Chapter-V

Actual working of some Panchayats in the District of Birbhum.

It is observed that the Anchal Panchayat which is a replica of the former Union Board has practically no positive welfare functions save and except its functions relating to the maintenance and organisation of village watch and ward. Under section 46 sub-sec(1) cl.(b) of the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1956 the Anchal Panchayat has the authority to levy and collect taxes, rates, tolls or fees and distribute the same amongst its constituent Gram Panchayats. Anchal Panchayats of his district and held consultations with the Adhyakshas and Pradhans and collected figures which lead him to believe that the new system has not yet inspired the people with a new outlook and a new vision. They have little initiative and enthusiasm for the development of their areas. They are self-seekers and power-loving and it is unfortunate that some of them are dishonest. It is found that money allotted on different heads in the budget is not properly spent in all cases and the Adhyakshas manage the same by submitting false and fabricated vouchers. An example will clearly demonstrate how it is easy to prepare a voucher concerning expenditure on public welfare. In the Gram Panchayat budget every year a certain sum of money is earmarked for the repair and construction of roads and sinking and resinking of tubewells or construction and renovation of wells etc. To take an example, the budget estimate of a particular Gram Panchayat provides for Rs.300.00 for the construction of new roads or the repair of old roads. The Adhyaksha of the said Gram Panchayat spends 8s.150.00

1. Also read in this connection Sec 55 sub-sec.(2) cl.(d) of the W.B.Panchayat Act,1956.
he keeps vouchers in his custody to the tune of Rs.300.00 in order to produce them before the Auditor that he has entirely spent the sum as provided in the budget. The specimen of a voucher runs as follows:-

Received the sum of Rs._______ on ____________
for the earth work in ______________ read from Sri ____________
Adhyaksha of ____________ Gram Panchayat.

Left thumb impression of the Receiver.

Attested by Sri ____________

Naturally this left thumb impression is attested by a villager or a member of a Gram Panchayat and it is very easy on the part of the Adhyaksha to misappropriate the fund in collusion with the members of the Panchayat or the person who attests the thumb impression.

From the personal experience and his field study the author found that the Panchayat failed to perform its allotted duties relating to the welfare of the village people though its income had been doubled in all cases in comparison with the former Union Board. The budget estimates of different Gram and Anchal Panchayats will show that each and every year the Gram Panchayat makes its provisions on different heads for development but these are all paper works. In actual field very little is done and the people are in no way better off than in the past. Everywhere the people complain that the Panchayat
The aforesaid facts can only be ascertained by talking with the villagers but they are afraid of giving me something in writing. Thus it is deemed that the villagers with whom the author has talked have either no moral courage to fight the same or they are a party to the same. The misappropriation of money as caused by the Pradhan of an Anchal Panchayat will be cited later on in this thesis. The author has also some other records in his custody which clearly prove the aforesaid fact. A judge of the special court Nadia convicted the accused Kumaresh Chakrabarty, Adhyaksha, Gram Panchayat, Chhoto Muragacha, P.C. Panskhali, Dt. Nadia on a charge of criminal breach of trust with respect to $175.32 paise of the Gram Panchayat funds and sentenced him to rigorous imprisonment for a period of six months and a fine of $175.32 paise, in default, to rigorous imprisonment for one month more.

Corruption is also rampant in the case of the Bankipur Anchal Panchayat, Dt. 24-Parganas, where a member of the Panchayat was illegally appointed to a paid post and payment to him was illegally made—"commission for tax collection" when there was no collection at all. In the said Panchayat notices for tax were served on persons who already paid taxes against proper receipts.

I. See page No. 341
2. Published in the A.B.Patrika, dated 21.6.63 (Sri S.Pagobi delivered this judgement.)
3. Ibid, 29.5.68.
The cases as pointed out belong to other districts save and except the district of Birbhum where the leaders have not yet been fortunately detected. But the practice is the same everywhere as far as the knowledge and information go.

