Chapter VI

The Gram Sabha, the Direct Democracy in Village Government

Introduction
The Greeks in ancient times had no representative system of government. The Small city-states had direct democracy. The city-state of Athens was famous for its system of direct democracy. For opposing the demagogues or rulers of Athens, the great philosopher Socrates was put to death by forcing him to take the cup of poison. But he stuck to his doctrine of “virtue is Knowledge”, a poor but virtuous life is better than a billionaire wallowing in mud.

In India we had small republics situated in the Himalayan Terai, the Licchavis, Shakyas etc. though India had the tradition of big empires and Kingdoms. Athens gave Socrates to the world; these ancient Republics gave Buddha to the world. Buddha was born several hundred years before Socrates. Buddha is called the “Light of Asia”, Socrates preached a truthful life. And Jesus in the New Testament has said, “Lead kindly Light.”

The morale of the above description is that the people live in small villages or cities and draw inspiration from peaceful, spiritual life of a village.

The framers of the constitution of India had not envisaged the vital force of a big state in the village Republics. But Mahatma Gandhi rejected the draft constitution placed before him and asked there is no real India in the constitution. Later on the development of the Indian villages was placed in one sentenced in the chapter on the Directive Principles of the constitution.

The planner concentrated on large industries, the cities and the urban life. But eighty percent of the population lives in the villages. Baden Powell said some 100 years back that everything has changed in India. Change is the law of life, but the villages, the small republics in India has not changed. It’s a strange phenomenon really.

The failure of the Five Year Plans has led to the constitutional amendment of 1993, which again gives the pride of place to the village government. The idea is to make the Indian Republic stand on the villages and draw its strength from the villages. Till now the cities have grabbed everything; good roads, drinking water, employment prospects, electricity, good education, good medical facilities etc. and the urban man has become a “white collar man”. The villages have shown downward trends; their schools are in dilapidated condition, 5 classes in the school have only one teacher, the State Government boasts that it has given one teacher to every school (Even in British times there were very few primary schools, but whatever primary schools they had, they appointed five teachers for the five classes. But the Chhattisgarh Government thinks that only one teacher in primary school can teach 5 classes. The State Government has no money. Three are several
types of teachers getting different scales of pay. In reality it is a sort of “bonded labour”, be satisfied with what we pay, otherwise leave your job and go elsewhere. Health service, the supply of drinking water, the supply of electricity, construction of roads etc. are all second rates to what we find in cities. 2

The idea behind the Gram Sabha is that all the villagers, men and women voters must directly participate in the village governance. The direct democracy at Athens was based on the idea that all the people should fully participate in their government. The Athenian people rejected the idea of representation. A cannot represent B, C, D, E...... A, B, C, D, E should come together, sit and discuss about the government affairs. Nothing should be left to the representatives.

Jean Jacques Rousseau fully developed the Greek doctrine in his doctrine of general will. He warned the Frenchmen not to copy the leaders of the “bloodless revolution” in England and establish representative government. Rousseau said that the people will express different wills but the will of all having the elements; permanence, welfare of all, the good of all should be the General Will. 3

The villages four times in number than the cities but the cities grab 90 percent of the wealth of India and the villages are compelled to lead a life of poverty, backwardness, diseases etc. The agriculture and cottage industries are ruined. A diagrammatic representation of the Chhattisgarh Government of what the nature, and the functions of the Gram Sabha should be is given in their publication. 4
The Panchayat and Gram Development Department Government of Chhattisgarh

Critical Appraisal of the Diagram
The government in its publication has left several vital activities, which should be performed and discussed by the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha should give top most priority to tree plantation and preparing a green belt all round the town and on the banks of the two rivers flowing in Bagicha.
The Governments Wrong Thinking
The Government at the Center and in the State level always thinks in terms of bureaucracy; the IAS, IPS, the Collectors, Tahsildars and Naib Tahsildars, the Revenue Inspectors, the Patwaris, the BDOs. The State Government forgets that it is the bureaucracy, which destroyed the rural administration, rural society and the cottage industries. It brought up centralization. (This aspect of the criticism of government bureaucratic mentality is described in details in the last chapter in conclusion.)
In the diagram Government has mentioned Gramin Sachivalaya. It is redundant as the Gram Panchayat functions as the secretariat itself. In the above diagram the Government has not mentioned about the most important item of infrastructure the roads.

**Gram Sabha as the basic unit of Panchayati Raj System**

The States in India are divided into rural and urban areas. The rural areas are divided into Van Gram or forest villages and Revenue Gram or Rajaswa villages. Gram Sabha will be constituted by all the voters of the Van Gram or a Rajaswa Gram. These voters of the village will sit in the Gram Sabha.

