

**POLITICS OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND  
PANCHAYATI RAJ: A CASE STUDY OF  
AUL BLOCK IN ORISSA**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the award of the Degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**1995**



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Date : 21st July 1995

**CERTIFICATE**

Certified that the present disertation on "Politics of People's Participation and Panchayati Raj: A Case Study of Aul Block in Orissa" being submitted by Shri Jayanta Parida is worthy of consideration for the award of M.Phil Degree of the Jawaharlal Nehru University. This is his own work and has not been published or presented for the award of any degree of any other University in India.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Prof. Kuldeep Mathur, my research supervisor for giving invaluable suggestions, academic inspiration and constant encouragement in completing this work.

I am thankful to the authorities of JNU Library, New Delhi, IIPA Library New Delhi, NIEPA Library New Delhi, Institute of Social Sciences Library, New Delhi and Parija Library Utkal University, Bhubaneswar for providing me with library facilities.

Thanks are also due to the BDO, Aul, his colleagues, villagers of Sansidha and Demal GPs for the invaluable co-operation they extended to me in course of collecting data.

I am also thankful to my friends and seniors who extended their co-operation to me.

Last but not least, I would certainly like to record my appreciation of Shri Govind Singh Rawat, who typed this manuscript.

*Jayanta Parida .*

Jayanta Parida

TO,  
MY FAMILY  
FOR THEIR LOVE,  
INSPIRATION AND  
SACRIFICE

## Preface

Participation of people in developmental process is the sine-qua-non of developmental programme. It is prime requisite for the effectiveness, equity and viability of development programmes. Being action oriented and goal-oriented, participation calls for strong will and skill on the part of every participating citizen to cooperate and involve whole heartily and enthusiastically in the process of social change and national development.

Keeping the importance of people's participation in mind several attempts have been made by the Government of India since independence through five-year plans, various committees and commissions to achieve people's participation. But it is found that participation of people still remained far from satisfactory. The benefits of the development have not been shared by all and decision-making process remains far away from the common people. In this context, the present work seeks to examine the degree of people's participation in various Panchayati-Raj activities such as participation in voting, Gram Sabha, planning, implementation and evaluation phase of decision-making process. The study also seeks to examine the relationship between socio-economic status of the people and their level of participation in grass root level bodies.

For the purpose of study, the present work has been divided into seven chapters.

Chapter one of the work covers the conceptual framework of people's participation and evolution of Panchayati-Raj in India including recent developments.

The second chapter focuses on profile of Orissa, the block, and sample Panchayats under study. The chapter also covers the Scope of the Study, Methodology, Area of Study, Hypotheses, and Review of Literature.

Third chapter of this work describes the genesis of Panchayati Raj system in Orissa, its structures, patterns including current developments.

Chapter fourth deals with the socio-economic background of Panchayat Leaders.

Chapter fifth analyses various aspects of people's participation in grass-root level bodies.

Chapter sixth of the work discusses on JRY and people participation in it.

Chapter seventh is the concluding chapter of the work. It runs into two parts. Part one focuses on the findings of the study and part two suggested remedial measures to make people's participation more effective in grass-root bodies.

Date:21.07.95

**Jayanta Parida**

## Abbreviations

BDO	-	Block Development Officer
CD	-	Community Development
DRDA	-	District Rural Development Agency
GP	-	Gram Panchayat
GS	-	Gram Sabha
IADP	-	Intensive Agriculture Development Programme
IAY	-	Indira Aawas Yojana
JRY	-	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
MWS	-	Million Wells Scheme
NES	-	National Extension Service
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organization
NREP	-	National Rural Employment Programme
PRI	-	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PS	-	Palli Sabha
PS	-	Panchayat Samiti
RLEGP	-	Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme
R.D.	-	Rural Development
ZP	-	Zilla Parishad

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governmental authorities with a view to improve the economic and social life of the communities, to integrate these communities with the national mainstream. Community participation includes encouraging the village people to become self reliant, responsible citizen, capable of participative in the socio-economic development and nation-building, by proper utilization of scare resources.

#### **HISTORY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ**

The village Panchayats, as institutions of local self-government at the village level had its origin in ancient India. In the 'Manusmriti' and 'Shanti Parva' of Mahabharat, there are many references to the existence of Gram Sanghs or rural communities. A description of these rural communities is also found in the 'Arthashastra' of Kautilya. Infact, the village in India has been looked upon as the basic unit of administration, since early vedic times. Together with a large self-sufficient village economy, the Panchayats enabled the people of rural India to survive internal wars and foreign invasion over the centuries.

Etymologically, 'Panchayat' means "A body of five eminent persons". Each person is called a 'Panch'. The Panch was held in very high esteem and his wisdom trusted. He was

respected to such a degree that he came to be ranked with the God through the epithet 'Panch Parmeswar' i.e., God speaks through the wisdom of five <sup>12</sup> *is it for a single book or collecting*

But this wishful thinking did not last. They fell into disuse. The Mughuls and British rule led to their disintegration. The deliberate introduction of Landlordism, and the Ryotwari system by Britishers against the Manasbari or village tenure system, dealt almost a death blow to the corporate life of the village communities. The excessive centralization of executive and judicial powers in the hands of the government officials deprived the village functionaries of the age long power and influence. *why call it wishful thinking*

Though during the British rule; the system of village Panchayat completely lost its ground, in course of time, the Britishers for their own administrative convenience had taken some measures with regards to establishment of local self-government in India. Undoubtedly, Lord Mayo's Resolution of 1870, was the first attempt made in this direction of establishment of local self-government, but the Government Resolution of 18th May, 1882, brought out by Viceroy Lord Ripon was hailed as the Magna Carta of self-

12. Bhagwant Singh Tomar, Panchayati Raj in India, Indian Bibliography Bureau, Delhi, 1991, p.1.

*Is "Manasbari" + "Village tenure system" the same?*

government in India. Then came the Royal Commission of Decentralization in 1909, followed by the Government of India Act 1919, which made the local self-government as one of the provincial subjects, and accordingly, Acts were passed in many of the erstwhile provinces for the establishment of village Panchayats. By 1925, eight provinces of British India had passed Acts for the establishment of village Panchayats. By 1948, 20 native states had village Panchayat Acts. However, these statutory Panchayats covered only a limited number of villages and had a very limited number of functions.<sup>13</sup>

Village Panchayats were central to the ideological framework of the national movement for political freedom. Gandhiji had categorically stated his vision of village Panchayat in a 1942 issue of the Harijan. His idea of village Swaraj was that the:

"Village must be a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many other in which dependence is a necessity. The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required.

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13. George Mathew, Panchayati Raj : Legislation to a Movement, Concept Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1994, p.4.

Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, the Panchayat will be the legislative, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Here there is perfect democracy based on individual freedom".<sup>14</sup>

But when the constitution was being drafted little concern was expressed for Gandhian thought and the concept 'Panchayat'- the cornerstone of Gandhiji's framework, did not figure in the constitution. It is because, these views of the 'Father of the Nation' had not seen shared by many, most notably Dr. Ambedkar - the legal luminary of Indian Constitution, who said in the Constituent Assembly "What is village, but sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism". However, the incorporation of Panchayats in Directive Principles of State Policy in Art. 40 which reads: "The state shall take steps to organise Panchayats and shall evolve them with necessary powers and authority, to enable <sup>it</sup> to function as units of self-government" was a compromise between Gandhians and the modernists led by Dr. Ambedkar.<sup>15</sup> This left little obligation to implement Panchayati Raj (rural local government) in

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14. M.K. Gandhi, "My Ideas of Village Swaraj", Harijan, 26 July, 1942.