But these are all internal matters and the outside activities of the Panchayat will be shown by the budgets and their execution. The budget estimates of Kendua Anchal Panchayat (P.S. Suri, Birbhum) reveals the facts that the said Anchal which is constituted by 10,000 population and having seven gran Panchayats possesses an annual income of Rs. eleven to twelve thousands but it can afford only to spend Rs. two to three thousands for development purposes. The author can furnish the exact copy of the budget estimate of the said Anchal Panchayat for the year 1969-70 which he has collected from its Pradhan. The budget estimate runs thus:

Kendua Anchal Panchayat (P.S. Suri, Birbhum, West Bengal)

Budget Estimate for the year 1969-70.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Received from State Govt. as grants for the salary of the Chowkidar and Bafedar</td>
<td>1. Payment of salary to the Secretary - Rs. 1,654.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 2,700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rent accruing from Chowkidari or Chakran lands</td>
<td>2. Contingency - 360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 409.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lump grant for road development (Ampl. from State Govt.)</td>
<td>3. T.A. to Secretary - 100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 1,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Recd. from State Govt. for the salary of the Secretary with allowances.</td>
<td>Rs. 1,674.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Accrued from taxes, tolls or fees etc.</td>
<td>Rs. 5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Received from Pounds.</td>
<td>Rs. 200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 11,283.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the items of expenditure from I to 10 in the budget relate to the establishment charges and the maintenance of watch and ward save and except its item 8 which is concerned with positive welfare. Under item 8 the Anchal has allotted Rs. 2,118.80 to its seven constituent Gram Panchayats, i.e., each Gram Panchayat receives to the tune of Rs. 317.00 in average which has 1,500 population approximately. Thus, under the said analysis, the Anchal can spend annually only 20 to 22 rupees per head for the material welfare of its people.

The budget estimates of its two contiguous Gram Panchayats as mentioned below will show how ....
the gram Panchayats spent their allotted money under different heads:

Budget estimate of the Dhananjaybati Gram Panchayat for the year 1969-70.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Existing balance</td>
<td>₹15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Received as grants from Anchal Fund</td>
<td>₹300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Water supply</td>
<td>₹90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Repair of streets</td>
<td>₹140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Grants to Library</td>
<td>₹15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Drainage</td>
<td>₹40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Contingency</td>
<td>₹20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. G.P. Fund</td>
<td>₹10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>₹315.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gebra Gram Panchayat for the year 1968-69.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grants of the State Govt. under Sec.34 of the Act</td>
<td>₹140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Repair of streets from Anchal fund</td>
<td>₹500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Water supply</td>
<td>₹100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Drainage</td>
<td>₹120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Miscellaneous</td>
<td>₹5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>₹640.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table shows the activities of the Anchal Panchayats and their contiguous Gram Panchayats relating to rural welfare:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Gram Panchayat, Police Station &amp; District</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total income</th>
<th>Establishment charges</th>
<th>Allotment to Gram Panchayats</th>
<th>Number of Gram Panchayats</th>
<th>Expenditure per head incurred by Gram Panchayats for development works</th>
<th>Expenses for the village and watch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kendua, P.S., Suri, Birbhum</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>11,703.75</td>
<td>2,814.00</td>
<td>2,718.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21 pais approx.</td>
<td>4,900.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purandarpur, Suri, Birbhum</td>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,989.49</td>
<td>3,087.00</td>
<td>4,147.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69 pais approx.</td>
<td>3,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karidhya, Suri, Birbhum</td>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>13,787.69</td>
<td>3,110.00</td>
<td>3,150.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32 pais approx.</td>
<td>7,050.00 including outstanding dues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilpara, Suri, Birbhum</td>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>9,442</td>
<td>9,547.42</td>
<td>3,252.00</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20 pais approx.</td>
<td>4,110.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gehaliara, Dubrajpur, Birbhum</td>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>6,303.00</td>
<td>1,511.50</td>
<td>814.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12 pais approx.</td>
<td>3,023.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainthia, Sainthia, Birbhum</td>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>88,081.87</td>
<td>6,735.50</td>
<td>9,189.00</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37 pais approx.</td>
<td>4,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimpal, Dubrajpur, Birbhum</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>7,127</td>
<td>8,577.31</td>
<td>2,740.31</td>
<td>2,060.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29 pais approx.</td>
<td>3,577.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harisara, 1959-70</td>
<td>4,222</td>
<td>Rs. 8,567.37</td>
<td>Rs. 3,259.40</td>
<td>Rs. 2,700.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>64 paise approx.</td>
<td>2870.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damda, Sainthia, Birbhum.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Rs. 10,414.81</td>
<td>Rs. 3,047.81</td>
<td>Rs. 2,800.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23 paisa approx.</td>
<td>4567.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghotosangra, Suri, Birbhum.</td>
<td>7,239</td>
<td>Rs. 11,801.66</td>
<td>Rs. 4,302.50</td>
<td>Rs. 3,000.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42 paisa approx.</td>
<td>4041.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kama, Suri, Birbhum</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>Rs. 10,251.33</td>
<td>Rs. 3,942.78</td>
<td>Rs. 2,790.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66 paisa.</td>
<td>3660.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandore, Nalhati, Birbhum.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Rs. 25,392.33</td>
<td>Rs. 3,560.00</td>
<td>Rs. 10,500.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.05 paisa.</td>
<td>7920.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantipara, Ranjagar, Birbhum.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Rs. 14,991.72</td>
<td>Rs. 4,750.50</td>
<td>Rs. 3,000.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30 paisa.</td>
<td>4450.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipratkuri, Labpur, Birbhum.</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>Rs. 14,874.90</td>
<td>Rs. 4,615.00</td>
<td>Rs. 3683.90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49 paisa approx.</td>
<td>5160.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The role of the Panchayat in conferring civil amenities and adopting schemes relating to agricultural development and bringing about an all round prosperity to the rural people will be clear from its financial resources. Everybody knows that no function can be undertaken and properly discharged without finance. Of course, there is a provision in the Panchayat Act that it is obligatory on the part of the Gram Panchayat to organise "voluntary labour for community works and works for uplift of its area." But this organisation of voluntary labour for community works depends upon the moral integrity and personality of the Adhyaksha and the members of the Gram Panchayat. The author in his study has found very few such types of Adhyakshas or the village leaders.