The Gram Sabha of Bagicha consists of Bagicha village and Kurumkela village.

**Meeting of the Gram**

The State Government of Chhattisgarh in its publication has described the meetings and purposes of the Gram Sabha as 5

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**The Meeting of Gram Sabha**

There will be minimum 4 meetings of the Gram Sabha in a year.

1. In the week beginning from 14 April.
2. In the week beginning from 23 January.
3. In the week beginning from 20 August.
4. In the week beginning from 2 October.

The following passed by Gram Panchayat.

1. To approve the village development plan and budget.
2. The annual accounts report.
3. The annual report of previous years administration.
4. The annual audit report of the previous year.

Special meetings of the Gram Sabha should be convened if-

1. The members of the Gram Sabha so demand.
2. The district Panchayat so demands.
3. Janpad Panchayat so demands.
4. The District Collector so demands.
The special meetings of the Gram Sabha should be convened, besides the four regular or ordinary meetings of the Gram Sabha, in the following circumstances:
1. If the Panchayat thinks that on a very important matter the Gram Sabha should be convened to discuss the matter.
2. The Janpad or the District Panchayat can also request the Gram Panchayat to convene the meeting.
3. The state Government may like to get a meeting to discuss some important matter. For example the Rojgar Guarantee Yojana of the Central Government was sent to the Chhattisgarh State to be discussed in the Gram Sabha where this Rojgar Guarantee Yojana is applied. The State Government of Chhattisgarh asked the concerned Collectors of the villages to get the scheme discussed by the Gram Sabhas. The Collector is the representative of the State Government, and in that position he must ask the relevant Gram Sabha to convene the meeting.

The Sarpanch is responsible for convening the meetings of the Gram Sabha.

In the above cases mentioned, the constitutional responsibility of convening the meetings is that of the Sarpanch.

The meeting of the Gram Sabha should be convened within 30 days of the demand.

The notification for the meeting should be issued three days prior to the date of the meeting.

The voters of the village can convene a meeting of the Gram Sabha; 1/3 of the voters in the village have the right to demand that the Sarpanch convenes the Gram Sabha meeting.

These voters (1/3 or more) should give an application in writing to the secretary (Sachiv).

On receiving this written application the Sarpanch must convene the meeting of the Gram Sabha within 30 days.

The Subject matter of the Gram Sabha, the rights of the Gram Sabha

1. The Gram Sabha will discuss the works done by the Gram Panchayat.
2. It will discuss the budget of the Gram Panchayat.
3. It will discuss the new schemes of the Gram Panchayat.
4. If the Janpad or the Zilla Panchayat wants that the Gram Panchayat should perform a certain function or implement a certain scheme, these should also be placed in the Gram Sabha.
5. Similarly if the Collector, as the representative of the State Government wants to place before the Gram Sabha certain scheme or a plan the Sarpanch must place the same before the Gram Sabha meeting.
The directives and decisions of the Gram Sabha are mandatory for the Gram Panchayat
Whatever discussions and debates take place in the Gram Sabha and whatever decisions are taken in the Gram Sabha and the suggestions are made and advice tendered in the meeting of the Gram Sabha should be followed and acted upon by the Gram Panchayat.

The date of the meeting and its notification
The notification for the meeting should be given to the members of the Gram Sabha (or the Voters) at least 7 days before the date of the meeting.
The notification should mention the following things:
1. The place of the meeting
2. The date of the meeting
3. The agenda of the meeting; what things should be placed discussed and debated in the meeting
All these things should be written and mentioned clearly in Performa, meant for this purpose and this Performa should be affixed at a prominent public place. Moreover this should be declared by the beat of drums (dondi).

Emergency Meetings
In emergencies the Gram Sabha meetings can be convened within three days notice.

Quorum of the Gram Sabha Meetings
The quorum is 1/10 total voter in the village. But 1/3 of the total number present should be of women voters.

If the quorum is not complete then any of the following things should be done
1. The meeting can be adjourned and a fresh date is to be announced for the meeting by the presiding over the meeting.
2. The Sarpanch will declare the time and place of the adjourned meeting.
3. The adjourned meeting can be held within an hour or at any date.
4. For the adjourned meeting no quorum is necessary.

Interviews on Gram Sabha Meetings
I interviewed several prominent citizens of Bagicha. They clearly stated that in the present circumstances the people are not taking any interest in the Gram Sabha meetings. Sometimes only 10 or 15 voters are present. The meeting is then adjourned.
But just after sometime the meeting starts with this 10 or 15 citizens present. But in annual meetings the quorum should be complete.

