Chapter XII

PANCHAYATI RAJ - A SUMMING-UP

The main consideration that led the fathers of the Panchayati Raj movement to take this historic step, was to strengthen the nascent democracy of India at the grassroots, and to provide a suitable agency for the social-economic development of the countryside. It was hoped that if, on the one hand, the mass of people, living in the innumerable villages of the country, inculcate a spirit of self-help and begin to vigorously participate in the development programmes, and, on the other, there is built up a strong cadre of village leaders who think seriously about the problems of their community and can inspire their brethren to action - democracy will grow roots firmly in the soil, never to be shattered again.

Five years in the life of an institution is too short a period for an adequate assessment of its success or failure. In the case of Panchayati Raj, however, five years (of its existence) have been quite significant. As this study reveals, the working of this new institutional complex during this short period has brought to light the various shortcomings which have tended to hamper its rapid development.

As regards the first objective of Panchayati Raj, namely the development of the concept of a participatory democracy at the local level, not much success seems to have been made. This objective was sought to be achieved by means of the institution of the Gram Sabha. What has been observed in the course of this study is that the
meetings of the Gram Sabha are neither held regularly nor are they largely attended. This is substantiated by the fact that the sixteen Gram Panchayats, during the course of the last three years, have held only 77 percent of the required number of meetings and 60 percent of them were such which had an attendance below 25 percent of the members. (For detailed reference, see Table Nos. 21 and 22).

The poor development of the Gram Sabha cannot be attributed to either the lack of education on the part of the people or the lack of proper facilities such as a common venue or a medium of publicity of the date of the meetings and such other factors. Had the former been the cause, the Gram Sabha would have made greater impact on the inhabitants of the road-side villages where the level of general education is comparatively far higher than that of the inhabitants of the interior-most villages. But the findings are just the reverse. Had the latter been the cause, then the Gram Sabha would have been far less developed in the interior-most villages which being far less developed have neither the suitable public buildings where people can hold a meeting nor efficient means of communications so that they can make it convenient to attend them. But even that is not true.

The fact that the Gram Sabha has been more successful in the interior-most villages than the road-side villages, is not just an incidental happening to be brushed aside lightly. But it is something very much significant, providing a clue to the underlying forces that are continuously but imperceptibly influencing the way of life of a developing people. Hitherto our villages
were more or less isolated rural localities. There was very little flow of the modern ideas in them. But with the coming of the Independence and along with it the greater attention of the Government towards the rural problems, a revolution has taken place in our villages. More roads connecting the inner-most land-locked areas have been constructed, land reforms of far-reaching consequence have taken place, schools have been set up all over the country side, economic assistance has been provided to the under-developed sections of the village community in order to enable them to get rid of their backwardness, innumerable officials equipped with the latest ideas and techniques have started going round the country-side to-day. All these factors have combined together to bring about a tremendous change in the mental make up of the rural folk, their way of living, apart.

Consequently, our village people are not the same as they were, say, two decades back. They are in the process of developing the same sophisticated outlook as their brethren living in neighbouring towns and cities possess. They expect their local Government institutions to provide them the same civic amenities as municipalities provide to the town people. With the increasing economic prosperity they do not mind even to pay for the additional benefits they can get. Since they have also developed a consciousness for better living, they are more highly engaged in their multi-sided economic pursuits. (The old feature that an Indian peasant would have, remain idle for days at a stretch is disappearing). They have, thus neither the time nor the will to undertake mass-scale
development activities. They wish everything to be done by the government. When they find the latter doing everything for the town people, they become all the more averse to it.

The cumulative effect of all this is that the concept of participating democracy does not have much chances of flourishing. So long as the people are not much influenced by the fast-spreading cult of modern civilisation (as is the case with the interior-most village people to-day), they can be successfully urged to come to the meetings of the Gram Sabha. They may also enthusiastically respond to any call for the community work. But with the flow of the modern ideas and modes of living, their enthusiasm will gradually grow less. The same situation shall, ultimately, come to prevail as we find in the road-side villages to-day. This is one of the trends that has emerged from the functioning of Panchayati Raj during the last five years.

It may be accepted that in the ultimate shape of things to come, the concept of participating democracy may lose its force and significance. But so long as our rural society is in the traditional phase, this concept can prove of immense benefit to the people. It can, on the one hand, speed up the tempo of the development work, and, can, on the other, help root out corruption at

1. Krishnamchari, V.T., "What is essential is that everywhere villagers should be enabled to make their own decisions... and contribute as much voluntary labour as they can to works that benefit the entire community. It is only, thus, that improvement can become possible on the scale we desire". Address to the Sixth Development Commissioners' Conference, Ministry of Community Development, 1939, p. 22.
the village level. All efforts should, therefore, be made to promote this concept by developing and popularising the concept of the Gram Sabha. The factors that are responsible for arresting the growth of the Gram Sabha, as detailed in chapter VII, should be properly looked into and carefully improved.