Moreover, the contribution of voluntary labour made by the villagers depends upon their economic condition. The villagers are really poor and the persons who live upon their daily wages can ill afford to contribute even one day's labour to the development of their area. The contribution of one day's labour to the purpose means the loss of wages for the day and consequently their starvation for that day. So the aforesaid things must be taken into consideration before coming to a definite conclusion.

In the opinion of the author the Panchayat - a new instrument of rural welfare has failed to achieve its purpose. The reasons for the failure of the Panchayat may be summarised as hereunder:

I. Sec.31, (k) of the W.B.Panchayat Act, 1956.
Firstly, the instrument could not evoke much popular enthusiasm. The villagers have not yet been inspired with a new outlook, a new vision and a new energy;

Secondly, the contribution of the voluntary labour by the villagers for the purpose of welfare is negligible;

Thirdly, the resources of the Panchayat are scanty. The villagers are unable to bear a heavy burden of taxes mainly depending on agriculture;

Fourthly, the government grant for the purpose of rural welfare is practically nil;

Lastly, the money allotted to welfare works by the Anchal is not properly spent owing to the dishonesty of the Panchayat fathers.

The author after a good deal of observations and investigations has come to the conclusion that, first of all, the economic status of the villagers must be improved. They must be assured of a living wage, they must be made free from the horrors of unemployment and underemployment falling which their tax paying capacity will not be improved. The State Government must also assure a larger assistance to the Panchayat either in the form of money or in kind in order to make it a genuine instrument of rural welfare.

The following tables would show the tax paying capacity of the villagers as well as the quantum of government grants received by the Anchals.
The quantum of government grants received by the
The quantum of government grants received by the
different Anchals and their nature of expenditure will reveal the
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tests that the grants thus received are in most cases entirely
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spent for maintaining the Secretaries and for giving salaries and
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equipment charges to the dafadars and chowkidars. The following
equipment charges to the dafadars and chowkidars. The following
table will throw some light in this matter.
table will throw some light in this matter.
The figures thus pointed out would clearly prove that the grants so received from the State Government are quite insufficient to meet the salary and other charges of the Secretary, Dafadars and Chowkidars and the deficit is made up out of the Anchal fund i.e. from the taxes I.B. & 3. The figures marked asterisks show that out of twelve Anchals under study only 2 panchayats have got sufficientGovt. grants to pay the salaries of the Secretary and the Dafadars and Chowkidars and to meet the equipment charges of the latter.
and fees etc. realised from the poor villagers. Thus the utility of maintaining a Secretary, Dafadar and Chowkidars may be questioned as they do not play any positive role in the affairs of rural development.

