in different ways by different scholars. In the earlier writings on caste, more attention was paid to the separate castes and their attributes than to their place in a system of economic, political and ritual relations. Hutton, while describing the caste system in various parts of India, pays very

\begin{itemize}
  \item S.Bhatnagar, \textit{Panchayat Raj in Kangra District}, op. cit., p. 3.
  \item Iqbal Narain, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
\end{itemize}
little attention to intercaste relationship. He wrote, "While a caste is a social unit in a quasi organic or
society and throughout India is consistent enough to be immediately identifiable, the nature of the
unit is variable enough to make a concise definition difficult." At the same time, for Hutton caste
was an endogamous group, often with an ascribed occupation and ranked relative to other
castes.

Dumont and Leach are prominent among the sociologists who maintain that the caste
system is peculiar to Indian civilization. Dumont goes as far as to maintain that its distinguishing
feature is its religious matrix and that no type of social stratification, however, similar to Indian caste
division, constitutes a caste system unless it is buttressed by religious beliefs and observance. In
addition to the religious element, Leach insists on identifying the caste system as a series of non-
competitive categories arranged in hierarchical order. He writes that the caste system is an organic
system with each particular caste and subcaste filling a distinctive functional role. It is a system of
labour division from which the element of competition among workers has been largely excluded.

But Srinivas disagrees with this view of Leach that competition between caste groups is in
defiance of caste principles. He says that it is true that the caste wise diversion of labour facilitates
the inter-dependence of castes and this is strikingly seen in the 'jajmani system'. But
interdependence is not the whole story. Castes do compete between each other for acquiring political
and economic power and high ritual position.

According to Max Weber, "Caste is doubtlessly a closed status group", and caste are
communities as distinct from classes which are categories.
To explain what he means by a status group, Weber contrasts it with class. "Classes", he says, are groups of people who, from the standpoint of specific interests, have the same economic position. Ownership or non-ownership of material goods or of definite skills constitute the class situation. According to Weber, "Status is a quality of social honour or a lack of it, and is in the main condition as well as expressed through a specific style of life". The reason why caste is a 'closed' status group is that all the obligations and barriers that membership in a status group entails also exist in a caste where they are intensified to the higher degree.

The 'closed' nature of caste system has been emphasized by many scholars. F.G. Bailey, for instance, provides a structural definition of the caste system. He holds that for a given society to exhibit a system of caste, it must be divided into groups which are (1) exclusive (no one belongs simultaneously to more than one group) (ii) exhaustive (everyone belongs to some group), and (iii) ranked. In the traditional Indian castes system, a caste can be said to be one of the relatively closed status groups. Each of them is a commensal unit with a distinct name. These units are locally called jatis. Each jati or subcaste is endogamous and has a traditional occupation associated with it. Each jati has a particular style of life and enjoys a monopoly over particular rights, duties, privileges and disabilities. There are many jatis in any one cultural region. Jatis are to be distinguished from the varnas. There are four varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaiśya and Sudra. Therefore, Varna refers to one of the four main categories into which Hindu society is traditionally divided whereas, jati refers generally to such a smaller group. The caste system is said to be founded on the concept of purity. Purity and pollution are associated with human beings, objects and activities, and determine the form that social relations between any two persons may take. The concept of purity and pollution

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96 Ibid, p. 186.
99 Gerald D. Berreman, Caste and other Inequalities, Folklore Institute, Meerut, 1979, pp. 183-184.
provides the basis for hierarchization so that, ideally, each caste group occupies a particular position in the hierarchy of castes.\textsuperscript{100}

The caste system is a particularistic type of social system in which the ascription status of the individual determines his life's course. Caste membership is immutable and there appears to be no sanctioned mode of mobility. The individual has to submit to the rules of his caste, otherwise, strong pressures are applied to him.

Though castes are exclusive groups, separate from one another, with each enjoying a certain amount of autonomy, the different castes together form a system. Caste display a certain degree of interdependence. The relationships of interdependence are mainly in the ritual and economic sphere, but cooperation does not preclude the possibility of competition or conflict, especially in the political sphere.\textsuperscript{101} E.R. Leach's view that, "Wherever caste groups are seen to be acting as corporations in competition against like groups of different caste, they are acting in defiance of caste principles," is not keeping with reality.\textsuperscript{102}

According to Berreman, a caste system may be defined as a hierarchy of endogamous divisions in which membership is hereditary and permanent. Here hierarchy includes inequality both in status and in access to goods and services. Interdependence of the sub-divisions, restricted contacts among them, occupational specialization, and or a degree of cultural distinctiveness might be added as criteria although they appear to be correlates rather than defining characteristics.\textsuperscript{103}

To sum up, the traditional caste system was a relatively static, unchanging particularistic type of social stratification in which an individual's status was ascriptively defined and determined. The social system was fragmented into relatively closed status groups, hierarchically arranged, each associated with a particular set of privileges and disabilities which were supported by traditional sanctions. These status groups were castes, and it was caste which ordered intervals and attitudes. There was little scope for acquiring status outside the caste system. The different castes

\textsuperscript{100} E.Kathleen Gough, \textit{Caste in Tanjor Village}, in E.R. Leach, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 11

\textsuperscript{101} R.Jayaraman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{102} E.R. Leach, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{103} Gerald D. Berreman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 2.
were rigidly separated from one another by economic, ritual and social barriers. The position of a caste in the ritual hierarchy largely corresponded with its positions in the economic and political spheres.\textsuperscript{104}

Caste system has been changing. Change has always been present, though its rate in the different aspects of the system has not been uniform. The influence of caste has increased in proportion as political power passed increasingly to the people from the rulers. The arrival of the British was a departure for studying change within the caste system. The effects of British rule on the caste system were not always direct. British rule brought with it new tools and technology, ideas and institutions, concepts like freedom, equality, secularism and democracy were new to the traditional bound people of India. Though these ideas took time to reach the people, once having done so, they unleashed forces which initiated or accelerated the tempo of social change in India.\textsuperscript{105}

With the coming of British, there was a marked growth of towns and cities, and a process of industrialisation was initiated which brought people from different castes together into new areas of activity. The overall result of the British policy was that the power of caste to expel members, to declare marriages void, and to prevent widow remarriage, was greatly reduced, and the practice of seeking relief in civil courts was encouraged. Laws were enacted whose object was to remove certain social disabilities and equality before the law was ensured for all the people.\textsuperscript{106}

Independence accelerated the process of change. The Indian constitution sought to base the new social order on an egalitarian principle, and to remove every trace of inequality. But the provision of constitutional safeguards to scheduled castes and tribes has given a new lease of life to caste. Though the leaders in India desire to establish a casteless society and make India a secular state, yet they are halting in their effort to achieve it, as they are aware of its vote catching power. After independence, an attempt was made to de-emphasize and eliminate caste by removing the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[105] M.N.Srinivas, op. cit., p. 15.
\item[106] G.S. Ghurye, \textit{Caste and Race in India}, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969, pp. 270-291. Although the British rule affected all Indians, it appears that the hierarchical nature of the traditional system made it by and large possible for upper castes to be the first to be affected by the "new winds of change".
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
column of caste from the census but this has not served any purpose. In fact the caste has become
the unit of social action in India.107

It is true that to some extent industrialization and urbanisation weakened the hold of caste. But
industrialization has not spread widely or deeply enough to modify the system profoundly. People
lost the caste complex to a certain extent when they are in industrial area, but the moment
they go back, they accept all its old rigors.108

The caste is a very complex phenomenon. It has divided the Hindu society into groups
and the grouping is principally based on kinship relations since certain customs related to the caste
system determine who should marry whom and who should not marry whom. Secondly, caste
systems are ordered into "higher and lower" castes. Because of the association of caste with
occupation, castes puts limits on the income of the people of different castes and thus influence the
economy.109

In the study of caste and politics, Kothari says that three aspects of caste system call for
special attention. They are secular aspect, integrational aspect and aspect of consciousness. For the
secular organisation of caste, there are two traditional aspects- the governmental aspect (caste,
councils, village arbitration and procedure) and the political aspect within caste and inter-caste
authority and status alignments and cleavages. For the integrational aspect, caste gives a place to
every individual from the highest to the lowest and makes for a high degree of identification and
integration. The aspect of consciousness is also important in which the contest for positions
between various castes often follow some variations of Varna. Therefore, to achieve power or
position the caste consciousness acts as a positive point. Kothari while studying the relation
between caste and politics holds that casteism in politics is no more and no less than the
'politicisation of caste'.110

