Chapter VII

Gramin Vikas (Rural Development) and other related topics connected with the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act with special reference to Bagicha.

Introduction
Some topics and subjects in relation to Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj have been left in the previous discussion. In this chapter I shall discuss besides the topic of rural development other topics in connection with the Panchayati Raj Act.

2. Sources of revenue of the Gram Panchayats.
5. Accounts and audit.
6. Annual reports of the Panchayat.
7. Supervision of the Panchayat.

Standing Committee of Bagicha Gram Panchayat.
The Panchs and Sarpanchs are elected. After the election of the Gram Panchayat what are the functions that it has to perform? The spirit behind this Act is that the village should perform its own functions. Previously they depended on the District, State and Central Government. The act has removed this dependence. The Panchayats are now quite free from the control of these bodies; the District Administration, the State and Central Government. Hence to understand the functioning of Panchayats we must understand that the Panchayats are autonomous, self-governing bodies in their villages. The State, Centre or District Administrations have very little control on these village Panchayats. The Panchayats can go to the courts in case these bodies interfere in the sphere of the Panchayats. 

Besides the Panchs and Sarpanch there are committees for performing different functions. The committees include villagers who perform these functions. The idea is that the entire village should participate in these functions. To assist the Panchs and Sarpanchs of the wards these committees are constituted to assist them in various wards.
Political Participation through these committees
The Panchayati Raj Act supposes that the people will participate in the government and village development directly without any interference from the Block Administration, the District Administration, the State Government or the Central Government.

How can these bureaucrats and politicians understand the needs of the village people
The people want nallis or branches from canal to irrigate their fields. These distant people, not versed in village life cannot understand the needs of people regarding farming- what and when to sow and when to reap; regarding education- the condition of the schools whether a school building is in good condition, a teacher is coming regularly and teaching properly; regarding health- whether the health centre doctor remains in the village or goes to the city after signing the register, whether the health centre has enough medicines for the ordinary disease of the villagers. Do the people suffer from the loot of the Patwari? Where Murrumikaran is essential in the lanes of the village. Where R.C.C roads, water storage, wells etc. are necessary, how the marker place is to be given a modern shape, where the toilet facilities are to be provided.
These and other questions pertaining to the village development can be understood by the people of the village. These are beyond the comprehension of the bureaucrats and the politicians who are residing in the distant cities, leading a comfortable life having all the facilities of life.
Hence the committees are quite necessary to assist the Panchs and Sarpanchs. So it is necessary to include the people from the village in the committees who would understand the needs of the people on the spot.

An Example of Mid-day Meal
The mid-day meal was meant to attract the students to the school. The students used to drop out from the school of Bagicha especially the school managed by the Panchayats. But the scheme has not served the education needs of the people. There is lot of complaint and criticism of the scheme. I will deal in detail with the pros and cons of the scheme, and suggestions in this respect.

Distribution of Jersey Cows by the Raman Government has been a failure
The villagers especially the trial's opinion was not taken into account. Many tribal leaders have strongly rejected the scheme, they say that the tribals do not want cows, it is practically impossible to manage. Tribals want land, pigs, hens etc. not cows. This topic will be dealt in detail later on.

The Patwari, the Revenue Inspector, the Naib Tahsildar and Tahsildar are all heavy burden on the villagers
The Patwari whose present status is due to the British land revenue system. Before the British Raj, the villages had quite a different type of system. The Patwari was under the control of the village Panchayats. But now he has become the Raja (king) of the village. The Patwari, the Revenue Inspector, the Naib Tahsildar, the Tahsildar and S.D.O. all have fleeced the rural community especially the tribals. The villagers cannot sell or purchase their lands without paying 2% of the sale or purchase money to these persons connected with the revenue department. Lakhs and crores of land is being sold or purchased every year. And we can imagine how much money is being grabbed by these persons attached to the revenue department. All the parties know this problem; the Congress and the BJP know this black spot in the villages. They speak loudly about the corruption and the evil deeds of these officials but as soon as they come to power they try to save the corrupt officials. Hundreds of illustrations can be given about these corrupt officials and the protection provided to them by the government, the ministers and the CM. The Kunkuri rice ghotala is an illustration in this connection.
I went to the Patwari for village map whose surname is Chandra. He said that we are blamed for taking bribes. But people come to us to do illegal things. The day I went to him to get the map he said that he is very busy he had to go to a village where he has an important work. He told me to come on the next day. I did not force him thinking that he could refuse to give. I was in urgent need of the village map. He was not so busy but he was unwilling to give.
This shows the power the Patwaris enjoy in the present setup. The Patwaris are notorious for doing so many illegal things and people are helpless as they are shielded by the State Government authorities. Wealthy and powerful people encroach on Nazul lands, which are meant for social and developmental purposes. Due to the misdeeds of the Patwaris and the Revenue Officers, the Nazul lands, the government lands described as ‘ghas’ ‘gaddha’ ‘pani’ in revenue records are given to powerful, the wealthy sections of the village. The result is that no land is left for grazing of animals, for constructing community hall, for building roads, temples etc.

The Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act has a provision to check the misdeeds of these Revenue Officers

The registration of lands sold and purchased are to be placed before the Gram Sabhas by the Gram Panchayats and then only the sale and purchase of these lands are to be validated. The act returns the power to the village government previously given only to the Patwari and the revenue department.

It is supposed that in the Gram Sabha the registrations will be discussed and the Patwari should be checked. But to check the Patwari becomes impossible, because the Patwari pays a portion of the amount he receives from the seller and the purchasers to the Revenue Officers above, who do the same with giving gifts to the Collectors and through them to the politicians and administrators above. The village people freely talk about these things. But should they be in a position to talk about these things pertaining to the village in the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha is the greatest innovation in the political system and we must all be thankful to Shri Rajiv Gandhi who imagined the return of power to the Panchayats. Now the people must assert themselves and speak freely about the corrupt authorities who are corrupting the rural society.

The spread of corruption can be understood from this roughly sketch diagram

(1) 2% from sellers and purchasers
(2) Illegal transfers of Nazul, government and other lands. Lakhs and lakhs of rupees are collected in this way.
The above diagram is based on the views expressed by farmers and others of the Bagicha village.

The Chhattisgarh Act describes the following acts of the Gram Sabha.

The Powers and Functions of the Gram Sabha

Responsibility of the Village

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Bagicha Gram Panchayat has been entrusted with the following functions and responsibilities in connection with the village:

1. To consider, discuss the principles of the village development plans, which are essential for the economic development of the village. In Bagicha, while interviewing the people, I found that leading villagers have good ideas about the economic plans for the development of the village. They should be permitted to place them before the Gram Sabha meetings but before that they should have discussions about these ideas with the people outside the Gram Sabha.

2. Poverty removal schemes are to be framed. In Bagicha, the people are not satisfied with the BPL list prepared and approved by the Gram Sabha. The people who deserve, their names are not included in the list and those who do not deserve their names have been included in the list. In some Gram Panchayats (not Bagicha) we find the names of the Sarpanch included in the list. The people tell about this deception and laugh to their hearts. Hence the list is to be carefully prepared and the Gram Sabha should take real interest in the preparation of such lists. If the list of BPL is prepared honestly then poverty will certainly be removed from Chhattisgarh.

3. To monitor all the schemes pertaining to the "hitgrahis" the Gram Sabha must see that all the schemes of development are properly implemented in the village. They should be so implemented that the
village society proceeds towards equality in all respects giving opportunities to all for social, economic and political equality.

The responsibility of work done by the Gram Panchayat

The Gram Sabha should discuss all the schemes of development of the Gram Panchayat. It should suggest changes in it. It should approve them then only they should be implemented.

The Gram Sabha should give its approval to:

(1) The annual budget of the Gram Panchayat.
(2) The audit report of the Gram Panchayat.
(3) To approve of all schemes and plans of development of the village, it should see the finance allotted for these are not misused or misappropriated.
(4) It should advise about the proper utilization of small, tanks ponds, water resources of the villages.
(5) Then there is the annual report of the administration for the previous year of the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Sabha should consider the report properly and advice the Panchs and Sarpanchs accordingly.
(6) It should consider the future schemes of development of the Gram Panchayat.

Thus the above functions are performed to keep a check on the Gram Panchayat. In Bagicha all these functions have not been performed properly. The people are to be trained to perform them.

Control over natural resources

The Bagicha Gram Panchayat is empowered to protect, preserve and develop the natural resources of the Bagicha village. These natural resources are: Jal (water), Jungle (forests) and Jamin (land).

This function appears to be insignificant but is of vital importance and has been discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter. The Gram Sabha of Bagicha while performing this function has to keep in mind the rules and regulations of the revenue department the irrigation department and the forest department.