The Annual meeting is held to consider the following crucial matters like;
1. To prepare the annual plan
2. To prepare the annual budget
3. To select persons as “hitgrahis” for different welfare schemes
4. Report of accounts, report of annual accounts
5. To prepare the report of the Panchayat administration

Without the quorum the above subjects cannot be brought in adjourned meetings of the Gram Sabha.

The duties of the Panch and Sarpanch as regards the meeting of the Gram Sabha

A revolutionary Step
The Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act passed recently after 2005 places great responsibility on the Panchs and Sarpanch to convene the Gram Sabha meeting. They should see that the requirement of quorum should be fulfilled. If the Panchs and Sarpanchs fail to complete the quorum in first three meetings then they are given a notice by the Collector. In the next two meetings if they fail to complete the quorum they are given a notice and may be removed from their post.

The quorum is a revolutionary provision in the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Act
The aim is to develop the spirit of political participation in the villagers in their affairs. Democracy without active political participation is unthinkable. The people must take active interest in the affairs of their village, about the budget of the village, about the accounting and audit of the village expenditure, about preventing corruption. The Sarpanch and Panchs must bring the villagers to the Gram Sabha meeting place in as many number as possible.

Register of the proceedings of the Gram Sabha
The Gram Sabha will keep a register wherein the proceeding of the every meeting is kept in detail;
1. The proceedings of the meeting should be entered in detail.
2. All the documents pertaining to the proceedings of the meeting should be kept in a file and recorded in the register.
3. The decisions of the Gram Sabha.
4. The number of members and their names who were present in the Gram Sabha.

All the above things should be entered in the Gram Sabha register. The person presiding over the meeting of the Gram Sabha shall sign the register to the fact
that the things entered in the register are true and correct. This is certification or pramanikaran of the register. The proceedings should be written in Hindi.

The conduct of the meetings of the Gram Sabha
The Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act states that the Sarpanch will preside over the meetings of the Gram Sabha. If the Sarpanch is not present then the Deputy Sarpanch will preside over the meeting. If the Sarpanch and the Deputy Sarpanch both are absent then the members present in the meeting will elect from themselves any one to preside over the meeting for the day. The person who is presiding over the meeting of the Gram Sabha will have the following functions-

1. To decide the order of the things to be discussed in the agenda.
2. To see that there is no disorder or trouble in the meeting, the person who is speaking should not be unnecessarily interrupted. He will also decide the order of members who are to speak.
3. When there is a dispute about the right of the person to participate in the meeting, the president will decide whether the disputed person has the right to attend the meeting.
4. If the quorum is not complete, the president will adjourn the meeting and declare the time, place of the next adjourned meeting.
5. The Panch and the Sarpanch are duty bound to get the quorum of the Gram Sabha completed.

The role of the Panchayat Secretary (Sachiv)
The secretary or the Sachiv is also known as Panchayat Karmi and he has the following functions about the Gram Sabha:

1. He must assist the President to conduct the meetings of the Gram Sabha.
2. To see that the date of the meeting is well publicized.
3. He must come with all the records and documents of the Gram Panchayat in the meeting.

Decisions of the Gram Sabha
The Gram Sabha will discuss every agenda thoroughly and then arrive at some decision. Generally the Gram Sabha will try to decide every matter unanimously. But in case of differences, the decisions should be taken by majority of the members present by raising their hands. The hands thus raised will be counted by the president and the secretary and the decision of the majority will be the decision of the Gram Sabha.

The powers of the members of the Gram Sabha
1. He will have the right to participate in the deliberations of Gram Sabha.
2. He has the right to receive information about every thing going on in the Gram Sabha meeting, for this information the following should be obeyed by the Gram Panchayat Karyalaya.

(i) Time should be fixed for the opening and closing of the Panchayat Karyalaya.

(ii) The members can demand any information from the secretary about the Panchayat and the secretary has to supply the same within seven days.

Disputes between two Gram Sabhas

Now a day every Gram Panchayat generally consists of more than two villages, for example the Bagicha and Kurumkela form one Panchayat. In such case both the villages must sit in the Gram Sabha and decide things unanimously or by a majority of vote by raising their hands, and the votes counted by the secretary.

Five Districts of Chhattisgarh come under the fifth schedule of the constitution

The five tribal districts of Chhattisgarh are excluded from all acts, rules and regulations of Parliament or the State Legislature if they are contrary to local customs, traditions. The Governors’ consent is to be taken in such cases. The Governor is supposed to take the consent of Gram Sabhas in these five tribal districts. The provisions are meant to preserve the tribal culture and customs.