107 M.N.Srinivas, op. cit., p. 41.
109 S.M. Ijil Anis Zaidi, op. cit., p. 138-139.
Not only individuals, but groups as well, use politics as a means to advance themselves. With increasing politicisation, it has been observed that in this political game of divergent interests, castes have found new areas of activity. This has led to conclude that the caste system is being strengthened instead of being liquidated. The emergence of caste associations has been indicated as an example of strengthening of the traditional system. According to Rudolph and Rudolph, caste associations "have come to specialize in politics". They compete with one another on many issues, including the issue of special privileges accorded to the depressed castes and classes by the government. To win elections (particularly at the state and national level) political parties try to get the support of as many caste associations as possible. Often a number of castes combine to form large groups in order to take an effective part in political activities. Castes become categories when they take part in political activities, for when acting as categories they tend to give up certain characteristics of the traditional caste system. Within the caste organisation, the relatively higher castes occupy positions of influence, as do those individuals who are economically better off.\(^{111}\)

In competing for various privileges, castes have displayed an increased sense of solidarity and cohesion. An example of this is struggle going on today between different castes for the title of being 'backward,' for their vested interests are involved. Srinivas shows that in Karnataka state the important non-Brahman castes developed the technique of capturing government jobs and securing other important concessions on the plea that they were backward. Because these advantages had to be secured through parliamentary means, the leading dominant castes set about organizing themselves as successful pressure groups. The concessions thus gained in their turn helped the castes which were numerically stronger and better organised to enhance their political power. Claims to backwardness and political power thus reinforce each other. The Lingayats of Karnataka owe their political power, in part at least, to the concessions to backward communities because of their political power.\(^{112}\)

But there are certain changes in caste system. The most important change has been the lessening of the rigidity of the caste system as a whole. The structural distances between different castes and between sub-divisions of the same caste are being reduced. Religious and ritual barriers,

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which traditionally separated the castes are breaking down, and rules about commensality, purity
and pollution are being relaxed. Differences between the life styles of castes are gradually being
eliminated and there is a marked tendency towards the evolution of a common style. The forces
behind this standardization of life styles are the twin processes of Sanskritization and
Westernization.¹¹³

Spread of education, development of transport, and rapid strides made in the media of
mass communication facilitate the spread of news and ideas easily and swiftly to all sections of the
population. This has led to the emergence of some values which are common to the majority of the
population.

There has been a considerable increase in the occupational heterogeneity of the members
of a caste. Members of a caste often engage in different occupations and for this reason differ from
one another in their earning. Traditional values continue to play a part in the individual's acceptance
and acquisition of new occupations which were traditionally restricted. Though inter-caste
marriages are still exception, there has been a tendency to enlarge the endogamous units by
merging smaller ones. Nowadays, a few parents tend to take occupation, income and education into
account when seeking spouses for their children rather than looking only to the sub-caste or caste
affiliations.¹¹⁴

There has been a considerable decline in the importance attached to the ideas about
purity and pollution in inter-caste relations. Srinivas maintains that "legislation and education are not
by themselves enough to liquidate untouchability. Every well intentioned move of the Government
to improve the lot of Harijans will be frustrated if it goes against the interests of the high castes who
have economic and social power over the former. As long as the Harijans are not economically
independent of the high castes, the rights which the constitution guarantees them will not be
translated into practice."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 91.
¹¹⁵ M.N.Srinivas and Andre BetelIlle, The Untouchables of India, Scientific American, 1960,
Quoted in R.Rajaraman, op. cit., p. 31.
Srinivas writes:

There is a widespread impression among educated Indians that caste is on its last legs, and that the educated, urbanised and westernized members of the upper classes have already escaped its bonds. But these impressions are wrong. These people may observe very few dietetic restrictions, marry outside the caste and even region, but this does not mean that they have escaped entirely the bonds of caste. They show caste attitudes in surprising contexts. And they interact closely with relatives who are steeped in attitudes. On occasions they are not averse to make use of caste ties.116

The implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations by the V.P. Singh government for job reservations to backward castes has resulted in the castecization of politics. The methodology followed by the Mandal Commission makes it clear that "Caste" is only incidental to its exercise which has been used to identify the "classes" of people. When our constitution, which is the life line of our democratic set up, gives the right of equality to all Indian citizens irrespective of their caste, creed, race or religion, why special provisions for castes? Continuing the policy of reservations for SCs and STs in education and employment on the one hand and raising it to an alarming 27 per cent to the backward castes on the other hand has given birth to castecization of politics.117

Thus, V.P. Singh government made 49.5 per cent reservations in all. Narasimha Rao government has further increased it by 10 per cent reservation for forward castes, thus making reservations in central jobs to the tune of 59.5 per cent. But this government has introduced economic criteria both in case of reservation in backward castes and for forward castes. The Supreme Court has stayed the implementation of the new formula reservation of V.P. Singh government and has not been given any verdict on the matter of fact is that all parties are exploiting caste as a political category for their vested interests and thus there is a revival of caste and castelism in Indian society and politics.

116 M.N. Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

The distinct meanings attached to class in sociological literature are the 'antagonistic' classes associated with the theories of Karl Marx (1818-1883), and the other can best be described as 'status groups' and is identified with the writings of Max Weber (1864-1920).

Marx defined classes in terms of their relation to the means of production, which include land, mines, factories, machinery, raw materials, and finance capital in an industrialized society. He distinguished two broad categories: the owners of the means of production or 'capitalists', and the 'propertyless' or proletariat, who work for a wage of salary and who possess only their labour power. Landowners, who derived their income from rent, constituted a subsection of the capitalists class. Marx traced the growth of classes in his major work Das Capital, and contains the following passage:

*The owners merely of labour power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage labourers, capitalists and landowners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production.*

He adds that the stratification of classes, "does not appear in its pure form. middle and intermediate strata obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere." In Marx's theory of antagonistic classes, the working class emerged from a process that abolished slavery, serfdom and other forms of bonded labour, and changed peasants and independent craftsmen into wage-earners in mines and factories. Marx argued that capitalism required workers who were free in a double sense: 'free' to sell their labour power on an open market and "free from, unencumbered by any means of production of their own." He meant that since worker's have no 'capital', whether in the form of land, factories or money, they are obliged to work for a wage. Excluded from control over the means of production, the worker becomes an alienated being.

Marx's theory of capitalism included an assumption that society would be polarized into two hostile classes. The capitalist class would become wealthier and more powerful as

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Industrialization expanded, while the working class would grow in size and suffer increasing poverty. This, he argued, was an objective process, the result of a social structure based on the pursuit of profit without regard to human welfare.\textsuperscript{120}

Max Weber, the leading sociologist of the present century advanced a detailed modification of Marx's binitory class system. Weber suggested a 'multi-dimensional' model. He argued that different kinds of stratification occurred in contemporary societies, and the numerous social strata could be distinguished intermediate between workers and capitalists. He acknowledged the importance of economic factors in any system of stratification, but claimed that political power was another and independent determinant, which produced its own hierarchical order. Another determinant was 'social prestige' or 'honour': the ranking of persons according to the amount of 'esteem' in which they were held, as members of a traditional aristocracy, or in terms of occupation, education, and living standard.

An individual's initial status is ascribed. He inherits his position from his parents, and shares it with the family as a whole as in the caste system. Individuals and their families often rise or fall in the social scale by moving out of the stratum in which they originated. The movement is not necessarily consistent in all the three dimensions of social stratification: economic power, political power and prestige. There is a tendency for the three indices to coincide in what may be called a 'coordinated status identification'. Wealth, political influence, and prestige usually go hand in hand as determinants of status.\textsuperscript{121}

In the words of Weber, the term 'class' refers to any groups of people that is found in the same class situation.\textsuperscript{122}

Marx defined classes in terms of their relation to means of production. He distinguished to broad categories: the owners of the means of production or 'capitalist' and the propertyless or 'proletarian'. Weber's notion of status, on the other hand, refers to the way people are ranked according to the amount of 'esteem' or prestige they possess in society. Status may be achieved

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid}, p. 645.


\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid}, p. 65.
through improvement in education, occupation and income or ascribed as in the caste system through birth.

