INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF THE WORKING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN GOA
CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY OF THE WORKING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS IN GOA

In the present chapter a sincere effort has been made to survey the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Goa. Also to begin with, an attempt is made to brief the history of Panchayati Raj in India.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN INDIA:

India is committed to Democracy. It believes that development will be possible and real only with the participation of people at all levels of governmental machinery. In fact, India lives in villages and her development depends to a large extent on the active involvement of the villagers in administration. Hence Panchayati Raj Institutions were established to realise this objective / Panchayat or the institution of Village Council is as old as Indian History. From time immemorial, the people in rural India had lived in village as self-sustaining and self-governing community. There are many references to village
institutions in the Vedas, the Sukraniti, the Manusmriti, the Valmiki Ramayana, the Mahabharat, the Jatakas, Kautilya’s Arthashastra and the Jain and the Buddhists literature. These local bodies were called as Kula, Gana, Jati, Puga, Vratha, Shraini, Sangh, Samudaya, Samuha, Parishat and Charan. Manu considered the village as a fundamental unit of administration and provided for three kinds of settlements, namely, village (grama), town (pura) and city (nagara). The central authority or the government exercised general supervision and control over the village assemblies and their councils. The village communities were self-sufficient, self reliant, independent and autonomous. Local government in India was more genuine, more successful and far more widespread than in the days of British Raj or even at present. The rise and fall of the empires or dynasties and the internal conflicts or external aggressions were not able to abolish this system. Even under the Mauryan Empire and the Mughal dynasty the dignity and rights of the village communities and the powers of self-government were not ignored.

This ancient arrangement suffered a crippling blow during the British Rule. Their trading interests, their growing political influence, their ascendancy to power and their policy of economic exploitation shattered the self-sufficient and autonomous character of the village panchayats. The transfer of power from the East India Company to the
Crown in 1958, marked the beginning of remolding of local self-government.

After independence, adoption of Parliamentary Democracy, re-organisation of states on a linguistic basis, decentralisation of administration, socialistic ideology, secularism, concept of welfare state and many other aims and objectives set by the country not only ascended the responsibilities and obligations of the government towards the people but also gave birth to new hopes and aspirations to the Indians. To achieve this and to make democracy work in the desired manner, a strong and effective popular participation is required. This could be achieved only through the renewal of our age-old institution, i.e. the Panchayati Raj System.

Today local self-government is being recognised even by developing countries not only for the service it renders to the community, but also for the opportunities it offers to men and women to enjoy an active participation in the government and in the process, to develop their creative talents and responsibilities.

Mahatma Gandhiji strongly recommended for social and economic upliftment of the village masses through constructive programme and revival of Panchayats. Gandhiji wanted to build Ramarajya by giving autonomy to the villages in India. He claimed that decentralisation is essential for an ideal democracy.
In 1948, Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while inaugurating the first Local Self-government Ministers Conference of free India said, "Local Self-government is and must be the basic of any true system of democracy. People got into the habit of thinking of democracy at the top and not so much below. Democracy at the top may not be a success unless you build on this foundation from below".\(^5\)

Unfortunately the institution of Panchayati Raj which enjoyed its own identity since the vedic period amidst the ups and downs of Indian history and the institution which is very significant for the construction of an ideal democracy did not contain any reference to it in the first draft of India’s Constitution. After a good deal of thought and discussion, K. Santhanam moved a resolution for the incorporation of the Panchayats in the constitution. It was accepted by an overwhelming majority. A place was thus permanently carved out for them in the national frame of the governmental organisation.\(^6\)

The new Constitution that came into force on 26\(^{th}\) January, 1950, included under the Article 40 in Chapter IV on the Directive Principles of State Policy which provides that "The State shall take steps to organise Village Panchayats and to endow them with such powers and authority, as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of Self-government". Further Article 246, by including the local government in the State list, made it the responsibility of the state
governments to take necessary steps for fostering local government within their respective jurisdiction.