The rights of the Gram Sabha

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Responsibility of the Village

The Gram Sabha has to perform the following functions about the village:

1. It should know what schemes are good for the village and it should try to implement them in the village.
2. It must know all the schemes for the economic development of the village.
3. To prepare a list of BPL or people who live below the poverty level. It must frame schemes for the eradication of poverty in the village.
4. It should control and monitor all the schemes for the Hitagrahis. It should keep in mind that all these schemes do not create inequality in the village. Its aim should be to establish an equalitarian society in the village.

The Gram Sabha is responsible for all the acts of the Gram Panchayat

1. The Gram Sabha should discuss the annual budget of the Gram Panchayat and give suggestions about it.
2. To consider over the audit report of the Gram Panchayat.
3. It should review all the schemes, especially the annual plan and see that the money is properly spent and utilized in these schemes.
4. It should advice the Gram Panchayat on the proper utilization of the ponds, nullas, rivers in the village, so that there be no scarcity of drinking water or water for animals and water for bathing purpose.
5. It should consider the previous years' administrative report.
6. It should discuss the various schemes with special reference to the financial aspect of such schemes.

To manage the natural resources of the village

It is the duty of the Gram Sabha to discuss about the preservation of the natural resources of the village such as water, forests, and soil. The management of these natural resources should be in accordance with the Revenue Code, the Van Samhita and the Rules and Acts of the irrigation department.

1. Control of committees constituted in connection with the forest department are under the control of the Gram Sabha.
2. The Gram Sabha will be responsible for the preservation and protection of the forest wealth of the village.
3. The forest department, before utilization of the forest resources must consult the Gram Sabha.
4. The Gram Sabha has the power to inspect the forest products passing through the village.
5. The Gram Sabhas and the Janpad Sabhas in the district have the right to fix the price of the forest produce (But such forest products should not have been nationalized).

Gram Sabhas control over government institutions and their employees in certain circumstances

Certain offices and their employees have been transferred to the Gram Panchayat, the Gram Sabha will have control over them. Besides the gram Panchayat has appointed certain employees and the Gram Sabha will have control over them.
The following are transferred to the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha will have control over them:

1. Kotwari and Patwari
2. Agricultural Extension Officer
3. Ladies and Gents Health Workers
4. Teachers of primary schools and some others.

The year-end on March 31, three months before this date, the annual meeting of the Gram Sabha should be held and the following things should be discussed and decided in these meetings.

The annual accounts of income and expenditure of the Gram Panchayat.
1. The administrative report of the previous year.
2. The schemes, projects and proposals of the coming year (1st April to 31st March) should be placed before it by the Gram Panchayat and discussed by the Gram Sabha.
3. To consider the audit report of the Gram Panchayat for the previous year.
4. To consider the annual budget and the future schemes of village development.
5. The Collector, the Janpad or the District Panchayat sends certain subjects to the Gram Sabha for consideration. These should be discussed in the Gram Sabha.

The Gram Sabha (voters list) members of Bagicha are appended in the appendix 2 and the list is analyzed.

**Gram Sabha meetings for Bagicha and Kurumkela**
A meeting of Bagicha and Kurumkela Gram Sabha was held on 20.04.2005 at Subhashu Para in Bagicha at 12 noon. The total numbers of members present were 94 out of which 62 were male and 32 were female.
This was a joint meeting of the two revenue villages of Bagicha and Kurumkela. The proposal to hold a joint meeting of the two villages was passed previously. In this meeting the proposals were put forth and passed was to beautify the area, the flowers and the plants were to be planted in front of the LDM Bangla. 9

A meeting of Gram Sabha Bagicha was held in primary school, Kurumkela in community hall of Van Suraksha Samiti on 9.7.2005. The male and female members present were 161.
The proposal was made to hold a joint meeting of two-Gram Sabha; Bagicha and Kurumkela. Shri Bhakto Ram, the Panch proposed the name of Shri Bifai Ram to preside over the meeting. Theis was seconded by the Panch Shri Vinod Nikunj. Since the quorum was not complete the meeting was adjourned for 1 PM. The following proposals were put forth and passed:
1. The list of voters of Bagicha and Kurumkela was to be read in the meeting. The Gram Prabhari read the list of voters of Bagicha.

2. A proposal was put forth and passed for drawing the boundary of the boys and girls primary schools.

3. Kitchen shades were to be constructed in (i) Primary school Kurumkela (ii) Boys primary school Bagicha (iii) Girls Primary school Bagicha (iv) Navin Prathmik Shala Kurumkela (v) Kanti Ashram Bagicha (vi) Primary school Jhapodarha.