W. Lloyd Warner and P.S. Lunt, two American sociologists who made a valuable contribution to stratification studies, used the subjective index in defining 'classes,' in these words;

By class is meant two or more orders of people who are believed to be, and are accordingly ranked by the members of the community, in socially superior and inferior positions.\(^{123}\)

A 'class' is a group of people. But a class can also be described as a force or mechanism that operates to produce certain social attitudes. T.H. Marshall describes it in the second sense by saying that a class is a force that unites people into groups, who differ from one another by overriding the difference between them. It may sound paradoxical to stress in this way the difference within classes instead of those between classes. The class criteria taken in terms of income, property, education and occupation will find that every class contains within itself persons differently endowed in respect of each one of them. It follows that there are two main roads to the classless society. One leads through the abolition of the social differences between individuals which is roughly the way of communism and the other proceeds by rendering all differences irrelevant to social status which is roughly the way of democracy.\(^{124}\)

Dahrendorf, in fact, defines class almost exclusively in terms of conflict. "Class is always a category for purposes of the analysis of social conflict and Its structural roots, and such it has to be separated strictly from stratum as a category for purposes of describing hierarchical systems at a given point of time. But the definition of class used here does not imply the existence of conflict as a necessary or continuous element in the relations between classes.\(^{125}\)

Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in the historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and


\(^{125}\)Ralf Danrendrof, *Class and Class Conflict In an Industrial Society*, London, 1959, p. 76.
formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are group of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.\(^{126}\)

The existence of class is associated only with historically determined modes of production. The emergence of class is determined by the development of the social division of labour and the appearance of private ownership of the means of production, the division of society into propertyed and propertyless, the exploiters and the exploited. In every class society, besides the basic classes, slaveowners and slaves in slave society, landowners and serfs under feudalism, capitalists and proletariat in bourgeois society. There also exist the intermediate classes and social strata, whether the heritage of previous formation (such as peasants, artisans, petty traders, landlords under capitalism), or representing the newly emerging classes of the subsequent formation (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the epoch of feudalism). Even with all the differences between the class structures of antagonistic societies, they all have one common feature: the exploitation of one class by another. The irrecocnclably hostile interests of antagonistic classes lead to class struggle, which results in a change of the social system, and, consequently of the class structure of the society. The basic classes of modern capitalist society are the bourgeoisie and the working class. Based on the amount of capital possessed, the modern bourgeoisie can be divided into the monopoly, large non-monopoly and middle bourgeoisie. The monopoly bourgeoisie enjoys absolute economic and political domination. Its class interests irreconcilably clash with the interests of the entire nation, and all the people. The working class deprived of the means of production and compelled to live by selling its labour power to the capitalists, is the oppressed and exploited class. The growth of the working class is accompanied by its better organisation and greater political activity. The working class represents the basic force of social development, reflects the interests of all the working people all the social strata of society in the struggle against monopoly domination.\(^{127}\)


\(^{127}\) M.I.Volkov, A Dictionary of Political Economy, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985, pp. 43-44.
(d) Power and Power Structure

Power and power structure have been defined differently by different scholars belonging to different systems. In human affairs, the "power" often describes the effectiveness of action or the capacity of action by one individual or a group of individuals.

(I) Power: Max Weber defines the term power in these words:

*In general, we understand by Power the chance of a man or of a number of men to realise their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the actions.*\(^{128}\)

The power of the state is backed ultimately by the control and use of physical force. Power in wider sense which we attach to it, may be backed, in addition to physical force, by economic, ritual and other sanctions.\(^{129}\)

The chief exponent of the so called elite approach in the study of power, Gaetano Mosca elucidated his views in these words:

*In all the societies from societies that are very meagerey developed and have barely attained the dawn of civilization, down to most powerful societies two classes of people appear, a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoy the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is now more or less arbitrary and violent.*\(^{130}\)

Russell has defined power as the production of intended effects. He has examined three forms of power which are Traditional, Revolutionary and Naked power. According to him the Traditional power possesses the force of habit and it commands respect which is due to custom. This form of power does not have to justify itself at every movement, nor to prove continually that no opposition is strong enough to overthorugh it. Moreover, it is almost invariably associated with


religious or quasi-religious beliefs purporting to show that resistance is wicked. He calls power Revolutionary when it depends upon a large group united by a new creed, programme or sentiment such as purporting, communism or desire for the national independence, and he calls power Naked when it results merely from the power loving impulses of individuals or groups and wins from its subjects only submission through fear, not active cooperation. It will be seen that the nakedness of power is a matter of degree.131

The concept of power is associated with that of control. The power is measured by the extent and degree of control over others. Although power and control, according to Mannheim, primarily mean coercion, the use of the word soon broadens since we do not control other men by commands and threats alone, but often through kindness and persuasion. Hence power is present no matter how we induce people to comply with our wishes. Interaction in the power relations is not based on fear alone but on mutual response, which is perhaps the more fundamental and general source of human control.132 In the words of S.L. Wasby, *Power is generally thought to involve the bringing about of an action by some against the will or desire of another.*133

The simple Marxian view makes the big economic man the real holder of power. The simple liberal view makes the big political man the chief of the power system, and there are some who would view the warlords as virtual dictators.134

Power in broad sense in modern society is composite entity of economic, political and cultural elements and thus power is exercised primarily through the mechanism of state. While a fully satisfactory analysis of the power should cover a very wide field of investigation, stretching from the composition of its various organs to the juridical, ideological frames that sustain it.135


Power is generally and rightly regarded as a capacity of one group to control and influence the action and behaviour of other groups by either the threat or the actual use of force who come in contact with him or who have a continuous interaction with him.

(ii) Power Structure: The social scientists all over the world have offered different explanations of power structure. C.Wright Mills says that power structure in America, like a pyramid, is controlled by four types of elites - political, executive, corporation and the military. These are designated by him as power elites. Reisman argues that there is not political elite controlling power structure. He suggests that only "veto groups" can control the power structure without taking into confidence the other groups. Lasswell says that there are three layers in the power structure of a society- power seekers at the top, unpolitical structure at the bottom and political structure in between the two. According to him the first two categories are intermingled and a struggle continues between them for capturing the power so as to reach at the top. The lowest category has no share in the power structure. Robert A. Dahl adds one more category to Lasswell's three categories. According to him four categories are-- the apolitical structure, the political structure, the power seekers and the powerfuls. He says that, at times, a political stratum enters emperceptibly into the political stratum, so only an arbitrary boundary can be marked between the two. However, these are the power seekers and the powerfuls who play the most important part in controlling the power structure. But he argues that all these four categories are interchangeable from time to time. Karl Marx gave a new dimension to the interpretation of power structure. According to him, society in the age of industrialisation is divided into two classes. Before the socialist revolution when the proletariat will capture power, there are the Capitalists who control power structure. His main theory is that those who control the means of production also control the entire power structure. In other words, it is the base or sub-structure which controls the superstructure in concrete terms, in socialist societies such as China, the proletariat control power structure and in liberal democratic

136 C.Wright Mills, op. cit., p. 276.
countries such as U.S.A. and U.K. the capitalists dominate the power structure, Bourgeoisie is another name given to the Capitalists by Marx.\textsuperscript{140}

Power structure can, however, be defined as a system within the social system-comprising an individual or a group of individuals who exercise control over the rest of the community.

Indian social reality is very complex and our assumption is that it cannot be explained in terms of any of the models of power structure mentioned earlier. The basic problem which we have tried to investigate is: Who controls rural power structure in Himachal? In this study, those persons, who control the means of production of society in which they live, have been considered power holders. This power holding may be in the form of leadership, holding positions in the formal organisations, exerting influence over others or preventing others from doing some work. The group which hold power on the basis of caste, economy, and holding and political affiliation have been identified in the present study.

**Caste, Class and Power Convergence**

We have described the basic concepts used in this research work separately. It is necessary to demonstrate how caste is related to class and power. Although it is difficult to generalise for the whole of India, it may be said that, generally, there is a close correspondence between the three hierarchies of caste, class and power. Over most of India, Brahmins have the highest position in the caste hierarchy. Untouchables have the lowest position and between these two there is a large collection of castes with no fixed positions. Positions in the caste hierarchy itself are based on the ideas of purity and pollution. Castes at the top have greater purity in that their food, dress and occupation are regarded as more pure than those of other castes. Castes at the bottom are regarded as impure and their food, occupations, clothes, customs, and myths are regarded as either inferior or impure. In the middle range of the hierarchy. There is often rivalry over relative position. In Kumbapettai, the village studied by Gough, Brahmins occupy the top position in the hierarchy, non-Brahmins the middle range and the Adi-Dravids the lowest position.\textsuperscript{141}


\textsuperscript{141} K. Gough, *Caste in Tanjour*, op. cit., pp. 11-61.
There is a close relationship between the status of a caste and its economic position. The higher castes tend to be landowners, tenants are mostly from the backward castes and agricultural labourers come mostly from the untouchable castes.