The dawn of independence in India ushered an era of development and modernisation. The development process was initiated in a planned manner to ameliorate the socio-economic condition of the masses. Where as the modernisation process sought to transform the old orders and stood for changing social and moral values, attitudes, orientation and the entire approach to the way of life. Thus, development and modernisation became two important planks of national reconstruction and nation-building efforts of free India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the chief architect of planning in modern India, took up the task of reconstruction of dilapidated economy by according the highest priority to agriculture and rural development. To give an effect to this the First Five-Year Plan (1951-56) emphasised the role of Panchayats in rural areas. In India, rural development has almost become a corollary to national development. This is due to the fact that more than 70% of the population lives in rural areas with a very poor standard of living. The thrust of rural development must be to increase the standards of life of this poor, deprived, ignorant, ill-fed and unemployed people.7

Since all the aspects of rural life are inter-related and could not be attended to in isolation, a comprehensive Community Development
Programme (CDP) was launched on October 2, 1952, with the inception of 55 community projects. Later it was extended to cover the whole of India. The programme was supplemented with National Extension Service (NES) on October 2, 1953. Community Development is the movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and the initiation of the community. The Community Development Programme is a multi-purpose, multi-focused and multi-processed programme characterised by a comprehensiveness in rural development. The basic objectives of community development are:

1. to bring about a change in the outlook of the village community, to create a desire for the better standard of living and a readiness to use scientific methods in agricultural and other activities of village life;

2. to promote self-help, self-reliance and co-operation;

3. to extend the principle of co-operation to myriad phases of community life in the village;

4. to utilise the local resources, spare time and dormant energies of village people for the works of village development and social benefits;
5. to bring about increased production, increased income and employment, better social amenities and more social and economic overheads;

6. to bring supplies, services and credit to the very door of the villager;

7. to prepare and execute a village production plan;

8. to prepare a plan for every family to make every family a member of the co-operative society;

9. to promote youth, women and child welfare and welfare of the underprivileged classes; and

10. to bring about community mobilisation, to activise and energise functional groups, voluntary agencies and village institutions.¹⁰

Hence community development stood for the overall development of man. The Community Development and National Extension Service created a new administrative set up and ethos in the field of rural development administration. The Community Development Block was made the first unit of planning and development. The Block Development Officer (BDO) was entrusted with the task of co-ordination of all the rural development programmes at block level with the assistance of various technical officers and village level workers.
The Community Development Programme has its own achievements as well as shortcomings. The programme generated awareness regarding rural development among the rural people. It also resulted in the village development in the basic sectors like agriculture, animal husbandry, education, health, sanitation and so on. Inspite, the programme exhibited certain weaknesses. It failed to generate the support of the people in its implementation. Due to various reasons like wasteful expenditure, superfluous staff and lack of missionary zeal in implementation, this programme could not generate much enthusiasm among the people. This problem was perceived by the planners during the Second Five-Year Plan. This programme failed to achieve its objectives mainly because of lack of public participation, which is considered as one of the critical variables in the achievement of development goals.¹¹

In order to trace the causes for not getting the desired success through Community Development Programme and National Extension Service and to find out the ways and means to rectify the same, the Committee on Plan Projects constituted a study team in January, 1957, under the Chairmanship of Balwantray Mehta. The study team toured all over the country and submitted an exhaustive report in 3 volumes. The community opined that the Community Development Programme did not evoke the required popular participation.
The committee made various recommendations to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions:12

1. There should be three tier system of democratic decentralisation—Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Zilla Parishat at District level, the most effective body being the block level;

2. All developmental programmes at local levels should be implemented through decentralised administration;

3. All these bodies should enjoy real autonomy and power and shall function under the guidance and supervision of higher bodies;

4. The entire decentralised administrative system should be under the control of elected bodies;

5. There should be genuine transfer of power and responsibility of planning and development activities to these bodies;

6. There should be adequate financial resources transferred to these bodies to enable them to discharge these responsibilities efficiently.

The Balwantray Study Team Report was widely welcomed. It influenced significant changes in the organisational set-up of the Community Development Programme. Out of the three levels suggested by the committee, the Block level was visualised to be more powerful. The states were given an option to adopt it with such modifications as
suited to their special conditions. Due to this there was lack of uniformity in its implementation as some States adopted two-tiers and some even one-tier system. Rajasthan was the first State to establish Panchayati Raj in October, 1959. It was followed by Andhra Pradesh.

Mahatma Gandhiji had envisaged five-tier system – Village Panchayat, Taluka Panchayat, District Panchayat, Provincial Panchayat and All-India Panchayat. The village shall be the real unit of administration. Where as the higher Panchayats shall tender advice and guidance, provide information, supervise and co-ordinate the activities of the Village Panchayat. The entire setup shall be like an Inverted Pyramid. In other words the basic unit shall dictate the Centre.13

By 1959, almost all the states had passed Panchayat Acts. From 1960 there began a process of reforming and revitalising the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Though India gained Independence on August 15, 1947, the present State of Goa, a small territory on the west coast of India, remained under the Portuguese colonial influence. It was on December 19, 1961, that Goa was liberated from the Portuguese rule and acceded to the Indian Union. Further it was instituted as a Union Territory under the First Schedule of the Constitution. Goa was bestowed with Statehood on May 30, 1987, and instituted as the 25th State of India under the First Schedule of the Constitution by the Goa, Daman and
Diu Reorganisation, Act, 1987. Goa has a geographical area of 3,702 square kilometers with a population of about 12 lakhs. Located on the west-coast of India, it is separated in the North from the Maharashtra State by the Terekol river, in the East and South by the Karnataka State and in the West by the Arabian Sea. The State of Goa comprises of 2 Districts, 11 Talukas, 13 Municipalities and 188 Village Panchayats.

