Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

People and Society:

He who thinks on Himachal, though he shall not behold him, is greater than, he who performs all worship in Kashi. In a hundred ages of gods I could not tell thee of the glories of Himachal. As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of Himachal.

Skand Purana.¹

“The word Himachal drives its origin from two Hindi words: ‘Him’ and ‘Achal’ meaning snow and lap respectively. Thus etymologically Himachal Pradesh stands for the region which lies in the slopes and foothills of snow i.e. Himalayas.”² Himachal Pradesh is situated in the north-western in lap of the Great Himalayas. It is called as Dev Bhumi that is the abode of gods. People of Himachal Pradesh has immense faith in god they are god fearing people every village has its own devi-devta (god-goddess) system. Prior to its formation social history of Himachal Pradesh was a story of unending exploitation by feudal lords, Rajas and Ranas. They exploited people for their personal gains and put them into the abject poverty. The sense of pride was absent in the poor people. Inspite of all serfdom people strongly preserved their cultural unity. In the princely states the people were backward, main cause of backwardness and poverty was the absence of contact with the outside world. Besides this caste system was rigid and oppressive, begar and beth (forced labour) were the common features of princely states. “In all

princely states there was a rigid caste hierarchy, on the top of which stood the Rajputs and Brahmans. The middle castes were scanty. It is difficult to present a portrait of cultural life of people in the princely states. One could perhaps reformulate Habbes’s description of state of nature and say that there were no letters, no means of transport and communications, no schools, no hospitals, no electricity, no industries and there was continual fear of death due to epidemics and natural calamities."³ People of the hill states were not politically active and alive as in the other parts of the country. “Life apparently went on peacefully, despite the seething discontent under the surface on account of begar unequal laws between classes, and overall suppression.”⁴

Despite oppressive and unjust rule of the erstwhile princely states people silently lived their life. Festivity of song and dance at the end of the day was a common feature. Fairs, functions and festivals provided them the cultural outlet. Though they were in bondage but people ungrudgingly gave everything to their god and the chief sometimes called ‘deva’ (god).⁵

The people of Himachal Pradesh like those of the Sub-Himalayan hills from western Kashmir to eastern Nepal are referred to by the generic term ‘PHARI’ (of mountains). The people, by and large are caste-ridden. Two major ancestral stocks the KHASA and the DOMS are generally believed to have contributed to the present ‘PHARI’ population. The DOMS constitute the low-caste groups like the black smiths, carpenters, musicians, shoe-makes, weaves, tailors, basket-makers etc., while the KHASA include the high-caste groups like Brahmans and Rajputs. The DOMS are believed to be the indigenous people of hills and the

⁴ Y. S. Parmar, Polyandry In the Himalayas, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1975, p. 179.
predecessors of the KHASA. Family, caste and community were social units of the society. There was a sense of communitarian feeling among the people of hill state and they shared their problems in common.

Area of Himachal Pradesh is 55673 square kilometers and population of the state is 60,77,900, density of population is 109 per square kilometer as against 324 for all India and per-capita income is Rs. 36783 (at current prices). Number of households in the state is 1221589 and average house size is 5. Gender wise it has 3087940 males population and 2989960 females population. Sex ratio in the state is 968 females per 1000 males as against 933 females at all India level. Proportion of rural population is 90.2% and urban population is 9.8% Proportion of SC population is 24.7% and ST population is 4%. Population of OBC is 9,0374. Literacy rate stands at 76.5%; 85.3% males and 67.4% female, which is higher than national level. Level of illiteracy in the state is 38.5% among males it is 30.3% and among females it is 46.9% lower than all India average. Work participation rate in state is 49.2%, proportion of main workers is 32.3%, proportion of marginal workers is 16.9% and non-workers are 50.8%. Proportion of cultivators to total workers is 3.1%, proportion of workers in household industries to total workers is 1.8% and percentage of other workers to total workers is 29.8%.

Religion wise break up in the state is 95.4% Hindus, 2.0% Muslims, 1.2% Buddhists, 1.2% Sikhs and 0.1% are followers of

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8 Census of India, 2001, Himachal Pradesh.  
9 Population of other Backward classes in Himachal Pradesh as recorded in 1991 by Himachal Pradesh State Commission for Backward Classes, H.P. State Commission for Backward Classes, Shimla.  
Christianity. Majority of hill people are Hindu with sprinkling of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists. The population of Himachal Pradesh presents an admixture of hill tribes; it includes Gaddis, Gujjars, Kinnars, Lahaulas and Pangwals. They are found in Chamba, Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti, Shimla, Kangra, Mandi, Bilaspur and Sirmour. Agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and trade are main occupations of tribal people in the state. Fairs and festivals dominate the social, religious and cultural life of the tribal people in Himachal Pradesh.

In Himachal Pradesh as in other part of the country there exists a hierarchy of social status. Hindus are divided into four castes. People are religious by faith and devoted to traditional gods. Every village has a temple where the villagers worship their devta, whole community life revolves around it. In Himachal Pradesh every village has its fair. Fairs and festivals are generally held in honour of the local gods and goddesses. Folklore is full of chivalry, love of victory over evil, of a free and fearless society where lord Shiva and his consort Parvati reign supreme.

The people of Himachal Pradesh are honest, truthful, industrious, frugal, gentle and good humoured, faithful in their dealings with other people and submissive to authority. All in all Himachal has rich cultural heritage.

After the conclusion of Anglo-Gurkha war (1814) and Anglo-Sikh war (1846) hill states were designated as ‘Shimla Hill States’ * and

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12 Verma, op.cit., p. 24
* The Shimla Hill States comprised of a group of 28 states (inclusive of feudatories). The important ones out of it were Bushahr, Sirmour, Jubbal and Bilaspur.
'Punjab Hill States.' The state of Kangra and its offshoots Nurpur, Kullu and its adjuncts Lahul and Spiti were dismembered by the British in 1849 and were brought into the British rule which had been similarly constituted.

There have been a number of social reform movements, popular uprisings against the British and constitutional movement within the erstwhile princely states of Himachal Pradesh. These were directed against the British and the hill Rajas. The struggle had specific object of throwing off not only Britishers but also the rule of terror, slavery and feudalism perpetuated by the chiefs of the hill states. Against the imperial forces first incident of revolt was led by the Wazir Ram Singh Pathania of Nurpur state in the Kangra hills during the middle of nineteenth century. Next comes the first war of independence against the Britishers in 1857, which originated from the political, social, economic, religious and military grievances. After this revolt Britishers tightened their grip over hill states.