Taking up the other objective of Panchayati Raj, namely the building up of a strong cadre of local leaders, one finds that with the establishment of the Panchayati Raj institutions, as many 4,340 offices of the Panches and Sarpanches have been thrown open before the people in Kangra district alone. From amongst them are elected the members of the Panchayat Samitis and the Vila Parishad. All these offices provide ample opportunities to the people to come up and display their potentialities. Hitherto, there was no such opportunity. The institutions of Panchayati Raj, have, thus assumed a regular supply of local leaders, equipped with the necessary training in the art of government.

But it is somewhat disappointing to note that out of the total number of 240 members of the sixteen Gram Panchayats and five Panchayat Samitis that were covered under this study, as many 126 members, i.e. 52 percent are totally illiterate, (Table No. 57). Out of the rest 36 percent are the under-matriculates, 38 percent matriculates and hardly 6 percent are those who have received higher education.

The poor educational level of the leadership is one of the important factors that hinder the success of the Panchayati Raj institutions. It is a fact that unless men of quality, equipped with a reasonable standard of general education, are elected to these bodies, their functioning cannot improve. Almost all the respondents suggested that a certain minimum educational standards be prescribed as one of the qualifications for the membership of these institutions. The Study Team on Panchayati Raj in Punjab also made recommendations to that effect.

The question arises, how at all this is possible in a democratic set-up which rules out the possibility of splitting up the electorate on any basis, including

education. To divide the people between the educated and the un-educated will, in the first instance, conflict with the social ethics. It may be argued that if a few are uneducated, it is the society that is to be held responsible for this lapse. Secondly, to exclude the un-educated from being elected to the Panchayati Raj bodies (and for that purpose to any governing body) is to deny them the basic right of democracy.

Thirdly, it will conflict with the established electoral law of the country which does not prescribe any qualifications - academic or otherwise, for the membership of the State and Union legislatures. It may, therefore, be said in the end that present practice of open election should be continued. As more education makes its headway in the country-side, better people will be elected.

Besides, illiteracy, factionalism is another weakness of the elected leadership in the Panchayati Raj institutions. No other single factor has done so much harm to them as has been done by it. It is an admitted fact that greater the harmony of thought and interest, more paid is the pace of progress of an institution. As has been examined in the foregoing chapters, the more common disturbing factors are the economic interests and casteism. This study reveals that 62.5 percent of the leadership in the sixteen Gram Panchayats and the five Panchayat Samitis covered by it, is held by the traditionally privileged occupations, such as the landlords, shop-keepers and the services. Only 37.5 percent leadership is in the hands
of the poorer sections of society (Table No. 58). This is too bad a situation because unless all the different sections of the rural society are evenly represented in their local councils, these will not become ideal agencies of rural development. These would tend to be torn by mutual rivalry. But, this imbalance is expected to be gradually set right in due course of time because as has been noticed the poorer sections have captured half of the leadership at the Gram Panchayat level (the percentage of their share on the basis of occupation is 53, Table No. 2). Their position both in the Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis is likely to improve further with the growth of political education in them and the development of their economic standards.

Table No. 59

Showing the occupational break-up of the Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samiti leadership

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<tr>
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<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Traditionally prestige occupations</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>62.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditionally non-prestige occupation</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>37.5</td>
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The other, and more important, factor that is responsible for the present village factionalism, is the casti-sm. As has been stated already in chapter IV, village people are more particular about their castes. They struggle hard to secure a sizeable representation for their respective caste groups. There seems to be little chances of this menace of castel-sim to go in the near future. In certain
quarter a suggestion has, however, been quite frequently made, namely that the political parties should step in and contest local elections. It is the political parties, having a nation-wide appeal based on socio-economic programme of action, can alone cut across the caste barriers and weld the people with identical political views into one harmonious whole. But this suggestion has aroused lot of controversy.

There are two schools of thought. One led by the 'Sarvodaya' thinkers, is of the firm conviction that the jumping of the political parties into the field of the Panchayati Raj institutions will add another spur to the village factions. They, instead of getting abated, will become more acute and penetrating. These thinkers, therefore, suggest that the Panchayati Raj institutions should be left as much undisturbed by the political parties as possible.

The chief exponent of this school of thought is Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, who, expressing his opinion on this issue, says, "It is well worth emphasising that the success of Panchayati Raj would depend upon the extent to which organised political parties refrained from interfering with it and trying to convert it into their handmaid and using it as a jumping ground to climb to power. There is no doubt that as consciousness grows among the people at the ground level, they would be less and less liable to be moved about as pawns by political parties and ambitious politicians. But in the initial stages it is necessary for political parties in the interests of the people whom they claim to be anxious to serve to place
themselves under a self-denying ordinance and refrain from either setting up party candidates or putting pressures on the elected representatives to become party members, so as to be able to control the basic institutions of democracy.