To trace the history of local self-government in Goa one has to dwelve into the history of this territorial unit, which enables us to have a comprehensive picture of the evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Hence it is desirable to discuss the growth and evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions under different politico-administrative configurations which are relevant to the new State of Goa.

GOA:

In ancient period, Goa was known by a variety of names such as Gove, Gowa, Goaem, Kawa, Kawai, Goe, Kuva, Gomanchal, Gomant, Goapuri, Guvapuri, Gopakpur and Gopakapatanua, among others. Goans have descended mainly from the Aryans and the Dravidians. According to the records of the Sahyadri Kanda of the Skanda Purana, Aryans were brought to that part of India which is known as Goa by Parasu Rama. Subsequently Goans have mingled intimately with the
Egyptians, the Huns, Armenians, the Rajputs and the Marathas. The history of local institutions in Goa can be classified into 3 stages:

1. Pre-Portuguese Conquer;
2. During Portuguese Colonial Rule;
3. Post Liberation period.

**1. Pre Portuguese Conquer:**

Prior to Portuguese advent, the territory of Goa was under the administrative control of several Kings of several Kingdoms. Before the Portuguese conquest, Goan society was subject to a long experience in political systems under the aegis of the ancient Mauryans, the medieval Kadambas, the Hindu Vijaynagar Empire, the Muslims, Kingdoms of Bahamani and Bijapur and the Maratha rulers. The ancient history of Goa is depicted in the Mauryan administration before the Christian Era, followed by Satavahanas, Bhojas, Traikutakas of Konkan, Kalachuris, Mauryas of Konkan, Chalukyas of Badami, Shilharas, Yadavas and Kadambas.

Before the Portuguese rule, Goa formed a part of one or the other Kingdom that ruled in the other parts of India. Hence the mode of development of local self-government institutions in India shall also be
applicable to Goa. Before the Portuguese advent (1510 A. D.) the
district borders in the North extended up to Kudal (Ratnagiri) District in
Maharashtra State and Rajapur Mahals up to the river Kharepatan. In
South it extended towards Ankola and included Supa, Halyal and
Karwar, now forming a part of North Kanara District of Karnataka
State. In the East it covered a large portion of the Belgaum District.\textsuperscript{18}

2. During The Portuguese Colonial Influence:

After the discovery of the sea route by Vasco-da-Gama on May
17, 1498, many Portuguese expeditions came to India mainly in search
of spices, intellectual curiosity, an urge for territorial expansion and the
desire to fight with the Muslims. Unlike the British, the Portuguese had
no experience of working of local self-government institutions and
democratic government. Though parliamentary government was
established in Portugal in 1820, it was not successful. Dr. C.F.Saldana
remarks, “However successful the parliamentary regime has been in
England, it has proved a hopeless failure on the continent, especially in
the Latin countries .... ”\textsuperscript{19}

In 1510, Afonso de Albuquerque, the ablest of the Portuguese
conquerors, with the assistance of Vijayanagar Emperor attacked and
conquered Goa. In 1542, with the arrival of great Jesuit, St.Francis
Xavier began proselytisation in Goa.
Before the advent of Portuguese rulers, the people in each village constituted themselves into a Gaumponn (village community). Gaumponn was a peculiar and distinctive institution that existed in Goa since the earliest times. It was a tiny, republic, self-sufficient and self-contained institution. The Gaumponns were largely independent of each other. A Goan's loyalty to the village was stronger than his loyalty to the king. The management of the Gaumponn was in the hands of Gaocars. A board of 3 to 4 persons was elected every year by heads of families. This institution not only managed the affairs of the village but also ruled the village. This was the real democracy at its grass-roots. People were fully involved in the management of affairs of their village and it gave them a voice in it.

The village council administered the Gaumponn. The council was all-powerful and administered all matters - Civil, Judiciary and Military, pertaining to the village. Even the king's officials seeking to enter the village had to obtain prior permission of the council.