Against the princely rule people of Himachal Pradesh raised their voice time and again. In Bilaspur people agitated against Raja in 1833, 1883 and 1930. A few years before 1839...rebellion broke out in Kullu against the Raja Ajit Singh.... "Alexis Soltykoff, a Russian traveler who

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14 The Punjab Hill States included Chamba, Mandi and Suket.
17 Ahulwalia, op. cit., 42.
passed through Nahan in 1842 give us a brief description of what quite clearly appears to have been a *dhoom*.\textsuperscript{20} that occurred in September 1842.\textsuperscript{21} In 1859 people of Bushahr state rose against the highhandedness of government officials and *begar*.\textsuperscript{22} In Mandi state peasantry protested in 1893 \textsuperscript{23} and in 1909 \textsuperscript{24} against an encroachment on their right as well as the imposition of *begar*. Famous Mandi conspiracy took place in 1914-15 under the influence of Gader Party.\textsuperscript{25}

In Chamba state cultivators of Bhattiyat Wizarat during 1895-96\textsuperscript{26} refused to pay the land revenue, unjust taxes and *begar*. They stood against the excesses of the state. Again in 1932 \textsuperscript{27} people struggled against the misrule in Chamba.

All these incidents of mass protest by the highlanders were the result of repressive revenue policy, exploitative system of *begar*, maladministration, highhandedness of state officials and misrule by the Raja or Rana in the states. Educational backwardness, authoritarian and traditional social structure, poverty and lack of means of communication delayed the growth of political consciousness amongst the hill peoples, however these factors could not prevent its growth forever.

The political history of the hill states was history of struggle against the autocratic princely states. The struggle of hill people was for

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\textsuperscript{20} Gazetteer of the Mandi State, 1920 describe dhoom as dum. The dum is one manifestation of the democratic spirit formed amongst the peasantry of the hills, and in several respects bears a resemblance to the modern forms of labour combination. Its effective weapon is general strike, the malcontents attempting to achieve their objects by bringing the ordinary affairs of government to a standstill., Gazetteer of the Mandi State, 1920, New Delhi, Indus Publishing Company, rpt., 1996, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{21} Alexis Soltykoff as Quated in Chaten Singh, "The Dhoom in Himachal Pradesh: Community Consciousness, Peasant Resistance or Political Intrigue in Laxman S. Thakur ed., op.cit., p. 113.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{24} Gazetteer of the Mandi State 1920, op.cit., pp. 68-69.

\textsuperscript{25} Shakuntla Sharma, op.cit., p. 174.

\textsuperscript{26} Ahluwalia, op.cit, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
liberation from feudal structure. It was a search for equalitarian democratic order. The Praja Mandal movement led by emerging political elite who were exposed to ideas of western liberalism and were inspired by the leadership of national liberation movement which played significant role in raising the political consciousness of the masses. There were areas, which were ruled by native prices, and other hill areas, which were under the direct control of British government.

Nationalist movement in British India influenced people’s struggle in princely areas. Main object of Praja Mandal movement was democratization of the administration. It cannot be characterized as freedom movement, since it never attempted to eliminate their princely rulers. In other areas which were under the British control people struggled for freedom with an object of overthrowing British rule. Organisation of Praja Mandal movement made hill people politically and socially conscious. People actively participated against the rulers and their misrule through Praja Mandal. Leaders of Praja Mandal encouraged the people to refuse to pay unjust taxes and not to perform begar. Various Praja Mandal were established in the erstwhile hill states. In Rampur Bushahr under the leadership of Pt. Padam Dev encouraged people not to perform begar to the ruler of the state.28 Dhami Praja Mandal (1939) passed resolution asking for the abolition of begar, reduction of land revenue and grant of civil liberties. An ultimatum was sent to the Rana to receive a deputation and concede the demands. The confrontation between Rana and Praja Mandalist led to Dhami firing tragedy killing two persons and injured many. This incident occupies an important place in the growth of political consciousness in the hill states.29

28 Ibid., p. 46.
29 Ranbir Sharma, op. cit., pp. 40-42.
Like Dhami the people of Kunihar (Arki) raised voice against the excesses of the ruler. They demanded reduction in land revenue, introduction of social, economic and political reforms.\textsuperscript{30} In Mandi leaders of Praja Mandal got inspiration from Gader party and inspired the people of Mandi state for revolutionary activities.\textsuperscript{31} People agitated against the maladministration of the minister of Raja of Mandi. To achieve the objective of fully responsible government Suket Satyagraha was launched by the Praja Mandal in February, 1948. It was a civil disobedience movement, which finally led to the merger of Suket with the Indian Union.\textsuperscript{32} The breeze of political awakening fanned the restlessness of the people of the Chamba State. The Chamba Praja Mandal gave a call for the establishment of popular government and for ending the nepotism and corruption used by the official of the state. The agitation waged by the people of Chamba ended in number of arrests.\textsuperscript{33}

In Sirmour Praja Mandal played an important role to mobilize the people for their democratic rights and for responsible government. Sirmour Praja Mandal was organised in 1937 to carry on the struggle.\textsuperscript{34} Kisan Sabha was organised at Pajotha and Pajotha Andolan was started. This protest movement was well organized and it was regarded as an extension of the Quit India movement. To suppress the democratic voice of the people state imposed a Martial Law in the Pajotha area. People of the area were mercilessly beaten and their houses were set on fire. People of the Bilaspur state waged struggle against the heavy and unjust taxes and rendering services of unpaid labour, \textit{begar}. The protest was crushed bitterly and leaders were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Beside this people were charged with heavy fines.

\textsuperscript{30} Ahluwalia, op. cit., pp. 49-50.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{32} Ranbir Sharma, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{33} Shakuntla Sharma, op. cit., p. 177.
\textsuperscript{34} Ahluwalia, op. cit., p 60.
Bilaspur Praja Mandal demanded civil liberties from the Raja and launched satyagrah which was suppressed by state authority. Praja Mandal leaders with other workers arrested on the way to Bilaspur from Shimla near Namohal, state boundary of Bilaspur and were beaten mercilessly. This incident was known Namohal tragedy. Subjects of the erstwhile Kangra hill states revolted for protection of their fundamental rights and against the state authorities. Leaders of Praja Mandal inspired the people and led them in various satyagrahs. Movement of the people of Kangra was anti-feudal and anti-imperialist.

"Praja Mandal movement in Sirmour and Bushahr states derived sustenance from the adjoining district of Dehra Dun of United Provinces of Agra and Audh and it served as a launching ground for them, as did Shimla, for Shimla Hill States and Bilaspur; Kangra and Gurdaspur for Chamba; Kangra, Hoshiarpur for Mandi, Bilaspur and Suket. The people's struggle in princely states was for the democratization the administration while in British territory it was for overthrowing of British rule and termed as freedom movement. The spread of sentiments of egalitarianism amongst the hitherto deprived segment of the hill society provided a solid foundation for the subsequent stages of political development. People cannot forget the contribution of brave martyrs, freedom fighters and Praja Mandal activists who fought a relentless battle not only to liberate their motherland from the yoke of foreign rule but also put an end to tyranny of oppressions. The Dhami Goli Kand, Pajhotha Movement, Suket Satyagraha are some incidents which drew attention of the nation during our freedom struggle.

