PROBLEMS OF SOUTH GOA DISTRICT PANCHAYAT AND THE SELECTED VILLAGE PANCHAYATS
CHAPTER 6

PROBLEMS OF SOUTH GOA ZILLA PANCHAYAT AND THE SELECTED VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

The Village Panchayats in accordance with the legislation, are working since 25th January, 1997. Since then, they are facing numerous teething problems in their operation. The Panchayats have a number of problems which are political, administrative and financial in nature and significance.

Political Problems

The Panchayat bodies are primarily conceived as local self-government institutions for the purpose of providing civic amenities and formulating and implementing various developmental programmes in the rural areas. Armed with wide-ranging powers, these bodies have become the centres of power in rural areas. Panchayat bodies should not remain aloof from the immediate and long-term concern of rural people. Their operational tactics and strategy must be in tune with the hopes and aspirations of the people. Such an ethics demands that powers must come from the vital sections of the rural society. The leadership must be the true representative of the people capable of serving the rural people, in an effective manner. In
the vast rural India, poor and poverty stricken people constitute the majority section of the rural society. The bulk of the population has either no land or have meager holdings. Given this reality, large section of the population is left with virtually no means of livelihood. It is presumed that power and leadership should come from this section of the people. Then only meaningful policies can be initiated to eradicate poverty by uplifting the poorest of poor in the Indian society. In Goa, the problem of poverty is not so severe as compared to in other states. The population of scheduled caste is about 2.08 percent. There are no scheduled tribes in the state. It is assumed that there is very little that panchayats can do for these bodies. The class and caste structure of the South Goa Zilla Panchayat members recently constituted for the first time in the state, show that socially and economically the dominant caste and classes predominate in this body. The backward classes and minorities have a marginal representation. The representation of scheduled castes and women is limited to the extent of percentage of representation the Act provides for. It shows that, power is concentrated in the dominant castes and classes. In the selected village panchayats the bulk of leadership (members) has come from the locally dominant castes, though a small percentage of the poor and the laborer class have also entered into the arena of rural power. The minorities and backward classes have better
share in rural government at the Village Panchayat level when compared to
Zilla Panchayat. Also at the Village Panchayat level, the less privileged
castes and classes have a greater opportunity for a share in power with the
dominant castes and classes. But at the apex level, the position is quite
different with the dominant castes and classes monopolising powers. This
hiatus may be due to the fact that the backward classes and minorities in the
rural areas are able to mobilise and organise better at the base level than at
higher levels. Thus the rural strata is one particular kind in which the power
nexus is dominated if not complicated by the dominant castes and classes
who have developed their own vested interests. These dominant castes and
classes play a very crucial role in election as well as in the socio-economic
and political life of the rural areas. Panchayat elections have reinforced
kinship and caste feelings. Individuals are loyal primarily to his/her own
family lineage. The politics of primordialities seems to have supplanted the
politics of choice of honest and good people. This in fact has undermined
building up of a modern secular democratic system. So it is widely appealed
that people must rise above their narrow grooves.

Egalitarianism is the pre-requisite of rural development. The rural
society is highly hierarchical and various kinds of inequalities prevail. The
rural power structure favours one or the other class and caste. Initiation of
development requires equality as pre-condition. Gunnar Myrdal views that equality is a pre-condition of development. Without equal treatment of all individuals, it would be difficult to bring about rapid economic development in the rural areas. Due to the peculiar conditions that prevail in rural areas some kind of protective discrimination to protect the interests of the weaker sections is necessary. Arguing in the same line, Uphoff and Esman on the basis of their study of rural development in sixteen countries consider relative equality as the pre-condition for development. In the absence of equality, power and benefits of the development are cornered by few dominant sections of the rural society. This is true in case of the Panchayats in the South Goa District and particularly in the selected village panchayats. This may cut at the very roots of the concept of democracy. In the rural context politics is essentially manipulative in nature and it manifests in many ways. Due to low level of political awareness, political participation and literacy, the play of politics is largely unorganised or disorganised. The rules of the game of politics neither understood nor are they clearly laid down in order to achieve something distinct or concrete for the community as a whole.