The British abolished this institution in the rest of the country. But it was retained intact in Goa by Afonso de Albuquerque who recognised its worth, since the state received land revenue from these institutions. However the Portuguese colonisation suspected the loyalty of the local people. Hence the administrative pattern was designed in such a way that top civil servants, the top judges, the top
military officers and the high police servants consisted of none other than the Portuguese.

The Government normally did not interfere in the village affairs. There was a Thanadar in each village, appointed by the government with certain judicial powers concerned to land tax. At the head, there was a Chief Thanadar. The first chief thanadar appointed by the Portuguese was a native Goan by name Timoja.24

In 1910, when Portugal itself became a republic, the Goans were given some measure of autonomy. The Goa Governors Council had a majority of elected members. However the franchise was limited to those who knew Portuguese and paid certain amount of taxes to the state. In May, 1926, Dr. Olivera Salazar’s dictatorial regime began and the formal republican rule came to an end. With the Colonial Act of 1930, Goa became a Portuguese colony, reducing Goans to a state of complete subservience.25 It is during the liberal regime (1820-1925) that Goans enjoyed some freedom, and it also gave Goans some idea and experience of democratic institutions.

For British rulers, administrative and financial decentralisation was necessary in order to integrate the vast and complex land of India. Whereas in Goa, due to its small size and the existence of comunidades, the ancient local self-governing units, which were ready-made organs of financial decentralisation for collection of taxes, the Portuguese did not
find necessary to introduce any new body of local self-government. Due to illiberal policy of education and greater restrictions on freedom of press and speech, the Portuguese rulers, unlike the British, could not provide an indirect momentum to the awakening of national consciousness.\textsuperscript{26}

Though the Portuguese policies were not in favour of democratic decentralisation, the local self-government developed in the form of Comunidade (Village Community) and the Camara Municipal (Municipal Council). Their subservience to the colonial dispensation molded the basic outlook of the Goans on all the post-independence democratic institutions, including the Panchayati Raj system. Continental jurisprudence, with its "inquisitorial" model of administration of justice had left indelible marks on the Goan psyche. Even today, the socio-political ethos in Goa may be characterized as one, that is predominantly "looking above", i.e. looking to higher authorities even in small matters. Diploma Legislativo No 642 of 25 March, 1933, provided for the smallest of details, deprived the village authorities of initiative and discretion. Hence the panchayats in Goa, established soon after its liberation, neither possessed nor could grow upon well-established local traditions.\textsuperscript{27}
Comunidades (Village communities):

Centuries before the Portuguese came to Goa, this territory enjoyed a tradition of autonomous village administration. In Portuguese correspondence these local village organisations were referred as Gauncarias or Gaonkaria, Camara Agraria (Agricultural Community) and comunidades or communities.  

It is generally, though wrongly, believed that the functions of local self-government were carried out by the comunidades. Comunidade is the most ancient institution existing in Goa. It is a unique feature of rural life in Goa. It is a system of land cultivation. The original members of the village are called Gaocars, who are the hereditary members of the comunidade. The Managing Committee of the comunidade allots the lands of comunidade to the cultivators and receives a share from them which is divided among the Gaocars. Hence, according to S.R.Phal, comunidades are similar to agrarian societies or farming co-operatives or village communities.

The land or property owned by the comunidades is not a grant or a gift of land by the Government or State or King but are in the form of confederation of individual private property by each Gaocar. The National Council of Applied Economic Research, 1964, in its survey report states, "In earlier days, comunidades were collective farming societies as well as socio-politico entities charged with public functions."
They looked after the affairs of temples and churches in their jurisdiction, built and maintained roads and performed most of the functions of gram panchayats. Through ages comunidades have provided the training ground in local self-government, in democratic processes and procedures, co-operative agricultural economy or farming, local level leadership and so on.

The comunidades consisted of two categories of members. The first included the Joneiros, who were the male descendents of the original gaocars or inhabitants. The Joneiro received some amount of the annual income obtained by the comunidad. The right of the Joneiro was inalienable, personal and imprescriptible. The second category consisted of Acsaokar or shareholders. When some of the comunidades lacked funds for expenditure they had to borrow money from well to do persons. These persons were given Accoes or shares that were transferable and alienable. They received income in the form of dividend from the net income shown by the comunidad.

The Portuguese introduced new legislation with regard to the village community. The Portuguese rulers nominated the President of the village community. The comunidades were governed by a law, namely Codigo dos Comunidades (code of the community). The village committees were deprived of all their functions except agrarian. With the liberation and establishment of democratic institutions, political
conditions in Goa and the attitude of the people towards the comunidades have changed significantly. However the Goans have preserved these historical institutions as a heritage of the past and also because they play a vital role in the agricultural economy of Goa as co-operative farming societies.