15. Kuldeep Mathur, Political and Administrative Decentralisation in India, (Unpublished Article).

independent India. There was no legislation to implement it until 1959. Finally, it came about when policy makers realised that it was impossible to implement the development programme without the instrument of people's participation.

During the fifties, national planning was started and this broadened the scope of rural extension. The First Five Year Plan visualised Panchayats at the village level mainly as agencies for development, public welfare and land reforms.<sup>16</sup> The Second Five Year Plan went a step further and specifically recommended a network of active Panchayats for securing comprehensive village planning and complete pattern of development administration.<sup>17</sup>

After independence, the move to difuse power to the grass root bodies was first started through Community Development Projects (CDP) and National Extension Services (NES). But these programmes failed to evoke popular participation and popular initiative in the process of rural development.<sup>18</sup>

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16. The First Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, 1953, p.153.

17. The Second Five year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, 1956, p.148.

18. R.B. Jain (ed.), Panchayati Raj Administration, 11PA, New Delhi, P-X.

It was at this juncture, when experience belied the high hopes placed in the C.D. Programme, the government came forward and set up a high level committee headed by Shri Balwantrai Mehta to review the working of C.D. programme and N.E. Services with a view to economy and efficiency and also to examine the question of obtaining popular participation through local institutions and people's organisations.

In its exhausting report submitted to the government, the committee recommended the scheme of 'democratic decentralization' in the form of Panchayati Raj (PR), as a measure remedial to the failure of the C.D. programmes, to evoke people's initiative and mobilise their spontaneous participation.<sup>19</sup> The study team also recommended a profound change in the methods of operation of the programme, transferring control from the government machinery to elected bodies of the people at the ground level, from the village up to the district level. However, it laid down four fundamental principles which should underline the spirit of democratic decentralization. These were:

- i) there should be a three-tier structure of local self government bodies from the village to the district

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19. The Report of the team of the study C.D. projects and National extension services, 1958.

- level, and these bodies should be linked together;
- ii) adequate resources should be transferred to these bodies to enable them to discharge their responsibilities;
  - iii) there should be genuine transfer of power and responsibility to these bodies to enable them to discharge their responsibilities; and
  - iv) all the welfare and development schemes and programmes at the three levels should be channelised through these bodies.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, Panchayati Raj movement started with a full fanfare, enthusiasm, laudable objectives and hopes. It was widely thought, not wrongly so, that the PR would bring democracy to the doors of the rural people; that it would evoke people's participation in decision-making and implementation of programmes and schemes which by and large determine their destiny; that it would put the bureaucracy under the local popular control; and that it would accelerate the process of social and economic development.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Ibid.

21. B.S. Bhargava , Panchayati Raj Movement in India, Angewandte sozialforschung, JG, Nürumburg, W. Germany 1986-87, p. 221.

It was in 1959, that, following the recommendation of the Balwantrai Mehta committee, a three-tier system of Panchayati raj was adopted first in Rajasthan, as a form of rural local-self government. Very soon it was followed by Andhra Pradesh in the same year and a good number of states in the subsequent years. Though there were variations from state to state, broadly the functions entrusted to the Panchayats include village roads, community wells, maintenance of public parks, tanks, in some states the Zilla Parishads (ZPs) were made responsible for primary education and entrusted with functions related to rural industries, primary health, child welfare etc. The extent and tempo of the involvement Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the basic planning and implementation development projects was also subject to wide variation from state to state and even within the state. Besides all the above, the PRIs gave a boost to the emergence of local leadership by creating new seats of power to be filled by the competitive mechanism of democratic election.

This phase of ascendancy in the history of PR in India continued till 1964, to be followed by a phase of stagnation, (1964-69), and then a phase of decline (1969-



77).<sup>22</sup> With the passing away of Pandit Nehru, the commitment to democratic values weakened. The flow of funds for block development slowed down to a trickle, after the closure of the intensive stages of Community Development Programme.

Several causes contributed to the decline of PRIs. Firstly, the bureaucracy, local vested interests and the elected representatives in the State Legislature and in the Parliament did not take kindly to the PRIs, whose ascendancy they feared.<sup>23</sup> In 1966-67 the Ministry of Community Development was reduced to the status of a department and brought under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. In 1971 the very name "Community Development" was dropped and replaced by "Rural Development". This was not just a cosmetic change. It was the end of the both 'Community' and 'Panchayat' as agents of change and agencies of development.<sup>24</sup>

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22. Ashok Mehta Study Committee, Report of the Committee on PRIs, New Delhi, Department of RD, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, 1978.

23. C.P. Bhambri, 'Panchayati Raj: A neglected area' Financial Express (New Delhi), 6Jan, 1993.

24. L.C. Jain, (ed.), Grass without Roots, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p.40.

Secondly, the political leadership, planners and bureaucracy considered the PRIs mostly as agencies of development and not as little Republics. This was a serious conceptual flaw. While the rationale for the creation of the PRIs was that "development can not progress without responsibility and Power", the thrust in the five year plans had been to establish statutory Panchayats mere as vehicles for National Extension and Community Development Projects than as units of self government, with the result the PRIs had no autonomy and were under the mercy of the State Governments and their bureaucracy.

Fourthly, most of the State Government would not hold elections to the PRIs for years together, under one pretext or the other. Elected Chairmen were suspended or removed in many cases, and some PRIs were suspended or superseded on flimsy political considerations. As a matter of fact, local Panchayat leaders had become important 'vote bank' for both state and central leaders and it was in their interest that their leadership held away without interruption.

Fifthly, lack of adequate resources, and more particularly, dependence on funds from State Governments

crippled the Panchayati Raj institutions.<sup>25</sup>

Sixthly, the failure of <sup>and the</sup> (distribution) land reform policies and resources, contributed a lot to the decline of PRIs. As per data for the country as a whole, the top 10 per cent of rural households own about 70 per cent of agriculture land and the bottom 90 per cent, including small and marginal farmers, own the remaining 20 per cent; the bottom most, the docile do not own anything. Regarding the distribution of assets, 39 per cent of the household owns 5 per cent of the total assets, while the top 5 per cent own 46 per cent.<sup>26</sup> In such situation, when PRIs were introduced, it only helped the well<sup>to</sup> do farmers. The power structure simply transferred to their hands through Panchayat election. These people became the major decision makers. As a result the marginal farmers and landless labourers totally remained neglected and remained out side from the purview of PR system. They had no voice in the Panchayat affairs.

Last but not least, PRIs were dominated by local groups

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25. K.L. Sharma, "Panchayati Raj: an experiment in empowerment of the rural people" , Kurukshetra, vol.XLII, no.12, Sept.,1994, pp.35-38.

26. Ashim Das Gupta, in M. Adiseshiah, P.Mukherjee, R.Hegde, G. Fernandis, Decentralised Planning and Panchayati Raj, Institute of Social Sciences and Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994, p.29.

based on castes. In the PR bodies, power to people had meant, the hegemonic position of the upper castes, and the lower castes find themselves forced to accept the domination of upper caste. Practically, the lower caste people had no says in PR bodies. In PR bodies they were denied of their rights.

Thus it was only in the early of about 5-6 years from 1959 to around 1965 that the excitement about the viability of PRIs ran high. For about 12 years from 1965 to 1977, PR was used as the whipping boy all those who wanted it to be discredited.<sup>27</sup> Some other characterised village Panchayat as "a focus of frustration", and Gram Sabha as "something <sup>a</sup> joke".