35 Ranbir Sharma, op.cit., p. 29.
36 Ahuwalia, op.cit., p. 57.
37 Ranbir Sharma, op.cit., p. 25.
38 Ibid., 247.
Democracy and Political Process in Himachal Pradesh

India achieved freedom on 15 August, 1947. Thereafter the position of princely states and its people completely changed and Himachal Pradesh was brought into the mainstream of Indian democracy on 15 April, 1948, with the merger of 30 hill states.39 Coming into the main stream of liberal democracy the process of political growth started in this tiny hill state of Indian union. In politico-administrative term Himachal was a centrally administered area up to 1952, a ‘C’ state between 1952-56 under a lieutenant governor, with a legislative assembly. In 1954, Bilaspur, another part ‘C’ state was merged with it. It was an Union Territory from 1963 to 1971 and a full-fledged state since 1971,40

Till 1966 Himachal consisted of only six districts Mahasu, Mandi, Chamba, Sirmour, Bilaspur and Kinnaur. In November 1966 some areas of Punjab- Shimla, Kangra, Kullu, Lahul-Spiti, Nalagarh tehsil of Ambala and some areas of Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur district were included in Himachal Pradesh. The state was organized into 10 districts and declared a state on January 25, 1971 with Shimla as its capital. In 1972, the state was reorganised into 12 districts.41 Before 1966 Himachal consisted almost exclusively of former princely states but in that year substantial areas of Punjab were merged with it. With this merger the state came to have two distinct and clearly identifiable political units, one consisting of erstwhile princely states and the other cutout from composite Punjab. The first had no democratic set up whatsoever before 1947 but latter had some democratic institutions.42

41 Bhatt and Bhargava, op.cit, 21.
42 T.R. Sharma, op.cit, 278.
With the untiring efforts by the leaders of Praja Mandal movement after the formation of the state, princes were not allowed to enter into the politics of the state. Leaders mobilised the rural masses to strengthen the democratic process. Although people were low in political consciousness but Praja Mandal leaders organised their political skills to eradicate social evils like begar and reet. A strong anti-princes feeling erupted among the masses and people started to develop taste for democracy. These leaders provided a strong base of political leadership for the institution of democracy in the state. Besides this, western political ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity touched the minds of educated elite and they joined Praja Mandal leadership to solidify the democratic forces in the state. Thus began the journey of development vision and commitment to make Himachal Pradesh a prosperous state of the country. The unification of hill states under one administrative unit set into motion social economic and political forces which helped to move the wheels of change faster than what could be ever imagined before.43 During first popular ministry social and economic reforms were introduced by the government. Development works were undertaken in the field of health and education. The spread of communications brought the people nearer to new ideas and connected them culturally. Attention was paid to improve the economy especially in apple and potato growing areas which brought about a marked change in the economic position and attitudes of the people. Cultural unity was also realised with the closeness of social contacts. Marriage, customs, functions, festivals which were particular to each state areas, crossed their erstwhile limits. Road construction, expansion of educational facilities, job opportunities were another factors which helped people to do some rethinking about their old belief and prejudices.44

43 Parmar, op.cit., 183.
Economic development along with administrative and political activities transformed the structure of society and economy and social conditions of the people. Economic transformation has its impact not only on social institutions but on the disintegration of caste barriers, the relationship of landlords and tenants and the breaking up of feudalism. During the tenure of first popular ministry the important socio-economic legislation adopted by the Himachal Pradesh includes. H.P. Tenants Rights and Restoration Act, H.P. Abolition of Big Landed Estates and Land Reform Act, H.P. Land Revenue Act, H.P. Panchayati Raj Act. H.P. Cooperative Society Act, H.P. Compulsory Primary Education Act, H.P. Debt Reduction Act. The other important legislation affecting socio-economic life of the people of Himachal Pradesh were. H.P. Agriculture Produce Market Act, H.P. Live-Stock Improvement Act, H.P. Board of School Education Act and H.P. University Act. All these measures affected the life of the people of Himachal Pradesh. Whole picture of relationship between the landlord and tenants has undergone a great transformation. System of begar has been abolished in the new constitution and any extra hands engaged on farm receive wages in kind and cash. The centuries old customs, values and social institutions have undergone a tremendous change. Political and economic development transformed the whole social structure and people realised the benefits of liberty and equality by experiencing it in their actions.

The political history of the hill states was history of struggle against the autocratic princely states. The struggle of the hill people was for liberation from feudal structure. It was a search for egalitarian democratic order. The Praja Mandal movement led by emerging political elites who were exposed to ideas of western liberalism and were also inspired by the leadership of national movement played significant role in

46 Ibid., pp. 189-191.
raising the political consciousness of the masses. Working under the aegis of the Praja Mandal movement people’s conference also demanded socio-economic reforms in the princely states.

Soon some rulers of the princely states began to see the writing on the wall and introduced a few development plans in their states. To blunt the threat posed by the Praja Mandal movement they even co-opted some notables into the state structure. Some of the rulers, particularly the Raja of Mandi and Suket, were also sympathetic to the cause of the national liberation movement and hailed the leadership of the congress party. Some other who were enlightened like the Raja of Bilaspur introduced educational reforms in their States. The feudal structure in this way began to crumble in the states.

The formation of Himachal Pradesh as a Chief Commissioner’s province and part ‘C’ state under the new Indian constitution in 1950 gave a further boost to this process of change. The beginning of electoral process in 1951 enabled people to directly participate in the political process and set in motion a process political socialisation. Having lived in poverty and wide spread illiteracy for centuries the people began to assert and fight for their rights. After becoming a part of Indian Union, Himachal Pradesh no more remained a closed society. Physical and occupational mobility became possible and people began taking interest in national and international issues.

The princely state of Bilaspur had been created as a separate chief commissioner’s province in 1948. Its merger in 1954 with Himachal Pradesh led to a protracted agitation against its merger. There was unprecedented mobilization of people of Bilaspur against its merger. The completion of Bhakra dam in the 1950s submerged large area of Bilaspur and people had to vacate not only the old town of Bilaspur but also several villages. The problem of resettlement of these oustees and the issue of compensation for submerged properties led to another mass movement. Thus people began to drawn into the arena of politics.
However, this mobilization was only localized and did not involve the people of the whole state of Himachal. The appointment of State’s Reorganisation Commission in 1955 led to political mobilization in the whole state. Since there was a strong move to merge Himachal Pradesh with Punjab due to lack of its financial viability, there was a statewide agitation against the attempts of mergers. It was due to this mass movement that Himachal Pradesh remained a separate political unit even though the State's Reorganization Commission had recommended its merger. However, the status of Himachal Pradesh was downgraded in 1956 to a union territory with a popularly elected Territorial Council.47

This provided another issue for mobilization of the masses. From 1956 to 1971 the people of the hill state continued building pressure on the centre to upgrade their status from a union territory to a state. They partly succeeded when in 1963 the Legislative Assembly was restored.48 However, demand for full state was not met.

During the reorganisation of Punjab on linguistic basis there was a strong move to merge Himachal Pradesh with Punjab. The people of Himachal Pradesh strongly opposed any such merger move. On November 1966 they succeeded in their mission and Himachal Pradesh not only managed to remain a separate political unit, but it also got the hill areas of Kangra, Kullu, Shimla Lahaul and Spiti and Nalagrah area of Ambala district, parts of Una tehsil of Hashiarpur district and parts of Pathankot tehsil of Gurdaspur district. People of the merged areas shared cultural social, lingual and geographical similarities with the people of Himachal Pradesh.49 The area and population of Himachal more than doubled because of the transfer of these areas.