The other School of thought, pleads for the active involvement of the political parties in the functioning of the Panchayati Raj institutions. They hold, as hinted in one of the preceding paragraphs, that the coming in of the political parties will break the narrow loyalties based on the caste and family allegiance.

One of the exponents of this view, says, "It is not realised that the village unity which is feared to be disturbed by the political parties is a myth and does not exist in reality, that political parties have an educative role to perform in the country's development and that party conflicts would eventually cut across caste cleavages and parochial loyalties, replacing the latter by political and secular divisions based on voluntary associations and some identification of programmes and principles in place of hereditary privileges and status considerations".

Supporting it, another writer remarks, "Politics is, as it appears, inevitable and there is nothing wrong about healthy politics having a full play in Panchayati

Raj institutions. This can even do considerable good to these units by helping in cutting across caste and religious loyalties and bringing about national and developmental outlook.

This School of thought, is moreover, of the opinion that it is rather impossible to keep politics out of the purview of the Panchayati Raj institutions. Since these institutions possess vast powers and are increasingly becoming the hub of the entire local administration, the political parties cannot simply afford to leave them out of their purview. Kamboodripad very rightly argues, that since Panchayats, under the new set up, shall not remain, as of old, the simple organs of local government with limited functions and authority, but are going to be the base of that political power which is called Panchayati Raj, as such the political parties will naturally be averse to any step that will keep them away from the seats of power.

The Committee on Panchayati Raj Election also makes a parallel observation, "Besides so long as these Panchayati Raj institutions have any real power and wield any influence among the people by the exercise of such power, there is bound to be a struggle among the political parties directly or indirectly, to put their own men in positions of power in these bodies."

Notwithstanding the fact of the increasing importance of these institutions, the villages otherwise occupy a very important place in the political set up of the country. Since the bulk of our people live in the villages, the political parties must intensify their activities in them and must try to enlist the support of the village leaders for their respective causes. The institutions of Panchayati Raj cannot, therefore, possibly escape the influence of the political parties. In this context, it may be mentioned that in the Fourth General Elections there are currently being held, as many as twenty-one candidates for the various the seats of the State and Union Legislatures in Kangra district, are such who are the members of the political parties. They are contesting on party tickets. In such a state of affairs, it will be too unrealistic on our part to expect of them to give up party loyalties at the time of the next election to the Panchayati Raj institutions or to hope that their attitudes and behaviours will not bear an indirect influence of politics. It is, therefore, not possible to rule out the possibility of keeping political parties out of the field of local bodies. H.C. Mathur quite aptly remarks, "Political parties with best of intentions may pass resolutions for keeping party politics out of Panchayats and a serious effort may even be made in that direction, but reason and common sense will not accept that such a thing will come about".

There is another reason also, and that is that the whole administrative set up of the country, from the Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha, is one organic whole. How is it ever possible that at the higher echelons political parties may play freely and the lower ones are left out completely? It is fantastic, as B. Maheswari calls it, to assume that the arena of local government can be separated from the arena of national government.

In the end, it can be safely remarked that it is not possible to keep the political parties completely out of the field of the Panchayati Raj institutions, for wherever there is power, there must be politics—a law as fundamental in political science, as supply and demand in economics. On the contrary, the entry of the political parties in the local field will have a very healthy effect of far-reaching importance both on the village life and the administration of these institutions.

Next to the people’s representatives who can contribute to the success of the Panchayati Raj institutions are the services working therein. Maddick describes them as the spinal cord of the whole organisation and remarks that “the success and failure of local government will almost certainly turn upon its quality. The necessity of having

well-trained officers, particularly in the first stages of local government development, is enormously important. Unless, therefore, the services are contented and their morale is high, there are bleak chances of the institution making much progress.

But what is actually found in the case of the services of the Panchayati Raj institutions is that they are far from being happy and contented. It has already been pointed out in Chapter VIII that the service conditions of the staff are low pay standards, poor promotional prospects, and few incentives. The obvious outcome is that men of good qualifications are not attracted towards the Panchayati Raj services, and whoever joins it is always on the look out of an opportunity to quit that at the earliest. They would prefer to change over to any other service. They generally consider their assignment in the Panchayati Raj institutions as mentioned by a number of the employees interviewed, as the second rate one. The instances where they have been jeered at by the Governmental wing of the Panchayat Samiti staff, have been come across in abundance. This is quite a deplorable state of affairs. It is, therefore, highly desirable in the interests of efficiency and overall progress of the Panchayati Raj institutions that their employees be paid adequately and should be provided proper incentives to keep up their morale.

In this connection it may be emphasized once again that the invidious distinction between the government staff and the Samiti staff should be done away with, and further, or steps should be taken to have a complete integration of services of all the three institutions. Although the integration of the Panchayati Raj Services has already been done, yet some of the key posts, such as those of the Secretary, Zila Parishad, executive and extension officers of the Panchayat Samiti still lie outside the scope of the integrated service.