Under such circumstances rural political elites effectively manipulate with a view to acquire power. This enables the political elite to
effectively manipulate development policies in their favour. To make these grass-roots effective institutions, active involvement of the rural people in the decision-making and administration is most essential. In order to make this involvement more effective, the new Act has made some welcome provisions for the roles and responsibilities of the gram sabhas, some of which are mandatory in nature, while certain others are advisory. The Gramsabhas are an appropriate forum for the people to get together, discus schemes for their welfare and developments programmes and decide on solutions. It is a forum in which we can see an equal opportunity for all sections of the rural society to share views on matters of public interest. However in selected village panchayats, there is substantial lack of such involvement of rural masses. Also in view of the latest constitutional amendment, it is not only a new institution, but also a weak organisation. To make the Gramsabha strong, it requires support of other executive wings such as planners at the district, states and national levels They shall provide for an effective mechanism for the involvement of Gramsabhas in planning, implementation and supervision of development programmes and welfare of the people. Gramsabha is an instrument to make democratic decentralisation a reality. It is thus surely an excellent way of
strengthening the democratic fiber, converting the dependency syndrome into a participatory democracy.\(^5\)

In the selected village panchayats, people in general, are unaware of the various welfare schemes and developmental programmes implemented by the Panchayats. It is the responsibility of the panchayat to make villagers aware of the schemes and programmes undertaken by the panchayat. To inculcate this, 'awareness camps' need to be organised. The Non-Governmental Organisations can play a very effective role in educating the rural masses about these schemes and programmes. Loans under various anti-poverty and employment programmes should be sanctioned on the basis of recommendations of the village panchayat. The right of evaluation viability-appraisal and sanction of developmental programmes at the village panchayat level shall be vested in the village panchayat. The village panchayat shall exercise sufficient control and supervision over the government servants operating within the village Panchayat area. This will help to expedite and ensure smooth running of various developmental activities in the village. Also the general notion prevalent among the rural masses is that the Sarpanches, the Panches and the Secretaries are corrupt, incompetent, irresponsible and inconsequential. This lack of confidence in the capacity of the panchayats to deal with their problems has made the
villagers to seek an alternative. Especially the educated and influential classes, instead of directly dealing with the panchayats, approach higher officials or ministers to get their work done. Goa being a small area and convenient for daily commutable distances within the state, the situation is highly favourable to personalised relations between ministers and panchas or other educated and influential villagers. Most of the ministers in Goa maintain their regular residence in the towns and villages in addition to the official ones in the state capital. This enables them to monitor and control the panchayats on a daily basis in the smallest of matters. There are ample of such instances. The ministers sanction many water supply and electricity connections personally. Ministers do selection of beneficiaries of various rural development programmes directly. In the approval and clearance of many developmental and industrial projects the panchayat had no say though the land belongs to the panchayat. Lands have been gifted by the state Government to multinationals or large industrial houses without the knowledge and approval of the concerned panchayat. Such a situation will definitely affect the growth and development of rural institutions. Interference of M.L.A.s., M.Ps. and Ministers must be avoided in order to make these institutions most viable, vibrant and autonomous units of self-government.
Since the inception of the Panchayat Raj Institutions, the debate over the role of political parties has assumed greater importance. Political parties have a functional role in mobilising public opinion, organising elections on some kind of ideology promoting national interest and educating public about government policies. Elections to the Parliament and the State Assemblies in the entire country are conducted on party lines. It is believed that direct elections are the only and certain means of effective democratic government. In such a situation, whether it is possible to keep the political parties away from the panchayat polls. It is widely felt that party politics is an important factor contributing to the downfall of the Panchayat Raj system. Elections held on party lines helps to build up parties and not people. Every local issue is considered from the party angle than on its merit and rationality. In the village Panchayats of South Goa District, party politics has played its role in forming government and providing effective opposition though some members claim to be neutral to party. Though political parties maintain to remain out of Panchayat elections, they indirectly involve. This is evident from the rampant use of muscle power, money power, casteism and communalism in panchayat elections. Thus Panchayat Raj system without party politics needs to be encouraged. In reality, Panchayati Raj system cannot be delinked from the party politics.
This could be possible only when all political parties come to an honest agreement to keep Panchayati Raj Institutions free from party politics. This requires establishment of healthy conventions and enlightened electorate. To ensure that elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions are kept away from party politics, the people must be properly informed, educated and motivated. Appropriate training programmes for all functionaries at the village panchayat level should be organised regularly and systematically.