**Camara Municipals (Municipal Councils):**

The Camara Municipals in the State of Goa originated in the 16th century. The first municipality, the Senado de Goa (the Senate of Goa) was founded by Afonso de Albuquerque in April, 1511. Under the Constitution of 1822, Camara Municipal De Goa replaced the Senate.32 Before liberation there were in all Eleven Municipalities each covering one entire Taluka. They had their own resources by way of taxation and government grants in proportion to the taxes. Before Salazar’s regime the Camara Municipals functioned as units of self-government with considerable autonomy. But they were not local self-government institutions in the real sense.

A legislation called the Reforma Administrativo Ultra Marino regulated the working and functioning of the municipalities till the enforcement of the Goa, Daman and Diu Municipalities Act, 1968.33 Under the new Act, for the first time elections were conducted to the
Municipal Councils on October 4, 1970. At present there are thirteen Municipalities in Goa.

3. Post Liberation Period:

Goa continued to be under Portuguese administration till 1961, even after India gained independence. On December 19, 1961, Goa was liberated and the first Lieutenant Governor of Goa, Daman and Diu was sworn in on June 8, 1962. The Constitution Twelfth Amendment Act, 1962, integrated Goa, Daman and Diu, with the Indian Union and was included in the First Schedule of the Constitution as a Union Territory, with retrospective effect from December 20, 1961. Informal Consultative Committee of 29 members was formed on September 24, 1962. For the first time elections for 30 Assembly seats were conducted in December, 1962.

Development Of Panchayat Raj Institutions In The Union Territory Of Goa, Daman And Diu:

The Junta de Freguesia though provided under the Codigo Administrativo (code of civil administration) of the 1933 Constitution of Portugal, for the management of village affairs, their development took place only after 1959. The same constitution empowered the
Governor General of the provinces of Goa, Daman and Diu to promulgate laws for the administration of villages as per the Codigo Administrativo. The junta de freguesia finally came to be constituted under the legislation known as the Portaria No. 7575 of July 23, 1959. This law regulated the junta de freguesia until it was repealed by the Goa, Daman and Diu Village Panchayats Regulation, 1962, following the liberation of Goa. The 1962 regulation repealed all Portuguese laws and the Gram Panchayats, the first democratic institutions, were established. Goa lagged 15 years behind the rest of the country in the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions. Whereas, from 1958 onwards almost all states in India had enacted Panchayat legislation in accordance with the Balwantray Mehta Committee Report and the recommendations of the Central Council of Local Self-Government. On October 24, 1962, the Panchayat elections were conducted and the first Village Panchayats were constituted. The most outstanding fact was that even before Assembly elections, the people at the village level got an opportunity for democratic expression through the Panchayat elections. The 1962 Regulation provided for only one tier Panchayati Raj system operating at the village level, called the Gram Panchayat. Another body was the Gramsabha, the general assembly, comprising of all adult residents of the village whose names figure in

21
the electoral rolls. Hence, for the first time the people of the territory got an opportunity to participate in the local administration.

However the trend of the elected state legislatures passing acts for the devolution of power to the local self-government bodies was not observed in Goa. Panchayat Raj in Goa was the creation of the centre in the form of the Goa, Daman and Diu Village Panchayat Regulation, 1962, promulgated by the President of India in September, 1962 under Article 240 of the Constitution of India.36

There were in all 183-Gram Panchayats. The people directly elected the members of the Gram Panchayat. The strength of the membership varied in accordance to the population covered by the Gram Panchayat: 9 members for a population above 3,500; 7 members for a population between 2,500 and 3,500; and 5 members for a population between 1,500 and 2,500. One seat in every Gram Panchayat was statutorily reserved for women.

All the village Panchayats were grouped under and supervised by the taluka wise blocks. There were eleven taluka blocks. Bardez, Tiswadi, Mormugao and Salcete were known as the Old conquest talukas, where as the talukas of Pernem, Satari, Bicholim, Ponda, Sanguem, Kepem and Canacona were known as New conquest talukas. Each block had a Block Advisory Committee comprising the local M.P. and the M.L.As., Sarpanchas of all Gram Panchayats within the taluka,
representatives of local co-operative societies, representatives of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes appointed by the Government and Government Officials.

With the Goa, Daman and Diu Reorganisation Act, 1987, Goa became the Twenty Fifth State of the Union of India. After acquiring statehood on 30th May, 1987, Goa was bifurcated into two districts – the North Goa and the South Goa. However the number of talukas remained the same. In conformity with the Constitution (Seventy third Amendment) Act, 1992, the new Goa Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 (Goa Act No.14 of 1994) was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Goa on 25-5-1994 and assented to by the Governor of Goa on 9-7-1994. The outstanding features of the Constitution (Seventy third Amendment) Act, 1992 are as stated below:

1. There shall be a Gramsabha in each village. Functions of the Gramsabha shall be as provided by law by the State Legislature.