The fully integrated Panchayati Raj service needs to be classified into three cadres, namely, class I, Class II and Class III. All the Clerks (including the Head Clerks), stenographers, typists, tax-collectors, Panchayat Secretaries, gram Sevaks, etc., be put into class III. The Extension Office s, the Superintendents of the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad offices, the taxation officer, etc., be encadred in class II and the Executive Officers of the Panchayat Samitis, the Secretaries of the Zila Parishads, the District Agricultural Officer, the District Panchayati Raj Officer in Class I. The latter two officers be given a selection grade in class I service, if at all their superiority is to be maintained. The scales of pay of all these classes should match with those of the State Services. This will go a long way to bolster up the morale of the Panchayati Raj personal.

The Class III services need to be recruited and appointed by the Chairman, Zila Parishad, on the advice of the
District Selection Committee and can be placed at the disposal of the various Panchayat Samitis. The latter should exercise such control over them as they do to-day in respect of the Governmental wing of their staff. In the same manner, the class II and class I services be recruited and appointed by the Governor on the advice of the State Public Service Commission, and should be put at the disposal of the Tila Panchayat and the Panchayat Samitis. Their jurisdiction over these services will be the same as in the case of Class III service.

This arrangement will eliminate some of the basic defects from which the Panchayati Raj services suffer to-day. With the integration of all the Class III services at the district level and those of class II and class I at the State level, the prospects of promotion for the employees will get brightened. To-day the petty officials of these institutions, as for example, the Secretary of a Gram Panchayat, have very limited chances of further promotion. In the same manner the Secretary of the Tila Panchayat would always remain a Secretary till he retires. This cast a very discouraging effect on their efficiency. There is the other aspect of the situation also, i.e., if any official does not function properly and creates a nuisance value, he cannot be easily got rid of by the institution he serves. But under the new system, all posts will become transferable. Both the institutions and employees who fail to pull on with each other can ask for their transfer.

Besides, new avenues of better career will open
upto the services. A secretary of a Gram Panchayat can now reasonably hope to get into class II service and become the superintendent of the Ilia Parishad or Panchayat Samiti office or the Social Education and Panchayat Officer. Similarly, an executive officer of a Panchayati Samiti and the Secretary of the "ila Parishad can aspire to be promoted to the district agricultural officer or the district panchayati Raj officer.

The encumbering of the post of the district agricultural officer with the Panchayati Raj service will, on the one hand, bring about greater co-ordination between the task of agricultural production and the Community Development Programmes, and, on the other, it will build up a strong cadre of officers, trained and experienced in the extension work, and, thus, eminently suited to fill up the post of the agricultural officer of the district level. In the same manner, the inclusion of the post of the district panchayati raj officer in the Panchayati Raj service will also provide a better field of experienced administrators for the selection of the incumbents for this office. Moreover, a person having a thorough knowledge of the working of the Panchayati Raj institutions when presides over this office, will definitely gear up its working and ultimately that of the Panchayati Raj institutions, as a whole.

Apart from the people's representatives and the services working therein, the State Government and its employees occupy a cardinal position in the development of Panchayati Raj. The responsibility of the Government is not confined to the mere establishment of the structural
frame of Panchayati Raj. But, like a mother, it has to continuously nurse it through the various stages of its development, guiding it at every step and dealing with the several difficulties which rise from time to time. The State Government should treat Panchayati Raj institutions as junior partners, in the common task of rural development and political growth rather than a subordinate agency to be ordered about.

A delicate issue in this respect is that of the nature of relationship between the State Government and the institutions of local government. Should the authority of the former over the latter extend to complete control over each and every activity of theirs or to simple supervision and guidance.

The situation, as it actually operates in the field is not much encouraging. The devolution of powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions, as has been effected by the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952, and the Punjab Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act, 1961, has been fairly substantial. But it has been noticed that the officials of the higher levels of the State Government do not seem to have so far learnt to respect the semi-autonomous character of the institutions. As it has already been discussed earlier, the sub divisional officers (civil) and the district level heads of the various development departments, in particular, have got a tendency to by-pass the authority of the non-official heads of these institutions and to straightway meddle in their affairs. Those officers have quite often been found passing orders to the executive officers and the extension officers without
 caring to route them through the chairman. Such a tendency is harmful to the proper development of these institutions. The position of elected leaders—both the Chairman and the members of these institutions, should be given due recognition by everyone and their authority be respected by the higher level officers in particular. Only then will these institutions acquire self-confidence and democracy will grow roots.

