CHAPTER – III

EVOLUTION AND WORKING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM
IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The State of Andhra, when first formed in 1953, consisted of the coastal and South-Western districts. The Telangana districts, although they had cultural and linguistically close association with the Andhra region, continued to remain within the jurisdiction of the former Hyderabad State. This led to the Visalandhra (the greater Andhra) movement for the merging of Telangana with Andhra. These districts were eventually integrated and on 1st November, 1956 the State of Andhra Pradesh came into existence. The Figure 3.1 gives clear picture of districts in Andhra Pradesh.

In 1953, the pattern of local self government in Andhra State had been modeled on the thing which had been already operated in Madras State. The Madras District Municipalities Act, 1920, the Madras District Boards Act, 1920, and Madras Village Panchayaties Act, 1950, encircled all the regulations for the local bodies.

In 1953, three types of rural local self government institutions were existed in the State namely District Boards, Taluk Boards and Village Panchayaties. The Village Panchayaties were grouped as Class I and
MAP OF ANDHRA PRADESH SHOWING DISTRICTS

FIGURE-3.1
Class II according to population and income. A Panchayati which has population not less than 5000 and annual income of not less than Rs. 10,000 is categorised as class I Panchayati. The rest were categorised as class II Panchayaties. The number of Class I and Class II Panchayaties, was 193 and 3687 respectively in 1956.¹

Adults casted their right to vote by lifting their hands under joint electoral system. But later situation was changed by following secrete ballot method. Responsibility for all developmental activities at the village level has been given to the Panchayati. Functions of the Panchayati are mentioned, they are promotion and development of elementary education, cottage industries, promotion of agriculture, organization of collective forming and co-operative management of lands, establishment and maintenance of maternity and child welfare centres, developing wards, assisting for implementation of land reforms measures and forming programmes of production for the village. They get 7.5 percent of the revenue from the sources of land revenue. For the rest they depend on the grants given by governments.

These elected institutions are endowed with powers and functions-development-reported to have performed more useful work, especially for district and taluk boards. However, they had certain limitations too.
Large Jurisdiction of district and taluk boards and absence of organic linkages between government departments and district boards, inadequate resources, ill equipped and poorly staged and insufficient technical and guidance from government departments, might be mentioned to count the major ones.²

After independence, the introduction of Community Development (C.D) projects in 1952 and the National Extension Services (N.E.S) successively, resulted in the extension of developing activities in rural areas. Apart from, elaborative administrative machinery, advisory bodies at the block and district levels were formed to get the cooperation of the people. The Member of Legislative Assembly and Member of Parliament from the respective areas and some nominated members were associated with the advisory bodies. Inspite the existence of these advisory bodies at block and district levels, much of the planning and execution of developing work was done by administration.³ The development of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the state can be broadly divided into four phases. They are;

**The First Phase: 1959-68**

The Government of Andhra Pradesh accepted the recommendations of study team of Balwanth Roy Mehta (1957) and
decided to establish one Panchayati Samiti in each district on an adhoc basis, benefit by the experience gained through its working and bring forward legislation thereafter to create a three-tier system of panchayati raj. As the adhoc samiti was formed in 1958 and proved successfully, the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Samities and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959, was passed and by the end of 1959 these statutory elected bodies had been established in all the districts: the Panchayati Samities by November and the Zilla Parishads by end of 1959.

The 1959 Act

The first batch of statutory panchayati samities was constituted with the inauguration of the Shadnagar Block on 11th October, 1959 by the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru (who had inaugurated panchayati raj in India on 2nd October, 1959 in Rajasthan). By the end of November 1959, totally of 235 Panchayati Samities had been established. The second and third batches were constituted later on or the next year.4

At the time of the passing of the 1959 Act, the statutory village panchayaties in the Andhra area had already been constituted under the Madras Village Panchayaties Act, 1950, while Gram Panchayaties were existed in the Telangana area under the Hyderabad Village Panchayaties Act. With the existence of Panchayati Samities and Zilla Parishads, all
the three bodies at the village, block and district level became corporate, statutory and representative things. They could acquired, hold and disposed off property and entered into contracts.

In December 1959, all the district boards were statutorily abolished and Zilla Parishads were constituted for all the twenty districts in the state. An adoptive order was issued to suitably adapt and transfer the powers, functions, assets and liabilities and also the institutions and staff of the district boards to the Panchayati Samities and Zilla Parishads. The act of 1959 was amended in 1963 and it had redefined the Andhra area, restricted the Membership of the Legislators with voting right to one samiti only, and prohibited being a legislator and presiding member for a person of any one of these bodies. It also the M.L.As from being the members of the Zilla Parishad or Samiti if their constituencies were include any rural area, besides prescribed the terms of the presiding members and forbidden village officers from becoming members of these bodies.5

In 1963, the government had deliberated the necessity to retain the full complement of staff as it existed in the 448 samiti blocks and had tried to assess, with a view to enunciate economy in spending expenditure
on establishment, the number of blocks could be reduced by carving out larger blocks but without affecting the tempo of developing activities.

A high power committee was set up under the chairmanship of M.Purushottam Pai to look proto-related aspects. This Committee recommended that the Panchayati Samiti blocks were essential units of planning and development. It felt that panchayaties were envisaged as instruments of economic progress and social change, there is the widest scope for the expression of democratic opinion at the village level, and big blocks would be financially stronger with increased scope for independent planning and execution of development programmes, those under “Area Planning”.6

The committee also suggested categorisation of blocks as advanced, ordinary, backward and tribal, and the abolition of the distinction between Stage-I, Stage-II, Post-Stage, and so on. It recommended that the allotment of community development funds on varying per capita basis so that less developed blocks could get a little more than others. Following these recommendations, an amendment was made to the 1959 act in 1964 to strengthen the government to alter the boundaries of the blocks and reconstitute the Samities. By July 1964, the number of blocks had been reduced from 448 to 321. In 1964 certain
town Municipalities in Telangana was also downgraded as Gram Panchayaties. The Samiti blocks in the state were categorized as advanced, ordinary, backward and tribal, by taking into consideration of per capita revenue, percentage of the irrigated area, in the total area, literacy rate, and percentage of children attending schools and road mileage, and others.