The revive interest in Panchayati Raj came about with a change of government at the national level during 1977. A thirteen members committee headed by Ashok Mehta was set up by the Janata Party Government to look into the PR system as a whole and to suggest measures to strengthen the PRIs. This committee re-emphasised the importance of Panchayati Raj, but recommended a two-tier structure- Zilla Parishad (ZP) at

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27. George Mathew, The Federal principle in local self government in N. Mukharjee and B.Arora, (ed.), "Federalism in India : Origin and Development", Vikas Publication, 1992, New Delhi, p.24.

the district level and Mandal Panchayat (MP) for a group of villagers, with a population of 20,000 to 30,000. It also recommended that the district should be the first point for decentralization under popular supervision below the State level and favoured the official recognition of the participation of political parties at all levels of Panchayat elections.<sup>28</sup>

Though no action was taken on the recommendations of the Ashok Mehta Committee report at the Central level, three states - West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh - have nevertheless tried since then, to put into practice the recommendations of Ashok Mehta Committee. These states either revised their existing Panchayat Acts or passed new Acts, in theory excepting the Ashok Mehta Committee report. These states adopted the recommendations to suit their conditions and learnt from each other's experience in bringing forth new legislations or amendments to the prevailing acts. For instance, in 1983 Karnataka followed the West Bengal model, and soon Andhra Pradesh also opened a new chapter taking the cue from West Bengal and Karnataka.

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28. Ashok Mehta Committee, op. cit.

## DEMAND FOR CONSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

With the remarkable enthusiasm among the people in Karnataka and West Bengal on the implementation of Panchayati Raj, the move to incorporate constitutional provisions for Panchayat strengthened. Following dominant views regarding the discussions took during that period:

- i) The constitutional changes to guarantees elections to local bodies at the expire of their terms;<sup>29</sup>
- ii) Creation of three or four tier government, that is the centre, state, district and village government; and,
- iii) Legislative and structural measures to give legitimacy to people's participation.

By the end of 1988, Governmental of India set up a committee headed by constitutional expert, Dr. L.M. Singhvi to prepare a concept paper to revitalise the PRIs. Among the other things, the committee suggested that, the local self-government should be constitutionally recognised, protected and preserved by the inclusion of a new chapter in the constitution. It also recommended a constitutional provision to ensure free and fair election for the PRIs and suggested that the task to be entrusted to the Election commission of India.<sup>30</sup>

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29. George Mathews, Panchayati Raj : Legislation to Movement, op. cit., p.31.

30. S.S., Meenakshisundaram, Decentralisation in Developing Countries, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994, p.59.

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Accepting the recommendations of committee, Rajiv Gandhi Government introduced the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Parliament in May 1989 to confer statutory status on Panchayat Raj. The 64th Amendment Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha but defeated in Rajaya Sabha in October 1989. Then the 74th Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament in September 1990 by the National Front Government led by V.P. Singh. It was not even taken up for discussion as the National Front Government went out of power. When the present Government headed by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao came to power in June 1991, the 72nd constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced in September 1991. It was sent to a joint committee of parliament for consideration of various clauses in it. The Bill was passed as 73rd constitutional Amendment Bill on December 22 and on 23rd, 1992. Following the ratification of the Bill by 17 out of 20 states which had elected assemblies in position, the President of India gave his assent to the Bill on April 20, 1993, and the constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, was brought into effect from April 24, 1993.

The main features of the constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act are : i) Formation of Gram Sabhas (the assembly of all adults in the village/s); ii) Uniform three-

tier system at village, block and district levels with exemption of the intermediate level in states with population less than 2 millions ; iii) Direct election to all seats at all levels; iv) Indirect election of Chairman at intermediary and apex levels with mode of election for the lowest level being left to the states; v) 21 years as minimum age for members as well as Chairmen; vi) Reservation on rotational basis for SCs and STs in proportion to their population both for membership as well as Chairmanship of the Panchayats; vii) Reservation of not less than one-third of the seats for women; viii) Five years term; ix) In case of supersession or dissolution fresh elections within six months x) Devaluation of powers and responsibilities by the state to districts and blocks in the preparation and implementation of developmental plans xi) Sound financial arrangement through tax, grant-in-aid, levy, fees, etc; xii) Setting up of the Finance Commission once in five years to review the Financial position of these recommendations to the state on the distribution of funds among Panchayats; xiii) Provision for the maintenance of accounts and auditing of such accounts; and, xiv) Holding of elections under the superintendence, direction and control of the chief



electoral officer of the state.<sup>31</sup>

The Panchayati Raj Act, passed by Parliament in December 1992 constitutes a major milestone in the history of rural local government. This act tends to provide meaningful PR bodies in the country. The 73rd Amendment Act is certainly a step forward in the direction of decentralization of powers to the people at the grassroot level by creating responsible village Panchayats to the Gram Sabha, regular elections, sufficient representation to weaker sections of society. The one-third, reservation for Chairperson's office for women and STs and STs provide a handle the party in power at the state level for manoeuvrability and political use, but it will certainly check the control of these bodies by powerful vested interests in the villages. This provision will provide opportunities of these communities for the decision-making at the highest level in these institution.<sup>32</sup>

About the structure of PR institutions, the constitution 73rd Amendment Act has taken into account the inner dynamics by accepting the concept of an organic

31. The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, Published in Kurukshetra, vol. XLI, No. 9, June 1993, pp. 29-34.
32. Hosiar Singh, Decentralization through constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, Kurukshetra, vol. XLI, no.8, May, 1993, pp. 22-25.

linkage between PR bodies. The Act allows the Chairpersons of the Panchayats at the village level and at the intermediate level, by law, to be the members automatically in the next higher level Panchayats at the intermediate and district level respectively.

The Amendment also provides for two independent authorities, one to conduct free and fair elections to Panchayati Raj bodies, and second, to devolve adequate funds to make them financially viable. A Finance Commission is set up every five years to determine the devaluation of finances on the PR bodies. The constitutional amendment specifies twenty nine functions for the PR bodies. These includes agriculture, land reform, minor irrigation, housing, road, rural electrification etc.

But there are some lacunas in the Act. First, it has a little to offer to the Panchayats by way of functions, powers and resources to shape them as 'units' of self government. This task is left to each State Legislature to determine.<sup>33</sup>


Secondly, the 73rd Amendment Act dispenses with the flexibility of the structure of Panchayati Raj. The question

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33. Ibid., p. 24

such as a three-tier or two-tier system, the extent mode of reservation for woman, SCs and STs are decided in a uniform pattern for the entire country. This inflexibility will cause great harm; for instance, in Kerala, where, after protracted discussion for nearly two decades, it was decided to have a two-tier system. Like wise West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh adopted the two-tier PR system which has shown good results. But the 73 Amendment Act makes it obligatory for Kerala as for every other state whose population <sup>s</sup> in above 20 lakhs to have a three-tier system.

Thirdly, the reservation schemes for the office of Chairperson of Panchayats would affect the smooth working of these bodies and this provision <sup>s</sup> (in) likely to be weaken the strong hold of other opposition parties in same regions and panchayats of the state, by reserving their Chairpersons office for ST, SC and women. It would be wise to let conventions secure a share in Chairpersonship for the disadvantaged groups rather than rely on a legislative stick.<sup>34</sup>



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34. L.C. Jain, Future of Panchyats, The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, April 10, 1992.