2. The members of Village Panchayat shall be directly elected by the members whose names appear on the electoral roll of the Gramsabha. Sarpanch and the Deputy Sarpanch shall be elected by the and amongst the members of the Village Panchayat. Chairman at the intermediate level and the district level shall be elected indirectly.
3. There shall be reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their population at each level. One-third of the total seats shall be reserved for women on the basis of rotation in different constituencies. Similar reservation is also applicable to the office of Chairman.

4. Once elected, the term of Panchayati Raj Institutions shall be of 5 years. In the event of supersession, elections should be completed before the expiry of six months from the date of dissolution.

5. State legislatures enjoy the power to authorise the Panchayats to levy, collect and appropriate suitable local taxes and provide grants-in-aid from the Consolidated Fund of the concerned State.

6. The Act proposes uniformity in the Panchayati Raj structure. It constitutes 3 levels – District level, Taluka level and Village level in each state.

7. Every State shall appoint a State Finance Commission, constituted once in every 5 years. The main function of the commission is to review financial position of the Panchayats and make recommendations to the State on the distribution of funds between the State and the local bodies.

8. Panchayats existing before the commencement of this Amendment Act will continue till the expiry of their duration
unless dissolved by a resolution to that effect passed by the State legislature concerned.

9. Every State shall constitute a State Election Commission for the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and conduct of regular, fair and free elections at all the three levels.

10. State legislatures should make necessary amendments to their Panchayat Acts within a maximum period of 1 year from the commencement of this Amendment Act so as to conform to the provision.

The new Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, came into force through an ordinance on 20th April, 1994. The Act provided for a two tier Panchayati Raj system in Goa. At the village level the Village Panchayat occupied the prime place. At the apex level the Zilla Panchayat has to be constituted having jurisdiction over the entire district excluding such portions of the district as are included in a municipal council. The new Act omits Taluka level Panchayat. The General Election to the 185 Village Panchayats was held on January 12, 1997, in accordance with the provisions of the Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, and the Rules framed thereunder. Later, two Village Panchayats have been re-organised into 3 Village Panchayats. As a result there are 188 village Panchayats at present. Village Panchayat is a popularly
elected body made up of the entire rural social strata. It gives representation to the various sections of the rural polity. The seats are reserved for women to the extent of 33% on the basis of rotation system. The percentage of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is meager in Goa. Hence proportionate representation in each village panchayat is given to them. The village panchayat has been vested with wide ranging developmental functions along with civic functions. The Gramsabha comprising all adult villagers is framed as a base for this whole edifice.

Though the new Act provided for the constitution of a Zilla Panchayat for each district, no sincere effort was made by the government in this direction till February, 2000. The Taluka Board Advisory Committee continued to function in the same manner as under the Goa, Daman and Diu Village Panchayat Regulation, 1962. In place of Zilla Panchayat, the Directorate of Panchayats of the State Government was constituted to direct and supervise the functioning of Taluka Boards and Village Panchayats. The Directorate consists of a Director of Panchayats and two Deputy Directors of Panchayats, one each for the district.

Recently due to emerging consensus that there should be a three-tier system in the state, the government had passed, the Goa Panchayat Raj (Second Amendment) Bill, 1999 (Bill No 6 of 1999), on
15th July, 1999. The Amendment provides for the constitution of the middle-tier i.e., Taluka Panchayat. The recently constituted Government finally dropped the idea of three-tier system and settled in for a two-tier system. Accordingly elections to the two Zilla Panchayats – the North-Goa Zilla Panchayat and the South-Goa Zilla Panchayats, were held on February 6, 2000. The North-Goa Zilla Panchayat consists of thirty elected representatives while the South-Goa Zilla Panchayat consists of twenty elected representatives. For the first time the apex body i.e., the Zilla Panchayat has been constituted in Goa. Since liberation in 1961, Goa had only a single-tier system i.e., the Gram Panchayats.

Indian Democracy is an ongoing project. The new Act is conducive towards democratic decentralisation. There was a need to change replication of power structure, top dominating the rest. Gandhiji projected Panchayat in the form of Oceanic Circle. His argument of a society was a holistic society, which is a value oriented. Past 30 years experience has shown that Indian society is not a good society. Democracy in other words is an expression of a Good Society. Good society depends upon Good Governance and Decentralisation is inevitable for Good Governance. Decentralised planning, decentralised administration and decentralised democracy find an expression in the present panchayat institutions. Due to Globalisation a large power
structure is emerging but that is undermining the sovereignty of states. Hence, without disturbing the process of globalisation, decentralisation has to be strengthened.