4. Names of new voters to be added and some names were to be removed from the voters' list of Kurumkela and Bagicha. The applications for the above were received by the two Panchayats. This has become necessary as some voters had died as well as some voters have left the village. It has become necessary to remove their names from the list.

5. It was decided to distribute the Antyodaya card. The beneficiaries were:
   (1) Pardeshi/ Bhulan
   (2) Imil/Piyush
   (3) Butore/Rangiya
   (4) Kamal Lukhu
   (5) Fulmani / Bifai
   (6) Lodo /Prem Sai
   (7) Shiv Rajan/Budhu
   (8) Sakal/Dhadhu
   (9) Lodo/Madhav
   (10) Dadi Das/Lilak
   (11) Dulari/Pandua
   (12) Salma/Kayasuddin
   (13) Janwa/Bhithal
   (14) Viphathi/Rangiya
   (15) Kesham Dut/Lukhram
   (16) Triveni/Lirai
   (17) Murari/Sali Sov

The pair of bullocks given to the following persons (1) Kanwa (2) Maklu Ram (3) Buthna /Bodha (4) Soma/Sukhna (5) Puniya/Inro (6) Buthu/Injru (7) Bhikham/Kondi (8) Jagu/Gulandu

The Sarpanch, the secretary and the person presiding over the meeting signed the proceedings.

A meeting of the Gram Sabha of Rajaswa Gram Bagicha and Kurumkela was held on 2.10.2005 at 1 P.M. in Gram Panchayat Bhawan. The Panch Sulendra Gupta proposed the name of Smt. Sarojini Tigga and was seconded by Shri Parmanand.
The voters present in the joint meeting unanimously approved the name of Smt. Sarojini Tigga. The quorum was not complete. Hence the meeting was adjourned for an hour. After one hour the joint meeting was held at the same place. The numbers of voters present were 163.

(1) It was the day of 2 October the Gandhi Jayanti. The presiding person Smt. Sarojini Tigga garlanded the photo of Mahatma Gandhi. The Sarpanch and Deputy Sarpanch also garlanded the photo of Mahatma Gandhi. Some members spoke a few words on Mahatma Gandhi’s life and work especially his policy on non-violence. The bad habit of drinking alcohol harms oneself and to the family and society. It was celebrated as the “Madya Nishedha Diwas”. The voters present filled up the forms “Sankalpa Patra” promising not to take liquor or intoxicants.

(2) The people who took on rent the rooms in complex 1 and 2 were asked to fill in the contract form to pay the rent in time. The above complexes have become dilapidated the floors are worn out and the roof leaking. Hence the repair work should be taken in hand.

(3) The Sulabh Shanchalayas are to be constructed in the bus stand.

(4) The rent of rooms of complex 1 and 2 should be revised and refixed.

(5) The amount of expenditure made on these complexes should be declared in the meeting.

(6) The amount received in auction of rooms should be declared in the meeting.

(7) The boundary wall of primary school of Kurumkela should be constructed.

(8) To build the water storage (Tanki) to provide water for drinking for the community hospital.

(9) To retain the Jan Bhagidari teachers in the school. The Gram Panchayat has passed a resolution to terminate their services, but the gram Sabha passed a resolution to extend their services to the month of March 2005.

(10) To dig a boring near the Krishi Karyalaya.

(11) The electricity pole is to be affixed near the Vidyut Karyalaya.

(12) A mango tree which is in front of complex room no. 1 and 2 is dried up, its branches, leaves etc. are falling on the people passing from the road, the nuisance is to be removed by cutting the tree.

(13) 4 applications for the shops in the complexes were received. The names are Nitin, Rupesh, Pavan, and Manoj. Their applications were considered in the meeting and approved.

(14) In ward 8 there is a pit, which should be filled up by murrum.

(15) Bore pump should be affixed to the boring.

(16) The guard in Kanji house has applied for enhancing his honorarium, the meeting approved the same.

(17) The following were allotted houses in the Indira Awas complex (i) Sri Mangru/wife Suni, Pahari Korwa (ii) Rati Ram/ wife Ashamati, Pahari Korwa. (iii) Rango/ wife Puniya was granted a sum for the repair of his house.
In Porang Para a ring well was approved. A chabutra in the well was also approved.

The complex near the transformer should be completed and allotted to the needy persons of the village.

From the Nurse colony to Rajpuri, Murrumikaran of the road has to be done.