The last hurdle for the search of identity was crossed on 25 January, 1971, when Himachal Pradesh secured the status of a full constituent state of India.⁵⁰

These agitations that the people of Himachal launched for retention of their separate identity and getting the status of full statehood had its unintended consequences. The people now began to realise that in a democratic political order it is necessary for them to properly articulate and aggregate their demands. The merger of Kangra and other areas, which were politically more articulate, because being in Punjab also gave a fillip to this feeling. Soon the issue of equal treatment to 'old' and 'new' areas cropped up.

The transfer of 'new areas' brought together two sets of people who were not without prejudices about each other, although the two could be said to be culturally somewhat similar, their political culture was quite dissimilar. These prejudices and the dissimilarity in political culture were often reflected in the politics of the state.⁵¹

After the merger of 'new areas' in Himachal Pradesh the politics of the state began to be projected along the 'old-new' divide. While the 'new areas' are predominantly agricultural, the 'old areas' have an extensive horticultural belt. Agricultural zone is fit for subsistence farming while production in the horticultural zone is mainly for the market. Economically, the horticultural region has moved ahead, while the agricultural region has lagged behind. This division has created economic differentials between the two regions.⁵² The people of Kangra and other newly merged areas began to mobilize public opinion against alleged discriminatory treatment and asked for greater share in political power.

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⁵² Ibid.
The controversy of 'old' and 'new' helped in raising people's political awareness further. Data and statistics began to be presented to compare the level of development of the two regions of the state. Each region wanted to have larger and larger share of political cake. One consequence of this was that in 1977 the chief ministership went for the first time to Kangra (Shanta Kumar). There after all political parties are performing some balancing act to satisfy the aspiration of the two regions. For rapid development of Kangra, the district was split into three districts; Kangra, Hamirpur and Una. Several offices of state government including School Education Board were shifted to Dharamshala in Kangra. Dharamshala also become the winter capital of the state. In due course a separate Agriculture University was set up at Palampur, a Regional Engineering College at Hamirpur, Medical College at Tanda all of which are in the lower areas of the state. Himachal Pradesh University Shimla opened its regional centre and a Law College at Dharamshala along with other professional institutions. Thus the people of Himachal Pradesh finally come out of their stupor and started asserting their independent political thinking as far as their state is concerned.

Leap of Himachal Pradesh from feudalism to democracy transformed the fortune of the people. Since its formation as an administrative unit and as a state of Indian Union Himachal Pradesh become one of most advanced state of the country. It has registered remarkable progress in social, economic and political fields. Its education, near self-sufficiency, horticulture sector are making a name in the country and even abroad. Due to spread of telecommunication and network of roads Himachal Pradesh has emerged as the best hill state in the country. The infrastructure for its industrial development is well laid out and its rich forests are being augmented.53

53 Bhatt and Bhargava, op.cit.p. 178.
State government has decided to create an I.T friendly environment for integrated participation by all in the development process of the new digital economy. Tourism sector is developing rapidly and it is earning handsome amount of foreign exchange. State has significantly developed its hydel power, which guarantees its bright future. The rich natural resources of Pradesh are ideally suited for investment in three major sectors namely industries, hydroelectric power and tourism. State has already become the ideal in respect of development for the hill areas of the country.

The development journey of the state had been difficult like a difficult hill track; however it had also been very productive, prosperous and progressive. The state began its development march with a per capita annual investment of Rs. 4 during the first plan and has been reached a level of 2543 for the year 2005-06. Total road length in the state has grown from 228 kms in 1948 to 29329 kms. in 2006. Total number of educational institutions has increased from 331 in 1948 to 16555. Similarly, the number of health institutions has increased from 88 in 1948 to over 3835 at present. In 1948 the number of veterinary institutions was only 9 whereas today it is about 2446 institution providing animal health care in the state. The state had only 6 electrified villages in 1948 whereas state achieved universal electrification way back in 1987-88 by electrifying all 16817-census villages. The power production in 1948 was 398 MW, which now has gone up to 6067 MW in 2006. The literacy percentage has increased from 7.1 in 1948 to 76.5 in 2001 with the female literacy pegged at 67.4, which is higher than the national figure. The per-capita income had increased from Rs. 240 in 1948 to 651 in 1971 and to Rs. 36783 in 2006-07. Till 1971 drinking water facility were provided to 1900 villages and in the year 1994 state

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54 Ibid., 98.
55 Ibid., 180.
achieved hundred percent drinking water facility in every village. Food production which was 9.34 (lac. M.T.) in 1971 has been increased in 16.69 (lac. M.T.) in 2007. Agriculture provides employment to about 71 percent of main working population and income from agriculture and allied sector accounts for nearly 22 percent of total State Domestic Product. The fruits production which was 1.78 (lac. M.T.) in 1971 reached to 6.95 (lac. M.T.) for the year 2007. There is immense potential for growing off-season vegetables, floriculture and mushroom cultivation to enhance the earning capacity of people in rural areas. “The state’s post independence economic take-off has been closely related to the transition from conservative feudal regimes to ‘developmental state’. In particular, the growing prosperity of the rural economy (including the ‘apple boom’) owes much to the state’s bold infrastructural investments and active promotion of marketing arrangements, producer cooperatives, credit facilities, technological innovation, extension services and storage networks”.

State has made significant development in the field of industrialisation, it registered 2743 factories in the year 2006 and number of small-scale industrial units is 952 for the same year. Government of Himachal Pradesh is committed to proliferate industrialisation in the state and it provides special incentives for private companies to set up their industrial units. In the service sector score of employment is high in the state, it has fleet of 161803 regular employees (Gazetted, Non-Gazetted) and numbers of non-regular employees in the


state is 67838 (as on 31-3-2006). Progress of state can also be judged from the Tenth Plan Outlay of Himachal Pradesh for the year 2002-2007 which is 1207057.58 The achievements of Himachal Pradesh have been widely acclaimed. Himachal Pradesh ranked first by ‘India Today’ in Education, Health, Fastest Mover state in Consumers Markets and 2nd in Infrastructural Development, Investment Environment and Budget and Prosperity. In overall performance Himachal Pradesh ranked at 3rd place among the other states of country in a nationwide survey.59 Today no area of the state stands untouched by the tide of development. The laudable progress that the hill state has made in the recent past is no less a tribute to its political stability and efficacy of administrative delivery in ensuring continuity of programmes and policies.

Besides it, government of Himachal Pradesh is engaged in the implementation of various rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. Development Blocks are selected to carry the policies and programmes of the state. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is being implemented is some districts of the state and remaining districts will be brought under this scheme. For the upliftment of the marginal sections of society the government has made various planned efforts and it is committed for economic and social development of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Other Backward Classes and vulnerable reactions of the society.

The above discussion shows that during the last 60 years state of Himachal Pradesh has crossed various milestones of development in social, political and economic fields. It is due to the endeavours of the government to provide its people a free, fair and fearless environment so that they can grow equally in a democratic system.