The new experiment in rural local government is a bold step in terms of devolution of financial powers and the magnitude of functions transferred or conferred on the rural institutions. Rural development responsibility is placed on these institutions along with the transfer of sizeable funds, through the State Finance Commissions, to carry out development activities. The new experiment raises a number of challenging issues in the sphere of rural local government, public administration, transparence, accountability and responsibility of the institutions, and economic and social development. Certain crucial problems arising out of this scheme need to be carefully examined. We are concerned with a number of important issues:

1. Whether the new rural local government institutions will function democratically and justify the faith reposed in them;
2. Whether they will ensure efficiency in administration;
3. Whether democratic governance will make these institutions more transperable, more accountable and more responsible;
4. Whether they ensure rapid and sustained economic and social development in rural areas based on local initiatives.
It is essential that these issues are examined objectively from time to time and appropriate solutions are found. A concurrent evaluation of the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions will throw light on the above questions. Such an academic exercise will bring-out the successes or failures, inadequacies and weaknesses of these bodies. This enables the leaders, planners and administrators to rectify the defects and weaknesses, so that these bodies can effectively contribute to rural development. Within this framework, the present study has been undertaken to examine the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Goa with special reference to South-Goa District. The proposed study examines the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions with reference to its functional and structural dimensions, emerging pattern of leadership, finance and planning, developmental functions, problems and prospects and policy prescriptions.

**SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:**

The Panchayati Raj Institutions are functioning throughout Goa since 1962. For the individual researcher it is very difficult to survey the whole state of Goa. Hence it was felt proper to select a district for an in-depth study. The South Goa District is taken as a sample district for examining the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions. In all there are 69 village panchayats in the South Goa District. Here also it was felt
that it would be difficult to cover the working of all these village panchayats. Hence the researcher chose four Village Panchayats, two from each Taluka for a micro study. Sancoale and Verna from Mormugoa taluka, Nuvem and Paroda from Salcete taluka. The selection of Village Panchayats is based on their performances, cropping pattern and the geographical and agronomic environment. On the basis of discussions with officials and from the perspective of academic objectivity, the above mentioned four village panchayats have been selected for study.

In this study the empirical method is followed with a view to understand the working of local self-government institutions in the four villages. In the contemporary period the purpose of social-science research is social engineering and critical understanding of the phenomena. This necessitates an empirical approach to socio-political investigations. Empiricism is the hallmark of today’s social science research. This is because the empirical method is adopted in many research studies. In the present field study the following tools constitute important sources of data collection:

1. Questionnaires;
2. Informal and formal interviews;
3. Field observations;
4. Office documents, meeting proceedings, circulars, orders, notes etc. and
5. Secondary sources consisting of books, reports, articles unpublished seminar papers, memoranda, etc.

1. **Questionnaires:**

Structured questionnaire was circulated to the non-officials, officials and rural public belonging to different occupational patterns. The non-officials are elected members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. They were interviewed with the help of a comprehensive questionnaire, that touched upon various aspects like their socio-economic background, elections, party affiliations, leadership variables, reservations, relations with officials, communal and religious problems, acquaintance about recent developments regarding rural self-government, issues and problems of Panchayati Raj Institutions. The questionnaire for officials included their administrative and inter-personal relationship with the non-officials. The questionnaire for rural public included their socio-economic background, issues and problems regarding Panchayati Raj Institutions.
2. Informal And Formal Interviews:

Some aspects were not covered by the questionnaires administered to the non-officials and the rural public. Such information was elicited through formal and informal discussions with them. These discussions were also conducted with the official functionaries at various levels. Reliance was placed on informal discussions, especially for collecting information on sensitive issues such as factional politics, accountability and responsibility, etc. This method yielded rich dividends in terms of exposition of Panchayat politics, conflicts and cleavages. In certain cases formal discussion with the help of questions was also used through a participatory process.

3. Field Observations:

The University academicians are often criticised for their arm chair theory building about rural India. M.N.Srinivas is highly critical of the lack of field study culture in social science research. This is because of difficulties in conducting survey research in social science in a developing country like India where the respondents may not respond appropriately. Survey research is a costly affair consuming both money, time and human resources and lack of training in conducting surveys has also formed the major difficulty in this
In Anthropology and Sociology, participant observation constitutes an important source of data collection technique. In our study, the technique of participant observation is also used. Field observations of the conduct of Gramsabha meetings of Village Panchayats were made in order to perceive the behaviour of non-officials as well as the conduct of statutory proceedings. This technique of field observation, especially meetings, yielded rich data in terms of the behaviour pattern of non-officials.

