Chapter VIII

Conclusion

My thesis is a behavioural research of an Oraon village of Bagicha. It is a tribal village, now slowly changing into a small township. It is not only the headquarter of Gram Panchayat but also the headquarter of Block Panchayat. The main road in the village is wide enough to give it an appearance of a small town. The lanes in the village are not muddy even in rainy season. The houses are clean and quite spacious though very few of them are pucca houses. The mud houses look very beautiful.

The setting of the village is very fine and attractive and the village deserves the name Bagicha (garden). It is like the Biblical Garden of Eden, surrounded by small hills, mountains, forests, streams full of water and a waterfall. All these things definitely can attract tourists. The climate is temperate. It is a double-crop area unlike many villages of Chhattisgarh. Paddy and wheat both are sown. The villagers seem to be well contended. Outside the Bagicha village is the Christian church, the School and the Hostel and on the other side is the Ramakrishna Mission. Both the institutions are modernizing the Oraon village.

Importance of the Gram Panchayat Bagicha

Gram Panchayats are now constitutional bodies. They are elected every five years. The M.P.s, MLAs, the Block and the District Panchayat all are dependent on the Gram Panchayats. The voters of village vote in the election of the MLAs, the MPs, the Blocks and the District Panchayats. No politician can now evade a village.

The Structure of Panchayat Government

The voters of the village now elect their Panchs and Sarpanchs. The constitution prohibits the parties to participate in Panchayat elections. This is to avoid too much politics and politicking in village affairs. Now the age of voters has been reduced to 18 years so that many school and college going students can participate in Panchayat elections.

The Panchs constitute their executive body by electing their Panchayats. They meet regularly every month and in necessity twice or thrice in a month. A small body in a small area can very well discuss the problems facing in the village. There are several schemes of development of the Centre and the State Government. These two Governments grant the funds liberally for implementing the schemes. In national papers the news of defalcation and corruption in the Panchayat bodies are regularly published. Hence the Governments have tightened their control over the Panchayat bodies. There are strict rules of accounting and auditing. The BDO
is responsible for such irregularities. The Collector should also be careful about these irregularities. Despite these tight controls, the Panchs and Sarpanch try to gain irregular gains in collusion with the contractors and material suppliers. The most important body is the Gram Sabha. The aim is to invite all the voters in the Gram Sabha. If it functions properly then everything will be all right. But the villagers have not understood the importance of the Gram Sabha. In this body they can discuss every thing pertaining to the village. But the villagers of Bagicha have not yet understood the importance of the Gram Sabha. Attendance is hardly 20 to 30 percent. Mostly the meetings are adjourned due to the insufficiency of the members.

The functions of Gram Panchayat, Infrastructure Building

It encompasses every thing pertaining to the village. They are mostly developmental functions. They may be termed as the building of the infrastructure. This concept of infrastructure, as related to Bagicha Gram Panchayat includes the following:

1. **Good schools with good teachers** - This condition is fulfilled with the establishment of two very good schools, which is not to be found, even in many cities of Chhattisgarh. The Christian Mission School and the Ramakrishna Mission School, besides there is Government Primary School.

2. **Good Hospitals** - The primary health centre and the Block hospitals do cater to the needs of the villagers.

3. **Good Roads** - The main road is a metal road and very good road. The lanes in the Wards, though narrow are not dusty or muddy. In many villages and in cities the houses are congested and look like Gandhi Bastis (dirty villages). Such Gandhi Bastis and Jhuggi Jhoparis (slums) are not found in Bagicha.

4. **Drinking Water Supply** - In every Ward water storages have been built. This is a water tank built by the Gram Panchayat.

5. **Water Resource and Irrigation Facilities** - There is no dearth of water in Bagicha. The stream of the Rajpuri waterfall flows throughout the year. The water is used for irrigation purpose. As a result the crops, paddy and wheat are sown.

6. **Forest Products** - The surrounding hills and jungles supplies fire wood, mahua, harra, baheera, awla and char chirongi. There are full of medicinal plants in the forests, which are not yet discovered but should be discovered for preparation of life saving drugs.

7. **Income to the Family** - The people rear pigs and hens and other domestic animals. The jackfruit trees are found in abundance. The tendu
patta is collected in summer. These add to the income of the tribal families.

(8) **Possibility of Production of Electricity:** The Rajpuri waterfall can be used for generating electricity.

**The politicization of the Gram Panchayat**

Politics is not so much visible in this small village but the political parties and the elites do have a part in awakening the people.

