PREFACE
The Indian village enjoys the glory of being seat of self-sufficiency and happiness. Sir Charles Metcalfe observed in 1830 that the village communities were little republics with nearly everything they wanted within themselves and almost independent of external relations. They seemed to last where nothing else lasted - dynasty after dynasty tumbled down, revolution succeeded revolution. Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English were all masters in turn, but the village communities remained the same.\footnote{1}

Indian village, stretched beyond historical limits, has been described in *Smriti*, *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Jatakas*, *Valmiki Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat* as ghosh (big village) and gram (smaller than ghosh). The village has its own polity and economy, used to be administered by 'gramini' who was generally appointed by the king with a social status in the village as well as in the court of the king. The graminis worked as per the advice of the elders of the village or the Panchayat or the Gram Sabha with variable number of members from place to place and time to time.\footnote{2}

India is believed to be living in its villages. But unfortunately village could not secure its right position in the draft constitution when it was being framed by the Constituent Assembly, noticeably or unnoticeably. Dr. Ambedkar had observed, "village republics had been the ruination of India." and village according to him, "a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism." Ambedkar was satisfied that the draft constitution had discarded the village and had adopted the individual as the unit.

But leaders of nationalist thought and Gandhiji in particular had imbibed the idea that village of India has been the very foundation of Indian life. Gandhiji had seen India from villages and Gram Swaraj was a concept bred by him. Gandhians have searched the village in the draft constitution and had to be despaired. Gandhians
could be satisfied by the compromise suggested by Santhanam in placing Panchayats in the Article 40 of the constitution (The Directive Principles of State Policy).

Villages became a nidus immediately following independence and the Community Development initiatives primarily as a result of Indo-American technical cooperative agreement signed in 1951 to run 55 pilot projects in order to develop the area and the communities. It started on Gandhiji's birthday, 2 October 1952 with a concerted aim of all round development of agriculture, education, health, sanitation, welfare of cattle, provision of employment, etc. These all centre on village development programmes.

Jawaharlal Nehru looked upon Community Development Programme as an agency to construct India from roots. Development had been a misnomer, maybe changes or growth or both but a dynamic component with temporal and spatial differences. To the Planning Commission of India, it is a method through which the Five-Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villagers. Community Development measures failed to deliver the goods to villagers solely due to bureaucratic negativity and an alternative device came up after the finding of Balwantrai Mehta Study Team to evoke popular initiative. Mehta's Team advocated decentralization of authority and direction of popular representatives at local areas. Everybody liked the ideology, except the fact that Jawaharlal Nehru did not like the phrase "democratic decentralization" as he means democracy springing from people. The system could not be 'Panchayat Raj', Panchayats being constituted with territorial jurisdictions confined to the village, rather he christened it as "Panchayati Raj" meaning an approach to administration guided by and vested in the people themselves.³

Panchayati Raj may be interpreted in many ways: a unit of local government; an extension of the Community Development Programme or an agency of the State Government. In fact, it is the conglomeration of all the above three functions. Once
upon a time Jaya Prakash Narayan had considered that the village Panchayat should constitute the foundation of the political organisation of the country and should enjoy the widest possible authority to govern all the affairs. This is a basis of thinking about political party activity from grassroots.

Developmental activities through agency of Panchayat with popular participation and guidance are a welfare function of the state. This is a part function of the local administration. The local administration has to be strengthened structurally and functionally capable of dealing with its area in all respects. Evolution of democratic governance in India in the years following independence has progressed to constitutional amendments and granting autonomy to rural as well as urban local government. These new innovations were the demands of the local governments. Assurance of regular election, proportionate representation of weaker sections and one third reservation for women, assured financial devolution guaranteed by the new legislation are additions to Panchayat functioning expected to attract people. The village poor must be finding new ways to combat their economic crises by the aids and assistance conferred by agency functions of Panchayat.

Over and above, man's political instincts have found enormous dimensions with evolution of the concepts propounded by the great thinkers of political science. Human society has the experience of variety of political patterns. The basic among the political attribute of human being is his part in the game of politics. Recent world has inherited all the fruits of political practice of the past centuries of history. Once upon tales of one country was quite unknown to the other, is no more a phenomenon. Human civilisation and education has freed each individual in appreciating the good and selecting it. Thus in the political forefront, democracy and democratic process is the favourite of each one. The value of democracy cannot be underestimated.

Where there is democracy, there is significance of political participation. Of course, democracy can survive without participation of its citizens, yet, wholehearted
participation of the citizens will strengthen democracy to great extent. Indian democracy has now opened a floodgate to political participation at all levels of government. Once upon a time, the village unequalled with caste and power domination, now find a changed structure with reservations and mandates. The game of politics will be more free and fair. The new environs of the Grama Panchayat, ten years after the new constitutional provisions and implementation is an attractive subject today. It has been the matter of this study.

The whole dissertation is divided into six main chapters with small chapter at end on findings and conclusion.

The first chapter on 'Introduction' deals with the problem, scope and objectives and methods of study. An attempt has been made here to make a short review of available literature relating to this particular topic, published and unpublished. In this chapter, hypotheses, which are taken for scientific study have also been pointed out.

A conceptual analysis of popular participation has been made in the second chapter. The third chapter deals elaborately with Panchayati Raj System in India and Orissa. The fourth chapter deals with the profile of Garudagaon Grama Panchayat that is the matter of study. In the fifth chapter, the socio-economic bio-data of the respondent and their observations have been made. In the final chapter findings and conclusions have been made on the basis of testing the hypotheses conditioned by the materials given in the contents of the dissertation. Analysis of data has been made, as far as practicable, with the use of tables, diagrams and graphs.

In course of the search of secondary and primary sources of information, I had faced several difficulties. I had to interview the respondents scattered over all its revenue villages that has no good communication. Again the respondents have the special characteristics of wage earning or agricultural work and uncertainty of finding them at their residence. The interview schedules were administered to each respondent and in most instances, it was in local language though there is possibility
of communication gap. There was difficulty in obtaining secondary data on Si Garudagaon from any source except remote revenue documents.

However, I owe immense gratitude to a number of persons and several institutions for their sincere ungrudging help in preparation of this thesis. A reference to some of the most important among them seems imperative although limitation of space would not permit me mention all their names.

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END-POINTS:
1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. IV, p. 278 - 279 quoted by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly on 4 November 1948.

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