The 1964 Act

The Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayati Raj Act, 1964, superseded the two Gram Panchayati Acts of Andhra and Telangana. Under this Act, the pattern was set up for future structure of panchayati Raj in the state, every village had to consist of a Gram Sabha and met at least twice a year to consider the annual statement of accounts and audit, the report of the administration of the previous year, the programme of works for the year ahead, and the proposals for fresh taxation or for enhancement of existing taxes. Usually the Sarpanch presides over the Gram Panchayati; it is presided over by deputy sarpanch, when the sarpanch is absent.7

The Gram Panchayati was the basic institution of the people at the village level. Each village, with the population of ten thousand or above, had a panchayati. Where the population was lower, the villages were conveniently grouped. The members of the Gram Panchayati were elected
by all the voters of the village. The number of members varied from five to seventeen, depending upon the total population. One seat was reserved for women if the total strength of panchayati members was seven or less, and two seats if the total was nine or more. One seat was reserved either for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Each village was classified into many wards on the basis of the number of voters and seats were decided according to wards the sarpanch and the Deputy-sarpanch were elected indirectly by the members of the panchayati. The term of office was five years.

The sarpanch was the executive head of the Gram Panchayati. He convened and conducted the meeting every month. He also exercised administrative control over the executive officer who was in charge of more than one panchayati. Besides the executive officer, the administrative personnel of the village consisted of a gram sevak for four to six villages and a primary school teacher.  

The 1964 Act had provided functional committees for agriculture, public health, sanitation and communication, and also one or two other committees, if necessary. Every conceivable work relating to agriculture, irrigation, drainage, co-operative, animal husbandry, civic amenities, education, public health, and rural arts and crafts was endowed to it.
Although under the statute the Gram Panchayati was assigned an important function and it played a key role in developing programmes, the success of these programmes depended upon the availability of financial resources. Adequate financial resources were a real problem for the panchayaties.

For providing justice in civil and criminal cases, Nyaya panchayaties will established a group of three to five villages were covered under one Nyaya Panchayati. Their term of office was three years.

**Panchayati Samiti**

Till 1965 a Panchayati Samiti had consisted of all the sarpanches of the Gram Panchayaties within its jurisdiction, and the Members of Legislative Assembly and Members of Legislative Council represent the constituency which comprised the block. After July 1964, an amendment took place to the act of 1959; it imposed prohibition on Members of the State Legislature from holding the Presidentship and Vice-Presidentship of the Panchayati Samiti. If they opted for the president or vice-president’s post, they would be automatically ceased to be the Members of the Legislature.⁹
The government had power to either extend the term of the president and vice-president by six months or to remove them whilst in office, if there is a sufficient cause. Ex-officio members held office as long as they continued to be Sarpanches, or Members of the State Legislature. The president of the Samiti exercised an administrative control over the Block Development Officer (B.D.O) and also convened, presided over and conducted the meetings. The Panchayati Samiti met at least once three months. The B.D.O. was its chief executive officer. He was liable to implement its resolutions and those of its standing committee. He attended the meetings but was not entitled to vote or to move any resolution.10

The functions endowed with the Panchayati Samiti under the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Samities and Zilla Parishads Act, 1959, were comprehensive and the same as those of Gram Panchayaties. The Panchayati Samiti was expected to exercise every conceivable work related to the development of the local economy and infrastructure.11

Zilla Parishad

A Zilla Parishad had been constituted under the act of 1959 for each district. It consisted of the president (ex-officio) of each Panchayati Samiti in the district, the District Collector, the M.L.As and the M.L.Cs
from the district. In addition, it included the M.Ps elected from the district, two women, and one representative from the S.Cs, and one from the S.Ts (if the population of the latter two categories was not less than 5 percent of its total population in the district). If the population of the S.Ts was less than this percentage, another representative from the S.Cs was included, as well as two persons who are interested in rural development.

The Members of the Zilla Parishad elected its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The amendment which took place to the act of 1959 in 1963 introduced an important change by imposing a ban on the district collector from becoming the chairperson of the Zilla Parishad. The Members of either House of the State Legislature or the Union Parliament were eligible to be elected as the chairpersons of the Zilla Parishad, but they were ceased to be members of the former institutions if they were elected and wished to work with the district body.

The Chairperson of the Zilla Parishad convened, presided over and conducted all its meetings and exercised administrative control over the secretary. If the office of the Chairperson was vacant or if he had been continuously absent from the district for more than fifteen days, his powers and functions during the period of absence entrusted with the vice-president.  

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The 1959 Act had enabled the Zilla Parishad to function as an advisory and supervisory body over the panchayati samities by endowing with powers to approve their budgets, coordinate their plans and distribute Funds (given by the government) among the blocks. It had also been allocated a few developmental functions, such as establishing, maintaining and expanding of secondary, vocational and industrial schools.

System of the Committees

Panchayati institutions functioned with the help of a number of committees at various levels. The Panchayati Samiti, being a large body, functioned during the first phase (1959-65) through seven standing committees, that is, planning and production, cooperatives and industries, education, women's welfare, communications, social welfare, taxation and finance. Each standing committee consisted of seven members, with some reservations for women and the deprived sections included in its structure. Similarly, general policies were discussed in all the sections of the Zilla Parishad, its work was also carried out through seven standing committees, which were the same for the Panchayati Samiti. Each standing committee of the Zilla Parishad comprised nine members, except the standing committee for education which had ten members.13
Resources

The resources of the Gram Panchayati were derived from government’s grants, taxes and non-tax revenue, property and other miscellaneous sources, and other miscellaneous sources (as per the 1964 Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayati Raj Act). The Panchayati Samiti was empowered to levy a surcharge on land/local cess and on taxes levied by panchayaties. Contributions from panchayaties were among the other sources of its income.