1. **Political Parties** - BJP and Congress Parties at the national level have their grass roots organization in this small village. Bagicha as a Gram Panchayat of Chhattisgarh was first under the control of the Congress Party now it is being controlled by the BJP.

Most of the Christians and the Vaishya Community and other rich people belong to the Congress Party. But there is no cutthroat competition between these political parties. Rather they coexist. The Sarpanch and the majority of Panchs belong to the BJP.

BJP and Congress, both do not miss a single opportunity to participate in the social and religious affairs of the tribal people. The BJP took a leading part in organizing the Sarhul festival. Sarhul is a great festival of the Oraon people. The BJP minister of the same constituency also participated in this great festival of the Oraons. The villages had many Sarhul festivals where the people were dancing to their hearts full.

2. **Pressure Groups** - They are not visible but women and farmers are trying to organize their interests in groups. The movement is visible about the pressure or the interest groups but there has been no strikes or dharnas organized. It is a silent village like most of the villages of Chhattisgarh. But there are signs of political awakening. In history as we have seen the Oraons, Mundas and other tribes inhabiting these villages have risen against the autocratic rules of their Rajas and land lords.

3. **The Elites** or the leaders are also not so much visible on the political scene as in cities. But still there are elites or leaders who hanger for political power. The elites are mostly to be found in the Christian Community, the people engaged in commerce and trade, the Christian leaders, the Patwari, the Sarpanch and the Panchs. They raise some issues on the political scene and take the matter to the political parties to be placed before the Government.

Elites are leaders in politics whose aim is to gather power, to exercise this power on the people. They raise the issues of the public and constantly bring them to the notice of the people. In the absence of a well-developed polity, the Panchs and Sarpanchs may be said to be the rural tribal elites. They bring the problems of the village in the Panchayat and Gram Sabha meetings. The discussions are recorded
and sent to the Block, from the Block to the District and from the District to the State Government.

A village free from Casteism - Equality and Liberty prevailing
The Oraons unlike other backward classes and scheduled castes in plain regions of Chhattisgarh are free from casteism, inequality, untouchability and such other degrading features. The Oraon society is free from the evils of casteism, inequality and untouchability. There is no feeling of hatred among the Oraon people. The feeling of liberty and equality prevails among the people.
The Oraons had been claiming their descent from Rawan, the Rakshas king of Lanka. The Rakshas and other tribal people are against the Brahmin culture of dividing society into four castes and placing the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas at the top and being assisted by the Vaishyas or the commercial community.

With liberty and equality comes the feeling of social justice and women' equal rights with men
One caste doesn't rule over the other castes, as the Oraons have no castes the women are held in high esteem. They work with men on equal footing. In the plains of Chhattisgarh women get a lower position in society than men. They go to the fields, the forests and the work place and after coming to home they do the domestic work of cooking and rearing children and looking after other affairs of the home.

Socialization
There is a constant socialization process among the Oraon society. They are people close to the mountains and the forests, the birds and animals of the forests and the hills. Fishing in nallahs, streams and rivers also take a lot of time. Hence the Oraons like the Mariya and Muriya Gonds of Bastar do not care much for their fields and crops. They are inferior cultivators as compared to the people in the plains of Chhattisgarh. The people in the plains of Chhattisgarh produce more than their needs, they sell the surplus in the Mandis. But the Oraons like the Mariya and Muriya Gonds produce just as much as they need and hence have very little to sell in the Mandis. They keep whatever they produce for the whole year. These Oraons depend on the mahua, char, tendu, and other forest products. They also catch fish in the streams. They do not bother about the cows and other milk cattle. They rear pigs and keep poultry. Thus the Oraon tribals like other tribals drink a lot, both man and woman. How far will this habit be changed by the modernizing forces is yet to be seen.
In a separate appendix I have added some songs of the Oraons they vividly depict their relation to nature; the hills and the forests, the trees, the birds, the animals and the forces of nature.
Suggestion

(1) The government must understand culture, traits, habits and thinking of these Oraons before implementing any scheme in their area. For example, the Raman Government has miserably failed in giving the tribals cows and that too high milk yielding cows (like the Jersey and Sahinals).

The tribal of Chhattisgarh like the Oraons, Marwa, Muriya, Blifta, Kanwar, Pahadi Korwas are not at all interested in cows. They drink milk very little, they drink Mahua, sarsi and other drinks a lot and will never take the trouble to keep cows and feed them. Where will they sell the milk even if they keep the cows because the tribals do not purchase milk. Hence the tribals have rejected the offer of cows by the government.