Though the Act provides for decentralisation of power, autonomy in functioning, freedom of economy and independent decision-making authority, the provision that follow provides ample scope for the interference of State Government and the bureaucracy. The act delegates adequate powers to the Village Panchayat and South Goa Zilla Panchayat under the Schedule I and II respectively. But under section 240 of the same act these powers are to be exercised within the rules framed by the state government. This provides ample scope for State Government to interfere in the functioning of the panchayats, which in turn negates the very spirit of decentralisation. In the normal course where the powers are transferred to the local units, it implies that, power and authority is in the process of decentralisation. But the fact is that even though power has been transferred from the state government to the local institutions, yet the ministers and
bureaucrats function in the old groove. They predominate even after the transfer of power to lower authorities. The Chief Executive Officer at the Zilla Panchayat level and the Secretary at the Village Panchayat level, both appointed by the State Government, cannot be expected to be accountable and answerable to the political bosses at the Zilla or Village level. The functionaries in Zilla and Village Panchayats have not been able to do away with their mentality of dependence on the government. Further reservations for the M.Ps. and M.L.As. in the intermediaries and apex tiers of Panchayats is the mockery of Panchayati Raj Institutions. This will ultimately lead to the influence of M.Ps. and M.L.As., on local leadership. Secondly, it will generate conflict of interest between panchayat members and M.Ps./M.L.As. Lastly it will result in lack of co-ordination among different functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions. As a result, the M.Ps. and M.L.As., do not want the Panchayati Raj system to function effectively. The government on one hand talks of bringing about democratic decentralisation by parceling out power to the people at the grassroot level, but on the other hand through its action and policies has somewhat weakened the powers of the grassroot units. In such a situation, the future of democracy and particularly the decentralised democracy in our country is rather bleak. It is only when the political leaders and the bureaucrats realised to keep the Panchayati Raj...
Institutions above politics, the purpose of decentralisation of powers and functions can be achieved.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS:**

**OFFICIAL – NON-OFFICIAL RELATIONS:**

The democratic set up in our country is based on a bureaucratic structure. As such it is essential to study the nature, substance and thrust of official–non-official relations in order to understand the dynamics of leadership at the local self-government level. The problem of official and non-official relations is an offspring of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The relationship between officials and non-officials is very complex in nature, since it can be visualised at the formal and non-formal dimensions. To ensure peoples involvement in administrating their affairs in the rural self government, Panchayati Raj Institutions were introduced from the days of Community Development programmes. Since then the problem of officials and non-officials has figured prominently in the literature of development administration. In fact, in development administration the government officers are expected not only to effectively and efficiently oversee the implementation of developmental projects, but also to develop a rapport with the people since in a republican democracy all power flows from the
sovereign people to the rulers. The success of Panchayati Raj experiment
depends upon a harmonious relationship between officials and non-officials.

Many studies have been carried out to examine the complexities of
official and non-official relations in Panchayati Raj administration. The
notable studies are by B. Maheshwari (1963), T. N. Chaturvedi (1964), M.

All these studies expose various dimensions of official and
non-official relations in rural development administration. Ideally, the
relationship should be one of popular leadership and interpretation of
popular will by the elected and co-opted representatives advising and
counseling the officials with whom must rest the execution of the policies
finally adopted by the concerned bodies. This obviously enunciates the
relationship existing in a parliamentary government between popular
ministers and the bureaucrats. This type of relationship exists at the state and
the national level governments. But it has been noticed that the Panchayati Raj
Institutions are not able to evolve this much-needed parliamentary
tradition at the grass-root level. As a result the Panchayati Raj Institutions
have failed to achieve the grassroots objectives, which has developed the
symptoms of instability. Many reasons are attributed to this lack of functional relationship between officials and non-official. They are listed as below:

i. Different socio-economic backgrounds of officials and non-officials;

ii. Lack of clear demarcation of sphere of actions, powers and functions of officials and non-officials;

iii. Interference of non-officials in administration;

iv. Poor quality of officials;

v. Psychological problems –superiority and inferiority complexes, lack of commitment, lack of understanding and adjustment;

vi. The culture of bureaucracy;

vii. The process of politicisation; and

viii. Improper demand on the officials by the political masters.