4. **Office Documents, Records, etc.:**

The village panchayat records, meeting proceedings, office orders, circulars, and notes provided valuable insights into the working of panchayat administration. The plan documents and budget estimates gave an idea of development activities in this rural setting. Important Government orders were also consulted. The office orders, documents, circulars, and other jottings were analysed through the content analysis method.

5. **Secondary Sources:**

Books on development administration, Panchayati Raj, local self-government and rural development were referred intensively and
extensively. Journal articles on various dimensions of rural development and Panchayati Raj were consulted as and when necessary. Government Reports, Five Year Plan documents and evaluation reports were also examined with a view to draw appropriate conclusions. Unpublished theses and seminar papers were also used in the analysis. For collecting secondary data the following institutions were visited:

1. Central Library, Panaji;
2. State Archives, Panaji;
3. Goa University Library, Taliegao, Panaji;
4. Karnataka University, Dharwad;
5. Municipal Library, Margao;
6. National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad;

**Sample Of Respondents:**

In order to elicit information, it was decided to interview the non-officials and officials of Village Panchayats and rural public belonging to different occupational patterns. The technique of random sampling was adopted by the researcher. The number of such respondents is given in Table-1.1.
Table-1.1: Sample Of Respondents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Non-officials</th>
<th>Officials</th>
<th>Rural Public (belonging to different occupations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directorate of Panchayats</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Development Office</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Panchayat</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approaches For Analysis:

The structural and behavioral approaches were employed for the study. \(^{41}\)

The structural analysis will cover the following aspects:

1. The structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions from state to village level;
2. The developmental bureaucracy involved in rural local government;
3. Selection, training and promotional aspects of Panchayat personnel;
4. Panchayat finance in terms of taxes, grants, other sources, accounting methods and auditing; and
5. The committee system in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
The behavioral analysis will look into the following aspects:

1. The functioning of Panchayat institutions in terms of panchayat elections, meetings, co-ordination, planning and implementation;
2. Leadership behaviour;
3. People's participation;
4. Official, Non official relations; and
5. Functioning of political parties.

Objectives Of The Study:

The principal objectives of the study concerning the various aspects of the working of Panchayati Raj system in the South Goa District are as follows:

1. To examine the origin and development of Panchayati Raj Institutions;
2. To understand the organisational aspects of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Goa in terms of structural and functional analysis;
3. To study the socio-economic background of rural leaders;
4. To understand the dynamics of leadership in terms of their perceptions, attitudes and beliefs;
5. To assess the panchayat finances in terms of taxes, grants, other resources, accounting, auditing and budgeting methods, etc;

6. To examine the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions in terms of planning and developmental programmes;

7. To study the official and non-official relationship at the local level;

8. To explore the problems of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Goa and prescribe certain policy prescriptions.

Organisation Of The Study:

The study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter, deals with the introduction and importance of the study, purpose, scope and methodology, data collection techniques and limitations of the study. A brief history of Panchayati Raj Institutions in India and Goa is also described in the first chapter. The second chapter, touches upon organisational aspects of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Goa. The structural and functional analysis of Panchayati Raj Institutions has also been made. The third chapter, deals with Panchayat leadership in terms of the following aspects:

a. Socio-economic background of leaders;

b. Factors determining leadership;
c. Leadership in terms of electoral politics;
d. Popular participation; and
e. Pattern of emerging leadership.

In the fourth chapter, panchayat finance in terms of budgeting, accounting and auditing are investigated. Also the tax structure and the system of grants are analysed and suitable conclusions are drawn. In the fifth chapter, the working of Panchayat planning and implementation are examined thoroughly. The civic and developmental works of selected village panchayats are discussed at some length. The sixth chapter tries to come to grips with the problems of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the spheres of legislation's, officials-non-officials relations, taxation, recruitment and transfer of personnel and training of official and non-officials. In the last chapter, findings of the study, policy prescriptions, are indicated with a view to help policy planners in the governmental administration.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:


15. Ibid.


26. Ibid; pp 18, 19 and 20.


32. *Gazetter Of The Union Territory Of Goa, Daman and Diu*, op.cit., p.655.

33. Ibid; p. 656.

34. Ibid; P.206.


36. Ibid; p.56.


41. In this connection see. V.Shivaling Prasad’s *Panchayats and Development*, (New-Delhi, Light and Life Publishers, 1981).