(2) Instead the Oraons and other tribals want "Van Bhumi" rights on forest lands from which the Britisher's and afterwards the Government have ejected them.

(3) "Swa Sahayata Samuh" or self-help groups should be formed among Oraons. The Chhattisgarh Adivasi Vikas Samiti has suggested that the tribals should form their own Swa Sahayata Samuh. The tribals suffer from various drawbacks like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition and diseases. Hence "Swa Sahayata Samuh" will help the tribals. The members will contribute Rs.10, 20 or more in this fund. The government or banks will also add in this fund. From this fund loans may be given to the needy tribals.

These savings are the first step towards development. Regular savings will create a big fund in time and more loans will be given in future.

This will also create a spirit of independence. They will not depend on government or banks or moneylenders. The banks will also help to persons who want to have big loans.

(4) The Gram Panchayat of Bagicha should be well politicized. The activities of the political parties, pressure groups and elites should be considerably increased.

Elections to various bodies are being regularly held like the elections to Gram Panchayats, Blocks Panchayat, District Panchayats, the Vidhan Sabha and the Lok Sabha. People are also participating in these democratic bodies. But the elections cannot be properly contested if political parties have no strong base in Bagicha. The parties socialize the people in the process of democratic ways. They discuss about the success or failure of Government.

Bagicha is a beautiful village and block but is situated in the interior of the tribal belt and parties generally avoid going to this village. It is also true that the situation now demands that the parties go to such interior villages and have a first hand knowledge of condition of tribals.

Many Writers have defined political parties. Edmund Burke gave the classical definition of democracy. He emphasized on national interest. But the modern definitions emphasized on power. The parties want to capture power through

While defining a party the characterization of Harold Lasswell should be kept in mind, “power... who gets what, where, how and when.” Thus it is not national, regional or local interests that lead the parties to contest election but to capture power and form their Government.

Bagicha has seen the national parties contesting the Panchayat elections. Up to 2003, the Congress controlled the Panchayat but now the BJP has captured the power. We have to evaluate the work of both the political parties as to whether they have served the interest of the Bagicha people well. But the present BJP Government functioning only for two years it is not possible to compare the working of both the political parties. The BJP Sarpanch says that he would make Bagicha a real ‘garden’. He would beautify Bagicha by constructing wider roads, providing playground, providing better facilities of drinking water, good schools, good hospitals etc.

Let us see whether he succeeds or not. The political parties help in modernizing process. They bring the modern ideas of development, equality, liberty, social justice, women’s emancipation etc.

Pressure groups are very necessary to voice the demands of the people. They are primary organization for input functions in a democratic society. But Bagicha has not developed pressure groups and hence the voice of the people remains subdued.

The demands articulated at Bagicha is not put forth loudly, still the people express their multifarious wants in different ways. People discuss the in their informal meetings. Many wants cannot be satisfied by the Government hence they do not take the form of demands. Only those wants that can be satisfied by the Government are articulated as demands. Here the pressure groups do not articulate their demands loudly “hamari mange puri karo” but are slowly and silently expressed in their informal meetings. These demands are expressed before the party leaders, the MPs, the Ministers, the MLAs, the Collectors and the BDOs etc. These demands may be expressed as:

1. The demands of the farmers
2. The demands of the labourers
3. The demands of people working in the forests like tedu patta collectors, forest product collectors and demand for Van Bhumi
4. To allot places for Sarhul dance and other social activities
5. To improve the market place
6. To improve the condition of the government school building such as repair of broken tiles, walls, desk and bench etc.
7. Forests around Bagicha are thinning. Hence more trees, especially the big trees are to be planted.
To beautify the spot where there is waterfall. As the government is failing to supply electricity throughout the day, the waterfall may be utilized for generating electricity.

The input output circle of demands

The feed back circle of dissatisfaction with the governmental activities.

The articulation of demands raised at the grass roots level is termed as the Input and thus the pressure groups are formed at the Gram level.
But there is a difference between the pressure groups in the cities which raise their voice very loud “hamari mange puri karo…… jo hamse takraega mitti me milgayega”.

In Bagicha we rarely see big processions, big dharnas, loud speeches condemning the Government and giving petitions to the Collectors or the Governor or Ministers.

The people of Bagicha do not assemble in large numbers except during the Sarhul festival. When Sarhul festival is celebrated the main road is practically full of Oraon tribals. The drums and the dholaks are beaten to the full and men and women sing and dance for the whole day.

The ministers and the politicians do not miss such occasions and are seen pouring their political speeches and promising that they will do this thing and that thing for tribals. But the promises remain unfulfilled. Once the ministers, the politicians and other VIPs leave Bagicha, they forget their promises.