In the light of above considerations, questions were posed to the officials in regard to their inter-personal relationship problems with the non-officials. Since the Zilla Panchayat was not yet formed, the officials of the Village Panchayat, the Block Advisory Committee and the Directorate of Panchayats were considered for these discussions. The sound inter-personal relationship between officials and non-officials is possible in a homogeneous atmosphere. The homogeneity can be established if the socio-economic
backgrounds of the members of the organisation is more or less same. The different socio-economic backgrounds create different perceptions, attitudes and orientation in the members of an organisation. In the study on official-non-official relationship, it was revealed that within official and non-officials a type of mirror image seems to prevail. This is due to lack of confidence and mutual suspicion between the officials and non-officials. This was examined through the socio-economic profile of the officials and non-officials. It was found that the officials and non-officials almost belong to the same religion and cast denominations. Age is also a significant factor in moulding the behaviour of individuals. It is assumed that, if the members of an organisation belong to the same age group, then homogeneity and cohesiveness in their actions can be ensured. In the present study a significant majority of functionaries (officials as well as non-officials) who are working in the Panchayati Raj Institution belong more or less to the same age group, i.e., between 30 to 50 years of age. This definitely ensures greater understanding and unity of purpose.

Though the operational role of two wings are different and one cannot interfere in the functioning of the other, their functioning cannot be divided into two strict compartments. The socio-economic development of the entire
population is the joint concern of the two wings. Official and non-officials interact together in many areas of administration. These may be policy implementation, routine administration, utilisation of government grants and personnel problems like transfer, promotion, discipline and so on. The crux of official and non-official relations mainly revolves around these areas. It is necessary that both the official and non-official inculcate functioning and proper understanding in these areas. Failure in this turns the relations into strains and stresses disturbing the very purpose of the system. Conscious efforts are required on the part of both official and non-officials for avoiding such irritants, which come in the way of smooth functioning of the administrative machinery. The creation of right climate for working of these institutions is of primary importance. The elected representatives and the service have to evolve healthy conventions to act as lubricants of the weakening machinery. In order to probe in to this, a query was put to the officials:

Q: In the light of your personal experience, please indicate the areas of co-operation and conflict between yourself and non-officials. Please make your observations from the following perspective?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Area Of Co-operation</th>
<th>Area Of Conflict</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy implementation</td>
<td>18 (90.0)</td>
<td>2 (10.0)</td>
<td>20 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine administration</td>
<td>12 (60.0)</td>
<td>8 (40.0)</td>
<td>20 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation of government grants</td>
<td>17 (85.0)</td>
<td>3 (15.0)</td>
<td>20 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel problems like Transfer, etc</td>
<td>10 (50.0)</td>
<td>10 (50.0)</td>
<td>20 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers are tabulated in Table 6.1. Interestingly the table reveals that maximum co-operation exists in the area of policy implementation and utilisation of government grants, whereas the areas of routine administration and the personal problems are the main conflicting areas. The officials and non-officials work unitedly to implement the policy. Naturally to implement, maximum funds are utilised. Hence the officials and non-officials act together and share a common purpose for their actions. The routinised administration involves day to day affairs of the office such as rule application, making notes and putting up the applications and cases for sanction or approval. This aspect of reality obviously exhibits the most noted
defect of bureaucracy, i.e., red tapism and delay. This was best exemplified by the inordinate delay in according approval to the estimates of the developmental projects at the official level. The day to day conflict also ensues forth from this basic divergence. Very often trivial issues assume ominous proportions, differences develop and the conflict deepens. The officials complained that political parties often interfere in the day to day affairs of the Panchayat to subserve their vested interests or to make quick electoral gains. On the other hand, the non-officials feel that in a democracy it is the duty of the officials to co-operate with them and act according to the directions issued by them. In this way the disharmony in relationship is created.\textsuperscript{12} It is natural that the conflict between the officials and non-officials is bound to exist in this area since the officials work in bureaucratic frame work while non-officials work in an open and free atmosphere. Hence officials have to develop a democratic spirit and frame of mind. Non-officials have to realise that without the healthy co-operation of the officials, development work cannot be carried out successfully. Primarily this situation call for adjustments on the part of the officials and non-officials and this can only be a gradual process.\textsuperscript{13} Similarly personnel problems of officials like transfers, promotions and discipline also lead to conflict between the two. This is because, officials either expect favour in
these matters or non-officials want to punish officials taking recourse to these matters. Hence on one side there is favouritism and on the other side, punishment and recrimination by the non-officials results in conflicting situation between the officials and non-officials. In the event, the point of conflicts are due to interference by the political parties, local M.L.As. and M.Ps. who for their own ends interfere in administration of village panchayats. Undoubtedly, charismatic non-official leadership and intelligent-official guidance can make the functioning of these institutions smooth. The opinion of officials is evident from the above table.