The payment for the above works for labour and materials should be made.

To dig a boring in ward 20.

To fill up the ditches by clay and murrum in the bus stand from thawaits house to Pratikshalaya.

A meeting of the Gram Sabha was held on 5.1.2006 in Primary School, Jhapidarha at 2P.M. The person to preside over the meeting was Jagamath Ram who was proposed by the Panch Shyamlal and seconded by the Panch Shri Sanjay Denjare. The members both male and female present were 165. As the quorum was not complete, the meeting was adjourned for an hour and then the meeting started to discuss and decide on the proposals and to pass them.

1. The labourers were registered by the Gram Sabha. Their names were read out in the Gram Sabha meeting and the Gram Sabha approved their names. This list was from ward 9.

2. The villagers below the poverty level were read in the Sabha and approved. Certain names were also recommended to be included in the BPL list. This was also approved. A survey was made on the basis of 2002 list. After considering both the list the BPL list was finalized and read in the meeting and approved.

3. The voters' list is to be changed, some persons have applied for the inclusion of their names in the list and their name is to be added. Some persons have left the village or died, their names are to be removed from the voters list.

4. A homeopathic health center has been started in Bagicha. Its working hours should be increased.

5. Monthly meeting should be held on 14.11.2005.

6. The account of Bagicha Gram Panchayat was opened in SBI.

7. The proposals and minutes of previous meetings of the Gram Sabha were approved.

8. A nalli is to be dug from the canal Mudri Ghaera to reach Jhapi Darha Basti.

9. The river is cutting its embankments in Soni Para, it should be stopped.

10. A stop dam to be constructed by stopping the river at Ful Dorga.

11. The ground at Jhapidarha is to be leveled and used as a playground.

12. The fields of the following persons are to be leveled; Bhumi Mukhiya Sukhu Ram/Rasiya, Buthu Lohara, Bhumi Mukhiya Pishun/Dev Dhari, Bhumi Mukhiya Sunura/Bhikha Jhampi Darha, Shobh Nath/Luch, Lala Sai/Saran Sai.
13. To dig a canal from Evdhara Kona to Lata Pani Dand.
14. To level the ground of primary school building Jhapidaha.
15. Leveling of grounds of various villagers.
16. Medbandi (building bund) of the fields of various farmers.

A meeting of the Rajaswa Gram Kurumkela was held at Bajrag Mandir Chabutra on 6.1.06. The members both male and female present were 130. The meeting was presided over by Shri Krishna Ram whose name was proposed by Shri Pawan Singh and seconded by Shri Pappu Sharma. Since the quorum was not complete, the meeting which was to start at 12 noon was adjourned for an hour. The following proposals were put forth and resolutions passed.

1. From ward no.9 to 20 the ward Panchs have prepared a list of labourers, these labourers were registered by the Gram Sabha.
2. The BPL survey list of 96 to 97 and 2002 were read.
3. The voter’s list was updated and those that are dead and those who have left the village, their names were deleted and new names were approved by the Gram Sabha were added.
4. It was considered that the homeopathy doctor should sit for more hours to attend to the increasing numbers of cases.
5. Bhumire Mukhiya Pavan Singh has donated a plot. A dubari (pond) has to be dug in it.
6. The Angan Badi Bhawan is to be repaired.
7. The electric pole is to be affixed in Chir Para and wires are to be put.
8. To give a piece of land for the funeral ground for the village.
9. Well is to be dug near Uma Sai’s house. Dodi to be constructed in ward 18 at Sukh Lal’s house.
10. To affix an electric pole and wire in Ward no. 18.

11. E.A. Preparation-

(i) Sulochana
(ii) Surendra
(iii) Tara/ Manoj
(iv) Chhote Lal
(v) Baleshwar/ Shivni
(vi) Asmat/ Gambhir
(vii) Pawan/ Miru
(viii) Repair of houses of (1) Shainath/ Fateh (2) Sukmat/ Late Simon (3) Amasi/ Malru (4) Parsadi/ Dadidas (5) Fulmani/ Kanhaiya (6) Aju/ Lagan (7) Dilbhanjan/ Budharam.
(ix) Samajik Suraksha Pension, Widow and Viklang Pensiion (1) Rakhan/ Sundaru (2) Jaso/ Jamna (3) Rumkeliaya/ Namdhari (4) Jechani Devi/ Late Niranjan (5) Shyam Pali Bai.

(xi) To purchase cricket materials.