The main resources of the Zilla Parishad were Central or State Governmental funds, grants for development of cottage and small-scale industries, shares of land and local cess, state taxes or fees, income from endowments or trusts, and donations and contributions from the Panchayati Samiti and from the public in any form.\textsuperscript{14}

The Second Phase: 1965-70

In view of mounting criticism from various sections, including Legislators, against panchayati raj institutions, the Andhra Pradesh Congress Legislature party constituted a Committee in March 1968 to consider all aspects relating to panchayati raj and to suggest necessary amendments to the concerned act. It had twelve M.L.As as Members, while J.Vengala Rao, Ex-President of the Andhra Pradesh State Chamber of Panchayati Raj, was the Convener.
J. Vengala Rao Committee

The Vengala Rao committee identified certain factors that accounted for public dissatisfaction with panchayati raj. It pointed out that panchayati raj had.

a) Lost its dynamism mainly due to paucity of funds.

b) That it had a mode of constitution of different tiers and a pattern of elections that left much to be desired and that.

c) It experienced undesirable things like it suffered from lack of functional freedom. Further, the committee felt that strengthening the hands of the bureaucracy at the district level had demoralised the entire set up. Lack of independent and adequate financial resources had also made fun of the concept of local self-government.

The J. Vengala Rao’s committee recommended that:

i. M.Ps and State Legislators should be prohibited from holding elective posts in the two upper tiers, while they could have membership in the zilla parishads but without right to vote.

ii. The Sarpanch, the Samiti President and the Chairperson of the Zilla Parishad should not have any independent powers and
act strictly in accordance with the decisions of the committees of
the respective bodies.

iii. Use of party symbols should not be permitted in elections at
any level.

iv. There is need to provide the panchayaties with adequate
resources, to eliminate their perpetual dependence on the
government for funds. For this purpose, governmental lands, road
margins, tank bunds, fishery and other areas which come under
the territory of Panchayaties ought to be handed it over for
plantation and other income generated activities.\textsuperscript{15}

The major recommendation of the committee to improve the
position of the Zilla Parishads annual income and grants-in-aid given to
them should be raised from 25 paise to one rupee. Very meager changes
were made in the panchayati raj structure during the second phase. In
1970, a new district of Ongole and a new taluk, Gajapathivaram in
Visakhapatnam, was formed.

The Third Phase: 1970-78

Another important committee which went into various aspects of
panchayati raj in Andhra Pradesh set up in 1971 and headed by
C.Narasimham. This committee was asked to review the functioning of
panchayati raj in the light of the experience gained during the twelve years, of its existence. It submitted its report in 1972, with the following recommendations.16

1. The Sarpanch of a village panchayati should be directly elected by all the voters in the village, and the continuation of electing the vice-sarpanch by the sarpanch and the members of the village panchayati.

2. A Panchayati Samiti should be composed only with the directly elected members and sarpanches, elected by an electoral system and members of gram panchayati and the strength of its members should be fixed for twelve times to the number of members elected to the Zilla Parishad.

3. The president and vice-president of the Samiti should be elected by all the members of the samiti from among themselves.

4. The Zilla Parishad should consist of all the members directly elected from the single member constituencies (subjected to a limit of four per block) into which the blocks were to be divided, with the presidents of the samities as its ex-officio members.

5. The practice of associating the district collector as ex-officio member and chairperson of the standing committee of the parishad should be discontinued.
6. The motion of no-confidence against the sarpanch of the village panchayati should be disallowed as he was elected directly, but this provision may applicable to vice-sarpanch.

7. For the Gram Panchayati, one to three seats are reserved for women depending on their strength in the village panchayati. The committee had felt that there is no need for reservation of seats for women in the Samiti and Zilla Parishads. However, political parties can choose many women as possible and give them proper representation.

8. One seat should be reserved either for S.Cs or S.Ts in the village panchayati if there are at least ten voters among them in a given panchayati, and in the Zilla Parishad according to the percentage of their population in the district.

9. Legislators need not be made as ex-officio members either of the samiti or the parishad.

10. The existing standing committees of the Panchayati Samiti should be re-designated as subject committees, limited to four in number: (i) planning, agriculture and industry; (ii) education; (iii) social welfare; and (iv) women's welfare.

11. Political parties should be recognised for the purpose of elections to Zilla Parishads and Panchayati Samities. The districts development fund should be constituted and administered by the Zilla Parishad.
Instead of giving grants-in-aid to panchayati raj bodies on various items, a block grant of twenty-five crores (two hundred and fifty million) rupees every year may be given.

The committee had strongly recommended the appointment of a Local Authority Finance Commission for every five years on the basis of the National Finance Commission. The authorities should be entrusted with government, to remove a sarpanch, vice-sarpanch or a member of the gram panchayati.


The Andhra Pradesh Gram Panchayaties (Amendment) Act, 1976, mounted the minimum strength of the Gram Panchayati from five to seven and the maximum from seventeen to nineteen members. One seat was reserved for the S.Cs or S.Ts, if their population was 25 percent or
less. If their population was more than 25 percent but less than 50 percent, the seats which reserved for the above mentioned proportionately according to their population.17

Under the amendment, the sarpanch should be elected directly by all the voters of the panchayati. The election of the sarpanch, the president of the Panchayati Samiti and the members of the Gram Panchayati should be conducted at the same time. The sarpanch should not be removed by the Gram Panchayati. It should be given to the government, if he fails to perform his duties. There had been reports of clashes between the sarpanch and the members in the Gram Panchayati leading to operational problems.

According to the amendment made in 1978 the Samiti President should be directly elected by all the voters in the Samiti area. As the government only would remove the president of the gram samiti if he failed to discharge his duties, only the government could remove the President of a Samiti if he failed to discharge his duties. Members of the Legislature are not eligible to hold the office of the president.

With the 1978 amendment, the samiti consisted of: (a) the President, (b) the sarpanches of all the Gram Panchayaties within the samiti area,
and (c) the M.L.As and M.L.Cs who are as its registered voters. They together elects six members, among them, the two are women, one each from the S.Cs and S.Ts and the two persons belonging to the backward classes. The government should nominate one person each from the following categories i.e., the backward classes, the minorities, those working for cooperatives, and social workers. These nominated members don’t have the right to elect the vice-president or to vote in the standing committees. The standing committees were reduced from seven to five i.e., development, education, social welfare, works and finance.¹⁸

The composition of the Zilla Parishad was also changed with a view to 1978 amendment. The collector was disassociated from holding the membership in the Zilla Parishad and the post of chairperson in the standing committees. However, he continues to have supervisory powers over the gram panchayati and the Panchayati Samiti as an agent of the government.