Natural Resources of Bagicha Village

The village is richly endowed with the free gift of nature, which are known as Jal, Jamin and Jangle. Man cannot create them, they are created by nature. Man's duty is to preserve them, not to pollute them or use them ruthlessly leading to their destruction. The soil is rich where rice, wheat and fruits are grown in abundance. The famous Jackfruit grows in the village. This fruit is used as vegetable also. When it is ripe it can be used as a nourishing fruit and food. The pickles can be
prepared and preserved for months. Its seeds are also eaten after burning them. Rice and wheat are grown abundantly.

Two rivers flow through Bagicha. They are full of water throughout the year. Hence there is no dearth of water either for irrigation of Rabi and Kharif crops as well as for drinking and bathing purposes.

The village is then surrounded by hills and mountains all round. So that the climate is cool and energizing. On interviewing the people said that much of the trees of the forests have been cut down. The forests in the past have been thick with trees and plants standing close by. Now the forests adjoining Bagicha have been cut for firewood or house building or making fields. This is affecting the climate.

Forests and hills and mountains are rich in forest products like char, tendu, harra, behera and aola. Harra, behera and aola are used in the world famous Ayurvedic preparation of Trifla. It is a great medicinal preparation to keep men fit.

Then there are hundreds of medicinal plants. These have to be studied and discovered. The Raman Government is planning to convert the Ayurvedic College into Ayurvedic University. This university should be entrusted with the task of carrying on research work in plants and forest products for medicinal purposes. Due to these free gifts of nature Bagicha can very well be made a tourist centre as well as a health resort.

The people and the government generally look at forests from the point of timber. Hence the forests are fast cut and the balance of nature is lost, the pollution is spreading all over. Ultimately man suffers from his unwanted greed.

Men should rather concentrate on planting more and more trees and plants rather than cutting for commercial uses. All round Bagicha, the Gram Sabha should concentrate on planting trees and medicinal plants. The life saving herbs is in great demand all over the world.

Science and technology gives whatever by one hand, takes several times more by other hand by destroying natural resources. The preservation of the gifts of nature should be of primary interest for the Gram Sabha.

The control over government servants, institutions that are placed under the control of Gram Panchayats

The following government servants are under the Gram Panchayat:

(1) Kotwar
(2) Patwari
(3) Agricultural Extension Officer, previously known as Gram Sewak
(4) Swasthya Karyakarta (Male /Female both)
(5) Anganbadi Karyakarta
(6) Teachers of Primary school etc.
The Gram Sabha has to control these functionaries. The powers are given to the Sabha to control them. In Bagicha it is often seen that these functionaries remain absent from the village. They draw their salary regularly. The Gram Sabha can pass strategies against them for their dereliction of duties, so that their salaries can be withheld and other facilities.

Some of these are notorious for troubling the villagers as we have already seen in a previous section. The Kotwar is meant to check the crime, murder, theft etc and if anything happens he has to report them to the police. If he is not performing his duties properly then there will be no peace in the village.

Bagicha village is based on agriculture. The State Government sends Agricultural Extension Officers previously known as Gram Sevaks. Their duty is to advice the villagers about sowing different types of crops, especially the use of modern hybrid seeds, use of fertilizers, preparation of composts etc. He has to constantly look at the agricultural situation in the village. The Gram Sevak or the Krishi Adhikari must meet the villagers on their fields advising them on various aspects of crop cultivation. The Gram Sabha has to keep an eye on him. Anganbadi Karyakarta looks after the pre primary children. Lastly the teachers in the primary schools should teach properly and they should not shirk their duties. The above are paid by the government, but are placed under the control of the Panchayats and the Gram Sabha. If the Panchayats and the Gram Sabha keep a proper watch over these functionaries, the needs of the village as regards law and order, development of agriculture, health, looking after children, school education etc. will be properly fulfilled.

**Bagicha Gram Panchayat**

Gram Sabha is a big body consisting of all voters of the village. But the whole village cannot work intensively. Gram Sabha is to act extensively for the whole village. The village is divided into 20 Wards each Ward is represented by a Panch. A Sarpanch is elected by the voters of the village as a whole. The minimum number of wards should be 10 and the maximum number should be 20. The Gram Bagicha and Kurumkela are divided into 20 Wards, which is the maximum number for a Gram Panchayat. This means that Bagicha Gram Panchayat is big Panchayat.

Gram Panchayat has the provision of reservation for the weaker sections of the society. They must be represented in the Gram Panchayat; if they are not represented then they should be nominated. The weaker sections of the society are:

1. Scheduled Caste
2. Scheduled Tribe
3. Other Backward Classes
4. Women
But all of them are elected in the Bagicha Gram Panchayat hence there is no need to nominate these section of people. It is a tribal populated village. There are also Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes. The most revolutionary provision is the reservation for women. In Bagicha there are six or seven women Panchs. It is a fair representation for women. As per the Chhattisgarh Act the 1/3 of the total seats of the Wards are reserved for women.

There should be a deputy Sarpanch to act in the absence of the Sarpanch. The Sachiv or secretary of the Panchayat is appointed. The Sachiv is the clerk of the Panchayat and has the following functions:

1. He should prepare all the documents and keep them properly.
2. He should give all information pertaining to the village.
3. He should assist the Sarpanch in convening the monthly meetings of the Panchayat.
4. He should assist the Standing Committee in its meetings.
5. He should assist the Sarpanch in convening the Gram Sabha in time and see that the notice of the date of the meeting and its agenda should reach all the members.
6. To prepare the annual plan, the budget and accounts and to keep them in the annual meetings of the Gram Sabha.

Thus the important function of the Sachiv is to help the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat to work effectively and orderly.

The Gram Panchayat is elected for five years. After the Sarpanch, the deputy Sarpanch and the Panchs have been elected, the Collector publishes the names in the gazette. After one month of the publication of the names, the first meeting of the Gram Panchayat will be convened. From the date of the first meeting of the Panchayat, the Panchayat will function for five years.

The quorum of the Gram Panchayat is regarded as complete only when minimum of 50 percent members present. In case of Bagicha minimum 10 members must be present to conduct their meetings. If 50 percent of the Panchayats demand for convening the meeting the secretary must convene the meeting. The Act enumerates other provisions, which are related to quorum, calling of meetings in time and the mode of taking decisions.

The Village Government must be run on democratic lines and modernization in every sphere should be spirit behind these provisions. The secretary in consultation with the Sarpanch convenes the meeting of the Gram Panchayat every month. Therefore the quorum in Gram Panchayat is kept at 50 percent of the total number of members. Any thing will be decided after full discussion. If there is difference among the members then the question should be decided by majority vote. The secretary will write the
proceedings of every meeting in the Panchayat register and the Sarpanch and other members should sign the proceedings. The Sarpanch will convene every month the meeting of the Gram Panchayat. The purpose of the above provisions is that the Panchs must talk to the villagers of their Wards, discuss with them how to solve these problems to the satisfaction of the villagers of the Ward.

Agenda of the meeting is to be prepared by the secretary or the Saktiv. But the secretary will consult the Sarpanch in preparing the agenda. The Janpad Panchayat, the Zila Panchayat and the Collector can also ask for the inclusion of a particular agenda. 12

Functions of Panchayats in Rural Development
The Panchayati Raj institutions especially the Gram Panchayat are to perform the functions of rural development, modernization, political socialization etc. They must totally change the outworn customs, prejudices and practices.

Section 49
The Gram Panchayat will perform the following functions

Section 49 of the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act States the functions for the development of the village.
The Gram Panchayat Should controls the trade and commerce of the village. The village should have good connection with traders of outside. It produces several things that are to be sent outside like Jackfruit, tendu, char, chironji, and other forest products. Many things are imported from outside for domestic use like cloth, food product, fuel etc.
The Panchayat should initiate about the water conservation, the cleanliness, and the drainage of water. Fortunately Bagicha is rich in water resources with two rivers flowing through the town. The Rajpuri waterfall keeps the river charged with
fresh water. The Oraons are by habit very clean people. They keep their mud houses very clean. The houses are not congested. The lanes are wide and the main road is very wide.

The Act says that the sources of water are to be preserved. Fortunately, there are no factories, mills etc. in Bagicha and Kurumkela. Hence pollution is not possible and the drinking water is not polluted. The nalis (gutters) and the main drains are clean. Of course Oraons keep pigs and poultry. But they keep them in a proper way so that the atmosphere does not look unclean.

The people in Bagicha are now trying to understand that water is the most important natural resource with land. They are free gift of nature. Though large numbers of people have inhabited there is no scarcity of water.