Grass-Root Democracy and Conflict Formation in Himachal Pradesh

After independence village studies have become quite popular in India. Government and other social organizations have been working for the upliftment of the rural masses. In Himachal Pradesh too villages dominate the state economy as well as polity. The entire politics of state right from the grass-root level to the Vidhan Sabha revolves around the rural masses and their elected representatives. Therefore the study of the political process and conflict formation at the grass-root in Himachal Pradesh is very significant theme to be probed into.

No society in the present day world can afford to be static. The forces of change are increasing day by day in every field. In the same way change is taking place even in Himachal Pradesh, which has resulted in the growth of political consciousness or awareness among the masses. Formation of Himachal Pradesh as a separate unit led to the institutionalization of democratic forces in the Himalayan society. It generated a sense of political consciousness in the hitherto docile people of hill state. During the princely rule the society in Himachal Pradesh was feudal, unequal and dominated mostly by upper castes. There was no mobilization of the lower castes and their level of political consciousness was very low. In 1950s and in early seventies land reforms were introduced in Himachal Pradesh and tenancy was abolished, tenants of all sections of society become proprietors. Due to these progressive legislations the hold of the upper castes got loosened. A substantial percentage of lower castes become owner in land and their economic conditions start improving. The process of exploitation became less sever. However with the introduction of universal franchise lower castes become important because of their numbers. The upper caste leadership tried to win the support of lower castes to capture power in the rural areas. Thus the mobilisation of lower caste began gradually. In
due course of time the leadership from lower strata began to emerge. This process of upward mobility among the lower strata in the form of political participation got further accelerated with the introduction of Panchayati Raj system in 1952 and later on in 1968. A large section of the masses was inducted in the administration, community development and Panchayati Raj of the pattern and principles of democratic decentralization. Panchayati Raj system in Himachal Pradesh is the part of this political process, which generated the democratic consciousness among the rural masses in the state.

Before the formation of Himachal Pradesh as Part ‘C’ state, there was no regular Panchayati Raj system in any part of the state. The village elders through conventional or customary Panchayats took decisions regarding the village and disputes settlement in the villages. A beginning was made in 1949, when Himachal Pradesh adopted Punjab Village Panchayat Act of 1939. There were only four districts in Himachal Pradesh and Panchayati Raj system was established in 186 Panchayats. The number of Panchayats in each district was thus: Mahasu 45, Mandi 33, Chamba 54 and Sirmour 54. In the areas now forming Bilaspur, Sirmour, Lahaul-Spiti, Kullu and Kangra districts, some regularly established form of Panchayati Raj was in operation even before 1949. R.D. Sharma, Himachal Pradesh in George Mathew, ed., Status of Panchayati Raj In The States of India, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1995, pp. 81-82.

In Himachal Pradesh Gram Panchayats were established in the year 1952 for the first time in a regular fashion under Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1952. Under this act a three tier Panchayat Raj system was introduced. After this The Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act 1968 came into force on 15th November 1970 in the state, it also provided for a three-tier system.61 The gram Panchayat was normally elected for a period of five years. The first election to the Gram Panchayat

was held in the year 1954, second in 1962, third in 1972, fourth in 1978, fifth in the year 1985 and sixth in September 1990. But Himachal Pradesh could not hold the elections in time, for some reasons the date was extended. However the elections to these bodies were held in 1992.62 Panchayati Raj system in Himachal Pradesh continued broadly with the recommendation made by the Balwantrai Mehta Committee (1957).

In addition to these initial initiatives for the facilitation of grass- root democracy the Legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh passed the new Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act in April 1994 in conformity with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. It came into force on April 23, 1994.63 This new Act has provided a wide space for the weaker and unprivileged sections of the society including the women in the form of proper representation in this political process of the state. The numbers of Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh are 3037, Panchayati Samitis are 75 and Zila Parishads are 12. The total numbers of wards/constituencies of members of Gram Panchayats are 18549. Reservation for seats of members of Scheduled Castes are 4898, general 2905, women 1993, for Scheduled Tribes members it is 994, general 617, women 377, total number of seats reserved for the members of general category women are 4452. There are reservation for offices of Chairpersons of Gram Panchayats, for Scheduled Castes total numbers of reserved offices are 771, general 501, women 270, for Scheduled Tribes it is 199, general 133 women 66, for Backward Classes it in 219, general 144, women, 75. General category women have 615 offices

reserved. At the Panchayat Samiti level there are 1658 wards/constituencies in Himachal Pradesh. Total members of Scheduled Castes are 437, general 282 women 155, Scheduled Tribes have 113 members, general 78, women 35, Backward Classes have 118 members, general 76 women 42, while general category women have 330 members in Panchayat Samitis in Himachal Pradesh. Total number of Chairpersons of Scheduled Castes is 19, general 12, women 7, for Scheduled Tribes this figure is 7, general 4, women 3, while Backward Classes have 5 offices reserved, general 3, women 2, total number of Chairpersons of general category women are 15 at Panchayat Samitis level in Himachal Pradesh. At Zila Parishad level there are 251 wards/constituencies. Total number of members of Scheduled Castes Category is 65, general 41, women 24, Scheduled Tribes have 21 members, general 14, women 7, Other Backward Classes have 19 members, general 11, women 8, while women of General category have 48 members in Zila Parishad. For the offices of Chairpersons Scheduled Castes have 3 Chairpersons, general 2, women 1, Scheduled Tribes have 2, general 1, women 1, Other Backward Class have 1 and that is for women, while women of General category have 1 Chairperson. The new Act gives representation to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Women at village, block and the district level both in regard to the category of members as well as presiding officers.

Political process got accelerated due to periodical elections in the state; people participated with the sense of dignity in this process. Table shows the increase in voters participation in Vidhan Sabha elections and in Panchayati Raj elections in Himachal Pradesh.

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64 Directorate of Panchayati Raj Government of Himachal Pradesh, Shimla.
Voters participation in Vidhan Sabha elections during 1977-2003

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<td>Turnout</td>
<td>58.57</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>70.36</td>
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Voters participation in Panchayat elections during 1995-2000

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<th>Year</th>
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Voters turn out at Panchyati Raj level is high as compared to the Vidhan Sabha level it shows that people of Himachal Pradesh are enthusiastic about the Panchayati Raj system. Moreover it is a beginning of new Panchayati Raj after the 73rd amendment and expectations are height for concretisation of political consciousness among the masses.

Thus the above discussion shows that the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions has undoubtedly started the process of politicization. The people have acquired a great deal of political consciousness. Education proliferation has played an important role in the mobilization of the people. Infect education is one of the factor of social change and awareness among the masses. It has been responsible for the process of change in way of life and host of other things that go to make a society.