Of course the politicians again return when there are elections to Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha. This time, the people as voters have their turn. They remind the MPs and MLAs about their promises, which have remained unfulfilled.

Thus there are pressure groups in Bagicha, but they do not fight or shout slogans like the city pressure groups. They mildly place their demands but they do pressurize the politicians, the ministers and administrators in a mild way.

The political parties integrate the demands of the pressure groups. The Government can satisfy not all demands; hence the parties select those demands, which can be put into practice.

The Gram Sabha at present is not taking any keen interest in the problems of the village. Very few people turn out to attend its meeting but the Government has instructed the Collectors and BDOs to see that people do attend these vital meetings.

The input-output circle enables the Government and the Administration to know about the demands of the people. And the Government tries to satisfy the people in their own way, but the people may not be satisfied by the governmental actions.

The dotted line in the above diagram shows the “feed back” of the people. Their representatives carry the dissatisfaction of the people to the Government and the Administration at the Block or the Administrative level.

Two recent examples of dissatisfaction can be given:

(1) The Government has implemented the midday meal system in schools. It is not working well, the teachers are troubled to give meals to their students and it requires lot of trouble to cook the meals. Much of the time of teachers is taken in providing meals. There is no education.

(2) The Government decided to distribute cows to the tribals. But the tribals are not interested in cows. They want “Van Bhumi” and their rights in the forests.
The Elites in Bagicha
There are tribal leaders in Bagicha who raise the issues demanded by the people. The leaders who politicize the issues and fight for these issues may be termed as the elites.
Elites are to be found as leaders in political parties and pressure groups that lead the people. The elites lead and the people follow.
A pressure group is not possible without its leader. Many writers have tried to define the pressure groups like H. Zigler, Almond, Powell, Nac Iver, Page, V.O.Key, Harold J. Laski, Pater Ode Guard, Alfred de Grazia, Earl Latham, Allen Ball, J.C. Johari (their works are mentioned in the Bibliography).
These elites are also to be found in political parties. Political parties have been defined by Edmund Burke, Joseph La Palombara, Myron Veiner, Sigmund Newman, Aldori Ball, Eldersweld, Joseph Schumpeter etc. (their works are mentioned in the bibliography).
Elites are termed as power elites. For our purpose we do not include those leaders as elites who are religious or social leaders unless they struggle for a share in political power. Hence the definition of Harold Lasswell has been taken as the ideal of elite definitions- “power...... who gets what, where, how and when”. Pareto, Machiavelli, C. Wright Mills, Burnham and others have defined elites. (their works are mentioned in bibliography).
A Panch will be regarded as elite because he contests election for securing power, the power may be very little. Still he is an elite because he leads his Ward and raises the problems of his Ward.

The functions of these three pillars of politics with reference to Bagicha Gram Panchayat
(1) Socialization - They bring the people in the general current of the society. People are generally disinterested in affairs outside their homes and family. But there are many issues and problems which effect them as they are members of the bigger society like avoiding child marriages, not to pay dowry, to participate in social and religious functions like Sarhul, Christian festivals, Hindu festivals etc. The role of women in society is checking evils like gambling, drinking, to discard outmoded customs and Jadutona (the witch craft and the witch doctors).
The MLA, the MPs the Panchs, the Sarpanchs and the party leaders are all elites they all perform the function of socialization. They bring the sleeping village in contact with the tribal society and the plain regions of Chhattisgarh.
At present the Press and the TV do not play any significant role in socializing the people. There is only one or two TV serials found on socialization. Similarly very few newspapers are being sold in Bagicha.
Politicization - The elites, the political parties and the pressure groups bring the people into the contact of politics inside and outside the village. People have started taking interest in not only local affairs but also State and National affairs. They have started discussing these things in the Gram Sabhas and the Panchayat meeting. Moreover the villagers have to go to the Block headquarter which is in Bagicha itself and come to know about many things.

Change of tribal culture to modern culture - Outmoded practices like believing in their tribal leaders, witch doctors and baigas are giving way to modern ways of thinking and doing things. The Christian Mission and the Ramakrishna Mission are doing a great service in modernizing the tribal people and their ways of thinking. Already the tribal people are not so outmoded in their thought and practices. They are animistic, believing in natural forces of earth, water, air, trees, forests and so on. Their tribal religion, their way of thinking and their philosophy easily lend them to accept the modern ideas of liberty, equality, and social justice.