If the Secretary, Dafadars and Chowkidars of the Anchal are retained only to avoid fresh unemployment problem for them, then the author has nothing to say. But if they are retained for purposes of rural development then the utility of the said machineries is always doubted. The utility of the dafadars and chowkidars will be discussed later on in another chapter. To open the issue of Secretary in this chapter we have to deal with the arguments of both the sides. The author has held discussions with a number of Adhyakshas and Pradhans of the different Panchayats regarding the utility of the Secretary and he can summarise those discussions in the following manner:

firstly, the retention of a Secretary is essential on the part of the Panchayat to perform some official works. The Panchayat has no clerk and the Secretary performs the functions of a clerk. Even in the days of the Union Board the organisation had a clerk-cum-secretary. So the abolition would create a dead stop in the day to day administrative functions of the Panchayat;

Secondly, the members of the Panchayat including the Adhyakshas and Pradhans have no salary; they work on non-remunerative basis. Thus naturally they are engaged in other avocations of life to earn...
their livelihood and they have little time to devote in the activities of the Panchayat. Even they very often default in attending the meetings of the Panchayat. One Pradhan has pointed out to the author that the members of his Anchal have thrown upon him the entire responsibility to carry on the functions of the Anchal and they (the members) have agreed that they would later on sign everything done by the Pradhan. So the attendance in meetings is very irregular in some cases. Hence a wholetime employee is necessary for keeping the records and maintaining continuity of the functions of the Panchayat.

thirdly, the author has come across a few Adhyakshas in his area of study who can at least sign their names but they do not know how to frame the budgets and maintain the accounts of the Gram Panchayats. The active help of a Secretary in the functions of the Gram Panchayat is essential in these cases;

lastly, the new machinery has conferred an opportunity to some educated people in the rural regions to be associated with rural development as well as to get a job.

But when we consider the other side of the question we find the following points:

firstly, the maintenance of a Secretary tells heavily upon the lean budget of a Panchayat. The money which is granted by the State Government for the said purpose is insufficient; thus the maintenance of a Secretary means further taxation upon the rural people. The fund which is spent for Secretary could otherwise be devoted
to rural development;
Secondly, the day to day functions of the Anchol or the Gram Panchayat including the preparation of the budget estimates and the maintenance of accounts ought to be done by the members who are conversant with the same and the members should be trained for the purpose;
thirdly, the members should abandon their apathy and they must be actively associated with the activities of the Fanehayat. If they fail to do so, they should step down and make room for the new energetic young people;
fourthly, if the entire Government grants and a large part of the resources of the Fanchayat are eaten up by a Secretary and for maintaining an establishment, then what positive role will a panchayat - a new machinery - play in matters relating to rural development? Lastly, some people have put forward the argument of unemployment. But the problem of unemployment is a national one and it should be tackled on a national level. The efficacy of the Panchayat in providing employment to the unemployed is meagre when an Anchal constituted by 10,000 population (approximately) can provide employment to only one person.

* c.f. "A government appointed Secretary obviously with instruction to watch with the eye of an I.B. officer their day to day normal activities and despatch secret reports to the Government would also be an unwanted superfluity." (see proceedings of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, 15th Session No.3, Vol.15, July 3, to Aug 30, 1956, P-540, observed by Hon'ble member Sri Kaipada Das)
I.Foot-note: An Anchal can maintain only one Secretary.
On the civic amenities supplied to the people the author has found very little of them. The author has practically toured the entire District of Birbhum and out of 158 Anchal Panchayats only few say seven or eight Panchayats have supplied electricity and maintained conservancy services; the supply of tap water is practically nil. Panchayats have little resources to establish and maintain schools and colleges; so the responsibility for the same lies with the State Government. The villagers have yet to wait for sometime to derive all round benefits from the Panchayats. Of course, we do not know whether the Panchayats would be ultimately able to meet the same with success. It can be shown by future alone. On the construction of roads it is found that not a single Panchayat has yet been able to construct pucca roads and there are still lying the communication difficulties. During the rainy season almost all the villages practically remain cut off from the main line of communication.