Efficient system of transport, mass communication including print and electronic media, freedom of press, growth of interest groups and NGOs plays a vital role in mobilization of the people and their socio-economic development. In Himachal Pradesh as in other parts of India change is taking place in social, economic and political fields. However, the change is not always smooth and peaceful. With the expansion of democracy and political process conflicts are emerging in rural areas of

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65 Chief Electoral Officer Himachal Pradesh, Shimla.
66 Ibid.
Himachal Pradesh. The grass-root democracy introduced the politics to the door-step of the rural people. Political power becomes the crucial thing which is disturbing the harmony of the village. Socio-economic and political consciousness is creating paradoxes. Earlier concept of power was dormant at grass-root level. Elections and political parties intensified the people for struggle of power. The social and political values of common people in the villages are changing due to mobilization and awareness. Political participation and politics has increased the role of village people.

Thus it can be deduced from above discussion that efforts for laying down the foundation of grass root democracy have led to the birth of political consciousness among the people of Himachal Pradesh. The new political institutions and system of affirmative action helped in the mobilization of masses for political participation as well as their empowerment. The present study is a modest attempt to ascertain the manner in which expansion of political process has led to conflicts at the grass-root level.

The Problem:

The study aims at exploring into how political process at grass-root level leads to conflict formation in Himachal Pradesh. It is presumed that political process at grass-root level has introduced divisive politics in the society leading to groupism, factionalism and conflict formation. The study aims at probing deep in to this problem. For the purpose of the study two districts of Himachal Pradesh has selected to constitute the universe. The districts are selected to provide equal representation to the lower and upper Himalayan region. The selected districts are Shimla and Bilaspur.

The former falls in upper Himachal and later belongs to the lower part of the state. Another aspect of the study is to analyse the way in
which harmony and unity of the rural society has been affected with the expansion of democracy in the state. Thus the present study aims at opening new possibilities about the different critical dimensions of democracy. How it tries to develop conflicts among the individual, groups and community? Historically Himachal Pradesh has been a very cohesive society. In what way has this cohesiveness been affected by process of democratization.

**Broad Research Issues:**

Broad research issues, which the present study intends to explore, are the following:

(I) What has been the impact of grass-root democracy on society?

(II) How far has democracy at grass-root fragmented rural society and created factionalism and groupism?

(III) What are the major patterns of conflict?

(IV) What has been the effect of the conflicts on rural society and to what extent has it disturbed the village harmony?

(V) What is the nature of conflict among various levels of local institutions?

(VI) In what way has the Panchayati Raj Institutions affected the power equations between institutions of local government and the bureaucracy?

The answer to these research issues has been explored within the broad framework of the following objectives of the study.

**Objectives of the Study:**

(I) How political process started in Himachal Pradesh? What have been major milestone in it during the last 55 years?

(II) How political process led to rise in political consciousness in the society of Himachal Pradesh and how far did it affect political
participation of the masses?

(III) How such political consciousness has led to differences and dissensions in the society?

(IV) What is the extent and nature of such dissensions and what are their implications for the social harmony?

(V) What has been the impact of changed equation between the institutions of local government and bureaucracy on the pace of development?

Review of Literature:

There is a large number of studies on Panchayati Raj by the Indian and foreign scholar at all India level, similarly there are state specific studies particularly Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Some books, which merit attention, have been reviewed here highlighting the purpose of the study.

Democracy and Development: The Grass-Roots Experience in India by Prasad (1971), deals with the village Panchayat. The author has taken up Awa village Panchayat for his study, located in the central part of Bihar. The study examines the functioning of a village Panchayat as a democratic political system and as an agency of village development. In this study author accounted the actual operation of the main institutions of village government and the nature of the major problems they have encountered during their functioning.

Tak (1973), In Sociological Dimensions of Gram Raj, describes the pattern of Panchayat organization and outlines the village social structure. The book portrays the working of four Gram Panchayats in Rajasthan. It covers institutional functioning, development and social change/ village leadership, Panchayat elections and emerging problems and politicization. It has been observed that rural social values and traditions play an important role in the organization of the community.
and rural social structure has been greatly influenced by caste, caste Panchayats, caste associations, Jajmani and other local institutions. He concludes that the present structure of village Panchayat under the three tier system of Panchayati Raj is not based on the 'Lokneeti' (peoples policy) and hence a number of problems have emerged out.

Changing Rural Stratification System by K.L. Sharma (1974), the study is about the structure and process of stratification system in the six villages of Rajasthan. It highlights the changes in the status system, class and caste structure and power structure of the villages as a result of the various forces of change, external and internal to the rural system. Study further says that status inequalities among different castes and classes have not reduced even after the land reforms and urbanization. Higher caste and class persons are highly politicised and form the key influencers in the villages and hold formal offices of power and patronage.

India's Social Transformation by Madan (1979), is about the social change and economic development, problems of industrialization, processes and problems of urbanization, problems of rural development and planned change. In this volume the relationships between social change, modernization industrialization, urbanization and economic growth have been analysed. The author observes that any over emphasis on economic activities without efforts for maintaining and improving the social health of the village community, treatment of social problems and effective social education there may be only partial success and it may also result in inefficiency, waste and mere temporary achievements. In this volume, chapter Change in Social Organization discuss the change in the family structure, caste structure, village community, economic structure, political structure, cultural change and change in values and attitudes.

Politics and Society in Rural India by Mishra (1980) is about the
politics and society of a North Indian Village. It is a field report of Bihar, which is well known for its own socio-economic, political backwardness. This work throw light on urban influence and social change, caste as a dominant factor in the day to day intercourse in rural India, reflection of Panchayat elections on village politics and types of social conflicts and their influence on decision-making process.

*Village Politics* by Rao (1980), is a study of village politics and power relations of village community. In this study the author have attempted to analyse the changing dynamics of political power and conflict in a village community in the Telangana region of the state of Andhra Pradesh during period of 1945-1975. The study focuses as on the interrelationship between class, caste, political power and conflict in the village in the given period under different regimes. The author accounted that the introduction of Panchayati Raj in the year 1959 definitely increased the scope and intensity of conflict in the village. Study observes that consequent on adult suffrage and democratic decentralization or Panchayati Raj the economic dominants come to hold political power. Author noted that formerly political conflict was either absent or was limited to persons belonging to upper socio-economic strata now it come to embrace all sections of the community.

*Social Change and Political Participation* by Naqvi (1989) is a study on socio-economic mobility and political participation. It is an attempt to analyse the impact of socio-economic change on political processes. The political processes are studied for (i) the changes in recruitment process of leadership elected for Village Panachayats and Block Samiti level, Municipal Board Level, Assembly Constituency Level and office bearers of different political parties working at local level and (ii) changes in political behaviour of the voters. In this study, the analysis is confined to the political preferences or political strategies adopted by different individuals and socio-economic groups in the Amroha Assembly constituency, district Muradabad, Utter Pradesh in different elections.
has been observed in the study that in the new form of political structure established in post independence India caste, community consolidation has been utilized for political purpose also. And socially and economically deprived sections are in majority still deprived of benefits of the parliamentary form of government.