23. X<sup>26</sup>. 95

## CHAPTER - 2

### SETTING OF THE ENVIRONMENT

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE:ORISSA

[Total Geographical Area - 1,55,707 Sq. Kms. Total Population - 3,1,512,070, Density - 202 per sq. km., Sex Ratio - 972: 1000 (M), Literacy -49.09% Female - 34.68%, Male - 63.09%, No. of Revenue Divisions - 3, No. of Districts 30, No. of Sub-Divisions- 54, No. of Tahasils - 142, No. Of Blocks-314, Total Labour Force - 37.53 per cent of which, 75.83 per cent in Primary sector, 7.51 per cent in Secondary sector, 16.66 per cent in Tertiary sector, Per Capita Income (89-90)- Rs 2, 965]

"Washed by the waters of Bay of Bengal, on the Eastern Coast, Orissa has the distinction of being endowed liberally with the bounties of nature and glorious achievements of its great people situated on the Eastern Coast of India, Orissa is bounded by West Bengal on the north east, Bihar on the north, Madhya Pradesh on the west and Bay of Bengal on the east. Famous in mythology and ancient history as 'Kalinga' and in medieval history 'Utkal', modern Orissa took its present form on April 1, 1936, the first state in the country to be formed on linguistic basis."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Encyclopaedia of India, vol.v, p. 1.



The state of Orissa extends from 17.49' to 22.34' N latitude from 81.29' E to 87.29'E longitude on the Eastern Coast of India. It covers an area of 1,55,826 Sq. kilometers, out of which 40% is covered by forest. The state presents a variety of geographical land scapes, hills and valley, forest and rivers the coastal line, the delta and the lakes, the water falls and the hot springs. The topography consists of an extensive plateau on the north and western section of the state intercepted by erosional plains into Bay of Bengal. The River Mahanadi flowing west to east practically divides the state into a northern part, which is an extension of the chhotnagpur plateau and a southern part which is an extension of the Eastern Ghats. In between lie the erosional plains and the river basins. The state thus has five well defined physical regions namely Northern plateau, the Eastern Ghats, the Erosional Plains, River Basin and Coastal Delta.

The state is well served with good rain fall from the south east monsoon during the period June to September every year; with an average annual rain fall of 59", except in certain chronically drought-prone areas of Ganjam, Kalahandi, Dhenkanal, and Bolangir district. The soil is extensively found to be red, loamy red, and yellow suitable

for cultivation of paddy and other crops. The total surface area of 60,164 Sq. miles, 3,875 Sq. miles have the alluvial soil, 54,321 Sq. miles have red and laterite soil and 1,940 Sq. miles black cotton soil.

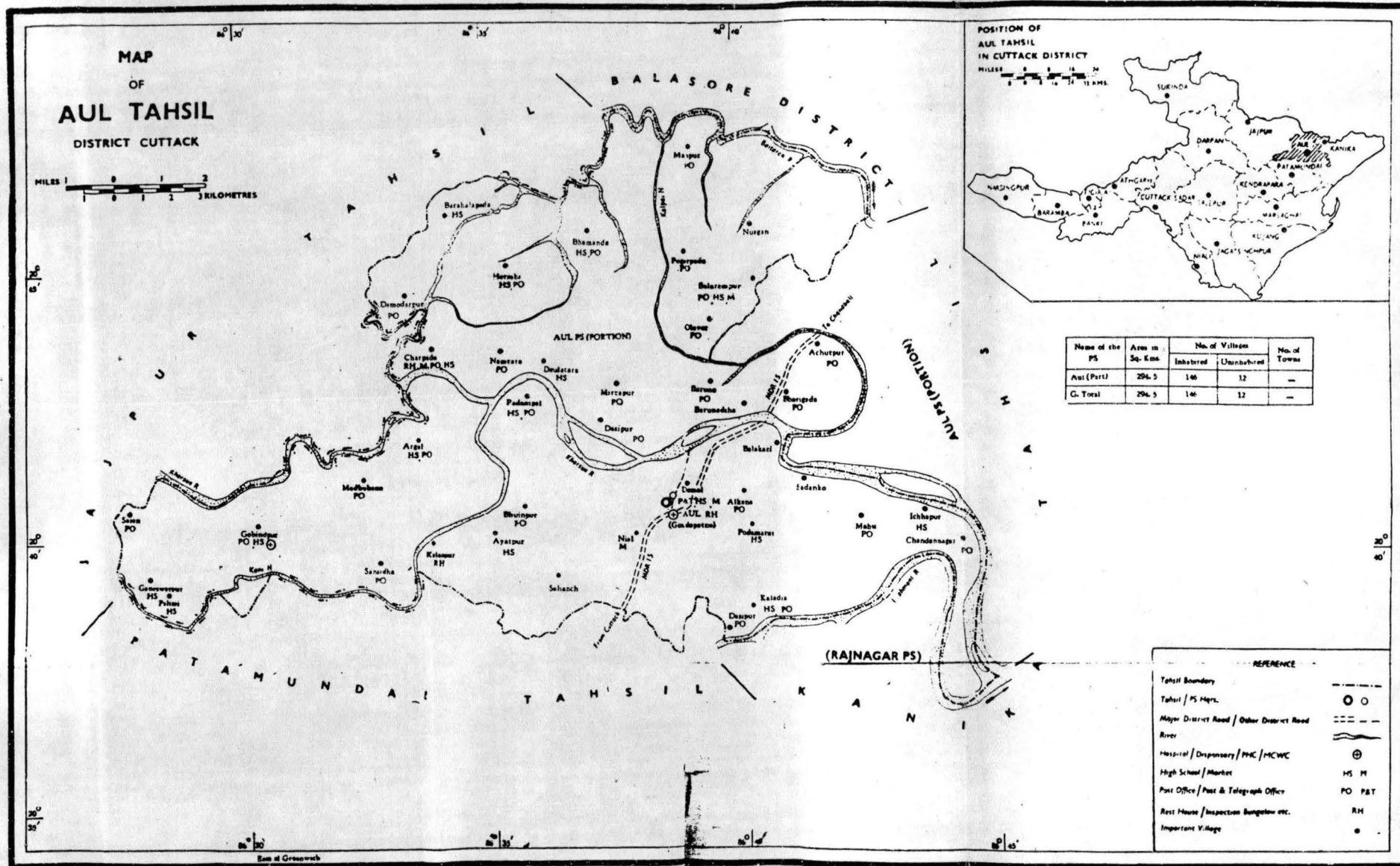
With a huge amount of natural resources, Orissa is characterised by abject poverty, low literacy rate, high infant mortality rate and very poor health status. The four coastal districts viz., Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam have been ravaged by frequent floods and cyclones while drought haunts the western and central parts. Agriculture being the main stay of the people these natural calamities shatter their hopes for a better tomorrow.

#### **LOCALE OF THE STUDY:**

##### Profile of the block

Total Geographical area- 223.64 sq.km. Total Population - 1,24,390, Average Density - 556, No. of Revenue village - 129, No of Habitable village - 119, No. of Panchayats - 30, Total No. of wards- 227, Average number of wards per Panchayat - 7.56, Average number of Population per Panchayat - 4146.33.