Similarly, higher castes have position of power and influence over the lower castes. There is a great congruence between caste, class and power. Srinivas was the first to influence over the lower caste, class and power. Srinivas was the first to indicate this congruence in this concept of the dominant caste. Srinivas writes:

A caste is dominant when it preponderates numerically over the other castes and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power. A large and powerful caste group can more easily be dominant if its position in the local caste hierarchy is not too low.142

In short the dominant caste is the one which has relatively high positions in the hierarchies of caste, class and power and numerical strength. The definition of the dominant caste also shows that Brahmins need not always be dominant. Srinivas gives the example of the Lingyat and Okkaliga of Mysore, the Reddi and Kamma of Andhra, the Nayyar of Kerala and the Patidar of Gujarat, as castes that are dominant. He has added modern education and modern occupation as factors contributing to the dominance of caste. He has given seven elements of dominance which are numerical superiority, economic status, political power, ritual status, non-traditional education, modern occupation and physical force.143

The fact that other castes can be dominant, leads to the concept of Sanskritization seems to be the only means of rising within the caste hierarchy. Srinivas writes:

The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism,

143 Ibid, p. 15.
and by sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. He calls it the process of Sanskritization.144

Explaining the importance of Sanskritization for the dominant castes, Srinivas writes:

Occasionally we find castes which enjoyed political and economic power but were not rated high in ritual ranking. That is, there was a gap between their ritual and politico-economic position. In such cases Sanskritization occurred sooner or later because without it the claim of higher position was not fully effective. The three main areas of power in any one sphere usually leads to the acquisition of power in the other two. This does not mean, however that inconsistencies do not occur.145

In traditional social system, physical force, economic, ritual and social sanctions were used by the higher castes to suppress all attempts at Sanskritization by the lower castes.146

Today there is a certain amount of divergence between the hierarchy of caste and class. Both the systems have been undergoing some modification, the caste system because of the general trend towards westernization and secularization, and the class system because of the extension of cash economy and because of land having come into the market.

In traditional society, there was much greater consistency between the class system and the caste structure. The class system was largely subsumed under the caste structure. This means, in effect, that ownership and non-ownership of land, and traditions within the system of production, were to a much greater extent associated with caste than is the case today. The disintegration of village handicrafts and the emergence of new "caste free" occupations have also contributed towards dissociating class relations from the caste structure. The relationship between the caste structure and the class system has, evidently been a dynamic one. In the traditional system caste and class overlapped to a very large extent. There is even today a considerable measure of overlap between the two systems. But the class system has gradually been dissociating itself from the caste

146 Ibid, p. 18.

56
structure. One can achieve a variety of class positions with different degrees of probability, whatever one's position in the caste structure may be 147

Framework.

The objective reality prevailing in the third world is different both from the developed countries like U.S.A. or a socialist state like China. These societies generally suffer from under-development, poverty, illiteracy and lack of modernisation. In all these societies a very small group controls the power structure. Coming the specific case of India, the power structure is controlled by the ruling classes which are composed of the bourgeoisie. These classes are also referred as "bourgeoisie- landlord combine". But in case of landlords or rich farmers the caste or nationality or religion question is important. For example, Sikhs particularly Jat Sikh constitute the rich farmers in Punjab. In Haryana, Jats prominently but Ahirs, Gujars, Sainis and Rors are parts of the rich farming class. In Himachal Pradesh also basically Rajputs, prominently but some other castes like, Ghiraths, Brahmins etc. constitute this class. In the district of Kinnaur and Lahul & Spiti, Negs dominate. But in the over all situation, both in agriculture and horticulture, Rajputs are a dominant caste. Here in the context of framework of our study of the three panchayats it is pertinent to point out that there is a sort of convergence between dominant castes and dominant classes. Dominant castes are to be defined in terms of ownership of landholdings. The caste or class which controls major portion of agricultural or horticultural land also forms the dominant class. This is followed by the petty trading classes in the rural area, who generally are Soods, Mahajans and Banias. This class also shares some power. But the effective control of the power structure tends to be in the hands of agriculturally /horticulturally dominant castes and classes. This is a proposition which needs serious consideration and which we have tried to investigate through field study in the three panchayats. We have tried to find out whether this generally hold impression, which is also the main finding of many research pieces, is correct or incorrect and into what extent. So the framework of present study revolves around caste, class and power structure in rural Himachal in terms of one major institution of panchayati raj that is the Gram Panchayat and its leadership.

147 Andre Beleille, op. cit., pp. 189-191.
Problem and the Issues.

The basic problem of the present research, broadly speaking is to investigate and analyse various aspects of grass roots democracy and politics in rural Himachal in terms of performance of panchayats. Let it be made clear at the very outset that though the panchayati raj includes three tiers, that is the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad, yet only three gram panchayats have been taken up for the research because of the two very compelling reasons first, because the zila parishads have not functioned and secondly the elections of panchayats samitis were not held regularly. Through the 1991 (Amendment) Act the top tier i.e. zila parishad has been abolished. So, the focus of this study has been to investigate the emerging pattern of gram panchayat leadership and the linkages of these leaders with higher political leadership and the linkages of these leaders with higher political leadership, with special reference to the interaction of caste, class and power in Himachal villages and of course the question of control over rural power structure has also been taken up. The basic issues or the research questions related with this study are as follows:

(I) What is the socio-economic status of the panchayat leaders? Is it in any way different from that of the common masses?

(II) What are the linkages between grass roots level politicians, and central level politicians?

(III) How far these linkages are beneficial to the development of Himachal rural society and to the downtrodden and economically backward sections of Himachal villages?

(IV) Is there monopoly and domination of upper castes and dominant classes in rural Himachal?

(V) What has been the impact of panchayats on politicization, socialization and mobilization of rural masses?

(VI) What role do the panchayat leaders play during State Assembly and Parliamentary elections?

(VII) How far the political parties have been able to penetrate in Himachal villages through panchayat leadership?

(VIII) What are the linkages of panchayat leaders with the bureaucracy and the police?
Whether panchayat leaders are genuinely re-constructing rural Himachal or only enriching themselves?

What has been the attitude of panchayat leaders to the economically downtrodden and socially backward sections of rural society?

Whether the panchayat system has fragmented the rural society by creating factionalism and groupism?

What is the role of money and wine in village panchayat elections?

How does politics operate in rural Himachal in terms of caste and class?

Is there convergence of dominant caste and dominant class in rural Himachal?

Who controls the rural power structure in Himachal?

What is the relationship of caste, class and power in Himachal villages?

To what extent politics is influential by groupism and factionalism in rural Himachal?

What is the interaction of population of these panchayats with nearest township, district headquarters and state capital?

Universe of the Study and Delimitation of the Area of Research

The Universe of this study in its broadest sense is the panchayat system in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Before discussing the procedure of delimitation of the area and the rationale behind it, it is not only appropriate but also relevant to briefly refer to the demographic structure and some other aspects of Himachal Pradesh. The name and political boundary of the region, now called the state of Himachal, have been more or less the same. Himachal Pradesh is situated on the western lap of the Himalayas. It has an area of 55673 Sq.Kms. and a population about 5111079. Himachal Pradesh is predominated by agriculture and horticulture. It is endowed with extensive natural resources. It has vast deposits of minerals like salt, slate, gypsum, limestone and

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MAP OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Chamba
Lahul and Spiti
Kangra
Kullu
Mandi
Hamirpur
Shimla
Khar
Kinner
Sirmaur
Solan
Bilaspur
Hamirpur

60
barytes. Forests, constitute the backbone of the State economy. The another important source of state income is tourism. Third important source of natural wealth is the hydroelectric power, various snowfed perennial rivers Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab and Yamuna, which are ideal for power generation.

The people of Himachal Pradesh are predominantly Hindus. Family, Caste and Community are the most significant social units of society. Himachal Pradesh passed through a series of trials before it could achieve its long cherished goal of a full fledged statehood on 25th January, 1971. The state has twelve districts at present.150 (About the history, social and economic culture see in detail the fourth chapter of this thesis).