The primary function of the bureaucracy, particularly at the grassroots level, is the distribution of goods and services. The administration is mainly concerned with the distribution of goods and services. In order to corner maximum services, the political pressures are bound to exist. In such a situation the official actions are subjected to discussion and debate and eventually result in stresses and strains. In order to avoid these conflicting situations, officials must act tactfully and persuade the non-officials to withdraw political pressures for improper demands. In order to elicit official opinion on this, a question was asked to the officials:

Q: Do you think that the non-official members often put pressure on officials for improper demands?
Table - 6.2: The Pressure From Non-official Members On Officials For Improper Demands:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Officials</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do it, if it is within the rules</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not yield to pressure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to convince</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table 6.2 reveals that, 80 percent of the officials expressed that the non-officials exert pressure for improper demands. Complementary to the above, another question was posed to officials as to how they react, when such pressure are executed. Around 75 percent of officials expressed that, they do the work if it is within the framework of rules and 5 percent of respondents said that they try to convince non-officials regarding improper demands. Under bureaucratic culture, the officials naturally go by rules and procedures. Since many officials are development-oriented, they try to convince non-officials regarding unfeasibility of improper demands by the non-officials. What is required at this juncture is enlightened, committed and transparent non-official leadership in league with efficient and development oriented
officers who would be able to deliver the goods. But such practice can develop only within a large socio-political culture, which places emphasis on merit, honesty, sincerity and dedication.\textsuperscript{14}

To maintain healthy relationship between officials and non-officials, officials should mould their behaviour and attitude in the desired direction. In other words, officials while interact with non-officials, should perform all the activities prescribed under parliamentary democracy. Sometimes officials wrongly interpret this attitude and go to the extent of not displeasing non-officials for any work. In order to probe in-to this a question was put to the officials:

Q: It is said that generally there is a tendency among the officials not to displease political leaders. How far it is true?

Table-6.3: Tendency Of Officials Not To Displease Political Leaders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Officials</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not True</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly True</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The answers tabulated in Table 6.3 reveals that, 60 percent of respondents expressed that, it is partly true, whereas 25 percent opined as true. It shows that 85 percent of respondents in one or the other occasion, never displeased non-officials. This raises a serious question. In order not to displease the non-officials, the officials may have to sometimes bypass rules and other official norms. This necessarily dilutes the rationality, neutrality, loyalty and impartiality of the bureaucratic spirit. Additionally, this raises some suspicion about favouritism. In this connection, it can be said that in welfare state, a degree of commitment to national goals is called for not only from politicians but also from civil servants.\(^{15}\)

**Table 6.4**  \hspace{5pt} **Frequency Of Contact By Non-officials To Officials**  

For Their Problems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Number of Non-official Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>7 (29.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>8 (33.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>6 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The frequency of contact between officials and non-officials denote the sound interpersonal relations between the two. In order to achieve the cherished goals of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, they must develop good rapport and function together. This is a healthy sign for these institutions since frequent contact helps to bridge the gap between the two and clears out any misunderstanding and misconceptions. It also enhances the efficiency of administration. When a question was posed to the non-officials regarding their frequency of contact with the officials, more than 60 percent of non-officials say that they have contact with the officials. This shows that the non-officials do meet officials for their problems and work. This type of attitude definitely ensures removal of red tapism, speedy implementation of the work and thus reduces the problem of too much bureaucratisation. The above table 6.4 reveals the response of non-officials to officials for their problems.

In the rural development administration, the efficiency and effectiveness of officials can be increased, if the non-officials support the officials rational actions. Non-officials to ensure proper working of the system must support the decisions taken by the officials in consonance with norms. The working of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the desirable direction to some extent, is determined by the non-officials support to the officials for
their rational actions. A question was asked to officials whether non-officials support them in their actions. The answers are tabulated in the following table 6.5:

Table 6.5: To What Extent non-officials Support Officials?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number Of Officials</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50 percent of respondents said that, non-officials fully support them in their officials actions. Similarly 35 percent of respondents expressed that, non-officials partly support them in their official endeavours. It is very healthy sign that non-officials support the rational actions of the officials, thereby ensuring smooth working of the system. This type of support also facilitates a balanced relation between officials and non-officials thereby enhancing the efficiency of the Panchayati Raj administration.