A few important changes took place in the panchayati raj system through the 1976 and 1978 amendment acts. These included the reduction of the age to get the light to vote from twenty-one to eighteen, and reservation fixed for the S.Ts and S.Cs for elective posts in respect of the sarpanch of the gram panchayati and president of the panchayati samiti respectively.¹⁹
FOURTH PHASE: 1979-85

This phase was marked by two important developments: the appointment of the State Committee on Panchayati Raj and the holding of elections to panchayati bodies after the gap of a decade.

A committee chaired by C.Narasimham was appointed in 1979 to review the problems faced by panchayati raj system and consider the implications of the Ashok Mehta Committee and it recommended the things given below.

The committee felt that panchayati raj bodies during the twenty years of their existence had passed through varying phases: a phase of dynamism, 1959-64; a phase of stagnation, 1965-69; and a phase of decline, 1970 onwards. They had not operated comprehensively for almost a decade and ultimately the Zilla Parishads and Panchayati Samities had been superseded and put under official control. No elections to Panchayati Raj bodies had been held for about a decade.

The committee made recommendation which has far-reaching consequences was that elections held to Panchayati Raj bodies must have constitutional safeguards similar to those relating to the Assembly and Parliamentary elections. It felt that on the lines of the chapter provided in
the constitution for the union, the states and the union territories, another one on local authorities needed to add after article 242 defining the goals and responsibilities of these bodies. The aim was to make it incumbent on every state to establish, organise and encourage local bodies with adequate funds, powers and functions. It also recommended setting up of a state finance commission on the lines of the finance commission at the centre. No significant attempt was made to act on these suggestions.²⁰

The Final Phase: 1986-Up Date

The next attempt for re-hauling the panchayati institution was made in 1986, changes were not brought about suddenly. The Telugu Desam government, which came to power in 1983, had promised in its election manifesto that it would work for the revitalization of panchayati raj institutions. The proclaimed purpose of the reform was to decentralize planning and administration, with a view to taking the panchayati raj institutions closer to the people.

The initial thinking of the government was for reorganizing the three-tier system into two tiers, in tune with the Ashok Mehta Committees report. The idea was to retain the old Zilla Parishads and establish Mandal Panchayaties by forbidding the Panchayati Samities and Gram Panchayaties. (Since this proposal was not approved it was
decided to introduce a four-tier system, that is, the Gram Panchayati the Mandal Praja Parishad and the Zilla Parishad and Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandali (District Planning and Development Council). The Andhra Pradesh Mandala Praja Parishads, Zilla Praja Praishads and Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandals Act, 1986, came into effect from January of the following year.

Efforts were also made to bring about changes in the organisation of the Gram Panchayaties. As already stated, the initial thinking was to do away with the Gram Panchayaties altogether and establish Mandals as adjuncts to the Mandal Parishad. However, due to criticism from within and outside the ruling party, the Gram Panchayaties were left intact. They continued to be governed by the 1964 act.21

The 1986 Act:

The 1986 Act made significant changes in the panchayati raj set up. It abolished 330 panchayati samities and created 1,104 Mandala Praja Parishads (M.P.Ps) in their place. While a Gram Panchayati had been constituted for a village, the Mandala Praja Parishad was created for a group of villages with the population of thirty-five to fifty thousand, and the Zilla Parishad, renamed as Zilla Praja Parishad, was made coterminous with the district. The size of the middle unit was
reduced by one-third; roughly three to four Mandala Praja Parishads for each Panchayati Samiti were created, with the proclaimed aim of taking administration "nearer" to the people. It was aimed at developing these units of a decentralized administrative system where all important departments, like revenue, police, cooperation, education, health and agriculture can to operate. They were entrusted with the powers and functions of the erstwhile Panchayati Samities.

The sarpanches, M.L.As and M.Ps were made as ex-officio members of the Mandala Praja Parishads. A new provision for co-option of a member from the linguistic or religious minorities to the M.P.P. was also made in the 1986 act. It indicated that the president is elected directly by the registered. Besides the earlier reservation given 15 percent and 6 percent respectively for the S.Cs and S.Ts and the quota of reservation given to backward classes and women was for 20 percent and 9 percent respectively. Thus, the total reservation quota was raised from 21 percent to 50 percent.

The Mandal President convene, preside over and conducts the meetings and exercises administrative control over the Mandal Development Officer. The major sources of income for the Mandal were governmental grants and funds relating to various schemes. It also got a
share of the land revenue and other state taxes. The government can remove the president or the vice-president of a Mandal if he misuses his powers or refuses to carry out its orders.22

The Zilla Praja Parishad (Z.P.P.)

The Chairperson of the Z.P.P. was to be directly elected by the voters of the district and there are twenty-two Z.P.Ps in the state. The ten were reserved for the weaker sections as follows:

Scheduled Tribes, 1; Scheduled Castes, 3; Backward Classes, 4; women, two. All the presidents of the MPPs in the district, as well as the M.L.As and M.Ps of the district were members of the Zilla Praja Parishad and still it is continued. One member belonging to either a linguistic or religious minority would be co-opted, while the district collector was also retained as a member.

Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandal

Each district, excluding Hyderabad, had a statutory Zilla Pranalika Abhivrudhi Sameeksha Mandal the chairmanship of the Z.P.P is equal to the status of the cabinet Minister of the State, entrusted with the function of advising and reviewing the developmental activities undertaken by the ZP.P. From time to time this body was headed by a Minister nominated
by the Chief Minister. The Z.P.P. chairperson, the district collector, all the legislators from the district and some expert members nominated by the government were the members of this body. The district collector is its Secretary member. Due to criticism from the public about the creation of such a nominated body over the Z.P.P., the government had initially thought of lowering the position of the Z.P.A.S.M., but it could not do so because of considerable pressure came from the ministers and legislature of the state.  

Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act-1994

The State Government amended the existing laws governing the Panchayati (which discussed in the previous chapter) Raj Institutions in the light of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. According to it the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Bill was passed by the State Legislative Assembly on March 30, 1994. The new Act called the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 came into force on May 30 1994, by replacing the earlier Acts. In accordance with the provisions of the Act a three tier structure comprising of Zilla Parishad at the district level, Mandal Praja Parishad at the intermediate level and Gram Panchayati at the village level was set up constituted in the State. The Act has been amended from
time to time during the last ten years of its operation to make it more effective.

Main Characteristics of A.P. Panchayati Raj Act of 1994

The following are the important features of A.P. Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. They are, 24

1. Provision of organic linkage among the three tiers which enables the Sarpanches of the Gram Panchayaties to attend the General Body meeting of the Mandal Parishad. Similarly, the Presidents of the Mandal Parishad are entitled to attend the General Body meetings of the Zilla Parishad without the right to vote.

2. Provision of the norm of two children, whereby a candidate with more than two children will be disqualified to contest in the elections or to continue as a member in any one of the Panchayati Raj bodies.

3. A member who is absent for three meetings consecutively is deemed to be disqualified thereby to ensure the regularity of the members of the functioning of panchayaties.

4. Joint cheque power for the operation of Gram Panchayati fund is provided to the sarpanch of the Gram Panchayati along with any one member purposively selected by the Gram Panchayati.
5. The scheme of selection of Gram Panchayaties is another unique feature in the State. Committees have been formed at the State, District and Mandal level for the selection of best Gram Panchyati and inducements are provided to stimulate the panchayaties.

6. The Power to call for information from the Village Development Officer (VDO) has been entrusted to the Gram Panchayaties.

7. Co-option to minorities given to provide representation to all sections including the community in the village, and

8. Provision for bringing no-confidence motion against the heads of PRIS only once in their five year term, not in the first two years after the holding of the office.

The Composition of Panchayati Raj

The three tier system of Panchayati Raj introduced under the new Act consists of Gram Panchayati, Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad at the village, intermediate and district levels respectively. The Act also provides for the constitution of Gram Sabha at the village level with all the registered voters as members to function as the General Body of the Gram Panchayati. The Gram Sabha has been endowed with a wide range of functions; it has been made responsible for supervision and
The Act provides for direct election of members to the Panchayati Raj Institutions at all the three levels on the basis of wards for the Gram Panchayati and territorial constituencies in the case of Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad with reservations for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and Women. Besides reservations of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes allocated in proportion to their population, one-third of the total number of seats for direct election in each of these bodies will be reserved for the backward classes and another one-third of them for women. It provides for the participation of political parties in the elections for the intermediate and district level bodies. The Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayati will be elected directly by the electorate in the village whereas the President of the Mandal Parishad and the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad will be elected from among the directly elected members in respect of these bodies. The term of Panchayati Raj Institutions and their heads is for five years.25

The system of direct election is formed to the post of sarpanch of Gram Panchayati for getting the potential leadership at the village level and a strong executive head of the lowest tier to implement the
developing programmes. Direct election enables the Sarpanch to be free from any group bickering and manipulations of the limited number Gram Panchayati members. There is less possibility for him to be a dictator and independent because he should be accountable to the people for the performance of the Gram Panchyati as its executive head, and not merely his individual performance. He has to get the support of other members for the Panchayati to function effectively.

The Act provides an organic linkage among the three-tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions by making the elected heads of the lower-tier permanent invitees to the meetings of the next higher-tier body. Thus all the sarpanches of the Gram Panchayaties in a Mandal will participate in that Mandal Parishad meetings and the Mandal Parishad’s presidents in a district do so in the Zilla Parishad meetings.26

There is a provision for Constitution of seven standing Committees at the Zilla Parishad level for subjects including planning and finance, rural development, agriculture, education and medical services, women welfare, social welfare and works (covering communications, rural water supply, power and irrigation). Each Standing Committee consists of the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad as ex-officio member and the members as nominated by him follow the prescribed rules in this regard.
Besides the directly elected members, the Presidents of the Agricultural Marketing Committees within the jurisdiction of Mandal in the case of Mandal Parishad and the chairpersons of the District Cooperative Marketing Society, the Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha, and the District Cooperative Central Bank will be associated with the Zilla Parishad as permanent invitees to its meetings. The Collector will also be a permanent invitee for the meetings of the Mandal Parishad and the Zilla Parishad Standing Committees. The permanent invitees will be entitled to participate in the discussions but without the right to vote. Besides, the Mandal Parishad and the Zilla Parishad also have one or two members co-opted from the minority communities. The Standing Committees will take decision-making and executive bodies in their respective fields subjected to the ratification of the General Body of the Zilla Parishad.

The Members of the State Legislature, or the Union Parliament represents the area of a Mandal or a district either wholly or partly will be ex-officio members of the respective institution not only with a right to participate in its meetings but also to vote on its resolutions.

When the situation arrives about the participation of political parties, different opinions are expressed the association of MPs and MLAs with Panchayati Raj Institutions either with or without right to
vote. It is viewed that this had contributed to create further groups and faction in the functioning of the panchayati Raj Institutions; they were affected in the past Panchayati Raj Institutions. Their eligibility to contest for the post of headship of any of these bodies is also viewed not favourably to look into the other side, it is considered that their association with Panchayati Raj Institutions will provide a link among the legislative bodies at the local, state and national levels, and keep one another to inform of their respective policies and programmes.27

The Gram Sabha

The Act provides for the constitution of Gram Sabha for every village with the electoral system of the Gram Panchayati comprises members. The Gram Sabha meets at least twice a year to consider the things which are placed before the Gram Panchayati. The things of the Gram Panchayati include annual statement of accounts and audit report; report on the administration of the preceding year; programmes of works for the current year; proposals for fresh taxation or for the enhancement of existing taxes; and selection of schemes, beneficiaries and locations. The Gram Panchayati gives due consideration to the suggestions of the Gram Sabha while implementing the programmes. The meetings of the Gram Sabha is convened by the executive officer of the Gram Panchayati and presided over by the sarpanch or in his absence convened and presided over by the Vice-Sarpanch.
However, the ground reality is different. The Gram Sabha’s meetings are not convened regularly in the majority of the cases. The meetings are manipulated in the villages where group politics are active. Such manipulation has become easier in the absence of any provision of the Act for having quorum for the Gram Sabha meeting. The ‘resolutions’ of such unheld meetings are passed by getting signatures of the members of the sarpanch’s group.28

The Act also does not make it mandatory on the part of the Gram Panchayati to implement the decisions of the Gram Sabha. Therefore its decisions are not ‘advantageous’ to the members of the sarpanch’s group and they can be ignored for implementation. These drawbacks are to be removed to make the Gram Sabha an effective institution and promote the participation of all sections of people in the village development.