Delimitation

At the first stage, the area is delimited from the twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh to only three districts namely Una, Shimla and Kinnaur. These three districts are selected for study basically for the following reasons:-

Una district is in low hill areas with agricultural economy and the panchayat which I have selected for the study is Bangarh. It is also an area which is called "new" Himachal Pradesh because this area was merged in 1966. Economically and in terms of development Bangarh panchayat is a developing one. Before the merger of this area into Himachal as a district, it was in Punjab and there is an influence of Punjabi culture on the people of this area. Now the boundary of this district touches to Punjab at Mehatpur. The people of this area speak in Punjabi or mixture of Hindi and Punjabi both. This district has also achieved some level of industrialization. There is a cluster of small and medium scale industries in Mehatpur. Local people are engaged to earn in these factories.

The second district is Shimla which comes in the high hill region. This area is a horticultural belt. There is an influence of Devatas on social and political life of the village. People are superstitious and believe in Devatas. The language of this area is Pahari. The two Chief Ministers, Ram Lal and Vir Bhadar Singh got elected from this region and gave boost to the apple economy giving remunerative prices by providing subsidies.

The third district is Kinnaur which comes in tribal belt. Its economy is primarily horticulture based and secondly agriculture. The people of this area are influenced by Buddhism and goddess Usha Devi. The language of the people is quite different with rest to other parts of the state which is difficult to understand. It is an underdeveloped area because of geographical conditions. District Kinnaur also touches the boundary of Tibet. Before 1962 there was trade between Tibet and this district.

The comparative study of grass roots politics of these three different areas will lead us to some broad generalizations about rural democracy in rural Himachal. At the second stage, the area is delimited to three blocks, in three districts of Himachal. In three blocks, one is Una and from this block only one panchayat Bangarh is selected. Second block is Jubbal-Kotkhai and from this Kiarl panchayat is taken up. Third is Nichar block and from this block Nichar panchayat is taken up.

Before taking up the other aspects of the sample and sampling procedure, it is relevant to add some more information about these three panchayats, particularly the demography, social structure and economy.

Social Structure of the Three Panchayats

The social structure of any rural/urban area may be explained in terms of the setting as well as the socio-cultural and political characteristics of the area. However, in case of rural area the socio-cultural and political characteristics seems to be more important. In the present study unless we are not acquainted with the social structure of the village. We cannot study its political pattern, power structure and the leadership pattern. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explain the social structure of the three panchayats under study.

**Bangarh**

Bangarh is a panchayat which comes under Una tehsil of Una district. It is situated besides the Nangai-Una State Highway Road. The distance of this village is 4 to 6 Kilometers from Mehatpur.

The panchayat is comprised of four main hamlets which are known as Bangarh, Fatehwal, Pukhru and Gholond. These hamlets come under the Bangarh panchayat. Bangarh is a big hamlet and is the centre of all social and political activities. The distance between one hamlet to another do
not exceed one and a half kilometer. The hamlets are well connected to each other through the link roads and streets.

Area:

Total area of Bangarh village panchayat is 1936 hectares. In this village 653 hectare land is used for cultivation. The irrigation facilities are limited which covers only 25 hectare of land. The land is irrigated through Bahabhor Sahib lift irrigation scheme by making Kuhals. Total dry land is 626 hectare. The uncultivated land is 1283 hectare which is used as grassland and is under forests. In this area, horticulture land is negligible i.e. only 2 hectare. It is evident from the Table 1.1. The main crops grown in the village are maize and wheat. Apart from these main crops sugarcane, vegetables and pulses are also grown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: 1.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gram Panchayat Bangarh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total land in panchayat Bangarh</td>
<td>1936 Hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cultivated land</td>
<td>653 Hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total uncultivated land</td>
<td>1283 Hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total land under irrigation</td>
<td>25 Hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total dry land</td>
<td>626 Hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Horticultured land</td>
<td>2 Hectares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Revenue Records, Patwar Circle Bangarh

Population

The size of the village is medium. It is neither too small to be poor in resources or manpower nor too large to be unwieldy and diffuse. It comprised of total 380 households. Out of these 278 households are of non scheduled castes, and 102 are of Scheduled Castes. Thus, each household, on an average consists of six to seven persons. The average size of the family indicates
that the majority of the families are nuclear families and not joint families. In fact, they fell somewhere between these two types, because although majority of the families have separate kitchens and chulhas, they live under the same roof, the house being divided into two or more separate portions among brothers. The following table shows the population, voters and number of households.

Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gram Panchayat Bangarh</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population of Gram Panchayat Bangarh</td>
<td>1324</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>2497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total voters of Gram Panchayat Bangarh</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>1551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population of non-Scheduled castes</td>
<td>1068</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-scheduled caste voters</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>1356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scheduled caste population</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scheduled caste voters</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households of non scheduled castes</td>
<td>278</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households of scheduled castes</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>380 (278 + 102)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Block Development Office, Una, District Una.

Total population of panchayat Bangarh according to 1981 census is 2497 and total voters are 1551. The total population of non-scheduled castes is 2005 and non-scheduled caste voters are 1356. The population of scheduled castes is 492 and total voters are 195.

In Bangarh, though the one religion Hindu is predominant but other religions i.e. Sikh and Muslim are also there who are in minority. Besides religion, there are many castes in the village. Among the high castes, mainly the Rajputs, Brahmins and Jat Sikhs (in minority) and the backward
consists of Gujjars, Carpenters, Lohars (blacksmiths) and Sunars (goldsmiths). There are other groups which are considered as scheduled castes in the village. These are Chamars (harijans) Mirasi (singer), Faqeer (drum beaters), Darzi (tailors), Tell and Nai (barber).

The caste system is strictly followed among high castes. The economic prosperity or education seems to have lesser importance to improve the social status of lower castes and scheduled castes. One caste do not like to marry outside their own caste and this tradition is practically followed by almost all castes.

**Occupation**

In this village bulk of population is engaged in agriculture. There are a few families who are landlords, who do not cultivate their land and give it to others for cultivation. Peasants and agriculture laborers are also found in this village. Apart from agriculture, the people are engaged in other occupations as wage earning and government services. They are having their traditional occupation and give services to the selected families of the village under 'Jajmani' system. They are paid by their jajmans in the form of foodgrains at the harvesting time. They get a fixed amount of grain twice a year. The serving castes are Lohars, Carpenters, Shoemakers and Sweepers. The other serving castes who provide their services on cash payments basis are: Tell, Darzi Faqeer and Marasi etc.

A few educated persons are in government/private jobs. The persons engaged in service sector belong to mostly higher castes like Rajputs, Brahmins and Jat Sikhs, etc.

**Infra-structural Facilities**

Various types of facilities are provided to Bangarh Panchayat.

(a) **Medical facilities**: Bangarh panchayat has no dispensary in its territory, but this facility is available in the adjoining village Jakhera. The health facilities are also available in the nearest town Mehatpur. District Hospital is at Una located at the distance of 18 Kilometers. The veterinary hospital is situated in another village Basdera at the distance of 6 Kilometers.

(b) **Educational facilities**: This panchayat is educationally not so developed. There are three primary schools and one middle school. High School is also located in adjoining village Jakhera which comes under another panchayat. The Senior Secondary School is at Basdera at the
distance of 6 to 7 kilometers. The nearest colleges are S.V.S.D.College Bhatoll and Government Degree College Una at the distance of 8 to 16 kilometers. Therefore, the people can be benefitted from these educational institutions.

(c) Transport and Communication facilities: There are two link roads crossing the panchayat and connect it to Mehatpur. There are three times of mudrika bus to this area from Una. But the state highway is very near to this area. There are frequent bus services on this road. The government and private buses ply round the clock. There are direct buses which starts from Delhi, Chandigarh, and Naya Nangal via Mehatpur to Una, Hamirpur, Kangra, Palampur, Dharamsala and Baijnath. This state highway connects this village to Tehsil and District headquarters.

The post office located at Jakhera cover the study area. The postman comes daily and distribute the post. Telephone and telegraph facilities are available at Mehatpur. The village has the facility of electricity which is used for domestic and commercial purposes.

The nearest market places are Mehatpur and Una. Another is at Una. The people buy and sell their produce in these markets. Newspaper agency and police chowki is at Mehatpur. Rai-Mehatpur is the railway station which is at the distance of 6-7 kilometers. Therefore, this panchayat is very fortunate in having developed means of communication.

(b) Kiarl

Kiarl panchayat comes under Kotkhai tehsil of Shimla district. Shimla district surrounded by Kinnaur in east, Solan in South, Bilaspur in West, Mandi and Kulu in North-West. It also touches the state of Uttar Pradesh in North-East.