The above analysis show that a number of factors are responsible for smooth relations of officials and non-officials. A number of variables have prominence on the officials and non-officials relations in Panchayati Raj
Institutions. The economic, political and social variables have a greater say in determining the pattern of officials and non-officials relations. These variables either contribute for smooth or difficult relations between officials and non-officials. In order to rank which factors have greater prominence on officials and non-officials relations, a question was asked to the officials.

The following table 6.6 shows the responses expressed by the officials:

**Table-6.6 The Variables Having Prominence In Official/Non-official Relations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number Of Officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>1 (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>15 (75.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>4 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 90 percent of the respondents expressed the view that, political and social variables were the first rank factors to have greater prominence on these relations. In the second preference 55 percent of the respondents said that economic variables were predominant while in the third preference 60 percent of the officials expressed the view that, the social
variables had greater prominence. In general, officials feel that, political and social variables have greater prominence compared to economic variables in official and non-official relations.

POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS:

The nature, substance and thrust of official and non-official relation in the context of the village panchayat and Block Advisory Committees of the South Goa District has been discussed and analysed in earlier portions of this chapter. Now the researcher's task is to make certain policy prescriptions, which can go a long way in improving the functioning of Village Panchayat and recently formed Zilla Panchayats. These suggestions are made in the belief that governmental policy makers in league with non-officials may implement them in an expeditious manner to achieve the long term objective of the South Goa Zilla Panchayat and Village Panchayat in particular and Panchayati Raj Institutions in general.

1. Government official must develop a sense of commitment to the cause of the upliftment of the rural population. This calls for a great deal of tolerance, patience and understanding of rural problems in terms of public interest.
2. Public officials have a great responsibility to ensure discipline formally and informally. By discipline, we mean the ability to function according to rules, regulations and procedures which can go a long way in proper utilisation of scarce resources for the benefit of the people.

3. The government officials must have a good mental disposition towards the rural population. They should not assume an air of superiority in their dealings with rural people. If they maintain cordial relations, the objective of action-motivated and problem-solving approach can be put into practice without delay.

4. To enhance official and non-official relations, the government officers must be selected on the priority basis of rural background. This would enable them to enjoy the thrust of the rural population. Also this would develop among the officials, a deep insight and a sympathetic attitude and understanding of rural issues and problems.

5. The areas of maladjustment or tension between officials and non-officials are to be found at the intra-group and inter-group levels. This may be because of sharp differences in local political leadership due to the play of caste, sect or other extraneous factors or these tensions may be because of the practice of sending development officers on deputation to local self-government institutions resulting in these officers involving
in an atmosphere of dual loyalty. The policy implementation that we would like to make to remove the tension between officials and non-officials at the intra and inter-group levels is that officials should not function in a bureaucratic manner. Elected members and officials should develop the habit of mind and tradition of mental trust and respect making them to cater to popular aspirations.

6. In order to transfer the objectives of local self-government into action, its personnel must be qualified with requisite skills and appropriate training, since the new Act assigns variety of functions and responsibilities on these institutions. The state government has to give a serious and sincere thought to create an administrative base at the Village Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat levels to enable these to prepare and execute developmental plans and programmes suitable to local needs. Failure to do this, the panchayats would have to depend upon the schemes and developmental plans prepared by the state government.

7. The main officials at the Zilla Panchayat and Village Panchayat levels are designated as Chief Executive Officer and the Secretary respectively. Since, the state government appoints them, they consider themselves to be accountable and answerable only to the government. This attitude among the state bureaucracy has to be changed and they should be made
equally accountable and answerable to the political bosses at the Village and Zilla Panchayat levels.

8. The elected representatives should give greater importance to matters relating to policy, planning, production and public participation at the ground level, rather than interfering with routine administrative matters. The administrative matters should be left to officials who have the necessary expertise to operate effectively as meaningful and catalytic agents of socio-economic welfare measures. The present system is new and development of sound traditions takes time for the civil service. It is the question of mental adjustment to tasks. A democratic spirit has to be developed among the officials, while the non-officials should be made aware about the intricacies of bureaucracy and development administration. This necessarily demands adjustment on the part of both officials and non-officials and this can be ensured in a gradual manner.