Land is equally the free gift of nature, which should be preserved and protected from pollution and foul matter generally discharged from mills, factories, houses and shops etc. Fortunately the village is orderly built with residences at distances with each other. The Bagicha Gram Panchayat has done good things by constructing drains. The Bagicha Gram Panchayat is watchful of those activities of the citizens, which are harmful to the environment.

The Panchayats prior permission is necessary before a villager constructs a house. Generally the Bagicha Panchayat has not strictly implemented this provision and people go on building their houses without taking the permission. The people had been building their houses without permission even before the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act was passed and implemented. The same old habit persists and nobody bothers about the permission of the Panchayat. But the Panchayat is empowered to take action against such building construction. Generally the Oraons have the sense of not encroaching on public lanes and other land. Hence everything is going on normally.

Section 55 of the Act clearly lays down that the prior permission of the Panchayat is necessary to build, to change the design, to add new houses. But the provision has not been strictly implemented by the Panchayat.

Septic latrines are essential in new houses and existing houses must also change their dry latrines to septic latrines. The provision was well discussed at the Central and State levels and now to modernize the villages, to change their attitudes to leave age old custom of sitting outside in fields or open spaces, the provision of septic latrines have been introduced.

Is it necessary to have septic latrines?

It is a debatable point but the educated people who are accustomed to city life, they are in favour of septic latrines. They have been accustomed to such provisions. But the people in rural areas, not accustomed to urban life, do not favour such provisions. They say that to go to toilets for latrines in the house is a dirty habit. The people must go far away for such purposes. The Nature easily
absorbs such dirty things if you go to fields or in open spaces, or by the side of rivers and nallas. Many people in Bagicha not yet accustomed to urban life say that such toilets require large quantities of water. Then the septic tanks should be often cleaned. Unless the people learn the habit of putting large quantities of water in the pan the septic tanks become a nuisance. If water is not poured after every use the foul smells comes from the toilets.

The arguments on both sides are just to be considered deeply and debated fully with special references to the water needed to keep the tank full. In future the water will become a scarce commodity. It will no longer be a free gift of nature.

Section 110 lays down rules and procedures for transfer of names- 'Namantorar.' In undisputed transfer of names after registration the Gram Panchayat should follow the following rules and procedures.

When the Gram Panchayat receives an application for transfer of name or Namantorar, the secretary should write to the Patwari to register the case.

The Gram Panchayat should notify the case for the information of the villagers and will hear the appeals of other persons who want to oppose this transfer. If no one opposes this transfer then the Gram Panchayat should validate the 'Namantorar.' The namantorar has led to serious disputes in villages. The Patwari may try to block the name of genuine persons in whose name the land has been transferred. The Gram Panchayat has therefore been entrusted with the duty of looking after the mischief committed by the Patwari and to set right the injustices. The Panchayat can remove obstructions to built roads or other development works, and it can order for cutting of the trees in this respect. The Panchayat has the right of removing encroachments on its properties. It can establish fair price shops and to see that they function properly and the people get ration regularly from these shops.

**Gram Panchayat has been entrusted with wide functions**

Gram Sabha cannot perform and is not meant to perform such wide functions. The Gram Panchayat should inspect the boundary signs and survey signs of the village, so that later on there should be no disputes in this connection. The Gram Panchayat should recommend the name of a person to be appointed as a Kotwar. If there is no Patel in the village the Sarpanch and the Sachiv should perform jointly the functions of a Patel.

The Gram Panchayat should control and administer those tanks and ponds, which come inside the village boundary. It should keep all the documents pertaining to the land rights and deeds. It has to distribute the Rin Pushtika. It should distribute lands for construction of houses for those who have no houses. Bagicha gram Panchayat is performing all the above function as per the land Revenue code and the Panchayat Act.
Responsibility of the Bagicha Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat is a constitutional unit where the Gram Sabha takes most of the decisions or the Gram Sabha approves the decisions taken by the Gram Panchayat. But the Gram Sabha is not always functioning. It has three or four meetings in a year. For the rest of the year, the Gram Panchayat functions as an executive, administrative and legislative body and the decisions of the Gram Panchayat are approved by the Gram Sabha.

The Gram Sabha is the debating and approving body. The Gram Sabha is an executive and administrative body. In the previous chapters these features are clarified in detail.

The special responsibilities of the Bagicha Gram Panchayat as per the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act

1. Planning and Rural Development

The Chhattisgarh Government has published a pamphlet wherein this function has been elaborated in detail. 20

The Gram Panchayat has certain functions to perform. The Bagicha Gram Panchayat has performed these functions:

1. The Gram Panchayat must frame its scheme of development and planning with special reference to;
   (i) Economic development of Bagicha and Kurumkela villages.
   (ii) Justice and equality.

2. It must follow the suggestions and advice of all institutions placed under the Gram Panchayat.

3. It has to see that all the decisions and policies of the Gram Sabha are translated into action.

4. The Gram Panchayat should control those functionaries, which the Government has entrusted to it e.g. the Kotwar, the Patwari, the Teachers and the Others.

5. Many schemes and projects are entrusted to Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat has to implement them. It should spend the amount on these schemes as per the directive of the Gram Sabha. The Bagicha Gram Panchayat is especially entrusted with the task of implementing the Employment Guarantee Schemes of the Centre. There are many such schemes for village development and these are to be put before the Gram Sabha for discussion and then implemented by the Gram Panchayat as per the discussion in the Gram Sabha. Thus the Gram Panchayat is an implementing body and the Gram Sabha is a policy framing directing body. The amount of expenditure, the way in which it
is to be spent, other resources required to implement the scheme are to be discussed in the open meeting of the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha will direct the Gram Panchayat as to how to implement the scheme.

(6) The Gram Panchayat has to implement all schemes of the Central Government, the State Government, the District Panchayat, and the Janpad Panchayat. The schemes and directives of the State Government and the Central Government are sent by the Collector to the Gram Panchayat. The schemes directives of the Zilla and Janpad Panchayat are sent directly to the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat then keeps these before the Gram Sabha for discussion and further directives and suggestions.

(7) The Gram Panchayat will preserve and control all the natural resources of the village. The Bagicha Gram Panchayat has to see that the two rivers and the Rajpuri water falls are not polluted, their water is not wasted, the forest and land surrounding Bagicha are not polluted, the trees should not be cut unnecessarily, the plants should not be destroyed etc. The Gram Sabha must give directive to the Gram Panchayat in this respect.

2. The Gram Panchayat is empowered to frame “byelaws” for the village
The Gram Panchayat of Bagicha is empowered to frame byelaws, which should be in accordance with the provisions of the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act. This is very significant. The Bagicha Gram Panchayat can frame byelaws to implement all the development schemes. These byelaws should not violate any provision of the Centre and State Government. After framing such laws they should be sent for approval to Block Development Officer or the Collector as the case may be, for approval.

The Gram Panchayat is supposed to implement the decisions of the Gram Sabha in the spirit in which the Gram Sabha wants to implement them.

3. Social Responsibility of the Gram Panchayat
The Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act imposes some 45 social responsibilities on the Gram Panchayats. These may be summarized as:

(1) To protect the life and property of the villagers. The Bagicha people are to look to their Gram Panchayat for the protection of their life and property. The unsocial elements, the thieves and dacoits are to be checked and handed over to the police. This duty is performed by the Kotwar who is an employee of the State Government.

(2) To distribute food and other materials to needy people living in the gram area free of charge. The Gram Panchayat gets grants for performing basic duties. From this grants the Gram Panchayat must purchase food
grains, clothes and so on for the needy. As per law, no person should die of hunger. The people have died of hunger in other States and even in Chhattisgarh. This is a matter of shame for the State Government. Generally the Government tries to cover up the matter, so that it may not get undue publicity by the media. Hence the Collector has to see that the Gram Panchayat provides for work and if no work is provided then the Panchayat must provide food to those who are hungry for days together. You cannot let them die for want of work.

The spirit of the above provisions is that people must get work so that they may feed themselves with two square meals. In the first responsibility it has already been mentioned that the Panchayat has the primary social responsibility of preserving life. The life can be preserved only when the people get two square meals. And they can get two square meals if they get employment.

The Bagicha and Kurumkela villages are fortunate that they have two crops; Kharif ad Rabi. Hence for 8 months they are connected with agriculture. The forests provide them with some work. But still there are some days where they do not get any work. The Gram Panchayat must start its development work in the month of May and June so that people may not sit idle and remain hungry.

This function is vital to the preservation of the Bagicha village Panchayat. It must so distribute its scarce resources, funds, government grants etc. that the employment is continuously generated.