Kiarl panchayat is located 75 Kms. from state capital of Shimla. From Kotkhai tehsil, it is only 12 kilometers. The panchayat under study is composed of many hamlets: Kiarl, Dakahal, Barli, Dhall, Karleta, Jole and Halal. Kiarl is the central place of all social and political activities. There is no link road which connects these hamlets to each others. All these hamlets are scattered, because of hilly area, the links roads are not possible. Therefore, all hamlets are linked to each other through footpaths. The distance between one hamlet to other is ranged from one to two kilometers.
MAP OF GRAM PANCHAYAT KIARI Teh. KOTKHAI Distt. SHIMLA (H.P.)

NORTH

FOREST KALALA
BHUILA
MANJAUHI
GANNI
HOSPITAL
KALI MANDIR
KOTI
KANLETA
NALAH DHALI
JAKNOL
BADROONI
SARKARI JUNGAL
BAGANA JUND
MIDDLE SCHOOL
DAKAHAL
LINK ROAD
KHANETI

WEST

DHILVI
KAMALI
KIARI KOTKHAI ROAD

SOUTH

POPULATION
BOUNDARY
SCHOOL
FOOT PATH
NALLAH
ROAD
TEMPLE
HOSPITAL
Area

Total area of gram panchayat Kiarl is 571 hectares. Out of this land, 350 hectares land is used for horticulture and 362 hectares for agriculture. The uncultivated land is 209 hectares. The selected area is totally rained. No irrigation facility is available in the area. Table 1.3 shows the land use pattern in Kiarl panchayat periphery.

Table 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gram Panchayat Kiarl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total land of Gram Panchayat Kiarl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cultivated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total un-cultivated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total horticulture land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total land under irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total dry land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Revenue Records, Patwar Circle, Kiarl.

Population

In Kiarl Panchayat, the total population according to 1981 census is 1521 (748 males and 773 females). The total voters in Kiarl are 1013. The non-scheduled castes population is 1268. The non-scheduled caste voters are 855. The total population of scheduled castes is 253 and total scheduled castes voters are 158. Total households in Kiarl panchayats are 351. Out of these households, 266 belong to non-scheduled castes and 85 to scheduled castes categories. Thus, in this selected area, the average family size comes out about 4 members.
Table 1.4
Gram Panchayat Kiari

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population of Gram Panchayat Kiari</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>1521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total voters of Gram Panchayat Kiari</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>1013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population of non-scheduled caste</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>1268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-scheduled caste voters</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scheduled caste population</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total scheduled caste voters</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households of non-scheduled castes</td>
<td>266</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households of scheduled castes</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households in Kiari panchayat</td>
<td>351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Block Development Office, Jubbal-Kotkhal, Distt. Shimla

In Kiari Village maximum families are joint families.

Caste Composition

In Kiari panchayat, there is only one religion that is Hindu, but there exist number of castes such as Rajputs, Brahmins, Lohars, Carpenters and Harijans. In this area the society is dominated by caste system.

Occupation

Because of suitable agro-climatic conditions, the area is enrich in horticulture. The bulk of population is also engaged in this sector. The serving castes are lohars, carpenters, goldsmiths and shoe-makers. In general, it can be said that the economic condition of the village is good than that of Bangarh panchayat. The apples are the main cash crop in this area.
Infra-structural Facilities

Educational facilities

Educational facilities to the local population in this area are more satisfactory as compared to that of Bangarh panchayat. There are two convent schools up to primary level. One is D.A.V. Public School and another is Blue Bell School. There is one government high school in the adjoining village located at the distance of only one kilometer. There is a senior secondary school and D.A.V. College at Kotkhal at the distance of twelve kilometers.

Medical facilities

There is a Primary Health Centre in this panchayat. In addition to this the medical facilities are also available at Kotkhal. Veterinary hospital is also there and facilitates to the villagers for the treatment of their cattles.

Transport and Communication

The study area is linked with the Shimla Kotkhal metalled road, but from Kotkhal to Klarl (12 Kms.) the road is unmetalled. There are three buses which directly ply from Shimla to Klarl. The private mini buses are also available from Kotkhal to Klarl. There are many other buses which ply from Shimla to Kotkhal, Jubbal and Rohru. There is another Gumma Ghatti road which passed through Klarl area to Baggi.

The village has a post and telegraph office, from where the post is delivered and despatched daily. Telephone facility is also available there. The people of the area have radio and television sets. Through the electronic media the people acquaint themselves with the latest local, national and international news. There is an agency of newspapers in Klarl. However, daily newspapers available in the village are the more popular and widespread than radio.

Other facilities

In addition to the above said infrastructural facilities. There is a shopping complex where individuals meet their daily requirement. There is also a fair price shop. The flour mill, saw mill and oil mill are also there. Banking facility is available to the people. There are two banks viz; State Bank of India and the State Cooperative Bank. There are other government offices like the office of Junior
Engineer Electricity, Junior Engineer P.W.D. Forest Range Office, Gram Sewak Office, Revenue Office, Office of the Horticulture Development. There are the agencies of General Insurance and Life Insurance Corporations. There are Plant Protection centre, forest club and sports club. The proposal of Community library is also there in the area. Facility of Electricity is available from mid-sixties. The street light facility is provided. The drinking water facility through pumping water supply scheme from a Bowari is available.

**Devata System**

The people of this area are very religious minded. They believe in their Devatas. These Devatas play an important role in their social and political life. Before doing any work they took the consent of their Devatas. They never go against the wishes of Devatas. There are two temples, one is Durga temple and another is Kiarl temple of Lakkar Vil. These temples are under the trust. There are local fairs of five gods. Two fairs which held once in a year, one fair takes place in May and another in August. The Tikkar fair is most important fair which comes once in four years. The money, food, gold etc. collected in the name of Devata are under the custody of a Brahmin who is known as a Bhandarl. These are kept in specially constructed room in the temple, where no body except the Bhandarl can go inside the store room. However, in princely days, besides Bhandarl, the Raja could also visit the store. There are occasions when the processions of Devata are taken all around the village.

**Social Welfare Institutions and their achievements**

The panchayat has a good potential leadership in many aged and youngmen. These leaders have given a good progress in the area. The social and institutional life of Kiarl is very rich. The panchayat has rich social heritage of the past twenty years. Since the establishment of Lal Memorial Trust (Regd.)

Lal Memorial Trust (Educational Charitable Trust) was established by Sh. Balanand Chauhan (Ex.M.L.A. State Assembly) as a Founder Trustee in memory of his father Late Sh. Lal Das Chauhan about twenty years back and got it registered under the Indian Trust Art in 1978 as an Voluntary Private Trust out of his own funds with a view to help and assist boys and girls students belonging to backward and economically poor families in the far flung snow bound and unserved areas of Himachal Pradesh by providing financial assistance in the form of monthly scholarships
through the banks by opening individual awardees Saving Bank Accounts to meet their schooling expenses. Keeping in view 33 middle and high schools and one Degree College have been selected for awarding monthly scholarships to about 300 students belonging to the poorest families and such students once selected are adopted to receive scholarships up to matric and graduation level.

The Trust is a secular institution and the scholarships are awarded irrespective of caste and creed. The scholarships are made available to the awardees through the bank nearest to the school every month out of the interest amount only. Destitute, disabled and Ex-serviceman children are given preference.

In order, therefore, to select and adopt the poorest of the poor children, 34 Advisory Committees consisting of headmaster, panchayat pradhan and social workers of each school areas have been constituted. The scholarship serve as incentive not only to the student but parents also as a result of which school drop out checked, bank sense, saving habit, self-confidence, vocational guidance and "earning and learning" habit amongst the students created.

Besides education, the Trustee Sh.B.N. Chauhan is deeply involved in the general upliftment of the area at the grass roots level and as a result of which "Kiarli" panchayat was adjudged and awarded the following awards: (a) Best Village Award in 1961. (b) Bachat Gram Award in 1981. (c) Family Planning Award in 1982. (d) Best Panchayat Award in 1983. (e) Best Post Office Awards in 1979 and in 1986. (f) Balanand Chauhan Temperate Fruit Research Award under consideration of I.C.A.R., New Delhi. (g) Natural Calamities, Fire sufferers and Destitute Relief Fund is in service since long and rendering service to the needy people. (h) Balanand Chauhan Ex. M.L.A. awarded Himachal Vidhan Sabha Silver Jubilee Award 1988 by Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice President of India, New Delhi.