9. The government must take punitive steps against those elected representatives who take decisions contrary to established procedures, rules and regulations. Sometimes elected representatives may take wrong decisions because of ignorance or lack of training in legal matters. In this connection a job-training course should be based upon problem-solving technique and illustrated by simple case studies. The
The effective working of panchayati raj system requires effective control and supervision of development bureaucracy by the political leaders, but the problem of this type of supervision and control is becoming acute. This is because popular representatives do not attune public bureaucracy at the lower rungs to this type of supervision and control. This has become a critical problem. The problem lies in lack of proper commitment and orientation. If the officials or the non-officials do not fully appreciate each other’s role, it creates frequent deadlocks and crises in development administration. The lack of culture of politics and proper appreciation of the panchayat system at lower levels by the officials has resulted in this type of feelings and actions. Organising workshops and short term training courses can effectively evade such feelings and actions. In this connection, training assumes an important role for orienting and making them committed to the development function.

A crucial variable for the success of Panchayat Raj Institutions is the Human Resource Development. This is because the managers (both officials and non-officials) of Panchayat bodies must have proper orientation and
understanding of the system in which they are working. Many problems of Panchayat Raj Institutions like lack of understanding and co-ordination between officials and non-officials, lack of integrity, lack of commitment, lack of honesty and humanity, irrationality, arrogance, status and power psychosis are attributed to the inadequacy of proper human resource development planning. Corruption among the officials and non-officials is rampant. On an average, one-third of total funds earmarked for rural development are lost through leakage. The panacea for all these human ills is training. Thus training occupies a prominent place for the success of rural local government. Rural development is not likely to be self sustaining without a range of diverse yet related training programmes. Most urgently required is training in management technology specially in areas of project planning and sharpening of professional skills. The people who run the institution must have proper orientation, attitude, perception and commitment towards the system. Training ensures a proper balance between the human side and the institution side of the organisation. In fact, training injects life blood into the system. Commenting upon the importance of training an expert body of the U.N. remarks that “training is designed to increase the knowledge and skills of an individual in order to give him greater capacity in his field of work.” Hence training is an organised
procedure which brings about a semi-permanent change in behaviour for a definite purpose. Training also is schooling, learning, adaptation and not just a ritual. Thus training is learning that changes behaviour. If it does not change behaviour no learning has occurred.

The importance of training for the efficiency of Panchayati Raj Institutions has been recognised by many high power committees appointed by various state governments. The Sadiq Ali team and Giridharilal Vyas Committee of Rajasthan, Bongirwar Committee of Maharashtra, Jinabhai Dorji Committee of Gujarat, Narasimhan and Vengal Rao Committee of Andhra Pradesh have emphasised training for strengthening Panchayat bodies. Likewise the Ashok Mehta Committee too has recognised its merit and recommended for proper training to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Complex nature of functions of the modern welfare state and fast changing administrative techniques make it imperative on every organisation to provide training for its officials. The fact that the rural institutions shoulder greater responsibilities in the present set up make it obligatory on these institutions to impart appropriate training to the officials and non-official, particularly for the members from the weaker sections and women who did not have much exposure to the art of governance. Hence training is
a process whereby individuals learn skills, attitudes and orientation congruent to a particular role. Role of the pattern of the actions expected of a person in the social system, with its accompanying rights and obligations, power and responsibility are intrinsic to the training process.

**Issues In Training:**

There are three issues in training of officials and non-officials of Panchayat Raj Institutions:

1. What should be the objective of training?
2. What should be the strategy for training?
3. Whether officials and non-officials should be imparted training in composite groups or separately?

**Objectives of Training:**

In general the objectives of training can be listed as follows:

1. Training must create in the participant a liking or interest in work. It should become as interesting to an adult as play is to a child. The zest for work can be created by making the trainee overcome the negative attitude towards the work and making him feel at home at work so that it is not treated as a burden but as a pleasure;
2. Training must enable the participant to develop confidence in work and induce self-reliance so that dependence on others is minimised;

3. Training must enable the participant to develop the right work ethic and culture which would also need to be reinforced by precept and example;

4. Training must bring about an attitude of precision or exactness in work; and

5. Training must enable the participant to value the time dimension in work. That time is money and it needs to be saved and effectively managed and utilised must become one of the general objectives of training in government. How to plan work and execute it effectively with the help of specific skills imparted should also be the concern of the training.23

Apart from these general objectives of training, specific objectives with regards to Panchayat Raj must be included. They are firstly, orienting the officials and non-officials towards the Panchayat legislation and its role in development, planning and implementation at the local level. Secondly, the work mechanism of Panchayat system should be made known to officials in general and non-officials in particular. In the last instance, training with regard to relationship between officials and non-officials, between
non-officials themselves must be imparted with regard to relationship between officials and non-officials. The stress must be on human relations.