Aul provides the locale of this study. Aul is one of the six blocks in Kendrapara district of Orissa. The district came into being only in April,1992 and earlier the





block was under Cuttack district. The block is situated on the north-eastern coastal part of the Kendrapara district. It is bounded by Pattamundai block on the south, Rajkanika block on the north, Binjharpur block (Jajpur district) on the north-west and Rajnagar block on the southern-east side. The Aul block is located at a distance of 40 K.M. from Kendrapara, district headquarters and 125 K.M. from Bhubaneswar, the state capital.

The block consists of 30 Gram Panchayats. Within this block different Panchayats present varying levels of development. The eastern part of the block is relatively more advance. The western part of the block consisting Sansidha Natara, Palimi G.P. are relatively backward where as the north western part presents a mix picture of both eastern and western parts.

The block consists of 30 village Panchayats and 227 wards. There are 129 revenue villages in the block out of which 119 are habitable. The block covers an area of 224.41 sq. K.m. with an average density of 556 which in much more than of state average. The block has got 195 village tanks, 17 Ferry and Ghats, 3 Markets, 12 cattle ponds. There are 4 Commercial Banks, 4 Gramya Banks, 3 Colleges working in the block.

Total population of the block stood at 1,23,291 (according to 1991 census) out of 58,768 are male, 64,472 are female, 28,078 are SC, 013 are ST, 95,200 are general castes. As per 1991 census, the literacy rate of the block stood at 66.25 per cent and the male literacy rate was 79.01 per cent and female literacy rate was 55 per cent.

**Occupation pattern**

**Table 2.1: In Sector Wise**

Sector	No. of person employed
Primary	19,885
Secondary	1,338
Tertiary	4,432
Marginal workers	887
Non-workers	96,758

**Table 2.2: In House Hold Wise**

Marginal farmers	4,065
Small farmers	5,370
Normal (Non-agriculture)	5,502
Agriculture Labourer	3,708
<b>Total household</b>	<b>18,645</b>

[Source : Block Register, Aul)

The block covers an area of 22,364 hectares, out of which, 17,585 hectares are cultivable land. Agriculture is

the mainstay of the people of the block and about 80 per cent of whom sustain on subsistence cultivation. Paddy is the principal crop of the area while black gram, green gram, groundnut and other vegetable are also grow in various part of the block. But absence of infrastructural facilities and modern techniques of agriculture, have restricted the cultivation to subsistence crops only. Most of the western part of the block (called Dhoia in Oriya) is flooded every year thereby washing away the main crops which brings immense misery to the people.

Peasants of the block have been depending on rain for cultivation owing to inadequate and uneven irrigation facilities. While major problem of the peasants is inadequate and uncertain rain fall in one year, one added difficulty for heavy monsoon rainfall and high flood in another year.

The method and techniques of farming in the block is very traditional. Most of the farmers still using age-old wooden plough, ladder, leveller, spede, stickles for cultivation. Absence of infrastructural facilities like road, irrigation and modern farm technology have been resulted in high cost of production and low output thereby

forcing this predominantly agriculture populace to be restricted within a subsistence economy.

#### **SETTING OF GRAM PANCHAYATS UNDER-STUDY**

In a village the physical, socio-economic and political factor are interdependent, interrelated and constantly interact with another. They are the important variables which have an impact on the working of the institutions within the village. The Panchayat has to function within the given socio-economic frame-work. The socio-economic structure imposes certain constrains and offers certain opportunities in the working of Panchayats. Thus, a deeper analysis of socio-economic pattern helps us to gain greater insight into the operational efficiency of the Panchayats.

For the purpose of study, two Gram Panchayats viz, Sansidha and Demal under Aul block have been chosen.

#### **PROFILE OF SANSIDHA PANCHAYAT**

Sansidha is one of the oldest Gram Panchayat of Aul block and situated about 17 Km. away to west of the block headquarter. River Kani separates this Panchayat of Aul block from Pattamundai block. The Panchayat consists of two revenue village namely, Sansidha and Petapara and six

hamlets. They are Sansidha, Mangarajpur, Thakurpatana, Petapara, Kharakhari and Baramania. The table below shows the population, literary and occupation pattern of Sansidha Gram Panchayat.

**Table 2.3: Population Pattern**

Name of the village	General	SC	ST	Total
Sansidha	2057	654	-	2711
Petapara	1889	355	1	2245
<b>Total</b>	<b>3946</b>	<b>1009</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4956</b>

**Table 2.4: Literacy (7+)**

Name of the village	Male	Female	Total
Sansidha	85.40	58.96	70.78
Petapara	87.51	61.33	72.80

**Table 2.5: Occupation pattern**

Name of the Village	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Marginal Workers	Non-Workers
Sansidha	464	15	39	2	1873
Petapara	362	9	50	1	1792
<b>Total</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3665</b>

(Source - Village primary census Abstract-1991)

The Panchayat has got 4 High Schools, and 5 U.P. Schools. It has also got one Mahila Samiti, and one formal

education centre. But practically they are defunct due to lack of interest of women and government.

The Panchayat covers about 1299.86 hectares of land. About 85 per cent of population depend directly or indirectly on agriculture. Due to lack of irrigation facilities, the farming in this area purely depends upon the gambling of monsoon. Most of the areas of the Panchayat are flooded every year which brings immense misery to the farmers and agricultural labourers.

(It is one of the most under developed Panchayat in the block under study. Situated in a remote interior, the Panchayat lacks all the transport and communication facilities. Even there is no such communications to reach at the block office daily by cycle. The condition of the village kuchha road is too bad. There is no link road which connects the hamlets to each other. All the hamlets are scattered. The distance between one hamlet to other is ranged from one to two kms.

Sansidha Gram Panchayat has no dispensary in its territory, but this facility is available in nearby Gram Panchayat, located at a distance of 10 km.. The Primary Health Centre (PHC) is situated in the block at the distance of 17 km.

## DEMAL PANCHAYAT

It is one of the most developed Panchayat and nearest to block. Nearest to block, it is in an advantageous position so far as business, trade and commerce is concerned. All the important government offices like the Block, the Tahasil, Police Station, PHC are situated in the Panchayat. Besides this, the Panchayat has got good number of educational institutions including one +2 college. Villages under this Panchayat are well communicated through pucca and metallic roads. The Panchayat consist of five revenue villages. viz. Giribandha, Mulasahi, Lokapada, Demal and Dashipur.

The tables below show the basis statistics of the Panchayat.

**Table 2.6: Population**

Name of the village	SC	ST	Gen	Total
Giribandha	85	-	873	958
Mulasahi	-	-	904	904
Lokapada	91	1	1471	1563
Demal	625	1	1144	1770
Dashipur	716	-	1272	1988
Total	1517	2	5664	7183

Table 2.7:      Literacy rate (7+)

Name of the village	Male	Female	Total
Giribandha	83.12	50.90	67.26
Mulasahi	74.85	32.74	52.55
Lokapada	88.22	61.68	75.21
Demal	81.00	55.40	68.99
Dashipur	70.61	51.43	60.41

Table 2.8:      Occupation Pattern (in sector-wise)

Name of the village	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Marginal workers	Non workers
Giribandha	168	9	37	4	739
Mulasahi	177	7	18	-	702
Lokapada	156	54	172	-	902
Demal	163	30	290	44	1242
Dashipur	398	2	14	98	1458
Total	1062	102	531	146	5043

(Source : Village Primary Census Abstract - 1991)

Out of 7318, 1062 people are engaged in primary sector, 102 in secondary, 531 in tertiary. 146 people are marginal workers and 5043 are simply non-workers.