**Reservation of seats to SCs, STs, OBCs and Women**

The State has the system of reservation of seats for SCs, STs, OBCs, and women in Panchayati Raj institutions. The number of seats reserved for SCs and STs are determined on the basis of their population in the area. Such seats are allotted by rotation for different wards/constituencies in the respective tiers.
Women's Reservation

One-third of the seats to be filled up by direct election in Panchayati Raj Institutions are reserved for women and another 34 per cent of them for Other Backward Classes as provided in the Act. The Participation of Women in the process of elections held to Panchayati Raj institutions was very limited in the 1995 elections. More than 90 per cent of the women contested in the elections for the first time against the seats reserved for them and so they had not actively participated. In this context, prominent men (generally ex-presidents of panchayaties and cooperatives, retired government functionaries and members of political parties) made their wives or sisters or close relatives to contest in the elections against the reserved constituencies, they started acting as 'de facto' Sarpanches. They were conducting the Panchayati meetings and running the Panchayati administration. However, there are other instances indicated that women sarpanches took a lot of initiative in the development of their villages. One proud example is that Smt. Fatima Bee, a Sarpanch of the Kurnool district who received the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP) award in 1997 for the best contribution of her Gram Panchayati to village development.
Funding of Panchayati Raj Institutions

The funding of Panchayati is primarily derived through a line item in the budget of the state Department of Panchayati Raj. There is separate panchayati window within the State Department budget, in which allocations are assigned to the three levels of panchayati Raj. The commissioner of the Panchayati Raj forwards the funds through the states treasury on quarterly basis and states contribution on the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) to the Panchayati Raj institutions.

The administrative expense towards staff of Panchayaties is met from the regular budget of the State Department. Funds are released to the Panchayaties by individual line departments in accordance with the schemes entrusted with them. However, it needs to ascertain whether there are any deductions.

Sources of Income for Panchayaties

Under the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 only the Gram Panchayaties were empowered to levy and collect Tax and Non-tax revenues under section 60 to 72 of the Act. Zilla Parishads and Mandal Parishads are not allowed to levy any tax and non-tax revenues. The details of own sources of income of Gram Panchayaties given below:
Table -3.1

Sources of income of Gram Panchayati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax revenue</td>
<td>Non-tax revenue</td>
<td>Assigned Revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 House Tax</td>
<td>1 License Fees</td>
<td>1 Surcharge on Stamp Duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kolagaram (Tax on local produce)</td>
<td>2 Building permissions</td>
<td>2 Seigniorage fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Advertisement Tax</td>
<td>3 Auctions and Leases</td>
<td>3 Entertainment Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Vehicle Tax</td>
<td>4 Rents</td>
<td>4 Professional Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Vacant Land Tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of A.P.

*The main sources of own income are rents from House taxes (A-1), Lease Land (B-3) and Cattle markets (shandies, B-3).

It obtains the sources of income from also Kolagaram (Tax on local produce), Advertisement tax, vehicle tax and vacant land tax and it also obtained them from non-tax revenue, Assigned Revenue. The details of the assigned taxes to Panchayaties are as follows:
### Table - 3.2

**ASSIGNED TAXES OF PANCHAYATIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Description of assigned taxes</th>
<th>Quantum &amp; Collection Agency</th>
<th>Vertical share of Panchayaties against Urban</th>
<th>Inter-se sharing between three levels of Panchayaties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Surcharge on Stamp Duty</td>
<td>5% surcharge on stamp duty, Revenue</td>
<td>PRIs-get.40%</td>
<td>60% to Gram Panchayaties &amp; 20% each to Mandal and Zilla Parishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seigniorage fee</td>
<td>Mines &amp; Geology</td>
<td>PRIs get 100%</td>
<td>25:50:25 among Gram Panchayati, Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Entertainment Tax</td>
<td>Sales Tax Department</td>
<td>90% assigned to local bodies, which is shared in the ratio of 30:70 between PRIs and ULBs.</td>
<td>Gram Panchayati and Mandal Parishad share in 60:40. ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Profession Tax</td>
<td>State Government</td>
<td>95% to local bodies and Panchayaties get about 30% of 1 00 percent to Gram Panchayaties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of A.P.

*From 1999-2000 onwards, the powers of auctioning sand quarries has been delegated to Gram Panchayaties.

**Establishment of State Finance Commission, 1995**

The First State Finance Commission was setup in 1995, and recommended that 39.24 percent of the States' revenue (both tax and non-tax) should be devolved to Local Bodies at the ratio of 70 per cent to Panchayati Raj Institutions and 30 per cent to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) respectively. This report
recommended that provisions relating to percentage of devolution may be incorporated in the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act. The SFC recommended that the categorization of Panchayaties as advanced, ordinary, backward and tribal with weightage to be suggested by Planning Department to measure rate of development.

Assignments of Taxes

- On the assignment of taxes to Panchayaties, the First SFC made the following recommendations:
  - Rules ought to be issued to enable Gram Panchayaties to derive income rightly due to them from new taxes, such as Advertisement tax.
  - 95 percent of the Profession a Tax which is collected ought to be transferred to the Local Bodies and allocated between rural and urban areas on the basis of population.
  - Property tax compensation may be enhanced by 5 percent every year and Octroi compensation by 10 percent.