(3) To increase the social awakening in the people and to enhance the spirit of collective ownership. Bagicha and Kurumkela are their own villages and they must preserve and protect every thing pertaining to these villages. They should try to contribute as much as possible for the enhancement of the collective property of the village.

(4) To protect the property from fire.

(5) To financially or in other ways to assist the poor people to perform the funeral ceremony of the members of their families.

(6) Many great things can be done by collective labour voluntarily without any remuneration or wage.

4. Responsibility of Cooperation

(1) To cooperate in census work.

(2) To take preventive action against epidemics.

(3) To assist in inoculation work.

(4) To take measures for the protection of man and animal.

5. Responsibility connected with keeping the village clean
(1) To supply drinking water.
(2) To provide for funeral ground, burial ground etc.
(3) To provide for the dirt and dust to be placed in particular place.
(4) To control over the sale of meat and fish at fix places for their sale.
(5) To clean the village.
(6) To fix places for bathing of man and animal.
(7) To construct culverts, drains, toilets etc. 24

6. Responsibility to provide for basic needs and facilities
(1) To arrange for lighting.
(2) To construct the roads of the village.
(3) To construct culverts, tanks and ponds.
(4) To provide for basic facilities and to prepare schemes for these and mange them. 25

7. Responsibility of Social Welfare
(1) To help invalid and destitute who have no one to look after.
(2) To remove the evils of dowry and other social evils.
(3) To assist a villager suffering from very serious diseases.
(4) To uproot the evils of untouchability.
(5) To implement faithfully the schemes of the State, the Central Government for the eradication of untouchability and backwardness of SC, ST, and OBC. 26

8. Bazar and Fair
These places are to be determined by the Gram Panchayat without its permission fairs cannot be held and bazaars cannot be started. 27

9. Other responsibilities and functions of the Gram Panchayat
(1) To look after the ponds, tanks, borings, wells etc.
(2) To develop agriculture and social forestry.
(3) To manage and control the fisheries and see that they are commercially used to the benefit of the village as a whole.
(4) To select the 'hitgrahis' for various government works.
(5) To look after development schemes.
(6) To look after ration shops.
The Gram Panchayat of Bagicha and Kurumkela are responsible for the proper functioning of ration shops. The Panchayat has to see that these shops run at a proper place, open and close in time and supply the ration articles to the satisfaction of the villagers. 28
10. Responsibility of Panchayat Functionaries

Their main functionaries perform different type of functions in the Panchayat.

(1) Panchayat Sachiv or the Secretary.
(2) The Sarpanch.
(3) The Deputy Sarpanch or Upsarpanch.

The Sachiv

The performs the following functions:

(1) If the Sarpanch directs him, the Sachiv convenes the meeting of the Gram Panchayat.
(2) The Sachiv on the directive of the Sarpanch fixes the time, the place and the agenda of the meeting of the Gram Sabha. These things should be notified by the Secretary or Sachiv.
(3) To write the proceedings, discussions and suggestions in the Gram Sabha. He should also write down the name of the members present in the meeting.
(4) To send the proposals of the Gram Sabha to the Janpad Panchayat.
(5) To convene special meetings of the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha.
(6) To notify the ordinary and special meeting of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat. He has also to notify the time and place of the meetings of the committees of Gram Panchayat especially the meetings of the Standing Committee of the Gram Panchayat.
(7) He must enter the proceedings, the main points of discussions, the suggestions, proposals etc. in these committees.
(8) He must be present in every meeting (unless there is a strong reason for his remaining absent) of the Gram Sabha, the Gram Panchayat and its Committees.
(9) In these meetings of the Gram Sabha, the Gram Panchayat and its Committees, the Secretary or the Sachiv must give all relevant information pertaining to the agenda and the discussion to that the members may take their discussion on proper lines. For example, if the members are discussing about constructing tanks, or tree plantation or BPL or other employment generating schemes, the Sachiv must be in a position to tell the members what assistance they can get from the Government and under what scheme.
(10) If the Gram Sabha, Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat or the Chairman of any Standing Committee of the Gram Panchayat does any thing violative of the Act then the Sachiv must inform the BDO about the same within three days of the above.
Further the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act 1993 mentions the following functions of the Sachiv:

(i) He must read the Act, the byelaws framed under the Act and the orders issued under the Act. He must then explain the provisions of the Act, the byelaws and the orders passed therein.

(ii) He has to prepare all the documents of the Gram Panchayat. These records, proceedings and other papers should be classified and kept in a manner that in case of need they can be immediately placed before the Gram Panchayat.

(iii) In consultation with the Gram Panchayat members to fix the time for the opening and closing of the Gram Panchayat office and should himself present there in time, and should close the office in time.

The purpose of this provision is training the villagers in the art of self-government. Generally even in cities other offices are not opened in time or closed in time, if they are opened and closed in time, the office staff is not present on his desk. The people’s work suffers. They have to return without getting their work done. This creates a very bad impression on the public. The same bad impression may not be created in the minds of villagers about the Panchayat Bhawan and it’s working. Therefore the rules of strict discipline are laid down in the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act. The Secretary must be punctual in opening and closing his Karyalaya and must help the villagers in the best possible manner.

(iv) To keep all records of movable and immovable property of the Gram Panchayat.

(v) He should prepare the records and keep the documents in the performa meant for the purpose.

(vi) Another important function is the rules that a Panch absents himself in a three consecutive meetings, the Sachiv should note his name and send it to the Block Officer and Panchayat and Samaj Shikchak Inspector.

This provision is also very important if it is not implemented strictly, the Panchs will not mind their business seriously and they may often absent themselves from the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat meeting. By implementing this rule in the spirit of the Act, the Panchayati Raj System will work well and the villagers will learn to apply seriously the rules for the
smooth working of the system of direct democracy in the country.

(vii) To inform immediately to the Block Officer and Samaj Shikshak Sangathan about the posts that have fallen vacant in the Gram Panchayat and its Committees.

(viii) No confidence motion against the Sarpanch may be moved, the BDO should be informed about the time, place and the reason of the motion.

(ix) The proposals, discussions, resolutions of the meetings of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat for everyday should be signed by the Sachiv and the Sarpanch and should be sent to the Block Development Officer (Chief Executive Officer), and Upsanchalak Panchayat.

(x) If in the Gram Panchayat or Gram Sabha meeting or in the meeting of Panchayat Committees any thing is being done, which is violative of the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act, it is the duty of the Sachiv to inform in the meeting about such things and preventing the body to further violate the Act.

(xi) To inform in the Gram Panchayat meeting the decisions taken over by the Committees of the Gram Panchayat.

(xii) If the Sarpanch remains absent, the Sachiv should immediately inform the CEO, the Panchayat Inspector or the Panchayat Sangathak.

(xiii) The Income of the Gram Panchayat should be immediately deposited in the Panchayat Nidhi (Panchayat Fund). The account for the same should be kept and to take necessary steps to withdraw and spend from that Nidhi.

(xiv) To supervise the provision of drinking water, to maintain cleanliness in Panchayat area, to see proper lighting in the villages and roads clean and maintained properly.

(xv) To organize national festivals like Gandhi Jayanti, Independence Day and the Republic Day etc.

(xvi) To provide for and organize fairs and markets.

(xvii) To maintain a record of marriage, births and deaths and register them. This function if properly performed by the Sachiv may result in removing the evils of child marriages. He may tell the people that child marriages are not only illegal, but also immoral and harmful. The proper maintenance of the record of births and deaths will assist in proper maintenance of census, and collecting the census from time to time.
(xviii)
He should record the latest income and expenditures of the Gram Panchayat. The proper accounting is necessary for this and a separate register is to be maintained for this.

(xix)
The Secretary or the Sachiv must keep a separate record of people who leave the village and go to other places for earning their living. It is a 'playyan' (exodus) or a temporary economic phenomenon that will be ascertained from this register. 'Playyan' is a slur on the government- it means that the government has failed to provide employment to its citizen. Hence the government must immediately provide employment to such persons.

(xx)
To recover the taxes and the fees imposed by the Panchayat.

(xxi)
To suggest from time to time ways and means to enhance the sources of revenues of the Panchayat.

(xxii)
While depositing revenue in the Panchayat Nidhi and spending the amount from the Panchayat Nidhi there should be a joint signature of both the Sachiv and the Sarpanch.

(xxiii)
Thus the Panchayati Raj System confers vital functions on the Sachiv. If they are honestly performed in the spirit of the Act, the Panchayati Raj institution will definitely succeed and the villages will contribute their best to the political system of the country. 29

The Functions of the Sarpanch is to make the whole system of Panchayat Democracy or the rural district Democracy a success

The Panchayati Raj Act of Chhattisgarh provides for the direct election of the Sarpanch by the voters of the village. The provision increases the legal and the moral responsibility of the Sarpanch towards the village. Section 49 of the Chhattisgarh Panchayati Raj Act of 1993 supposes that the Sarpanch and the Sachiv both together will faithfully operate the act leading to the development of the village in all spheres. He will also take full cooperation of the Panchs of the Gram Panchayat in this respect.