The above listed objectives must form the content of all the training programmes meant for officials and non-officials in the South Goa Zilla Panchayat and selected village panchayats.

**Strategy For Training:**

Training should be recognised as a vital aspect for the success of panchayat raj institutions. The training must be made mandatory for all those involved in the working of rural local government. The success of any training programme needs three variables. Firstly, adequate funds, secondly, expertised training and lastly, the full participation and co-operation by trainees. The result-oriented training requires appropriate development of training materials, training manuals, training skills and tools. The top-level political masters and bureaucrats must ensure the necessary conditions for launching successful training programmes. Lastly, the strategy must involve adequate review and evaluation of training programmes.

**Combined Orientation Training:**

Since the inception of Panchayat Raj Institutions, the issue whether to have training for officials and non-officials separately or in composite group
is debated. The pros and cons of the two modes reveal nothing substantial. One cannot categorically rule out any single mode of training. This is because both the combined and separate training courses for officials and non-officials will be required under certain circumstances. However in certain training programmes a composite group of trainees from both officials and non-officials can be included as trainees. The combined training has certain advantages. A survey conducted by Mishra, Kumar and Pal reveals that the training of the officials and the representatives together will help them to understand each other and this would lead to better understanding and co-ordination between them. Ultimately, it would enhance the efficiency, popularity and successful experimentation in the field of Panchayat system. In the opinion of Ashok Mehta Committee “training provides for an opportunity for an exchange of views and cross fertilisation of ideas. It enables them to understand and appreciate each other’s viewpoints with greater clarity and empathy. The participants tend to realise and absorb how they through their attitudes and approaches to others can facilitate or impede progressive action for providing leadership and evoking co-operation”.

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Financial Problems:

Mobilisation and proper utilisation of financial resources is a major problem of Village Panchayats where resources are limited in quantum because of poor taxation and poor realisation of tax. The Village Panchayats apart from having taxation power on many items also receive grants from the State Government. Since Zilla Panchayats have been recently formed, the picture regarding their powers and financial position is not clear. It is reported that about 50 to 60 percent finances of village panchayats are derived from the State exchequer. It shows that, these bodies manage about 40 percent resources. Once the state government provides grant, it is automatically categorised as conditional grants, without much autonomy for its use. It can be used only for the purpose for which it is lent. Hence financial centralisation which is the bane of all State Governments has hindered the mobilisation of resources. Even the low percentage of mobilised resources has not been fully exploited in the larger interest of the people. In the Paroda and Verna Village Panchayats the tax share is merely 20 percent of the total budget. This could have been gradually and effectively raised but the Village Panchayats have always fought shy of raising taxes. They have not been able to tap all the resources of taxes. The overall financial position of Village Panchayats appears to be satisfactory
when compared to village Panchayats in other states. However the Panchayats have not utilised these resources in a proper way. This is evident from the balance carried over from year to year. In view of this reality it appears that these rural institutions will soon lose their character of self-government.

The expenditure pattern of Village Panchayats shows a significant trend. In other states normally a large chunk of amount is spent on non-plan schemes, i.e., on establishment and administration. In the Village Panchayats of Goa a substantial amount is spent on public works which amounts to about 40 to 50 percent of total expenditure. This is a healthy trend. The areas that are most neglected are planning, development and social welfare services.

Another problem is the financial management and maintenance of accounts. In the selected Village Panchayats accounts are not maintained in systematic manner. Accounts are not kept in double entry system, which is the normal practice in private commercial firms. The Village Panchayats audit has been brought under the Directorate of Accounts of the Government. The accounts of every Village Panchayats shall be audited each year by an officer so authorised by the Directorate of Accounts of the Government. The Directorate of Accounts and the local audit circle of the
state government have an onerous responsibility of maintaining proper accounts. Auditing has to be made compulsory. In presence of regular audit financial misappropriation and other errors can be avoided if not eliminated completely.

In all, we may agree that the problems of the selected village panchayats are fairly complex in nature. Some of these problems are political in nature, some are of financial nature while others are of an administrative nature. In the present chapter, official-non-official relations and related training problems, etc, have been discussed at length and appropriate conclusions have been drawn and some suggestions have been made. One broad conclusion is that all these problems are manageable and can be solved given the determination, sincerity and accountability of all the individuals involved in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
NOTE AND REFERENCES