_Leadership, Factions and Panchayati Raj: A Case Study of West Bengal_ by Chakrabortty and Bhattacharyya (1993), tried to show, to what extent the system of Panchayati Raj in West Bengal has brought about any qualitative change in the traditional arrangement of distribution of power in which faction leaders have been controlling the village politics. Study shows that factionalism which is a feature of village politics has now aligned itself with party politics and faction leaders have now become leaders of the local units of political parties. PRIs have been arousing consciousness among the common villages about their rights factional disputes occupy central position of village political life and these disputes are purely of local nature and factional leaders use Panchayat office as the resource centre to pursue their personal and factional interests.

The book _Panchaynti Raj From Legislation to Movement_ by George Mathew (1994), is a study of the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions since independence, examining their constitutional support including the role played by political parties including women in the Panchayati Raj after the enactment of the 73rd constitutional amendment. The author also portrays the experiences of democratic decentralization in the states, Karnataka, West Bengal and Orissa. He has noted that constitutional amendment can not fully bring about complete devolution of power and there is a need that the new Panchayati Raj system be supported by a strong grass- root people's movement.

In _Constitutionalization of Panchayati Raj: A Reassessment_ ed. By Joshi (1998), scholars have assessed the various strides made by
Panchayati Raj since the implementation of 73rd amendment to the constitution that gives various powers to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The scholars appreciate the working of the new decentralized political system from the center to the local level but they note that political parties are shy in the empowerment of citizen at the grass root level. The editor says that the Panchayati Raj model has a potential to transform rural social fabric but the big question he asks is that how to operationalize the system. The editor further notes that new model still mires in paradoxes and drawbacks, which somehow do not come up to the vision of Mahatama Gandhi’s concept of Gram Sawaraj. The scholars also raise different questions and issues regarding efficacy, performance, ideology, functional-operational dynamics, social integrity etc. of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They have also noted that the Panchayati Raj have produced stresses and strains or conflicts that have hampered the growth and health of the institutions.

*The State of Panchayats: A Participatory Perspective* by Manoj Rai et al., 2001 (rpt. 2003), highlights the issues which have been emerged since the implementation of constitutional 73rd amendment. Finding of the study is based on the practical experience with Gram Panchayat and Gram-Sabha, it says that with varying degrees of devolution of powers Panchayats have made progress in different states but so for devolution of finances is concerned Panchayats has to gain momentum.

*Indian Politics: Processes, Issues and Trends* by Yasin and Sengupta (2004) mention about present state of decentralized governance and empowerment of women. Finding of the study shows that decentralized governance has not been participatory as far as women segment of the society in concerned, it further says that although it has been contributory to rural development but it has not been able to contribute to the empowerment of women.

*Panchayati Raj and Empowerment of Women* by Sinha (2004). This book presents a chronological account of development of Panchayati
system in India from the Vedic time to the present time. It gives brief account of the various committees appointed by the Union government to strengthen the Panchayati Raj in the country. The book also gives detailed account of Participation of women in Panchayati Raj in the State of Haryana.

*Functioning of Panchayati Raj System* ed. by Sisodia (2005) is an outcome of National Seminar on ‘A Decade of Panchayati Raj in India organised by Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research, Ujjain. This volume is aimed to understand the macro and micro dynamics of decentralized governance in India and find out the achievements and problem of governance at the grass-root level. Volume focused special attention on structure and functioning of PRIs, institutional mechanism and grass-root decision making, power structure, leadership and social settings, marginalized sections and their participation, natural resource management and PRIs, decentralised planning and finance and Panchayats and capacity building initiatives. Authors’ opinion that there are similarities in administrative decentralisation, financial centralization and bureaucratic central in functioning of Panchayati Raj functionaries in different states, the pace and pattern of decentralisation vary significantly across the states.

*Grass-Root Governance: Changes and Challenges in Rural India* ed. by Ravindra Sharma (2005). This volume is a collection of articles contributed by different scholars on changes and challenges in Rural India. They analyse and unveil the various ailments that characterize decentralized governance in rural India after the enactment of 73rd constitutional amendment Act. In this volume contributors paint a promising picture of the future even though some have warned about the pitfalls emergent in downsizing of the government and upswing in market penetration, of rural India.

*Governance at Grass-roots Level in India* ed. by Chahar (2005) is a collection of articles by different scholars. In this collected work scholars
laid emphasis on issues and areas pertaining to the actual working of the local bodies at the grassroots level. This volume is a collection of research papers on the working of local bodies in the wake of seventy third and seventy fourth Amendment. This work shows that even after a decade of the constitutional status of the local bodies their working suffers from many flaws like lack of political will, inadequate well trained and dedicated staff at local level.

*Functional Efficiency of Gram Sabha in Tamil Nadu* by Palanithurai and Ragupathy (2006), this study seeks to evaluate the functioning of Gram-Sabha and trends of people's participation in the Gram-Sabha meeting. It also studies perception of leaders and people about the role and importance of Gram-Sabha, implications of Gram-Sabha meeting and difficulties faced by the leaders and people to make Gram-Sabha meeting effective.

*Local Governance In India : Ideas Challenges and Strategies* ed. by T.M. Joseph (2007), is a combination of various research papers by the scholars. This volume is aimed at a performance appraisal of the local governance mechanism in India for the last ten years of its existence. This work is divided into five sections, focusing on a specific theme like understanding local governance, decentralisation and development, people participation in local governance at work, dynamic sand challenges and the emerging paradigm of local governance. This collected work also throws light on the ideas behind these institutions, challenges they face and strategic to contain them.

*Experiment of Direct Democracy: Gram Swaraj in Madhya Pradesh* of Sisodia (2007), based on the experience of functioning of Gram Swaraj in Madhya Pradesh. It attempts to find out awareness and perceptions of people about Gram Swaraj and assess the level of awareness of Panchayati Raj representations about it. The study also tries to know the level of participation of people in Gram-Sabha and points out practical problems in implication of Gram Swaraj.
The above literature deals with the study of Panchayati Raj at state and all India level. There are only a few studies on Himachal Pradesh, studies of comparative nature are very few. The issues raised in the some of these studies are the following.

_Panchayati Raj in Kangra District_ by Bhatnagar (1974), is a case study of Panchayati Raj in the district of Kangra in Himachal Pradesh. It covers the period before 1966 when Kangra was not merged with Himachal Pradesh. The author discussed the elected leadership of the three tier institutional complex Panchayati Raj. He noted that the villagers have not developed a sense of involvement with Panchayati Raj Institutions and people do not actively participate in the deliberations of the Gram-Sabha. The system suffers from factionalism and there is no understanding of the rural problems. Author is very critical about it attitude and policies of the state government towards the Panchayati Raj Institutions. This study covers only one district and limited period of five years.

_Party Politics in a Himalayan State_ by Ranbir Sharma (1977), deals with the growth of political consciousness, development of political Parties, institutional development, party membership and factionalism in Himachal Pradesh. Author describes in detail the development of political parties as pacesetter of modernization and political development of phari society of Himachal Pradesh. It further says growth of political consciousness is essential for awakening the desire to participate in the decision-making processes in a political system.