A meeting of the Gram Sabha Bagicha was held on 28.1.2006. The numbers of members present male and female were 156 at Jhapidarha Primary School. Shri Gagan Sai’s name was proposed by Shyamlal Sai. The members present in the meeting accepted the name. The meeting was adjourned for an hour due to the quorum being not complete. The following proposals were put forth, discussed and approved by the Gram Sabha.

1. The ground of Jhapodarha primary school should be leveled.
2. The list of persons for whose houses the latrines have been constructed are (i) Shyam Lal (ii) Mainu Sai (iii) Sukhu/Rasiya (iv) Jagan Sai (v) Ramtahal/Thamku (vi) Balram/Mohana (vii) Ram Lajar Goswami (viii) OBC) (ix) Samru (ix) Balseo/Virsai
3. To approve the proposals put forth in the monthly meeting of Gram Panchayat.
4. To approve of the proposals of 2006-2007, Action plan, Karya Yojana from no. 1 to approve of the work completed.
5. The following persons application for allotment of houses for the Indira Awas Nirman Yojana were considered.
   (1) Dhansingh/Mitku
   (2) Ram Prasad/Jakai
   (3) Dhaniram/Sukhram
   (4) Ramprasad/Bulchu
   (5) Mainu Sai/Huini Ram
   (6) Jhurainya/Jagarnath (Awas Marammat)
   (7) Puran/Khaitu
   (8) Ram nath/Botari (Repair)
   (9) Krishan/Chamar Sai
   (10) Sukhuram/Rasiyaram (repair)
6. Samuhik Suraksha Pension. The following are the beneficiaries of the Scheme:
   (1) Shanichar/Lalkan(old age pension)
   (2) Loknath (chato) (ś)
   (3) Khiru (ś)
   (4) Balmat/Late Suksai

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The first three are above 70 years of age. Some others are of 42, 45, 65, 32 years of age.

7. Samudayik Bhawan Nirman- In the Durga Mandir several functions are held, hence it is necessary to accommodate the people by constructing a community hall.

8. Play grounds- The ground at Jhapidara should be leveled to be used as a play ground.

9. To build latrines- The names of hitgrahis or interested persons should be noted.

10. To construct C.C. road from Badrinath Gupta’s house to Sai’s house.

11. To dig a nalli from Jagan Sai’s house to Badrainath’s house.

12. Physical verification of the list of voters- Those persons who have crossed the age of 18 but their name is not entered in the voters list, should be entered. A public notification is to be issued for the same.

13. Nava Anjor Samuh- When the block of Bagicha so orders, a Nava Anjore group should be constituted and an account should be started for the same.

14. An amount should be allotted for M.D.M.- Swa Sahayala Samuh should be constituted and the BDO should be informed about the same.

(15) 2 daris (mattresses) should be purchased for the school at Jhapidarha.

(16) A Chabutra (platform) should be constructed at Durga Mandir.

(17) A plot of 3 decimal should be allotted to Duryodhan/sanuram Yadav. 14

A meeting of the Gram Sabha Kurumkela was held on 13.1.2006. The meeting was to be held near Durgesh house at 12 noon. The quorum was not complete. Hence the meeting was adjourned to 30.1. 2006. The joint meeting of the Gram Sabhas of Kurumkela and Bagicha was held. Shri Bhokto Ram proposed the name of Lojho Ram for presiding over the meeting, the members seconded the proposal. As the quorum was not complete, the meeting was held after adjourning the same for an hour.
The members both male and female present were 126. The following things were proposed and passed unanimously.

1. To build latrines for the following persons:
   (1) Ajay/Kira
   (2) Rakheshiam/Shiv Dhari
   (3) Bajranti/Elak
   (4) Lodaru/Budhu
   (5) Bulu/Pandua
   (6) Yudhisthir/Luthan
   (7) Shri Ram/Jagat
   (8) Jage/Sakal
   (9) Jangud/Ratnu
   (10) Dhani/Hira
   (11) Vishwanath/Anju
   (12) Amla/Jagat
   (13) Junu/Etwa

2. Indira Awas Yojana for the following persons were sanctioned.
   (1) Ajay/Hira
   (2) Vishwanath Ghansi
   (3) Manoj
   (4) Rotho/Banshu
   (5) Dhani/Hira
   (6) Bulu/Pandua
   (7) Jugnu/Khakhri
   (8) Gulab/Shuman
   (9) Bajrang/Etwa
   (10) Laxmi/Bali sao
   (11) Mangra/Thuthru (s.c.)