The Panchayat consists of 20 wards out of which 16 wards are meant for general and 4 wards are reserved for SCs. The Panchayat covers an area of 481.5 hector of land and consists of 1203 households.



participated in the decision-making process as a villager of Sansidha Gram Panchayat.

Apart from the schedule and observation method we also gathered much information through informal conversation with the villagers individually or in group.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Literature on PR and their functioning in India is very vast and ever growing in numbers. Since its inception, several authors, scholars, bureaucrats, academicians, committees have tried to analyse the concept from a different perspectives. There have been generalised studies, regional studies, historical studies, and empirical studies done at the both micro and macro levels. So an attempt to review the literature will have to remain inexhaustive and incomplete. However, an attempt has been made to review some of the important works available on PR.

Among the historical studies Mario D. Zamora's<sup>2</sup> book traced the historical development of the Panchayats from the vedic age to 1962, the time the Indian Government embarked on a historic programme of democratic decentralization

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2. Mario D. Zamora, The Panchayat Tradition, Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990.

(Panchayati Raj). The author explains and analyses the interaction between the ancient Panchyats and the new elective Panchayats.

R.V. Jathar's<sup>3</sup> book gives the historical background of the village Panchayat in ancient India and the history of local self government under the British rule. The book also indicates the importance attached to our village Panchayats by our representatives in the Constituent Assembly.

The second category of studies are available in the generalised form. These studies gave a textual treatment to the subject and cover almost all the aspects of PRIs. Desai<sup>4</sup> systematically examines the varied issues of PR and necessary momentum to development of rural areas, which is essential for a balanced growth of Indian economy. He also emphasises the importance of PR in the implementation of multi-directional programme in rural development. The book analyses the relevant problems of functions, finance, management and the organisation of programmes initiated to improve the living conditions of the rural poor. It also

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3. R.V. Jathar, Evolution of Panchayati Raj in India, JSS Institute of Economic Research, Dharwar, 1964.
  4. Basanta Desai, Panchayati Raj - Power to People, Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay, 1990.

contains relevant suggestions and management techniques for speedy rural development.

G. Ram Reddy (ed.) book<sup>5</sup> "The Pattern of PR in India" highlights the diversities and similarities of PRIs as established in various states of India. Besides, it also examines the working of these institutions in the socio-economic and political milieu of each state.

Similarly, the book ed., by R.B. Jain<sup>6</sup> on 'Panchayati Raj Administration' contains a series of articles. The articles cover most of the important conceptual and operational issues of PR. The administrative challenges that face the approach to democratic decentralization, the role of political parties, collector, mechanism of control, supervision and guidance for effective functioning of the Panchayats, have all been analysed from different stand points. The volume covers practically the entire gamut of thinking about the setting up of the PRIs as well as the problems that have emerged and the steps that are called for to cope with their problems.

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5. G. Ram Reddy (ed.), Pattern of PR in India, The Macmillon Company of India Ltd., Madras, 1977.
  6. R.B. Jain ed., Panchayati Raj Administration, IIPA, New Delhi, 1981.

Jain (ed.)<sup>7</sup> critically reviewed various rural development schemes initiate by the Government of India since independence. The book traced successive policy shifts, organizational changes and programme innovation and also considered the impact of all this activity at the grass root level through various field studies conducted in selected rural development blocks in the country. The authors find out that poverty and inequality are on the increase. The book concluded that reason for failure of the rural development and poverty allievaluation programme is the exclusion of the poor from the participation in the developmental process and abandonment of the institution of democratic decentralization.

The constitution (73rd Amendment Act) has marked the beginning of a new age in the evolution of democratic institutions and decentralization in planning for economic development in India. In the light of 73rd (Amendment) Act, Amitav Mukharjee (ed.)<sup>8</sup> book gives an glimpse of the future and operational aspects of PRIs. Besides, the book also

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7. L.C. Jain (ed.), Grass without Roots, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 1985.

8. Amitav Mukharjee (ed.), Decentralisation Panchayats in the Nineties, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994.

highlights political issues, institutional and personal issues, function of Panchayat, and resource mobilisation.

The fourth category of works are out come of the research by their individual or group efforts. Their main approach is emperial and both primary and secondary data have been used in these studies. There studies have given more importance to the working and performance of the PRIs. These studies provide a base line for the on-going research in PR field.

#### **PRIs IN ORISSA**

Although there is a defuse body of literature available on PR in India, no systematic work has been published on PR in Orissa. It is still a virgin field. So far as PRIs and people's participation in Orissa is concerned no empirical work has yet been made. So in this work an attempt has been made to study people's participation in Aul block of Orissa.

#### **PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND PANCHAYATI RAJ**

Participation of people in PR is the focal point of this study. The existing literature pertaining to this area is very little. But at the theoretical level, the concept of people's participation has received adequate attention.

Several authors have tried to defined the concept from different angles.

The work edited by R.K. Arora<sup>9</sup> deals with the concept, ideological rationals, the socio-psychological aspects and the administrative environment of participation, media participation, political leadership and participation, Farmers participation in Command Area Development Programme (CADP), Public participation in IRDP, health and family planning also discussed in detail.

Another work by S.N. Mishra<sup>10</sup>, provides a theoretical framework and discusses different dimensions of people's participation in development programmes. The book throws fresh light on eliminating poverty from the rural scene by making people politically conscious, socially assertive and mentally articulate.

Chaturvedi and Mitra's<sup>11</sup> work examines the nature and extent of participation in process of development. The work is based on empirical study conducted in two districts of

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9. R.K. Arora, ed., People's Participation in Development Process, SIPA, Jaipur, New Delhi, 1972.
  10. S.N. Mishra, Participation and Development, NBO Publisher's & Distributors, New Delhi, 1994.
  11. Chaturvedi and Mitra, Citizen' participation in Rural Development, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1982.

the country from two different socio-cultural region. On the empirical point of view, the study conducted by Noorjahan Bava<sup>12</sup> in Tamilnadu is relevant to this study. She deals with the theoretical and operational definition of people's participation in development process in general and Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) in particular. The study also examines the impact of socio-economic and participation variables on development.

25. 2/19/85

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12. Noorjahan Bava, People's Participation in Development Administration in India, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.

## CHAPTER - 3

### PANCHAYATI RAJ IN ORISSA

Traditional Panchayats had existed in the villages of Orissa from time immemorial. They derived legitimacy from various customs and social sanctions. Those Panchayats were given the power to administer the villages. They used to decide civil as well as criminal cases. Management of village temples, maintenance of village roads, sanitation etc. were under their jurisdiction.

#### HISTORY OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN ORISSA

There is no systematic history of local self-government in ancient Orissa. In Medieval period, till the advent of Afghans around 1568, the system of local self-government centering on Panchayats had survived. The two hundred years following 1568, were a period of turmoil and confusions. After 1751, the Maratha rulers managed to wrest the territory from the Mughals (the successor of the Afghans). In order to administer the territory, Maratha rulers divided it into two political districts named, Mughalbandi and Garjat.<sup>1</sup>

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1. B.B. Jena, in George Mathew (ed.) "Status of Panchayati Raj in the States of India 1994", Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1995, p.157.



The Mughalbandi district comprising the coastal areas was divided into 150 pargans and placed under thirty-two revenue commissioners. For a systematic collection of revenue, hereditary collectors called Kanungoes, Chadhuris and Talukadars were appointed.<sup>2</sup> On the otherhand, the Garjat district covering the hill regions was ruled by twenty-four tributary chiefs who paid tributes to the Maratha government.