Grants to Panchayaties Recommended by the SFC

On the question of grants to Panchayaties, the First SFC recommended that per-capita grants be increased as follows:
Table - 3.3

PERCAPITA GRANTS TO THREE TIER PANCHHAYATIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gram Panchayaties</th>
<th>Rs.2-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mandal Parishads</td>
<td>Rs. 5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Zilla Parishads</td>
<td>Rs. 1-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of A.P.

It also recommended that a special grant of Rs. 5,000 should be given to newly formed Gram Panchayaties for purchasing of furniture, forms and registers and that a grant of Rs. 1.5 lakhs be given to Zilla Parishads for construction of meeting halls.

**Recommendations of the First SFC on Policy matters**

On policy matters the First SFC made the following suggestions:

1. When the State Government decides to devolve any of the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule to Panchayaties, the funds intended for the discharge of the function should also be devolved to them with functionaries.

2. Consolidated audit and review reports on Panchayati accounts should be expedited and laid before the Legislative Assembly. Government should take effective steps for preparing and publishing the consolidated annually administrative reports on the accounts, of local bodies.
3. The Second Finance Commission should be appointed early in 1998 and even much earlier to the appointment of 11th National Finance Commission.

The recommendations of the First SFC pertaining to share of taxes, duties, fees and grants to Panchayati Raj Institutions were not accepted. However, in compliance with the recommendations of the first State Finance Commission, the Second State Finance Commission was set up in 1998.

**Second State Finance Commission, 1998**

Recommendations of the Second SFC of this amount, 6.76 percent was recommended to go to rural bodies and 3.63 percent to urban bodies. Regarding the vertical sharing formula between the three levels of Panchayaties, the second SFC recommended that Gram Panchayaties be given 50 percent, Mandal Parishads 30 percent and Zilla Parishads 20 percent. It also made the following recommendations on assignment of sources of income.

1. The amount collected in the district towards water tax should be allocated among all Gram Panchayaties on population basis

2. An exercise cess should be levied on liquor and Urban Local Bodies it should be given to Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions.

3. Where the sand bearing areas are within the municipality limits, 75 percent of the proceeds might be credited to the Municipalities/Municipalities
Corporations and 25 percent to the surrounding Gram Panchayaties, and

4. Surcharge should be levied on market cess at 5 per cent and proceeded to the local bodies. 20 per cent would be given to Gram Panchayaties where the market is located and 80 per cent would be given to panchayaties located in the jurisdiction of the market.

Grants to Panchayaties

The Second SFC made recommend actions regarding to grants given to Panchayati Raj Institutions, they are as follows

1. The Eleventh Finance Commission's grant of Rs. 152.05 crores should be provided for civic amenities to Gram Panchayaties, Municipal bodies, Data Bank, Maintenance of Accounts etc.

2. Construction of office buildings for 177 Mandals which not have official buildings might be taken up and completed in a period of 3 years by allocating Rs. 12 crores per annum.

3. Provision ought to be made of Rs. 2.41 and Rs. 2.07 crores should be provided per annum for toilet and drinking water facilities in schools.

4. An amount of Rs. 6.50 crores ought to be provided per annum for special repairs to school buildings of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Rs. 4.88 crores
ought to be provided per annum for maintenance of office buildings of Mandal Parishads, Zilla Parishads and other buildings, and

5. A grant equivalent to 5 percent of salary ought to be provided to meet the additional expenditure to Pay Dearness Allowance (DA).

Assignments of Taxes
The Second SFC did not recommend assignment of taxes. Instead, it suggested the following:

1. Sugar cane, Coffee and Black pepper should be added in the list of the production of village levy tax.

2. Gram Panchayaties are allowed to levy taxes on Vehicles.

3. Gram Panchayaties should be allowed to levy special tax on houses.

4. The subject of Small Scale Industries including Food Processing to be devolved. Instructions should be issued to Panchayati Secretaries to collect cable tax.

5. Gram Panchayaties should be allowed to auction fishing ponds and retain 70 percent of the proceeds, 15 per cent should go to Fishermen Co-operative Societies, and Mandal Parishads for redistribution among other Gram-Panchayaties in Mandal.
Allocation of Grants

The Second SFC recommended a special grant based on population to small panchayaties, given below

Table - 3.4
SECOND SFC RECOMMENDED SPECIAL GRANTS TO PANCHAYATIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slab</th>
<th>Gram Panchayaties with population</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slab-I</td>
<td>up to 500</td>
<td>50,000 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slab-II</td>
<td>from 501-1000</td>
<td>75,000 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slab-III</td>
<td>from 1001-1500</td>
<td>1,00,000 each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh

The second SFC recommended that the Panchayati Raj institutions should be given compensation due to the abolition of the land cess and distributed on the basis of population. For transfer of Rs, 200 crores to Panchayati Raj Institutions on account of different State source of income, it recommended the following distribution:
Table - 3.5
SECOND SFC RECOMMENDED TRANSFER OF RS. 200 CRORES TO PANCHAYATIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLNo</th>
<th>Name of the Local Body</th>
<th>Rs in Crores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gram Panchayaties</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mandal Parishads</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Zilla Parishads</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh

There is no information whether these recommendations were accepted or not. According to the figures available on the transfer of funds to Panchayaties, it does not seem as if they have been accepted. However, information is awaited.

The Kind of Transfer of funds to Panchayaties

Since there is no Panchayati window in the budget, which is directly operated by the Finance Department, the funds of the state government are transferred to the panchayaties either (a) directly transferred to Panchayaties through the treasury, or (b) transferred by the Government of India directly into parallel bodies, at the district level. Funds, including State contribution to Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) are sent by the concerned department to the treasury accounts of the Panchayaties. The office of the Commissioner of Panchayati Raj sends the funds to Panchayaties, and therefore exercises considerable control over the releasing of funds.


Eleventh Finance Commission

Andhra Pradesh was allocated an amount of Rs. 76024.15 lakhs by the Eleventh Finance Commission for Panchayati Raj Institutions. Out of this amount, of Rs. 68421.73 only was released to the State Government. Although, a matching contribution of 18614.72 lakh was provided by the State Government, the total utilization by the Panchayati Raj Institutions as reported by the State Government was Rs. 79434.03 lakhs which is 92.88 per cent.