The Act supposes that the Sarpanch will perform the following functions:

1. The Sarpanch is responsible for all the functions mentioned in the Act.
2. He presides over the meetings of the Gram Sabha and directs and conducts its proceedings.
3. In operation of the Panchayat Nidhi to withdraw or to deposit money or to issue cheque both the Sarpanch and Sachiv must sign.
4. To prepare the report of all the work done by the Panchayat.
5. He must have knowledge of all the registers especially the registers pertaining to income and expenditure.
He has to complete the work entrusted to him by the State Government, the Zila Panchayat and the Janpad Panchayat.

Section 17 (8) of the Act confers certain rights and duties on the Sarpanch as a Panch. He has also to perform all the functions of the Panch. He must move in all the Wards, observe the condition of the Ward as regards drains, nallis, boring, wells, ponds, electricity, roads, market place, etc, and he should meet with the traders and businessmen and consult them about the ways and means of enhancing the trade and commerce of the village in order to increase the revenue of the village. The people generally keep fish, pigs and poultry as commercial enterprises. He must watch as to how these can be used as profitable operation by the people. He must inspect the schools and the health centers to find out whether they are satisfying the needs of the villagers in the field of education and health. The Bagicha and Kurumkela villages have many lanes, besides a wide road passing through the heart of the town. The Sarpanch should observe the condition of the lanes. The most important function of the Sarpanch is to look to the water resources of Bagicha, especially the two rivers flowing in the village. The water is to be used in the fields by digging canals from these rivers and also the water could be conserved by building stop dams to use throughout the year. The trees are not to be cut but planted in more numbers. Bagicha should look like a village amidst trees.

To control the Standing Committees of the Gram Panchayat, to direct them to take a particular line of work.

To exercise control over the government servants entrusted to the Panchayat, to give them direction so that they may work in their field to the advantage of the villagers.

Three months before the completion of the financial year the Sarpanch should convene the meeting of the Gram Sabha. In this meeting the Sarpanch must place the administrative report of the previous year and the budget proposals for the coming year. He must place the audit report in the meeting. These must be discussed in the Gram Sabha and get them approved with a suggestion from the villagers present in the meeting.

The money received from the government should be properly entered in the register. This is also an important function. The aim is to prevent defalcation of money, which is generally the bane of the Panchayati Raj institutions all over the country. Defalcation or misappropriation of funds should be checked by all means.
The Functions of the Upsarpanch (Deputy Sarpanch)

(1) To preside over the meetings of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayat when the Sarpanch is not present.

(2) When the Sarpanch is not present, or absent due to certain reason the Deputy Sarpanch will perform all the functions of the Sarpanch and exercise all the powers of the Sarpanch.

(3) If the post of the Sarpanch falls vacant due to certain reasons, the Deputy Sarpanch will act as the Sarpanch till the time a new Sarpanch is elected.

(4) To advice the Sarpanch and the Sachiv on issues connected with the development of the village.

(5) The Deputy Sarpanch is a Panch also and performs all the functions and powers of the Panch.

The Functions, Powers and Responsibilities of the Panchs

(1) To participate in the meetings of the Gram Panchayat regularly.

(2) To participate in the election of the Upsarpanch or the Deputy Sarpanch.

(3) He must have full knowledge on the spot about the development works of the Panchayat. He must see that these development works are proceeding as per the decisions of the Panchayat. He must report in the meetings of the Gram Panchayat about the progress and the defects of such development work and suggest ways and means of such work.

(4) To give his suggestion on the agenda of the Gram Panchayat meeting. He must suggest as to what other things are to be placed in the agenda. He must participate and discuss in the meeting and put his views fully and frankly on different issues in the Panchayat.

(5) Generally there is voting on some controversial issues, the Panch should vote impartially and properly on such issues.

(6) He is the representative of his Ward, as such he must suggest all the ways and means for the development of the Ward in the meetings of the Gram Panchayat. He must get his suggestions included in the annual development plan of the village.

(7) To receive full support and cooperation from the government servants entrusted to the Gram Panchayat and give them his full cooperation.

(8) To elect, when the post of Sarpanch and Upsarpanch are vacant.

(9) To assist the Sarpanch in various development work.

(10) To keep eye on the activities of the Gram Panchayat. If he finds some irregularities or defects in the development works he must immediately report the same to he Sarpanch.
To prepare proposals of development work for his Ward and send it to the Sarpanch to be included in the development plan of the village.

Tree plantation in one's Ward.

To get the health of the boys and girls of his ward regularly examined. The Mahila Bal Vikas Mantralaya is entrusted with the task of looking after the children below 6 years, the pregnant mothers, to contact with this department and get them inoculated, give them tablets and food packets for preserving their health. The Panch has the duty to see that all the children of school going age are sent to schools without fail. This is a very important duty of the Panch. The Mid day meal scheme is there to attract the school going children to be admitted in schools. The Panch should see that every child who has attained the age of six should be sent to the school without fail. And as this objective has been invariably connected with the Midday meal scheme of the government. The Panch should try his level best to send all school going children from his Ward to school. He must also watch the working of the Midday meal in the school and find out whether the children are satisfied with their meals, whether this scheme is in anyway interfering with the teaching. He should also take the opinion of the teachers and the guardians of the school. He should meet the school going children of his Ward and try to interview them and encourage them to express their views freely. Thus the Panch has to see that children of school going age are admitted in schools without fail. The aim is to see that all are educated in his Ward.

To look after the cleanliness of his Ward.

To construct drains and nallis to take filthy water out of the Ward.

The hand pump should be continuously repaired and watched. He should see that no water is wasted.

He should see that the drinking water is constantly cleaned. This is necessary to avoid epidemics.

To prevent child marriages.

To oppose dowry system.

The women should be respected and they should be given equal statues in society and the village.

To arrange for pregnant mothers and inoculation for children.

He should neither himself differentiate on the basis of religion, caste, creed, community, nor he should permit others to differentiate of these lines.

Public roads, nallis should not be encroached by him neither he should permit others to encroach them. This is a thing where the people are generally found building houses and shops. They try to extend their
boundaries beyond their land leading to narrowing of village roads. The Panch while moving in his ward should immediately try to check such encroachment.

(24) Crimes and disorderly behaviour should be checked by immediately informing and reporting in the police, the Panchayat and the administration.

(25) He should prepare a list of weak, poor and the people living below poverty level (BPL). He should prepare plans for their upliftment and submit the plans to the Panchayat so that the Panchayat may prepare a comprehensive plan for development of these weaker sections and send the same to the government.

(26) He should inform the people of his Ward about the schemes of development that various government departments have for the village people. The Panch should acquaint himself about these schemes and let the people of his Ward know these schemes. This will enable the Panchayat to prepare a list of hitgrahis in this respect. The development schemes of different government departments are like this:

(a) Swarna Jayanti Swarojgar Yojana of Gramin Vikas Vibhag, Sampurana Gramin Rojgar Yojana, Awas Yojana, Jalgrahan Kshetra Prabandhan Yojana, Hariyali Karyakram or the programme to make the village green.
These are all schemes connected with the provision of employment to the villagers and removal of poverty in the village.

(b) Samajik Suraksha Pension of Samaj Kalyan Vibhag, Parivar Sahayata Yojana, Welfare of invalid persons to provide artificial limbs and examination by doctors.

(c) Swasthya and Mahila Bal Vikas Vibhag has some Schemes: Ekikrit Balvikas Yojana, inoculation, examination of health, Purak Posan Karyakram, Rashtriua Matritua Suraksh Yojana, Andhatua Nivaran Yojana.

(d) Shiksha Evam Adim Kalyan Vibhag has certain schemes; to provide text books free to school young children, to get the health of school going children examined free of cost, to get the children insured, to provide scholarship, to provide cycles to girls, to provide scholarships, Kanya Sakharta Puraskar, Ganvesh Yojana (Fresh dress).

(e) Schemes of forest Department: Paudha and Nursery schemes, Social Forestry Scheme (Samajik Vaniki Yojana), Laghu Vanopaj Yojana, Van Samrakshan Yojana (Protection of forests).