This tendency has not only been noticed on the part of the field officers of the State Government but on the part of the latter itself. It is manifest in the recent step that the Government took in constituting the Agricultural Production Committees at the district and block levels. The role of these committees has been described as purely advisory in character. But the instructions of the Government to the Tila Parishads and the Panchayat Samitis (as the plethora of correspondence between these institutions and the Commissioner for Agricultural Production and Rural Development reveals) are that the decisions of these committees should be treated by these institutions as instructions from above and should quite invariably be accepted and implemented by them. These instructions seem to give an indication that the Government has tended to encroach upon the legitimate sphere of the activity of the Panchayati Raj institutions.

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The considerations that weighed with the Government in constituting these Committees (namely, the acute urgency of enhancing agricultural production) may be quite justified, and, further on, the Government might have quite justifiably arrived at the conclusion that the institutions of Panchayati Raj might not be able to achieve the objective as speedily as desired. But that does not mean that the State Government should have chosen to meddle with their affairs in this manner. The Study Team On Panchayati Raj in Punjab very aptly remarks, "We may say that in case the State Government after watching the functioning of Panchayati Raj for two years, had come to the conclusion that agricultural production is a subject which cannot be handled efficiently and productively by popularly elected bodies, should have been bold enough to take away the subject from these bodies rather than indulge in double-think and create a situation which spoke well, neither of the faith of the Government in Panchayati Raj nor of the practicability of the set up created by infusing bureaucratic elements into the autonomous and statutory bodies at the District and Block levels."

The question of the relationship of the State Government with the Panchayati Raj institutions came up for discussion in the Seminar on Fundamental Problems of Panchayati Raj, organised by the All-India Panchayati Parishad.

in New Delhi in January, 1964. Some of the participants went to the extent of suggesting that the Constitution be amended and a separate list of subjects, falling with the jurisdiction of the Panchayati Raj bodies be drawn up so that the requisite degree of autonomy be conceded to them. They wished to limit the control of the State Government over these bodies to the constitutional provisions. It appears that they hold, as Maddick puts it, "that the autonomy of local government is axiomatic". But keeping in view the various limitations of the modern social structure within which local government institutions function in every country, full autonomy cannot be granted to them. MacNalty very rightly points out, "It is inevitable that all systems of delegated government must be controlled to a greater or lesser degree by a Central authority if equitable and just principles are to be maintained".

In the developing countries in which there is rampant mass scale illiteracy and where the officials have been trained in the authoritarian traditions, there it is all the more unsafe to leave the local government institutions to themselves. There are all the

possibilities that the politically inexperienced leaders of the people, intoxicated with newly devolved power, may abuse it to their personal advantage or to that of their friends and relations. There may be let loose an unending strife for supremacy between the officials and the non-officials. Commenting upon such tendencies, an Indian administrator remarks, "There is always a danger of political, economic and social institutions being captured or controlled by not merely undesirable parties but by the very people against whom they have been set up; so as to defeat the very purpose for which the institution is established".

The local government, as Henry Maddick very correctly points out, "is not just a machine to be operated by technicians. It is something that has got to be learned and the process of learning is not a swift one; it is a difficult technique, a difficult art". The power cannot, therefore, be straightway handed over to the people in a very premature way when they are not sufficiently trained for the purpose. The safest course is not only to space over the process of devolution to a number of stages, starting from the smaller doses of power and going over gradually to the larger ones, but, and more important, is to allow the State Government to exercise some control over these bodies.

What should be the nature of this control, is the

uous of the whole question. Shriman Narayan points out,

There is a natural tendency in bureaucracy to retain their

powers in the act of decentralisation. They tend to devise

a number of jerks and jolts and create bottlenecks in this

process. The obvious result is that quite often

the control of the State Government over the local
government institutions provides a long rope for the

officials to freely interfere in their functioning.

Anticipating confusion over this issue, Balwantrai

Mehta has observed, "The problem of guidance, supervision

and control is going to be a rather difficult one. The

idea of directing the Panchayati Raj institutions will have

to be replaced by the idea of guidance and supervision".

Ursula Hicks puts the issue in more blunt terms, "The

justified jurisdiction of the government vis a vis the

local government institutions extends to advice and supervi-
sion and certainly not to control".

This writer feels that the present statutory

provisions that define the nature of the governmental

control over the Panchayati Raj bodies, are more or less,
in keeping with the spirit of local autonomy. They need not

therefore, be modified. But, apart from them there should

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1. Shriman Narayan, Trends in Indian Planning, Asia

   Administration, October-December, 1962, p. 457.

3. Hicks, Ursula K., Development from Below, Clarendon
be cultivated some healthy conditions which may not only guide the actual operation of the activities of the field officers, but should also act as guidelines for the State Government while taking policy decisions.

In the gigantic task of rural development, people's representatives and services act as simply tools which frame and execute the various programmes. Healthy conventions governing the relations of the institutions of local government and the State Government act as an inspirational force that make them work more efficiently and effectively. But more important than anything else that can make a success of any development programme is the finance. Unless enough finances are available, nothing concrete is possible. So far as Panchayati Raj institutions are concerned, these do not possess them in adequate measure. This study reveals that these institutions get their income from two sources - taxes and grants-in-aid. The taxes are neither levied nor collected properly. This has been the case with both the house tax and the professional tax which form the main constituents of the incomes of the Gram Panchayats and the Panchayat Samitis.