Status of Women - Women's status is very high in Oraon society as compared to women residing in plain lands of Bilaspur, Raipur, Durg, Rajnadgaon and so on. They enjoy the rights of equality, liberty and social justice.

Equality - Untouchability is not found anywhere in this tribal region. No subjugation of man-by-man and no higher and lower castes exist. Living close to the Nature; hills, forests, mountains, rivers, animals and birds have endowed in them the spirit of equality and liberty. There is a feeling that all are sons and daughters of the Nature.

Political Change Towards Modernity
Like other places the Bagicha region is fast changing. It is coming into contact with democratic changes by taking part in many elections. The mode of cultivation is also changing. The farmers are growing both paddy and wheat in abundance. They learned to use fertilizers and high breed crops. Everything is changing in tribal garden (Bagicha); the dress, the diet, the way of talking and the way of thinking. The people take part in entertainment programme like famous Sarhul dance, festivals and the programme of TV. People go to nearby cities of Ambikapur and Jashpur and enjoy the cinema and other activities.

Political development-Infrastructure
The infrastructure leads to the all round development of this tribal city. People are already enjoying the modernizing influence of two institutions; the Christian Mission School and the Ramakrishna Mission School. There is a Government
Primary School but there are less number of teachers, the building is dilapidated condition and there is no playground.
The Gram Panchayat is placing great importance on roads, water reservoirs, water for irrigation, Government grain shops etc.

Suggestions

(2) More trees should be planted inside as well as outside the village. Only big trees should be planted like Jackfruits (which grows in abundance, the mango trees, the tamarind trees, Siris and Jamun).

(3) Tribals like pigs and poultry. Pigs are cheap and do not require costly food to feed them. The Government Officials must encourage them.

(4) Some have suggested that industries be opened around Bagicha. But it will harm the environment of Bagicha. The water flowing in the river and small streams will be polluted even the green fields will be affected.

(5) With its temperate climate many medicinal plants like haraa, bahera, awla, and many other such plants and trees can be planted. The old residents and the baigas know many plants that are used by tribals in the treatment of several diseases. They should be encouraged. Bagicha should be a research centre for herbs and medicinal plants.

(6) Tribal children are very healthy and they should be given opportunity in various sports activities.

The ideals placed by pioneers are no longer valid
In the past very good suggestions have been made to improve the condition of the village, to uplift them from poverty and to make them self-sufficient and self-supporting. The institutions established by pioneers are:

(1) Mahatma Gandhi’s Sevagram
(2) Tagores Shantiniketan
(3) Kumarappa’s suggestion about cottage industries

All of them supported that cottage industries that have been destroyed by the advent of British rule should be revived.

Albert Meyer’s Pilot project of the Sixties was a famous report
It is now being slowly accepted but grudgingly that science and technology gives with one hand but takes whatever it has given with another hand. Science and technology has resulted in increasing material goods for many times. The quality and quantity of material goods have increased in large extend. The people’s standard of living and material comforts have increased.
But on the other hand pollution and degradation of environment has increased several times. The natural resources; the land, air, water and forests are all being polluted. Once destroyed can we get back these natural resources? No we cannot get back these natural resources. Once destroyed they are destroyed forever. We cannot revive our cottage industries on the lines suggested by Gandhi, Tagore and Kumarappa. The machine age, the age of technology is leading us, rather forcing us to very large industries; these industries are becoming worldwide. Hence we must be satisfied with the demands of the age and the spirit of the age.

Bagicha is safe from pollutions and it should be permitted to remain a “garden village” or a garden city like the Biblical Garden of Eden. Bagicha is surrounded by hills, mountains, forests, waterfalls, rivers and streams. The simple Oraon tribals enjoying their dances and the simple ways of living.

The constitutional reform of 1993 has revolutionized these villages. They are now self-governing. They have their executive and legislature powers in the form of Gram Panchayats and the institution of direct democracy in the form of Gram Sabhas.

Rajiv Gandhi has given to the people by reviving the ancient direct democracy that existed in Greece and India in ancient times. Buddha greatly praised the Licchavi Gantantras and Rousseau, the prophet of French revolution praised the Athenian democracy. Rousseau said if you give your representatives to govern you, to make laws for you, to execute these laws and to administer justice, then you become the slaves of these representatives. You cannot pass good laws, you cannot execute them properly, and you cannot administer justice for other people. Hence you must participate directly in law making, in discussion about your affairs and administer justice.

Hence the Bagicha Gram should develop its institution of Gram Sabha. Laski has quoted in his grammar of politics the famous Athenian orator Periclese, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” People perish if they do not look after their own affairs.