(f) Department of Agriculture (Krishi Vibhag)-growing, compost distribution, distribution of seeds and other schemes.
The Function of the Panch is

1. To attend Gram Panchayat meetings.
2. To attend Gram Sabha meetings.
3. To move, inspect, observe what is happening in his Ward.
4. To meet the various development departments.
5. To study and suggest ways and means for the removal of poverty, unemployment, ill health, illiteracy, tree plantation, clean water, clean lanes, drains etc.
6. To development of the Ward and creating awakening in the Ward.

The Committee system in the Gram Panchayat - Standing Committee of the Bagicha Gram Panchayat

The Central and State governments both have several committees on several subjects. The Parliament and State Legislatures are big bodies where the issues cannot be considered in a cool manner. Moreover the legislatures are so big that they have no time to consider an issue in detail, in all its aspects. All the subjects require the study by experts in the field. The MPs and MLAs are not experts; they are laymen representing huge number of people in their constituency.

Committee consists of experts who study extensively and intensively the issues and prepares a report that is sent to the house of Parliament or the State Legislature. The report of the committee is again discussed and then a final report for taking any action is prepared.

Laski has greatly admired such a system adopted by the British Parliament. He says the committee system is central to the working of a parliamentary democracy. The committee system has been adopted in the Panchayati Raj Act 1993. This will assist the Sarpanch and Panch in their working and in solving the various problems of the villagers. The Gram Sabha can discuss the broad outlines of various plans of rural society, the Gram Panchayat can study them in detail. But
the minute discussion based on expert knowledge or on the spot study and thereafter preparing the report is possible by small expert committees composed of people who know the subject.

The formation of standing committees in Bagicha and Kurumkela
The aim of Panchayat is not simply to elect the Panch and the Sarpanch as to surrender all powers and functions to these elected persons. The Panchayat has to perform all development functions pertaining to the village. Like the governments at the Center and the States the functions of the Gram Panchayats are entrusted to Standing Committees. These Committees are constituted by nominating persons of special knowledge in different fields. They advise the Panch and the Sarpanch in their fields. Then the Gram Panchayat discusses on their report and advice.

![Diagram of Gram Panchayat](image)

To elect these committees, the Gram Panchayat will convene a special meeting of the Panchayat and will elect members from amongst themselves to these committees.

The Panchayat will elect those members to a committee who have special knowledge in that field. The aim is to perform the various developments functions relating to the village.

In every committee there are four elected members. The Sarpanch and the Deputy Sarpanch are ex officio members of every committee. The Sarpanch will be the chairman of all the five Standing Committees.

Every standing committee will meet once in a month. A register will be maintained for recording all the discussions and decisions of the committees.

Other persons having special knowledge and experience may be included in the committee. They may be government servants or from the public but they must possess special knowledge or experience related to subject under discussion. The chairman (Sarpanch) will decide the date, place and the agenda of the meeting and the members of the committee will be informed three days prior to the date of the meeting.
The quorum will be half the number of the committee members. The decisions in the committee will be taken by majority. In case of tie the Sarpanch or the Deputy Sarpanch in the absence of the Sarpanch will have the casting vote.

Functions of the Committee

**General administrative committee will perform the following function:**

1. To approve of construction works in the Gram Panchayat area.
2. Budget and accounting.
3. Food and civil supplies.
4. 20-point programmes.
5. To coordinate the functions of the Panchayat and the other Standing Committee.

**Agricultural and Animal Rearing Committee has the following functions:**

(a) Development of agriculture.
(b) Rearing animals and development of cattle.
(c) Dairy development.
(d) Fish culture.

**Construction and development Committee:**

(a) To prepare plans of development.
(b) To keep an eye on all construction work.
(c) To prepare a lay out of development work, to prepare their estimates and budget.
(d) To develop the roads and means of communication in the village.
(e) To develop cottage and rural industries.
(f) To build parks.
(g) To prepare plans for future construction.
(h) Functions related to public health engineering.
(i) To conserve water resources.

**Revenue and forest committee:**

(a) To conserve forests and forest resources.
(b) Development of land resources.

**Committee on agriculture, health and social welfare:**

a. To inspect all schools in the jurisdiction of the Panchayat.
b. To develop Anganbadi and Balwadis.
c. To certify the attendance of the teachers on fifth of every month.
d. Inoculation and family planning.
e. To inspect the health center and certify whether the doctors or the nurses are properly attending to their duty an attendance register is to be maintained.
f. To prepare welfare schemes for the invalid and socially backward persons.
g. To look after the sanitation and health in the Gram Panchayat area.
h. To properly distribute the social security pension.
i. Mahila and Bal Vikas functions connected with the development of women and children.
j. Social welfare.
k. To prepare schemes for the development of SC, ST, and OBC.
l. Develop sports.
m. To protect labour and their wages.

Meeting of the Panchayat
Without regular meetings the Panchayat cannot function. Hence the Panchayat must meet every month. The BDO who is the executive officer of the Panchayat has to see that the Panchayat meets regularly, if it does not than he can direct that the meeting of the Panchayat be convened.
If more than half members of the Gram Panchayat demand for a special meeting of the Gram Panchayat then such a meeting should be convened.
In the meeting of the Gram Panchayat the members can draw the attention towards any irregularity or corruption.
Several types of motions can be introduced in the meetings of the Panchayat like notice to draw the attention and resolution. These are meant to give training to the Panchs in the parliamentary system of government.

The sources of income of Gram Panchayat
The following are the main sources of income of the Gram Panchayat:
1. Charity or gift.
2. Income from Panchayat Nidhi.
3. Taxes imposed by the Gram Panchayat.

Income from Panchayat Nidhi can be divided into (a) Financial aid from the Central Government under various schemes. (b) Financial aid from the State Government under various schemes. (c) Land revenue. (d) The Panchayat has the right to impose various types of taxes, fees, fines etc. It can receive gifts and donations from the villagers. It can fine villagers if they violate any order or decision of the Panchayat.
The Panchayats can take loans from the banks for development purpose. The Panchayats have not been in a position to develop their own sources hence they have to depend more and more on the Center and the State Government. The Panchayats receive additional revenue from expenditures made by different departments of the State Government in the village.
Several non-government agencies can grant financial help to the gram Panchayat. Now a day the 'Sansad Nidhi' and 'Vidhyak Nidhi' are also good sources of revenue for the village Panchayat. The MP or the MLA grants money to the Gram Panchayat for development purposes.

Section 49 of the Panchayati Raj Adhiniyam empowers the Gram Panchayat to keep a eye on all developmental expenses by the State Government departments in the village.

**Panchayat Nidhi or Panchayat Fund**

Every Gram Panchayat will create a Panchayat fund or Panchayat Nidhi, wherein all the income received by it shall be deposited. This Panchayat Nidhi of the Gram Panchayat shall be kept in the nearest government treasury a scheduled bank or post office. The funds kept in the Panchayat Nidhi will be the property of the Gram Panchayat. The Panchayat will spend from this Nidhi on its activities including the development activities.

In the Gram Sabha meeting the Gram Panchayat will give an account of the funds drawn for various activities and welfare schemes, and it will state the amount of balance in the Panchayat Nidhi. The withdrawals from this Panchayat Nidhi is possible only when the Gram Panchayat in its meeting has approved for such a withdrawal. The amount can only be withdrawn by a joint signature of the Sarpanch and the Secretary.

**The taxes to be imposed by the Panchayat are;**

1. Those taxes which are absolutely necessary.
2. Optional taxes, which the Panchayat can impose as and when it thinks necessary. These are two types (a) Tax on profession. (b) Tax on the use of public property of the Gram Panchayat.

Now a day Panchs and Sarpanchs must have septic latrines. The Gram Panchayat can build septic latrine for public use in the village. The Gram Panchayat can impose taxes on such latrines. Similarly if the Central or State Government constructs some work on Panchayat lands the Gram Panchayat can impose taxes on such works of the Center or the State. The Gram Panchayat can impose 'upkar' on land revenue. The State Government imposes the land revenue. The Panchayat can impose its taxes.

**One of the greatest hindrances to Panchayati Raj is the lack of fund, has been removed**

Before the implementation of the Panchayati Raj Act, there were Panchayats in British India, as well as in free India. But the Panchayats suffered financially. They were deprived of all financial aid. They had no income to invest on development works. Now this defect has been removed by the Panchayati Raj Act. They are
getting huge financial aid from the Center as well as the State Government. Hence the villages are changing so rapidly that it cannot be imagined.

To avoid corruption and misuse the following steps have been taken

1. The budget of the Gram Panchayat should be prepared as per the directive of the State Government.
2. There should be proper accounting of the amounts received and the amount spent should be kept properly as per rules of accounting of the State Government.
3. The accounts; income and expenditure should be strictly audited.