As regards the grants-in-aid, the State Government does not seem to be quite generous in that behalf. During the last three years, a sum of Rs. 9,571,721.00 have been received by the five Panchayat Samitis covered

1. For detailed reference, see Table No. 41
in this study, which, if reckoned in terms of per capita, hardly comes to rupee one per head. Keeping in view the tremendous nature of the task of rural reconstruction, it is too inadequate. The record of performance of these bodies has by no means been bad. Whatever has been passed on to them, they have consumed it in a good manner. (Refer to Table Nos. 13 and 18). Their performance cannot therefore, be a valid reason to withhold the grants. What is needed is to help these bodies financially as much as is possible.

In the end, it may again be repeated that the State Government should take a sustained interest in their continuous development. Besides money, it should make a systematic study of their problems. It should set up an organisation on the pattern of the Planning Commission's Programme Evaluation Organisation which may keep itself in continuous touch with its day to day development by means of case studies, field surveys and seminars. Further, the State Government should also undertake investigations and studies with the collaboration of the three Universities which lie within its territorial bounds. The resources of the social sciences faculties of the Universities could be augmented by suitable additional grants so that these faculties could undertake objective research into the working of the Panchayati Raj institutions as well as arrange orientation courses for elected leadership and bureaucracy working within these institutions, in meaningful and stimulating manner.
A. **Personal background**

1. Name.
2. Designation.
3. Age.
4. Education.
5. Occupation.
6. Caste.
7. Political affiliation, if any.

B. **Training**

1. Have you received the training in any Panchayati Raj Training School? If yes, did you find it useful?

2. Have you any suggestion to offer in regard to the system of training?

C. **System of elections**

1. Do you like the system of direct election to the office of the Sarpanch? If not, why?

2. Do you like the present system of electing the members of the higher tiers from amongst the members of the lower tiers?

3. Which of the following factors weigh heaviest – with the people at the time of election? Caste/Education/Social service record/Family connections/power politics.
4. How can village factionalism and casteism be eliminated from the local elections?

5. What is your opinion, should political parties take part in local elections?

D. **Rural Leadership**

1. Does the traditional leadership, based on high caste, wealth and ancestry, still continue to rule your village? Yes/No.

2. How far have the hitherto under-developed sections of the rural society recovered their lost position? Fully/Partially/Not recovered at all.

3. If not recovered or recovered partially, what are the reasons for the same?

4. What is the nature of the new leadership? Is it based on caste, wealth, education, public service/the support of the political parties?

5. It has been observed that the leadership at the Gram Panchayat level in particular is mostly held by the illiterate or semi-literate people. What do you think are the reasons thereof?

6. What are the reasons why women could not become the active partners in the Panchayati Raj institutions?

7. The scheduled castes also could not develop much political consciousness. What are the reasons thereof?
7. a) What do you think how far has the system of co-option been helpful in pulling out the women and the scheduled castes from their political backwardness?

b) Do you like this system to continue?

8. Should political parties take part in the election of the Panchayati Raj institutions?

9. Relationship with the officials and the Panchayati Raj personnel

1. Are your relations with the Executive Officer/Secretary cordial? If so, is it due to the reason that —

   a) the officials have imbied the spirit of democracy?

   b) the officials have adopted an attitude of indifference and disinterestedness?

If the relations are not cordial, is it due to the reason that —

   a) the officials do not allow you to take policy decisions and interfere too much in your work; or

   b) do not co-operate with you, or

   c) they have not changed their bureaucratic mentality of issuing commands and of looking down upon the people's representatives; or

   d) any other reason.

2. Do you face any difficulty in controlling the conduct of your subordinate staff? If so, state reasons.
3. Do the officials remain politically neutral or do they meddle with the local power politics?

4. a) Do you like the system of the double patterning of the Panchayat Samiti staff? If not, why?
   b) What alternative do you suggest?

5. Do the officers take genuine interest in the affairs of the locality?

6. a) Do they attend the field-work regularly and seriously?
   b) How often do you find them in the field?
      Frequently/ Occasionally/ Quite rarely.

7. Do you get co-operation from the district level officers?

8. How is the new system of making the Panchayat Secretary an employee of the Panchayat Samiti functioning?

F. Panchayati Raj Finances:

1. It has been observed that the House tax is not being realised fully and its arrears are piling up everywhere. What do you think, are the reasons thereof?

2. It has also been observed that the professional tax is not being assessed and collected properly. Give reasons for it.
3. Why has the people’s contribution to the schemes undertaken by the Gram Panchayats been poor?