However, the Maratha regime in Orissa came to an end with the advent of British in 1803. For their administrative convenience Britishers included Orissa region into the Bengal presidency. The region of Orissa remained a part of Bengal presidency till 1911, when, along with Bihar, it was formed into a separate province. Hence till 1911 rural local government was regulate by the laws prevailing in the Bengal presidency.<sup>3</sup> Under the Bihar and Orissa local self-Government Act, 1885, rural local government had been constituted for the districts of Cuttack, Balasore and Puri. When Orissa become a separate province in 1936, the districts of Ganjam and Koraput (which were part of Madras

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2. Ibid., p.158.

3. Haridwar Rai and Awadesh Prasad, Panchayati Raj in Bihar, in G. Ram Reddy, (ed.), Pattern of PR in India, The Macmillan Co., Madras, 1977, p. 72.

Presidency till April 1936) were covered by the Madras Local Board Act, 1920. The other district Sambalpur, inherited the Sambalpur local self-government Act, 1939, from the local administrative system of former Central Provinces and Berar.<sup>4</sup>

In the pre-independence days, the system of local government was characterised by the presence of local boards. These were district boards, Local boards and Union boards. Among the three, District board constituted the apex body and served as the main administrative unit of local government. The main functions of the district boards as formed under Act XVI of 1920 were to provide for primary and secondary education, construct and maintenance of roads and to manage public health in rural areas. These boards did provide for limited popular participation through periodic elections under limited suffrage.

The next lower tier of the local government was called local boards or taluka boards. These boards served as the leadership base for the local influentials at the sub-divisional level.

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4. B.B. Jena, in George Mathew (ed.) Status of PR in the States of India, 1994, op. cit. p. 158.

## After Independence

Before going into details about the structures of Panchayati Raj after independence, mention must be made about the merger of princely states. Orissa as a autonomous province came into existence in 1936. But a substantial part of Orissa was still under the native princes. The merger of 24 ex-princely states had taken place in 1948 and 1949, prior to which there had been only six districts in the province. After the merger, seven more districts were created, bringing to the total number to thirteen.

Soon after the attainment of independence, provision was made by the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1948 to establish Gram Panchayat at the village level.<sup>5</sup> It was under this Act that for the first time a village or Gram Panchayat was established as a unit of self-government along with the District and Taluka Boards, in the district and intermediate level. In 1949, the Report of the Land Revenue and Land Tenure Committee, with Shri Naba Krishna Choudhuri as its Chairman, recommended the abolition of the Zamindari system and envisaged a scheme of decentralization of authority for

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5. S.N. Rath, "Democratic Decentralization in Orissa", The Orissa Political Science Journal, vol.1, June, 1969, p.77.

the proper revenue administration and development activities in the rural areas.<sup>6</sup> The report inaugurated a new system of administrative decentralisation in Orissa.

However, the introduction of democratic decentralization in the form of Panchayati Raj in its present shape owes its origin to the report of the Balwant Rai Mehta study team, which recommended a three-tier structure of the local self-Government institutions at the village, block and district levels. These recommendations were incorporated in the Orissa Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1959. This Act came into force on Republic Day, 26 January 1961, 11 years after India became a Republic. Thus emerged the institution of the Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishads. As far as the Gram Panchayats were concerned, suitable amendments were made in the already existing Gram Panchayat Act 1948 making them an integral part of the new system. Finally, it was in the year 1964, that a new Gram Panchayat Act was passed replacing the old Gram Panchayat Act, 1948. Under the new Act, elections were held to the Gram Panchayats in 1967 and along with it, new Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad were constituted in the same year.

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6. Report of the Land Revenue And Land Tenure Committee Orissa, (Superintendent, Orissa Government Press, Cuttack) 1949.

According to these Acts, the structure of the Panchayati bodies at three levels broadly consists of; Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad.<sup>7</sup>

However, the Orissa Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad (2nd Amendment) Act, 1967, which was assented to by the Governor on January 4, 1968<sup>8</sup> and published as Orissa Act of 1968, has since then abolished the Zilla Parishads, making the Panchayati Raj a two-tier set-up. In the later years after the abolition of the Zilla Parishad, District Advisory Council (DAC) system was introduced as a alternative arrangement to the Zilla Parishad.

In the later years (1968-91), no attempt has been made to reorganise the PRIs in accordance with Ashok Mehta committee recommendations. Thus, for about twenty-five years the state had no power-sharing mechanism below the state level. It is now being recognized that this vacuum, more than any other factor, contributed to Orissa's social and economic backwardness.

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7. P.V.R. Chandrasekhar Rao, Pattern of Panchayati Raj in Orissa, G. Ram Reddy (ed.), Pattern of PR in India, op. cit., p.199.

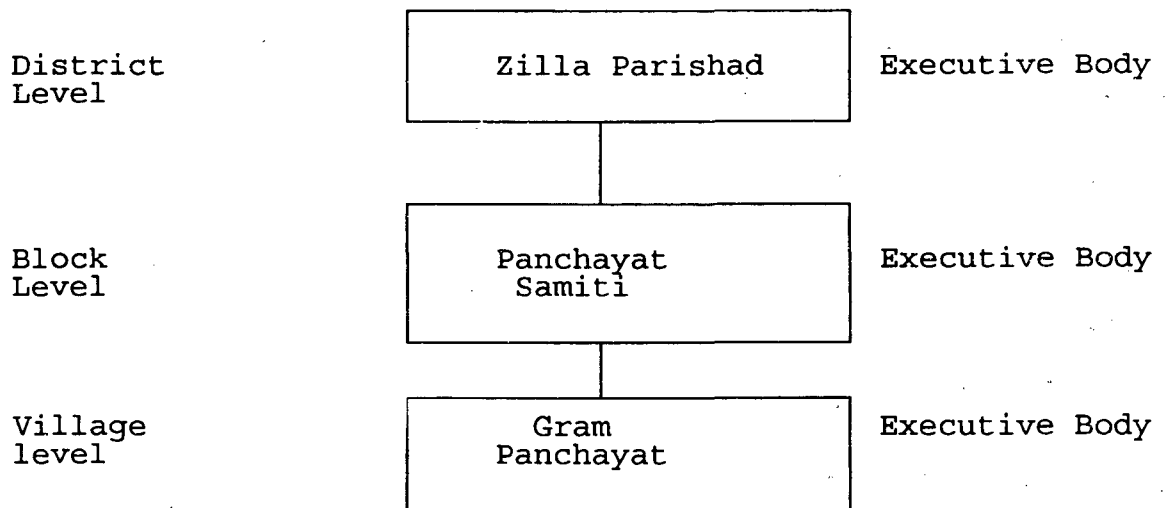
8. The Orissa Gazette Extraordinary, No.26, Cuttack, 1968, pp.1-6.

## The New Pattern

After coming to power in 1990 (second term), the Janata Dal government headed by Biju Pattanaik wanted to awaken the state from its backwardness and apathy. For this, he realised that without grass root level democracy nothing could be achieved. Therefore, he took historic steps to reorganise the PRIs in the state which <sup>had</sup> were remained lifeless since 1968 after the abolition of Zilla Parishad by Swatantra led coalition. In 1991, the state legislature enacted the Orissa Gram Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 1991, Orissa Panchayat Samiti (Amendment) Act, 1991 along with the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991 in which all important features of what is now 73rd constitution (Amendment) Act, 1993 were incorporated. In 1992, the elections to the Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis were conducted according to the new Provisions. But elections to the Zilla Parishads <sup>are</sup> ~~yet~~ to be held.