On the organisational and administrative side of the Panchayat the author has collected the following materials from his personal interviews with a number of Pradhans and Adhikarkhas of his area of study. The author has met the Pradhan of the Kendua Anchal Panchayat P.S. Suri, Dt. Birbhum, and asked him about the problems of the Panchayat. It was reported by him that very few members of the Anchal would regularly attend the meetings of the Anchal and the members
very often vest the authority upon him to do all types of functions on behalf of the Panchayat. The members would generally say that "you do, we would put our signature later on". The said Pradhan also reported that very few Pradhans would regularly attend the office of the Anchal Panchayat as they were engaged in some other avocations. The Secretary of the Karishya Anchal Panchayat P.S. Suri, D. Birbhum, reported that only the inhabitants of proper karishyas had been supplied with electricity and the people of other Panchayats could not avoide the same as they had very little resources at their disposal to undertake the projects conferring benefits to all. He also reported that they could not build up pucca roads in their areas on account of the paucity of funds.

The Pradhan of the Purandarpur Anchal Panchayat, P.S. Suri, Birbhum, had told the author that they face would face much difficulty during the time of assessment made by their Panchayat as they had no assessor for the valuation of lands and buildings upon which the Panchayat had been entitled to levy taxes. He also said that some of the Gram Panchayats in their area were practically manned by illiterate persons who had no elementary education. The Adhyakshas of the said Gram Panchayats could not maintain the regular accounts and the latter would
The Pradhan of the Kendua Anchal Panchayat, P.S. Suri, Birbhum had also supplied the information that they had practically exempted one section of the people of their area from the purview of the Anchal taxes on account of their chronic poverty and landlessness as a result of which the income of their Anchal had fallen.

The Pradhan of the Tilpara Anchal, P.S. Suri, Birbhum, had told the author that he would not find any initiative and enthusiasm of the people in his area for voluntary work for rural development. The apathy of the villagers to accept the modern and scientific methods of cultivation was also observed in many cases. If this type of apathy and indolence would continue, the agricultural production would not increase and the country would always face a food crisis. Of course, they were some people who welcomed the modern methods of cultivation and they were benefited by the same.

It has been provided by the P.S.Panchayats Act that a Panchayat (Anchal or Gram) must hold at least one meeting in a month and it has been found that the meetings are held regularly in the office of the Gram or the Anchal Panchayat but the attendance in many cases is very thin and many times the meetings cannot form quorum. This type of default in attending the meetings is usually found during the rainy season.
and at the time of harvesting as in the said two seasons the members who are agriculturists mainly engaged in cultivation.*

It was also reported by some Adhyakshas and Pradhans in the area of study that the people of the villages do not adequately understand the political ideologies of different political parties and elections are not generally fought on political level. But gradually the political leaders are stepping into the arena of the Panchayat election and instigating the villagers to fight the election on political level. It must be admitted that there are groupings in the villages and these groupings have become stronger and more trenchant due to the advent of the new Panchayat system. It was reported by some that the unity of the villages had been destroyed as a result of the same.

The effect of the new political change upon the Panchayat

When the election of the Panchayat was first held in 1965 all over West Bengal, the congress was in power and it was found that most of the members of the Panchayats belonged to the congress. But when the U.P. won the majority in the year 1967 general election the Panchayats in some areas felt much embarrassed at this political change as the new Government would always try to usurp the powers of the Panchayat vesting the same in the hands of the State Government officials. The

* The author has mainly confined his study to the functions of the Gram panchayats and the Anchal Panchayats because in the practice the said two organs are the real instruments of rural welfare. The functions of the Birbhum Zilla Parishad will be discussed later on in this Chapter.
Vice-President of the Suri Anchalik Parishad No. 2 told the author that the Anchalik Parishad under the Act has the power to distribute money amongst its constituent Anchal and Gram Panchayats but under the changed political situation the said powers have been entrusted with the Sub-divisional Officer and the Additional District Magistrate.