4. Does your Panchayat Samiti make the distribution of grants to the various Gram Panchayats judiciously or fairly?

5. The financial position of the Gram Panchayats is not very sound. What suggestions do you make to improve it?

6. What measures do you suggest to improve the financial position of the Panchayat Samiti?

7. Do you approve of the present pattern of the distribution of the financial resources among the three institutions of Panchayati Raj? If not, what alternative plan do you suggest?

8. Inter-institutional Relationship

1. Do you like the idea of submitting the Panchayat Samiti resolutions and budgets to the Zila Parishad for scrutiny?

2. Does the Zila Parishad give constructive suggestions and effectively discharge its role of co-ordination and supervision of the Panchayat Samiti work?

3. Do you like the system of the supervision of the Gram Panchayat by the Block Development and Panchayat Officer, and by the Social Education and Panchayat Officer? Or do you wish it to be substituted by that of the Panchayat Samiti Chairman?
4. Do the members of the Vila Parishad/Panchayat Samiti take genuine interest in the affairs of the Panchayat Samiti/Gram Panchayats, they represent?

II. Relationship of the Government and the Panchayati Raj bodies.

1. Do you like the system of the periodical inspection of the Panchayati Raj bodies by the District Development and Panchayat Officer, and by the sub-Divisional Officer (Civil)? If not, why?

2. Do you approve of the system of submitting the copies of your resolutions to the District Development and Panchayat Officer?

3. Have these officers been discharging their role of supervision and guidance of the Panchayati Raj bodies sincerely and effectively. If not, why?

4. On the basis of your experience, what do you think has the Government been taking genuine interest in the development of the Panchayati Raj institutions?

I. Activities:

1. Do you prepare the annual production plan of your village? If not, why?

2. What type of economic activities does your Gram Panchayat generally undertake?

3. It has been observed that the Gram Panchayats have mostly concentrated their attention on the development of the civic amenities. Why has it been so?
4. What in your opinion, is the system of entrusting the development work to the Panchayati Raj institutions working effectively? If not, why?

5. Have the Panchayati Raj institutions been helpful in stimulating the interest of the villagers in the development programmes? If not, what are the hindrances?

6. How can the enthusiasm of the people in the development programme be stimulated?

I. Gram Sabha

1. Are the meetings of the Gram Sabha held regularly in your village? If not, why?

2. a) Did you ever attend any such meeting? If not, why?

   b) If yes, what transpired there?

3. Do the members of the Gram Sabha take active interest in its meetings? If not, why?

4. Are the meetings held in a free and frank atmosphere? Or does somebody or group dominate its proceedings?

5. Do the Samiti level officers also attend the meetings?

6. Do you think the Gram Sabha provides an ideal forum for ventilating people's problems?

7. How can the meetings of the Gram Sabha be made more interesting and lively?

J. Committees:

1. a) Has your Gram Panchayat constituted the sub-committees of the people? If not, what are the reasons thereof?

   b) If yes, does it properly associate them with its functioning?

2. Do the Standing Committees in your Panchayat Samiti/ Nila Parishad function properly? If not, why?
3. Do the members take active interest in their meetings? If not, why?

4. What do you think, are these committees functioning as a proper forum for sifting the issues and providing good advice to the house?

5. What steps do you suggest to improve their functioning?

II. For officials

A. Personal background

1. Name.

2. Designation.

3. Educational qualifications.

4. Nature of the previous posting.

5. Since when have you been in the Community Development/ Panchayati Raj department?

6. Have you received any training or attended some refresher course in any of the Panchayati Raj Training institute?

B. System of Elections

1. Do you like the system of direct election to the office of the Sarpanch? If not why?

2. Do you approve of the present system of indirect election to the Panchayati Raj institutions?

3. Which of the following factors weigh heaviest with the people at the time of elections? Caste/Education/Social Service/Family connections/Political
4. How can village factionalism and casteism be eliminated?

5. What is your opinion, should political parties take part in local elections?

C. Relationship with the non-officials and Rural Leadership

1. How are your relations with the Chairman and other members of the Panchayat Samiti/Zila Parishad?
   Cordial/So-so/bad.
   If cordial, is it because -
   a) the Chairman understands that his job is confined only to the laying down of the policy and the issuing of the directives to implement it, leaving the details to you, and he, thus, does not interfere in your work? Or
   b) he is uneducated and does not understand the nature of his job and, thus, leaves everything to you?
   c) if not good, is it because -
      a) the Chairman is not contented with his job of policy-making and, thus makes too much interference in your work? Or
      b) the Chairman asserts too much of his superiority either because he compares himself with a Minister or has a very strong political backing?
      c) any other reason.

2. What type of interference do you notice on the part of the non-officials?
3. What do you think that, with the introduction of Panchayati Raj, under which the power has been completely transferred to the people, the village leaders have begun to behave more responsibly?

4. What is the nature of the rural leadership? Is it based on caste, wealth, ancestry, education, public service or power politics?