Twelfth Finance Commission

The Twelfth Finance Commission has allocated the amount of Rs. 1587 crore for the Panchayati Raj Institutions during the period 2005-10. The State has secured both the two installments value at Rs.158.70 crores so far during 2005-210. The first installment during 2006-2007 was released on Sep 13, 2006. The state however paid the amount of Rs.1, 06, 95,945 as interest to the Panchayati Raj Institutions for delay in sending allocations to the Panchayaties beyond the stipulated 15 days period.

Third State Finance Commission, 2008

The 3rd State Finance Commission has submitted its report to the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2008. The Commission recommended for enhancing the per capita grant at the rate of Rs.8/-, Rs 16/- to Gram
Panchayaties, Mandal Parishads and Zilla Parishads as against present norms of Rs.4/-, Rs.8/- and respectively. The committee also recommended for releasing grants exclusively for construction of Panchayati buildings.

Recent Developments

The year 2008 may be treated as a landmark in the recent history of Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh as it recorded couple of constructive initiatives towards strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has devolved certain powers and functions to Panchayati Raj Institutions to access the activity mapping belonging to 10 core departments viz., Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Rural Development, Drinking water and Sanitation (RWS), Primary, Secondary and Adult Education, Health and Family Welfare, Social Welfare, Backward Classes Welfare and Women and Child welfare Departments. It took two years for the government to complete the activity mapping as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) entered with Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj in 2006. Even though the Government has issued specific orders on all these subjects, the degree of devolution through these orders is limited and merely to functional aspects. The Departments like Rural Development, Women and Children
welfare, Social Welfare, welfare for Backward Classes welfare have spelt about the transfer of funds to Panchayati Raj Institutions but that didn't take place really. All the Government Orders remained silent on transferring functions to Panchayati Raj Institutions. The orders from Educational and women and children's Departments have caused a lot of resentment and unrest for the teachers and Anganwadi workers respectively and they protested against them which empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions with monitoring and supervisory powers over respective departments.

Committees Pertaining to District Planning

The year 2008 has brought the much awaited District Planning Committees in to functioning. DPCs have been constituted in 22 Districts in accordance with Article 243(ZD) of the Constitution of India with the Chair Person, of Zilla Parishad as Ex-Officio member Chair Person of DPC and the District Collector as Member Secretary. The performance of DPCs in the Districts identified under BRGF Programme is noteworthy and they met twice or thrice during 2008 and prepared district plans. But the DPCs in non BRGF districts yet to commence the district planning exercise. In general the DPCs in the state are still at infant stage and several measures such as creating exclusive secretariat, placing the
services of planning experts at DPC's disposal, providing district window in sectoral budgets, etc., would need to be taken to strengthen the District Planning Committees.

**NREGS and PRIs**

The NREGS was extended to 3 more districts viz. West Godavari, Krishna and Visakhapatnam Districts from 1.4.2008 and with this all the 22 rural districts came under the scheme. Though the scheme gives centrality to panchayaties, but in practice the programme is being mainly looked after by officials in an impressive manner in the state. There is a strong uproar among the PRI elected representatives that the Rural Development Department is the constitutional rights of PRIs and a delegators of over 50 elected representatives have participated in the National level workshop on NREGS and Panchayaties held in New Delhi on 13th and 14th November, 2008 and vociferously demanded the Union Minister for RD to implement the programme through PRIs only.

**E-Panchayati Project in Andhra Pradesh**

The Government of Andhra Pradesh in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed an application for haste free, friendly citizenship and accountable MIS tool for managing the affairs of Panchayaties and the project was launched in 450 Panchayaties. The
project helps for registering and issuing of birth and death certificates, generating demand Collection Balance statements of house taxes, and details of beneficiaries through this intervention. It also provides work monitoring and financial accounting. People can also get information from gram panchayaties through the portal developed by NIC. The project faces a lot of technical obstacles such as lack of broadband connectivity at village level, frequent transfer of the trained personnel from project areas to non-project areas, lack of training strategy for regular trainings to panchayati staff and frequent power cuts in rural areas. The project needs relook and proper handling for solving day-to-day problems faced in implementation.

Clusters of the Panchayaties

The Andhra Pradesh Government has revamped the village administrative structure in 2008 by reintroducing the Village Revenue Officer (VRO) system in place of unified Panchayati Secretary system amidst protest from Panchayati Raj Institutions. The State Government has created co terminus revenue and panchayati clusters by grouping adjacent Panchayaties to the revenue and panchayati related services independently. A cluster of panchayaties is created for every 5000 population and 5 Km radius in plain areas and 2.5 Km radius in hill areas. Now there are 12395 clusters for 21809 Panchayaties in the state.
Government set up a new scheme for Integrated Development of Internal C.C. Roads and C.C. Drains

The Government has set up a scheme for an integrated development of internal CC roads and CC drains in rural areas. The objective of the launch is to accelerate and smoothen the process of participation of people at village level with hygienic ambience so as to join them with the mainstream in towns and cities. Rs. 90 lakhs has been provided for each rural Mandal from the total budget valued at 992.70 crores allocated for the rural Mandals during 2008-2009. Ironically the scheme doesn’t envisage any role for PRIs and the entire amount is kept at the disposal of in-charge Minister of the District. The elected representatives of the PRIs have protested against this initiative but the government paid deaf ear to their pleas.

From the foregoing account it is clear that, some positive actions took place in 2008 devolving certain by government like devolution of certain powers and functions to PRIs, constitution of DPCs, Submission of SFC recommendation to the government. The latter half of the year has witnessed a lot of resentment from elected representatives and official functionaries over the indifferent nature in implementation of NREGS, and also implement of PRIS, unfulfilment of the long pending demands of PR employees happened in that year. The year 2008 has not accomplished main issues, remained unsettled.
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9. Ibid. p.32.

10. Ashok Bajpai and M.S. Varma, op. cit. p.4.

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20. Ibid. p.293.
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27. Ram K.Vepa, op. cit. p.32.
28. Ibid. p.33.