After coming into power on the State Legislature with a thumping majority in the mid-term poll in 1969 the United Front Government drafted a bill to remodel the present Panchayati Structure but due to internal troubles amongst the front partners the Government was dissolved and the President's Rule has been imposed in West Bengal and as a result the new bill did not come into operation. The bill as drafted by the United Front was known as the West Bengal Panchayat Bill 1969 and it was published in the Calcutta Gazette, Extraordinary, on August 30, 1969. The objects behind this bill were stated thus:

"The provisions of both the Acts viz. The West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957 and The West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act, 1963 regarding Panchayats are virtual denial of direct democratic principles. The Acts and their working since their enactment have totally failed to implement the spirit and the aim of the Directive. The past and the present state of affairs of the
Panchayati Raj institutions of West Bengal have assuredly proved this.

"The present United Government after a thorough survey and careful study, has thought it imperative to enact laws for the successful implementations of the Directive on the basis of the following important fundamentals or basic principles of Panchayati institutions, as accepted on an all-India basis:

(a) it should be a three-tier structure of self-governing bodies from the village to the district;
(b) there should be a genuine transfer of power and responsibilities to them;
(c) adequate resources should be made available to the new bodies to enable them to discharge these responsibilities;
(d) all development programmes at these levels should be channelled through these bodies;
(e) the system evolved should be such as would facilitate further devolution and disposal of power and responsibilities in the future."

Thus the bill under consideration contemplated to establish the following organs viz. Gram Panchayat, Anchal Panchayat, Block Panchayat and the Zilla Panchayat in the place of Gram Panchayat, Anchal Panchayat, Anchalik Parishad and the Zilla Parishad. The parallel organ of the Gram sabha in the new bill was Gram Parishad. A very novel discovery of the new bill was Gram Parishad. A very novel discovery of the new bill.
bill was that it sought to introduce two organs viz. the Zilla Panchayat and the Zilla Parishad at the district level which were conspicuous by their absence in the old bill. In the old bill there was only the provision for the Zilla Parishad and not the Zilla Panchayat. Just as the Gram Sabha in the old bill acted as a deliberative organ and the Gram Panchayat its executive so also the Zilla Parishad and the Zilla Panchayat would play the said respective roles if the new bill would come into operation. In the old bill we had a judicial organ viz. Nyaya Panchayat which did not find in the new. The bill in question did not mention any reason for omitting the old judicial organ which proved its utility in many cases. The bill stated that "care has been taken in this bill to build up a real democratic structure from the village to the district level in three stages by direct election." It is true that the method of direct election was resorted to in the constitution of Gram and Anchal Panchayats but it was not so in the case of the composition of Block Panchayats, Zilla Parishad and the Zilla Panchayat. Thus the new bill failed to achieve its desired object. When we consider the functions of the Panchayati organs as proposed in the bill we do not find even the slightest departure from the old. The only thing which it did was that it increased the powers of-
of the Anchal Panchayat by curbing the powers of the Anchalik Parishad (Block Panchayat in the new bill). Thus it was doubtful how far a "genuine transfer of power and responsibilities" could be achieved by this bill as compared to its old counterpart if it would come into operation.

The functions of the Birbhum Zilla Parishad as found in recent times:

The district of Birbhum which has a population of about 15 lakhs has a Zilla Parishad. The annual revenue of the said Zilla Parishad is about Rs.5 lakhs. Out of this Rs.5 lakhs about half is spent on establishment and general administration and the rest is utilised for carrying on development works. This Zilla Parishad maintains 1304 kilo-metres roads (metalled and non-metalled), 10 hospitals and 15 D&k bunglows within the district. The year to year expenditure incurred by this Zilla Parishad on different heads would reveal its actual functions.

It may be noted in this connection that the average annual income of the Zilla Parishad of the District of Birbhum is Rs. 5 lakhs but this money is inflated as and when the grants from the State Government are received on different projects under the five year plan.

U.B. The writer avoids to discuss the actual functions of the Anchalik Panchayads in the District of Birbhum because in his survey the writer has found that the Anchalik Panchayads have no functions of their own. The organs under study simply distribute money amongst their constituent Anchal and Gram Panchayats which they receive from the Zilla Parishad and the State Government. So the writer thinks that the functions of the Anchal and Gram Panchayats would serve the purposes. In this connection the functions of the Zilla Parishad have been analysed as it is the premier organ in the panchayati Programme.
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*Note: The above figures are subject to confirmation by the State Govt.*

**Functions of the Principal Officer:**

1. **Maintenance**
2. **Operation**
3. **Construction**
4. **Supply**
5. **Maintenance**