Being a dedicated social worker at the grass roots level Sh. Chauhan has already donated his political pension to the Trust and also in the event of getting cash award in appreciation of his humble service to the poor children. Lastly, as a matter of fact even at this old age of 80 years when he is afflicted by heart trouble, he assures that he will steadfastly devote the remaining days of his life towards the noble cause of downtrodden.

151 Based on the Interview with Sh. Balanand Chauhan, Ex. M.L.A. of first Vidhan Sabha (1951) from the Kotkhai constituency.
Nichar

Nichar panchayat comes under Nichar Tehsil of Kinnaur district. Kinnaur has taken its name after the principal community i.e. Kannauras occupied the area. Kinnaur, the north-eastern frontier district of Himachal Pradesh is a secluded region, rugged and mountainous to an extraordinary degree. The major portion of the area is inhabited because of the vast snowy mountains, inaccessible crags and forests. Besides the extreme cold climate in the major portion of the tract accounts for scanty population.

The panchayat is composed of many hamlets. These hamlets are - Nichar, Gradey, Gramey, Nanganio, Kashpo, Lingey, Parikh Khor, Rago, Somo, and Chhota Kanda. Among these hamlets, Nichar is the biggest and central place of all activities. There are two link roads in the selected area which connects hospital and high school to the Nichar hamlet and the other small hamlets are connected to each other through foot paths.

Caste Composition

There are many castes and communities. The principal communities are - Kannaura, Jad, Lama and Khampa. The upper caste among these is only of Rajputs(Negls). Brahmin caste is not there. Brahmins (Purohits or Pandits) come from Rampur or Sarahan to perform marriage and other social ceremonies. Those who have adopted Lama religion, their ceremonies are performed by Lamas. The backward caste are - Carpenters, Lohars, Sunar and Kumhars. The scheduled castes are Chanal, Koli, Chamar (Harijan) and Jullaha. Caste system is strictly followed and scheduled castes are treated as 'Achhuts'.

Area

The total land of Nichar panchayat is 2185 hectares. Out of this land 178 hectares land is used for horticulture. The cultivated land is 107 hectares and un-cultivated land is 1900 hectares. There is no irrigation facility available in the area.
Table 1.5
Gram Panchayat Nichar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total land in Gram Panchayat Nichar</td>
<td>2185 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cultivated land</td>
<td>107 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total uncultivated land</td>
<td>1900 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total horticulture land</td>
<td>178 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total land under Irrigation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total dry land</td>
<td>2185 hectares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Revenue record, Patwar circle Nichar.

Population

The total population of Nichar panchayat according to 1981 Census is 2092 (1049 males and 1043 females). The total voters of gram panchayat Nichar are 1299. The non-scheduled caste population is 1443 and out of it total voters are 939. The total scheduled caste population is 649 and voters of this caste are 360. The total households of non-scheduled castes in this village are 243 and the total households of scheduled castes population are 121. Therefore total households (including both non-scheduled and Scheduled castes) are 364.

Table 1.6
Gram Panchayat Nichar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population of Gram Panchayat Nichar</td>
<td>1049</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td>2092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total voters of Gram Panchayat Nichar</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>1299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population of non-scheduled castes</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>1443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total voters non-scheduled castes</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The main cereal crops are wheat, maize and pulses and main cash crops are apples and potatoes. The dry fruits are walnut, apples which give high income to these people. Grapes, wild apples and wild peaches are in abundance. The local people put these fruits to distil and spirit out of them, the famous Angurl.

Occupation

The main occupation of the people of Nichar is horticulture and agriculture. The government/private jobs are next to agriculture/horticulture in the area. A few people are engaged in business who have opened their shops in Nichar. The lower castes such as Carpenters, Lohars, Shoemakers and Sunars are engaged in their own traditional occupations.

Religious Institutions, Fairs and Festivals

The people of this panchayat area are religious minded. The people are influenced by Brahmins, Buddhists and Lamas. These Brahmins Buddhists and Lamas perform their religious and social rituals. In this area there is one temple of Nag Devata, another temple is of Usha Devi. The village deity is goddess Ukha (Usha Devi) within the hamlet of Nakayang or Nangni stand a big temple dedicated to goddess Ukha. Only the Bhandari is under a traditional taboo not to look inside the room while bringing plates (special utensil for keeping worship food). Local fairs are also popular in this area.
Infra-structural Facilities

(a) Educational Facility

The people of the selected area are educationally backward. The facilities for higher, technical and professional education have not yet provided in the whole district. However, for higher education, there exist no degree college. In this panchayat, there is one high school and three primary schools. The senior secondary school is at Bhawa Nagar, 10 Kilometres from this area. Another senior secondary school is at Kalpa. The nearest College from this area is Government Degree College Rampur, which is at the distance of about 55 Kilometres from Nichar. No newspaper/magazine/periodical is published within the district. The district library is at Kalpa which started in 1961. The 20 gram panchayats including Nichar panchayat in the district have their own libraries. The books of these libraries are purchased by the panchayat departments out of the government grant. From these libraries general public as well as office bearers of panchayat are deriving benefits.

Medical Facilities

This tribal area from the beginning remained steeped in the traditional belief of supernatural and a few traces of it continue to persist even today. The age old use of some indigenous medicinal herbs and plants was prevalent. This had its roots in the local beliefs, climate and taboos. The people had, as they still have, much faith in their local dieties and lamas. They also believe in propitiating gods and spirits to get rid of their ailments and diseases. The lamas were consulted, though there were few hakims, yet the bulk of the people pinned their faith in charms and incontations as a cure for various ailments. Some private practitioners locally known as habas, chobas and Tibtean lamas, visit from village to village to provide medical relief succor to the sick. These private practitioners received their training in Tibet on the ayurvedic pattern. The talent and proficiency of Vaids was duly recognised by their contemporary rulers and the eminent ones were honoured by the grant of fees etc. to them.

153 Ibid. p. 299.
154 Ibid. p. 300.
In addition to these, there is a primary health centre. In this hospital two (M.B.B.S.) doctors, are posted. Veterinary hospital is also there in this panchayat. One chemist shop is also available from where the people buy the medicines. Other chemist shops are at Bhawa Nagar. The 'private medical practitioners are at Bhawa Nagar. The District hospital is located at Kalpa and another hospital at Rampur.

(c) Transport and Communication

The road (National Highway No.22) extend from Shimla to Kinnaur entering the district near Chauhra Village 162.6 Kilometres,\textsuperscript{155} from Shimla. The upper Hindustan-Tibet Road enters Kinnaur near Chauhra at Maneoti Dhar 9.6 Kilometres\textsuperscript{156} from Sarahan and extends to Wangtu via the Villages of Taranda, Paunda, Sungra and Nichar at an average elevation of 2130 metres\textsuperscript{157}. It is liable to be blocked by winter snows between December and April. The regular bus services ply on this National Highway and on the Old Hindustan Tibet Road.

The distance of Nichar is 18 Kilometres from Hindustan Tibet Road. The Nichar link road connects this road at Sungra. Three buses ply to Nichar. One bus ply to Nichar from Mandi via Shimla. Another bus ply from Roppa to Nichar. Third, private mini bus ply from Pooh to Nichar. Earlier, this road was only a jeepable road. After broadening of this road people got the facility of bus service. In this panchayat there is a sub-post office and telegraph office.

(d) Other Facilities

In addition to the above facilities there are other facilities which are available to the people of the area. There are two banks. Many new buildings for offices and residential purposes have been constructed recently and some of under construction. There are many other offices like Police Station, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Patwar Circle, Gram Sewak and Farm Department. Forest guest house is also located at Nichar. Another guest house of P.W.D. department is at Paunda 8 kilometres from Nichar. Day by day, the area is being developed and people of this panchayat are getting every facility.