Reports of the Gram Panchayat
The financial year ends on 30th March and just after the end of the financial year the Secretary of the Gram Panchayat has to prepare the following report of the past year;

1. The annual accounts report.
2. The annual administrative report.

The performa for these reports will be the same as the performa for preparing the annual budget of the Gram Panchayat.

The annual income report will be prepared on performa-1
The annual expenditure report will be prepared on performa-2

The following annexure should be attached to the above two income and expenditure reports;

(a) The various demands of the Panchayat.
(b) How much the Panchayat will collect from its sources.
(c) The actual receipt or collection of revenue.
(d) How much actual saving is made in the whole year (perform-3).
(e) The annual grant for the whole year and the expenditure on it (performa-4).
(f) The amount of grants received from Central and State Government under various schemes and the actual expenditure on these schemes (performa-5).
(g) The target of Center and State schemes and the actual physical achievements by the Panchayat on these schemes has to be shown (performa-6).
(h) The Gram Panchayat takes loans for development purposes from the Central Government, State Government, District Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat, and Scheduled Banks. The amounts paid should be shown in performa-7.
In performa-8 the description of all the current assets and liabilities are to be shown.

**The administrative report of the Gram Panchayat**

This administrative report of the past year is very important for the annual meeting of the Gram Panchayat. The report must supply the following information.

1. If any post is vacant in the Gram Panchayat, it should be shown in performa-9 and the performa should be filled properly.
2. In performa-10 the meetings and the discussions of the Gram Panchayat, the Gram Sabha and the Standing Committees of the Gram Panchayat should be shown.
3. In performa-11 the name and number of employees should be filled in.
4. In performa-12 the annual plan of the Gram Panchayat as passed and approved in the Gram Sabha is shown.

These reports should be placed before the Gram Panchayat meeting on 30th April. The Gram Panchayat will approve such reports upto 31st May. These reports shall be kept before the Gram Sabha in its annual meetings. The report should also be sent to the block office and other authorities connected with the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

**The members of the Gram Panchayat- the Panch and the Sarpanch can be removed**

There is a special procedure for removing the Panchs and the Sarpanch. They can be removed by the following method:

1. No confidence motion (sections-21, 28, 35).
2. The recall of the Panchs or Sarpanch (section-21-k).
4. Removal of the above (section-40).
5. Resignation of the above (section-37)

Thus the Act provides for removal and suspension of the Panchayat representatives, the Panchs and the Sarpanchs.

**The Development Schemes and the Gram Panchayat Bagicha**

Bagicha is a tribal area and several schemes of tribal development have been implemented in this area. They also include the schemes of development launched in the plain areas. The most important schemes connected with Panchayati Raj Schemes are the Swarna Jayanti Scheme, the Indira Vikas Yojana including Jal Grahana Yojana, Housing Yojana, the Road Development Schemes, and Forest Development Schemes.
There are schemes for providing employment to the village labourers;

(1) The Jawahar Rojgar Yojana
(2) Work for Food.
(3) Employment Guarantee Yojana of Sonia Gandhi.

The Jawahar Rojgar Yojana was implemented on the 1st April 1989. Recently, two most important schemes of giving employment to the unemployed people have been launched (a) Work for food of the Atal Bihari Government (b) Employment Guarantee Scheme of the Congress government after 2005.

Even after sixty years of independence and implementation of ten five year plans, 60 million rural families are living below the poverty line. Starting with the rural manpower programme, schemes such as the crash programme for rural and tribal employment, Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (PIREJP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Food for Work Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were undertaken by the various states at the instruction of the Government of India with a view to providing gainful wage employment to the rural poor.

Of these the Work for Food Programme started with effect from the 1st April 1977 as a non-plan scheme. This may be described as a milestone in the wage employment anti-poverty programmes. It was aimed at generating additional employment to the poor while creating durable community assets and strengthening the rural infrastructure resulting in higher production.

Incidentally, the scheme could help stabilize the prices of food grains in rural areas. The green revolution and the abundance of food grains necessitated this scheme of work for food. The Center started procuring food grains from the farmers at a higher price than the price prevailing in the market. And this grain stored was used for payment as wages, the part of the wages was paid to the labourers in food grains. The food grains cost was estimated at lower rates than the rate of procurement part of the wages was paid in cash by the Government. Roads, schools, hospitals, dams, stop dams, tree plantation and other capital assets were built under this scheme. The scheme added to national wealth. This scheme is still continuing in Chhattisgarh (upto 2004-05). The above programme was however revised and came to be known as NREP with effect from 15th August 1980. With the experience gained in the implementation of the food for works programme suitable modifications were made in the NREP. Thus the new scheme stipulated a ratio between the wages paid and the material costs of projects so as to ensure the creation of useful assets. The Center and the States undertook the programme on 50:50 financial contributions. In addition to cash contribution the Center was also providing food grains as grant in aid to the States. In practice more than 60 percent of the days of work generated under the scheme pertained to the repair of village roads. As per the guidelines of the Government
of India preference to works benefiting backward areas and members of SCs and STs were given under the programme.

Though the scheme became popular, its slow progress was attributed to organizational bottlenecks, absence of proper planning and failure to choose appropriate project. The employment provided was for a very short period of time. There were irregularities in the selection of the beneficiaries and consequently to the poorest of poor, for whom the programme was really intended were often ignored. The works under taken benefited the contractors and officials, the government employees who grabbed the lion’s share of the money spent on projects.

Some two years after NREP was launched, the Government of India announced the establishment of RLEGP to provide gainful employment to at least one person in every poor family living in rural India. The objective of the new programme was to provide employment of at least 100 days a year for one member of every landless family. Unlike for the sister scheme here, the Government of India provided 100 percent financial assistance. The objective of the programme was to create durable assets for the strengthening of the infrastructure for the rapid growth of rural economy and for improving the quality of life in rural areas.

However in practice many drawbacks were noticed in the implementation of programme. For instance, more importance was attached to create permanent assets and generate employment potential among the poor, which was considered secondary. Along with BPL and landless, it benefited those who were above BPL and living comfortably. The corrupt bureaucratic machinery, the corrupt Panchs and Sarpanchs and corrupt politicians all combined to make the scheme a failure.

**Jawahar Rojgar Yojana**

This was implemented in 1st April 1989. The Government of India decided to merge the NEWP and RLEGP into a new scheme known as the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana with an outlay of Rs 2100 crores for the year 1989-90.

The scheme aims at all the Panchayats in the country. In the first place, money is made available directly to the Sarpanchs of the Gram Panchayat. Since the emphasis is on the elimination of the poverty, the funds are distributed to the districts on the basis of the proportion to the size of the population, which falls below the poverty line. The other criteria prescribed for backwardness is the share of the SCs and STs to the total labour and level of agricultural productivity. An average village with three to four thousand populations is to get Rs 80,000 to one lakh per year under the programme. The scheme aims at providing employment for at least one member of each family for fifty to hundred days in a year. Thirty percent of the recipients of the benefit should be women. Secondly, the Yojana is
expected to reduce considerable delay in the execution of programme, which was occurring earlier in the approval of schemes and sanctioning of funds by the higher authorities. Thirdly, the contractor and the intermediaries who were reaping the benefits of funds under rural development programmes are to be completely eliminated in the implementation of the Yojana. Fourthly, since the programme is open, every village knows how much of money is received and how it is spent and who the beneficiaries are and hence the chances for manipulation and corruption are considerably reduced. 38

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)
The UPA Government highly publicized the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill that was unanimously approved by the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, the August 23, 2005 after a marathon two-day debate that continued till Monday midnight.

Bill was a major Government initiative in tune with its National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). The passage of the proposed law was followed by the thumping of desks by the members of the ruling alliance including UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

The Bill provides for legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment on asset creating public works programme every year at a minimum wage to at least one able bodied person in every rural household that received unprecedented support from all sections of the House during its 13 hours debate. Significantly, bowing to the pressure of the left, the Union Minister of Rural Development Mr. Raghuvansha Prasad Singh moved a last minute amendment providing for a minimum wage as applicable in various States under the minimum wages Act 1948, apart from several other changes that had earlier been okayed by the Union Cabinet.

The minister Mr. Prasad Singh later said to the press to explain the importance of the minimum wages amendment provision. He said since statutory minimum wage was a State subject, the Center did not intend to intrude into their powers. The States were free to provide wages as per their State law even as the Centre could intervene through an enabling clause of the bill to raise its level, if need be. The minister however cautioned the States against hiking the wage to grab more funds. 39

Salient features of the NREGA

(1) NREGA is not just a scheme but also an Act providing legal guarantee to work.

(2) Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) will have principal role in planning and implementation.
Transparency, accountability, social audit and people's participation will be ensured through institutional mechanism.