5. Has the traditional leadership based on high-caste, wealth and ancestry, begun to lose its hegemony?

6. How far have the hitherto under-developed and suppressed sections of village citizenship recovered their lost position?

7. It has been observed that the rural leadership is mostly held by the illiterate or semi-literate people. What do you think are the reasons thereof?

8. It has also been observed that the women couldn't become active participants in the Panchayati Raj institutions. Why has it been so?

9. Do you think that the system of co-option has helped the women and the scheduled castes to recover their political backwardness?

10. a) Do you find any groupism in the Panchayat Samiti/ Zila Parishad?
    b) If yes, what is its nature? Is it based on caste, factionalism, or power politics?

11. It has been observed that the Sarpanch has acquired lot of power and prestige to himself. Do you agree with it?
    If yes, what are the factors responsible for this?
    Do you think it is conducive to the efficient function of the Gram Sabha.
D. **Personnel and its problems:**

1. Is your office staff complete? If not, which posts are vacant and since when?
2. Why did you not fill up these posts? Do you face any difficulty in recruiting suitable hands? If yes, what are they?
3. Do you like the new system of recruitment with the help of the District Selection Committee?
4. Do you like the double patterning of the Panchayat Samiti staff? If not, why? What alternative do you suggest?
5. How are relations between the two wings of your staff, (the Samiti and the Block staff)? If not good, what are the reasons?
6. Do you come across any difficulty in controlling the conduct of your staff because of the interference of the Chairman and other non-officials?
7. Do you and your extension officers attend to the field work regularly? If not, why?
8. Is there any office problem that you face?

E. **Finance:**

1. It has been observed that the House-tax/Professional tax is not being assessed and collected properly. What do you think are the reasons thereof?
2. Why has the people’s contribution towards the various schemes undertaken by the Gram Panchayats been poor?
3. The financial position of the Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis is not very sound. What measures do you suggest in improving it?
4. Do you approve of the present pattern of the distribution of the financial resources among the three institutions of Panchayati Raj? If not, what alternative plan do you suggest?

F. Inter-institutional Relationship

1. How do you like the system of the higher tier of Panchayati Raj supervising the work of the lower tier?

2. It has been observed that neither the Panchayat Samiti submits to the Vila Parishad the copies of their resolutions and budgets regularly, nor does the latter scrutinises them properly? Why is it so?

3. How do you like the system of the Panchayat Secretary working under the discipline of the Panchayat Samiti?

4. Have you got any suggestion to offer towards the improvement in the inter-institutional relationship?

G. Relationship of the Panchayati Raj bodies with the Government.

1. How do you find the arrangement of the inspection of the Panchayati Raj institutions by the District Development and Panchayat Officer and the Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil)? Is it conducive to their efficient functioning? Do these officers take genuine interest in the affairs of these institutions?
2. a) Do you personally come across any difficulty in conducting the inspection of the Gram Panchayats? If yes, what are they?

b) What alternative do you suggest?

3. On the basis of your experience can you point out the irregularities that the GramPanchayats/Panchayat Samitis generally commit?

4. a) Do these bodies take note of your inspection reports and make efforts to remove the irregularities as you point out?

b) If they don't, what steps do you take to get them removed?

5. Does the Taxation Officer give effective guidance to you in the assessment and collection of taxes?

6. Have you any suggestion to offer towards the improvement in the existing pattern of the relationship of the Panchayati Raj institutions with the Government?

H. Gram Sabhas

1. Do all the Gram Sabhas meet regularly? If not, what are the possible reasons thereof?

2. How many Gram Sabha meetings did you attend during the last one year?

3. Why did you not attend all the meetings? Why did you not depute any other officer to attend it on your behalf?

4. What steps did you take to make the Gram Sabha more popular?

5. What suggestions do you make to this end?
1. **Committees**

1. a) Have all the Gram Panchayats set up the sub-committees of the people? If yes, do they associate them with their working?

b) If not, what are the reasons thereof?

2. Do the Standing Committees in your Panchayat Samiti/ Vila Parishad function properly? If not, why?

3. Do the members take active interest in their meetings? If not, why?

4. What do you think, are these committees functioning as a proper forum of sifting the issues and providing good advice to the house?

5. What steps do you suggest to improve their functioning.

**Activities:**

1. Do you prepare the annual production plan of your village/block regularly? If not, why?

2. What type of economic activities does your Gram Panchayat generally undertake?

3. It has been observed that the Gram Panchayats have concentrated their activities more on the development of the civic amenities than on the economic activities. Why has it been so?

4. What is your opinion, is the system of entrusting the development work to the Panchayati Raj institutions working effectively? If not, why?

5. Have the Panchayati Raj institutions been helpful in stimulating the interest of the villagers in the development programme? If not, what are the hindrances?
6. How can the enthusiasm of the people in the development programme be stimulated?