\textsuperscript{155} Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers, Kinnaur, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 196-197

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid. p. 196.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid. p. 197.
There is a cutcha tank locally called “Sorang”, situated at higher level of villages of Jani and Ramnu at a distance of about 26 Kilometres from the village Nichar. Hot springs are scattered all over the district and may be found on the surface of such soil as can admit the passage and exit of the subterranean water. Where possible, water from a spring is used for drinking purposes as well as for irrigation. The inhabitants are usually careful to utilise the water and convey it to their fields by through Kuhals. The spring water mostly comes from the snow. There is a supply of drinking water through water taps. In Nichar Tehsil, there are a number of hot water springs, one at Natpa Village, 5 Kilometres towards north of Nichar and another near Joktaring hamlet about 5 Kilometres towards east of Nichar. Their water is used for bath and washing clothes.¹⁵⁸

Sample and Sampling Procedure

As it has already been discussed that out of twelve districts of Himachal Pradesh, only three districts have been selected. These are Una, Shimla and Kinnaur. From these three districts, only three blocks are selected. The selection of three districts and three blocks is purely purposive. Similarly the selection of three panchayats (Bangarh, Kiari and Nichar) is also made with a definite purpose which can fulfill the objectives of this study. We wanted to give representation to all castes. In Una block, in Bangarh panchayat, there are mixed castes-Rajputs, Brahmins, Jat/sikhs, Lohars, Carpenters, Goldsmiths, Gujjars, Harijans, Mirasi, Faqeer and Nai. In Jubbal-Kotkhai block in Kiari panchayat, there are also mixed castes of Rajputs (Chauhans in Majority), Brahmins, Lohars (Blacksmith), Carpenters, Goldsmiths and Harijans. Except Rajputs all these castes are in minority. In the third block Nichar, in Nichar panchayat, Rajput (Negis) are in majority. Other castes such as scheduled castes including Harijans are in minority. Among the three panchayats, Kiari panchayat is highly developed panchayat and Nichar an underdeveloped panchayat whereas, Bangarh is a developing panchayat. Therefore, I thought that these three panchayats would make an interesting comparative study. So far, as the panchayat leaders, pradhans, up-pradhans, elected panches and co-opted panches are concerned, a census survey was made because all of them were interviewed. There number was 8 in Bangarh, 8 in Kiari and 9 in Nichar in the three different blocks namely Una, Jubbal-Kotkhal and Nichar. Thus total number of panchayat leaders in the three panchayats is 25, out of which 3 are pradhans, 3 are up-pradhans, 16 are elected panches and 3 are co-opted lady leaders.

¹⁵⁸ Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteets, Kinnaur, op. cit., p. 18.
panches. We justify the selection of purposive sample of these panchayats basically because of two reasons as explained in this paragraph.

But as far as selection of gram sabha members is concerned, 100 gram sabha members out of total electorates of 1551 are selected from Bangarh panchayat. Another 100 respondents out of total 1013 electorates are selected from Kiarl panchayat whereas 100 respondents out of total 1299 electorates are selected from Nichar panchayat. Thus the total number of respondents interviewed are 300. The sampling, therefore, was random sampling and we selected respondents through the random number table. The whole procedure of selecting the sample may thus be called purposive-cum-random, (see table 1.7 and 1.8).

Table 1.7

Sampling Procedure: Universe of the Study: Himachal Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection of Three Districts: Purposive Sampling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Panches (Total): 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total electorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Gram Sabha members random sampling:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number : 300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources of Data Collection

Sources of data collection can be broadly divided into two—primary and secondary.

Primary Sources

The main source of primary data collection was questionnaire, interview schedule, observation, dialogue, discussion etc. The idea behind field survey was to collect information
Table 1.8

Total Number of Pradhans, Up-Pradhans, Elected Panches and Co-Opted Panches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Gram Panchayat</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Pradhan</th>
<th>Up-Pradhan</th>
<th>Elected Panches</th>
<th>Co-Opted Panches</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangarh</td>
<td>Una</td>
<td>Una</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiari</td>
<td>Jubbal-Kotkhai</td>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichar</td>
<td>Nichar</td>
<td>Kinnaur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
regarding the motives, perceptions and orientations of the respondents. The other sources of primary data were the government census and reports, documents and resolutions of the government and political parties.

Use of both the secondary as well as the primary sources was made. But first we shall discuss the tools of primary data collection.

Tools of Primary Data Collection

One of the tools of primary data collection for this research problem was a structured and unstructured questionnaire, an interview schedule and observation coupled with informal dialogues and discussions. These tools were employed to find answers to our research questions. Since the objective of our study was to investigate the real motives, perceptions and orientations of both the panchayat leaders and gram sabha members, observation of their behaviour was as important a tool as interview with them. Informal dialogues and discussions revealed certain facts about our research problem which otherwise could have not been gathered through interview or observation.

At this stage, it is relevant to briefly discuss about these tools of investigation and various methods of primary data collection.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire which was designed to be the main instrument for conducting personal interview with the respondents was divided mainly into four parts. The first part contained items about background data of the respondents such as their age, religion, caste, sex, income etc. The second part contained specific questions to gather information about their political orientations so that their level of political orientations, their level of political consciousness could be determined and a report could be created with them to elicit correct information. This part included questions on political affiliations, political background of their family and their knowledge of state politics etc. However the third part was the most important and most exhaustive and it included questions on all aspects of our research problem and as a matter of fact, it is the analysis of data collected in this part, which forms the basis and bulk of this dissertation. The fourth part is devoted to 64th Amendment Bill in which we have formulated questions regarding this Bill.
The questionnaire was in English but I asked the questions in Hindi from the gram sabha members. Whenever, the respondents found a question difficult to understand, it was explained to them time and again and in their local dialects. The questionnaire in English was prepared for convenience. The interviews of the panchayat leaders and of the gram sabha members were conducted on the basis of same questionnaire because the issues involved were, by and large of the same nature.

Before finalising the questionnaire, it was pre-tested in all the three panchayats and with both types of respondents. This helped us in deleting many questions for which there was very poor response and we added many questions which were found important during pre-testing.

Interview

So far as interview is concerned, I faced some difficulties. In all the three panchayats, the respondents hesitated to give the correct data and to some extent they told lies. But some respondents who got convinced of the sincerity and purpose of the interview, they not only co-operated but gave correct information. They convinced other respondents also about my research. In Nichar panchayat (District Kinnaur), I faced some language problem. But one girl student from that village helped me by asking the questions from the respondents in their own dialect. The other difficulty which was faced during the interview, was in eliciting information from the pradhans, up-pradhans and the other panchayat leaders on the issue related with the exploitation of the landless and the poor by the landowners, and the use or misuse of the linkages of panchayat leaders with police, bureaucracy and higher political leadership. We had to take resort to such tools as observations, dialogue, discussion etc. to gather correct information about these issues and about the income of respondents in particular.

Observation, Dialogue and Discussion

On certain crucial issues, as mentioned above, where the respondents either evaded to answer or told lies, observation and informal discussion proved to be effective tools of investigation. These helped in correcting the information gathered from interview. But it consumed lot of time, months together.

As a matter of fact, we did all that we could in collecting correct information so that the analysis does not become distorted and biased.
Secondary Sources

The secondary sources of data collection were books on our topic of research and related aspects of this area. Articles in research journals, magazines and printed material in the newspapers and in the form of pamphlets etc. An extensive use of secondary sources has been made in chapter I (Review of literature) and in chapter II, III, IV but chapter V and VI are based on primary data.

Tools of Data Analysis

There are many tools of analysing the data such as feeding the data to the computer and to get the results. This is known as the computerisation of the data. The other tools are statistical and mathematical in nature in which various types of statistical and mathematical formulae are used such as scaling techniques, content analysis, frequency distribution, scalogram etc.

To be honest, we have used the crudest but the most fundamental tool of data analysis, that is the hand tabulation. After making broad categories, we prepared the tables ourselves and gave our own interpretation and analysis of each table. The idea was not to sacrifice the content or essence of research for the sake of the sophisticated tools of data analysis. Frankly speaking we neither had the competence of using statistical tools nor we thought it desirable and relevant. It was also not feasible and practicable for us.

The report of the field study is prepared in the form of this thesis and we are responsible for the tabulation, analysis and interpretation of data and the consequent generalizations.

Limitations of Our study

This study has some limitations. The selection of only three out of twelve districts of Himachal is one such limitation, but it is believed that the generalizations which have been formulated in the last chapter, have their relevance and applicability to the panchayats of other districts of Himachal Pradesh and in the other states also. But to make this claim valid, separate researches are needed in other states of India. Secondly from the three districts, I have taken three panchayats only. Thirdly, the two panchayats Klarl and Nlchar are situated in terrain. There was some problem of traveling and for staying for field study.
Scheme of Chapterisation

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first and the present chapter deals with the problem and methodology. The second chapter discusses the historical perspective of panchayati raj in India from ancient times to Independence. The third chapter is the study of post Independence period and the study of panchayati raj upto 1991. The fourth chapter traces briefly the historical background of Himachal and the establishment and legal framework of panchayati raj in this state. The fifth chapter analysis the panchayat elections held in 1985 and voting behaviour of the people in three gram panchayats. The sixth chapter is devoted to the leadership profile and rural power structure. The conclusion and findings are included in the seventh and the last chapter.