_History And Culture of Himalayan States_ by Charak (1978), in two volumes, forms part of a larger six volume series on History and Culture of Himalayan States. First and second volumes of the series are focused on Himachal Pradesh. The present work is a detailed study of several facts of Himachal history and culture. First volume covers the polity, history and geography of Kangra state and its offshoots and the Shimla Hill States. The second volume covers the Chamba, Mandi, Suket,
Bilaspur, Kutlehr, Bangahal, Kullu and Lahaul and Spiti states, and the political awakening and formation of Himachal Pradesh. A major section of this volume offers profiles of cultural achievements of people of the state. It also includes an account of the various tribes of the region and their customs, religion, art and architecture.

*The Economy of Himachal Pradesh* by L.R. Sharma (1987), throws light on the growth and structure of economy development performance, policy interventions in the state, change in the production structure and distributional characteristic of the economy of Himachal Pradesh. This study shows that although economy of state is growing steadily but it is becoming a role model of development for hill states of India.

*Himachal Pradesh: History, Culture and Economy* by Singh (1994), gives a historical picture of state including its cultural, economic and administrative history. It also describes the constitutional history of the Himachal Pradesh.

Shakuntla Sharma (1994), in her book *Grass Root Politics and Panchayati Raj*, features the interaction of caste, class and power in rural area. She provides an analysis of grass-root politics in India, profiling rural leadership and rural power structure she gives a case study of three different Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh. She observes that there is a close relationship between caste, class and power in rural Himachal and generalizes that Panchayat leadership controlled by upper castes in these villages. The entire rural power structure is controlled by upper castes because these castes occupy key positions of power and privileges. In her study she finds that party system and Panchayat system in Himachal Pradesh are also interrelated. In her observation she noted that Panchayat system has created the cleavages and tensions leading to castes, groupism and factionalism. The most important fact about, says the study the Panchayat system in Himachal is apathy and non-involvement of ordinary Gram-Sabha members in Panchayat affairs.
Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism in State Politics by Ramesh K. Varma (1994), is about the problem of sub-regional tendencies in Himachal Pradesh. Author noticed that the state has been facing the problem of sub-regional conflict between old and new areas, which has emerged with it as a result of reorganization of Punjab. This study is an attempt to understand the inner dynamics of the state politics and see how the inter-play of socio-economic and political forces paves the way to the growth of sub-regionalism.

The Emergence of Himachal Pradesh: A Survey of Constitutional Developments by Verma (1995), is a survey of constitutional development of the state which gives a chronological account of struggle which the people has to wage first to free themselves from the feudal domination of the hill chiefs and to gain themselves democratic institutions. He traces history of hill republics in the state and emergence of democratic institutions in the state including constitutional and political process.

Agriculture Rural Development and Panchayati Raj ed. by Mahajan (1996), is a collection of essays which presents Indian rural scene including latest developments in the key areas of rural economy and Panchayati Raj. Himachal Socio-Economic and Political Framework and Panchayati Raj an essay by R.D. Sharma after touching every aspects of Panchayati Raj from Gram-Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Panchayati Samitis and Zila Parishad to the finances, functions and control, the author says that there is an excessive and undemocratic control exercised by the state government in Himachal Pradesh. This study covers the post independence period till 1992, before 73rd amendment act was passed. It is a critical study in which he has outlined various merits and demerits of democratic decentralization in the state. He has studied how caste, class and other socio-economic and political factors have impacted on Panchayati Raj Institutions in the state. In the volume under review T.R. Sharma, in his essay New Panchayati Raj in Himachal Pradesh noted
that a new act i.e. 73rd amendment Act. the Gram-Sabha will in all possibility become the torch bearer of democracy at the grass- root level, that in turn will make Gram Panchayat more representative than it was under the old Act. He says the new Act will completely change the face of politic-oil cover at the village level, block and district levels at least in some parts of the state. He observes that the parochial loyalties will get pronounced and will travel upwards from Gram Panchayat to Panchayat Samiti to Zila Parishad and the State Legislature. There is likely to be greater polarization of caste and regional identities especially if ideological polarization is not there or does not take place, the study observes. Under the new act he concludes, there will be greater financial viability which in turn would lead to greater responsiveness.

Social, Cultural And Economic History of Himachal Pradesh
Ahluwalia (1998), This volume is an attempt at interpreting the hitherto lesser-known aspects of Himachal Pradesh. It collects the scattered material relating to society, culture and economy of Himachal Pradesh from remote past to the present times. The present work examines from facts of history the constant rich and fruitful socio-cultural history of the state.

Patterns of Decentralized Governance in Rural India, Vol. I ed. by Choudhery and Jain (1999), this volume depicts the growth and development of PRIs in different states of India. In this volume R. Gangadhar Reddi, analysed the status of Panchayati Raj in Himachal Pradesh since the introduction of Panchayati Raj in the state and up to the implementation of 73rd constitutional amendment. This work also gives details of elections to the PRIs in the state since 1954 and outlines the powers, functions and responsibilities of Panchayats regarding the economic development and social justice.
Methodology:

Study is based on both primary and secondary sources. For the collection of secondary sources i.e. books, journals, monographs, magazines and newspapers on the study, intensive library work was undertaken. This involves visit to various libraries of different research institutions and universities of the region. For Primary sources information and data was collected from different government departments like, Directorate of Census Operations Himachal Pradesh, Director of Panchayati Raj, State Election Commission, Department of Economics and Statistics, Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes Commission, H.P. State Commission for Backward Classes, Office of the Sub-Divisional Officers, Office of the Block Development Officers, Office of the Chairman Zila Parishad and the Offices of the Panchayats under study. Primary data was also collected from Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Acts and Revenue Records of the Government of Himachal Pradesh. This case study is an outcome of field work, for the micro level study we selected two districts of Himachal Pradesh, one is Shimla and other one is Bilaspur. Out of these two Panchayats each in Shimla and Bilaspur were taken. We further ensured that half of these Panchayats are reserved Panchayats. It is from these selected Panchayats that a sample of two hundred respondents has been taken. Classification of respondents was made first; it was sixty voters and forty contestants from each of the two Panchayats of a district. Voters were selected by random method while contestants were selected by lottery method. Contestants include those who contested elections for PRIs (won or lost) after the implementation of the constitutional 73rd amendment Act in the state. For this purpose contestants who contested election to PRIs during 1995 and 2000 have been taken. Out of voters and contestants we have also taken the official of PRIs as our respondents for the study and their figure is seven from
each districts including director or Joint director whose responses was orally recorded for both districts. So the respondents of our study constitute voters, contestants and official of PRIs. The respondents were interviewed with detailed interview schedule. For this purpose questionnaires were prepared which included open ended and structured questions relating to the problem raised in the study. It was ensured that respondents should not feel uneasy while giving responses to the researcher. Also it was kept in view that contestants who contested elections to rural local bodies before 1995, their viewpoint and opinion should be orally taken without applying any method regarding their selection. Apart from these some village notables like, Lumbardars and Zaildars of concerned area were contacted for the purpose of study. Official of the Directorate of Panchayati Raj, Deputy Commissioners and sub-Divisional officers of the two districts were also contacted. An attempt was also made to seek the view of Mahila Mandals, Youth Organisations and Non-Governmental Organizations.