Grievance redressal mechanism will be put in place.

One-third beneficiaries will be women.

Any adult person in the notified area willing to do unskilled manual work can apply for registration with Gram Panchayat. He/she will then be issued a job card.

The job card is the legal instrument that will entitle the registered person to apply for employment under the Act.

Registration will be open throughout the year.

Employment will be given within 5 km of the applicants residence else additional wages will be paid.

The Act is to be implemented in 200 districts all over India. In Chhattisgarh the districts selected are Bastar, Bilaspur, Dantewara, Dhmentari, Jashpur, Kanker, Kawardha, Korila, Raigarh, Rajnandgaon, Sarguja. Implementation of NREGA starts from 2nd February 2006.

**Rural Household in the notified districts can now exercise various rights under the Act**

1. The right to demand employment.
2. The right to get employment within 15 days of their demand.
3. The right to get unemployment allowance if the employment is not given within 15 days.
4. The right to be paid statutory wages prevalent in a State.
5. The right to worksite facilities like drinking water, first aid and sheds for children.

**Mode of Applying**
The application for employment may be given to the Gram Panchayat or to the programme officer at the Block level.

**New Era for Rural India**
The Act has been termed as the National Launch of Programmes under NREGA by Dr. Manmohan Singh Honorable Prime Minister of India on 2nd Feb. 2006 at 11 am at Bandlapale Gram Panchayat, Narpola Maridal, District Ananthapur, Andhra Pradesh. Smt. Sonia Gandhi Honble Chairperson of National Advisory Council graced the occasion.

The ministers present were Dr. Raghuvansha Prasad Singh, Union Minister for Rural Development, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr.Y.S. Rajshekhar Reddy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.
Pradesh, Sri A. Narednra and Smt Surya Kant Patel, Union Minister of State for Rural Development. 41

Simultaneous Launching in the Gram Sabha all over the Country
The Act was applied simultaneously to 80,000 Gram Panchayats of Districts selected in the first phase. The Central Ministers, the MPs, the MLAs, the MLCs and the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) functionaries participated.

A New Era in the Development of Rural India
The Act has been termed as the beginning of a new era in the development of rural India. It will solve the problem of poverty and unemployment in Rural India. The Government of Chhattisgarh has accepted the scheme but changed the name to “Chhattisgarh Gramin Rojgar Guarantee Yojana”. 42
The Congress Party in Chhattisgarh strongly objected the change of the name. But the Chhattisgarh Government has said that we have changed the name with the approval of the Centre. Jashpur District where Bagicha is situated has been selected for the Scheme.

Pariwar Rojgar Card
Family registration card has to be prepared by every family in the district. The scheme is to be implemented by Panchayat and Gramin Vikas Department under the Minister Shri Ajay Chandrakar. He emphasizes that now every labourer whether he is skilled or unskilled will get a job guarantee and he will not be required to leave his village and go outside for work. The relevant performa and the details are given in appendix 3.

Conclusion

The Concept of Political Development
The politics of development has to be studied under to opposite party slogans and programmes;

(1) The BJP government has started the Gram Swaraj Movement.
(2) The Congress debunks the governments’ claim by starting a counter movement “where is the Government”.

“Gramin Vikas” is a Modern concept. However you may industrialize and modernize urban areas you can have only a lopsided development with cities and towns, developing fast with good roads, education, health services, with little or no employment, the country will not develop unless we develop the village and build the strong rural Infrastructure.

Previously the political and administrative structure was not at all suitable for development of village. There were Panchayats but these Panchayats could be
abolished at the sweet will of the State or the District functionaries. They had no funds to carry on development works. Now this defect has been removed and we must give full credit to Rajiv Gandhi for his Panchayati Raj amendment, the bill was actually passed in the time of Narsimha Rao. The Panchayats are now elected bodies. They cannot be abolished at the sweet will of the district bureaucracy or the State Government. The Panchayats are a part of the constitution and the government. They are elected representative of the people of the village. A lot of criticism was heard about misuse and embezzlement of funds. But the present Panchayats must get their accounts audited and checked by proper authorities.

“Gramin Vikas” means the development of the village. There should be all round economic, social and political development. The concept of political development was first developed in the United States. The American universities were well funded to study the problems of underdeveloped economics of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The problem was studied in detail by the institutions like World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank. Amartya Sen received his Nobel Prize for writing on the “Economics of Poverty”. The special studies show that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank have generated a lot of data on the development aspects of the underdeveloped countries including India.

**Infrastructure**

The above studies led to the invention of the word infrastructure. While we talk of political, economic and social development we must understand the term infrastructure. The word includes the following:

1. Education
2. Health services
3. Road development
4. Employment opportunities, which are possible only when the people are provided with opportunities to work in big or small cottage industries.
5. Provision of drinking water
6. Electricity.
8. Provision of green land, protection of trees and plantation of trees
10. Marketing facilities.

Now a day the development in information technology is much stressed. Newspaper, TV, radio and computer are becoming an essential part of development. All these facilities will “modernize” the village or the town.
Modernization
This is a western concept but is now a day adopted by backward and underdeveloped countries. The concept included the following:

(1) Change of outlook so that the people can look to the outer world especially towards the Western World.

(2) People must give up their outmoded habits and beliefs. They must adopt a scientific rational attitude towards their problems.

The European countries themselves took a long time to leave the middle ages, the Biblical age and adopt the scientific ideas. When they rejected the idea that the Sun moves round the earth there was a lot of hue and cry. Similarly when Hobbes wrote that the Christians by following everything in the Bible and not questioning the Biblical assumptions the church ordered that he is to be burnt alive.

Now the west has adopted a rational attitude. The scientific age is passed and now the west has entered the age of technology. Similarly India has also entered the age of technology. But a lot remains to be done to remove outmoded social customs, religious beliefs and traditions. The Oraons of Bagicha still follow the witchcraft and the witch doctors.

Fortunately the Oraons are free of outmoded social customs like untouchability and child marriage. There is complete equality and sense of social justice in the Oraon Society.

Women are also free and equal
Unlike the Hindu villages where the Brahmans, Kshatriyas predominate (though not in number but in power and wealth), the Oraons treat their women on a footing of equality with men.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions are revolutionizing the Rural Societies. Bagicha is fast developing. There are two important institutions; the Ramakrishna Mission School and the Christian Mission School, they are modernizing Bagicha and its surroundings with modern ideas. The most revolutionary changes will be brought by

(1) Panchayati Raj elections at 5 years interval.

(2) The institution of Gram Sabha.
Footnotes

(1) Chhattisgarh Government, Panchayat and Gramin Vikas Vibhag, Tristariya Panchayati Raj, Raman Governments Publication, (no date) P. 57
(2) Ibid
(3) Interview with Patwari of Bagicha, Shri Chandra.
(4) Refer to section of Interviews
(5) Tristariya Panchayati Raj, Quoted above, pp. 34-37.
(6) Ibid
(7) Ibid
(8) Ibid
(9) Ibid
(11) Ibid
(12) Ibid
(13) Ibid, Section 44
(14) Ibid
(15) Tristariya Panchayati Raj, pp. 45-46.
(16) Ibid
(17) Ibid, Section 178. Land Revenue code 234.
(19) Chhattisgarh Gramin Vikas Sansthan Raipur, Panchayat Avam Gramin Vikas Vibhag Chhattisgarh Shashan (no date of publication).
(22) Ibid, p. 47
(23) Ibid. p. 48
(24) Ibid p. 49
(25) Ibid, p. 50
(26) Ibid, p. 51
(27) Ibid p. 52
(28) Ibid p. 53
(29) Ibid
(30) Ibid p. 54
(31) Ibid
(32) Ibid p. 55
(33) Ibid
(34) Ibid p. 56
(36) Tristariya Panchayati Raj p. 57.
(37) Ibid p. 58
(39) Ibid
(40) Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 25.08.2005.
(41) Ministry of Rural Development Government of India.
(43) Navbharat, Raipur, for these movements the files of the following papers for the month of March April 1906.
   Navbharat- Raipur
   Dainik Bhaskar- Raipur
   Deshbandhu- Raipur
   Amrit Sandesh- Raipur
(44) Gabriel Almond was appointed to act as an editor “For Committee for Comparative Politics” by the Princeton University 1963-65. Under his editorship the following books were published;
   (a) Pye, Lucien: Bureaucracy and Political Development.
   (c) Coleman, James, S.: Bureaucracy and Political Development, 1965.
   (d) Lucien Pye and Syduey Verba: Political Culture and Political Development.

The reports of World Bank International Monetary Fund and Asian Bank. Amartya Sen’s Writings and articles published in different papers.