3. The Annual plan of 2006–2007 was approved.

4. It was decided to notify the Naya Anjor Samuh and to implement the same when it is approved by the block.

5. The following persons were approved as Hitgrahis for Samuhik Suraksha Pension:
   (1) Indu/Bandaru
   (2) Phulmati/Swabifai
   (3) Rakhan/Sundaru
   (4) Gabraela/Pradeekp (widow)
   (5) Smt.Bai/Ramprasad Parityaksa
   (6) Mohani/Late Ghanshyam
   (7) Dilbhanuya/Usainath (Viklang)
   (8) Khilo/Fuljunia
6. To install hand pumps and pipe line in ward no. 19 near Badrinath’s house.
7. To construct a chabutra in ward no. 20 in Rampatis’ land.
8. To construct a culvert near Sudames’ house- R.C.C. culvert.
9. Murrumikaran from Ram Kumars’ house to Chirpara. This has been approved by the authorities and hence the work should be immediately started.
10. To repair the house of Ramnath/Kasi
11. Balika Samridhi Yojana- The following will benefit from the scheme:
   (1) Smt. Susama/Sufarshan
   (2) Baidyane/Sukham
12. To affix the electricity pole
    (3) to affix 5 electric poles should be fixed in Chir Para.
    (4) 5 electric poles should be affixed in Subhashu Para.
13. The rent of complexes 1 and 2 are refixed from April 6 at Rs 300.00. The tenants are to be served with notice in this connection.
14. To construct a bathroom by the side of the canal.
15. To dig a boring near Surgesh’s house.
16. To construct a water tank at Jhapidarha.
17. To affix 2 pieces of transformer in Jhapidarha and Kurunkela.
18. Nahar piling near Durgesh Dheulu’s house.

The important Schemes of Rural Development are discussed in the Gram Sabha

The important scheme of rural development has been discussed in the Gram Sabha. They are such as the schemes of rural integrated development, development of agriculture, irrigation facilities, drinking water and development of industries etc.

The evils of establishing pollution spreading industries have been discussed in several villages of Chhattisgath. But Bagicha is fortunate in not having these industries. It is purely an agricultural village with forests and hills surrounding it.

Development of schools has not been discussed from the point of improving the quality of teaching staff, their salaries and other facilities etc. Most of the proposals about the educational institutions have been about the dilapidated school building, classrooms etc. The Gram Sabhas have focused their attention on roads, tanks, boring, drinking water etc. Hence Bagicha is fast changing from a sleepy village with muddy road. Murrumikaran and Khamja have been started in both the
villages of Kurumkela and Bagicha. Many cement roads (R.C.C.) have been constructed. The importance of electricity is being understood by the villagers. Electricity poles are being affixed and the village is slowly being electrified.

Conclusion

The Gram Sabha has had several meetings in the years 2005-06. But in no meeting the quorum has been completed. In the absence of quorum adjourned meetings have been held. The number of members present in such meetings is from one hundred thirty to one hundred seventy, not even 50 percent of the citizens of the village. Women are 50 percent of male voters but only twenty to thirty percent of them are present.

This shows great apathy to the meeting of the Gram Sabha. The political apathy is the greatest disease of democracy especially where the small village communities are concerned.

When Pericles said the price of liberty is the active interest shown by a people in the affairs of the State. And Rousseau explained this doctrine of political participation further by stating that the members of a political community should themselves pass the laws, should themselves execute these laws and should act as a judiciary to arbitrate in disputed cases.

Bagicha has not attained that status of politicization and political awakening. But the people are slowly showing interest in the affairs of their village. The M.L.As and M.Ps are now fully dependent on the village votes. If they do not go to the villages personally then the villagers will not vote for them. This is already happening in many cases.

The Panchs and Sarpanchs are duty bound to fulfill the condition of quorum. Before the meeting they must publicize about it. The Panchs must see that the voters in their wards do come to the meeting. Another defect in this procedure is that the meetings are held at 12 noon generally. Most of the villagers male and female are busy in their work. Hence they take little interest in these meetings. If the meetings are kept in the evening, more people will attend the meetings.

In the next chapter the Government of India has asked those villages which are covered by the scheme to consider the employment Guarantee scheme, to discuss it and suggest the ways and means to make the scheme a success.
Footnotes

3. Ibid p.26
4. Ibid p.28
5. Chapter on Interview.
6. Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act, 2005, Section 6 (4)
7. Ibid, section 7 (1)
8. Ibid, Section 8 (2)
9. Gram Sabha Register for 2004-06
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. Ibid
15. Ibid
16. H.J. Laski: Grammar of Politics, The Chapter on liberty, Periclese has been quoted as saying "Eternal Vigilance is the price of liberty. Rousseau in his "Social contract" further develops the doctrine in his chapter on General will.