Although the broad structural frame work of the PR set-up in Orissa remains all the same as it was before, a substantial change has been taken place with regard to its composition. The following diagram shows the structure of present Panchayati Raj System.

### PRESENT PR SYSTEM



The Orissa G.P. (Amendment) Act, 1991, Orissa P.S. (Amendment) Act, 1991 and Orissa Z.P. Act, 1991 provide for a three-tier Panchayati Raj System, Zilla Parishad at the district level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Gram Panchayat at the village level.

At the state level, the secretary of PR is the administrative head and the minister of the PR is the political head department while, at the district level, the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad is the elected head, the Collector of the district is the Chief Executive officer and Project officer, District Rural Developmental Agency (PO, DRDA) is responsible for overall direction and supervision

of all the developmental programmes under the district. At the Block level, the Chairman Who is the elected head, empowered with all executive power and he exercises his power through the Block Development Officer (BDO). The BDO looks after all the developmental function. Similarly, at the lowest level, all the works of village Panchayat is carried out by the elected Sarpanch While administration looked after by fulltime paid person called Secretary. The following diagram show the administrative structure of PR in Orissa:

<u>level</u>	<u>Elected Head</u>	<u>Administrative Head</u>
State	Minister PR	Secretary PR
District	Chairman Zilla Parishad	Collector, Chief Executive Officer
Block	Chairman, P.S. Executive Head	B.D.O, Chief Executive Officer
Village	Sarpanch, G.P Administrative & Executive Head	Secretary, G.P. to assist the Sarpanch



The following is the position of PRIs as on December 31, 1994:

-	No. of Panchayats	-	5,264
-	No. of Village covered	-	50,974
-	Rural population covered	-	2,76,33,748
-	Percentage of village covered	-	100
-	Percentage of rural population covered	-	100
-	Average No. of Villages per Panchayat	-	9.68
-	Average population per Panchayat	-	5249.57
-	No. of Districts covered	-	30
-	No. of Tahasils	-	147
-	No. of Blocks	-	314
-	No. of Zilla Parishads	-	30
-	Average No. of P.S. per Zilla Parishad	-	10.47
-	Average No. of panchayats per Zilla Parishad	-	175.46
-	Average No. of Panchayats per P.S.	-	16.76
-	Total member of Gram Panchayats	-	74,462
-	Total member of P.S.	-	5,264
-	Total member of Z.P.	-	844 (yet to be constituted)

[Source : PR Manual, Bhubaneshwar.]

## COMPOSITION AND FUNCTION OF PR BODIES

### (a) GRAM PANCHAYAT

At the base of the three-tier structure of PR system of local self government in Orissa stands the Gram Panchayat. As per the requirements of the Orissa Gram Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 1991, any village or a group of contiguous villages with a population in between 2,000 to 10,000 can form a Gram, for the constitution of a Gram Panchayat.<sup>9</sup> For each of these Gram there will be a Gram Sabha, a body comprising of all the qualified voters under the People's Representative Act, 1950, of that Gram (which may be multi village unit). Apart from the Gram Sabha the Orissa G.P. (Amendment) Act, 1991, also provides for Palli Sabha<sup>10</sup> which are the bodies consisting of all the qualified voters of their respective villages situated within the Gram. Infact, Gram Sabha and Palli Sabha are the two distinct general bodies which work within the Gram panchayats and are also recognised by the statute.

For the constitution of a Gram Panchayat a Gram is

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9. Orissa G.P. (Amendment) Act, 1991, Orissa Gazetter, Extraordinary, No. 502, Cuttack, 1992, pp.1-2.
  10. In Orissa, within the area of the Gram Panchyat there exists a number of villages (hamlets). These villages are called Pallis, which is a traditional term.

divided into a number of wards and the total number of wards in any Gram is to be not less than 11 and not more than 25. The adult voters of each ward elect their wardmembers who in turn constitutes the Gram Panchayat, along with the sarpanch, directly elected by the voters of the Gram Sabha and a Naib-Sarpanch, elected by the wardmembers from among themselves. Both the Sarpanch and Naib-Sarpanch enjoy a term of five years along with the other members of the Gram Panchayat. In 1994, there were 4,286 general Sarpanchs, 248 SC Sarpanchs, and 714 ST Sarpanchs and 14 women Sarpanchs.

With regard to the reservation of seats in Gram Panchayats, where as the old Act of 1964, had only provided that incase the existing membership does not include any member from the Schedule castes and Schedule tribe group, a person belongs to that group has to be elected to the Gram Panchayat<sup>11</sup>, the new act of 1991 has made elaborate provisions for the reservation of seats for the SCs and STs (including women belonging to the SC/ST group) and the women, whose share is to be not less than 1/3rd of the total number of members. Orissa is the first state in the country to implement this, even before the provision become a part

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11. The Orrisa, G.P. Act, 1964, (Orissa Act 19, 1965).

of the Indian constitution through the 73rd Amendment. These reserved seats for women are to be allotted by rotation to different wards of the Gram Panchayat area. The Act has also made provisions for a women Sarpanchs i.e., if the Sarpanch of the Panchayat is not a woman, the office of the Naib Sarpanch in that Panchayat will be allotted to a woman. Following the 1992 Gram Panchayat election, there were 28,069 women members in the 5,264 Gram Panchayats, 14 women Sarpanchs and 5,237 women Naib-Sarpanchas in the state.

Besides, the Act requires that Gram Sabha shall meet twice in a year; once in February and the other in June and one tenth of its membership constitutes the quorum. In its first meeting, in February, the Gram Sabha considers the programmes and works to be undertaken by the Gram Panchayat and the annual budget for the Gram having regard to the recommendations of different Palli Sabhas. Again meeting in June, it considers the report of the programmes and works undertaken by the Gram Panchayat and their progress during the previous year along with the audit reports. It also considers implementation of agricultural production plans. All the meetings of the Gram Sabha are presided over the Sarpanch who is the chief executive of the Gram Panchayat.

The Palli Sabha meets once in a year in February and

gives recommendations to the Gram Panchayat about the developmental works and programmes to be undertaken in the villages during the ensuring year and also considers the annual budget estimates prepared by the Gram Panchayats. In the case of 'Palli Sabha' the ward member/members representing the Pallis preside/presides over the meetings.

The Act also provides a long list of obligatory and discretionary function to the Gram Panchayats. The obligatory function includes sanitation, construction, maintenance and improvement of public streets, street lighting, management of cattle pounds and markets, local development works, works of social utility and execution of plans for the advancement of agriculture conditions includes improved methods of agriculture. The discretionary functions are of similar nature but spelled out in a detailed manner. In comparison to 1964, Gram Panchayat Act, the Gram Panchayat (Amendment) Act of 1991, gives some additional list of development functions to the Gram Panchayat. Even the works like, advancement of small scale industries, poverty alleviation programmes and public distribution system have also been brought under the obligatory list of functions. However, an important provision of the Act is that, the Panchayat samiti and Zilla

Parishad may delegate some additional functions to the Gram Panchayats, mainly the development of rural areas. It is through this provision that the Act links the GPs with the development works, making them an integral part of the PR system.

**(b) PANCHAYAT SAMITI**

In the PR set up of Orrisa, the Panchayat Samiti at the Block level constitutes the middle - tier, and is the most important body from developmental point of view. Earlier, Panchayat Samitis (P.S.) in Orissa were constituted according to the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959. Now, with some amendments in the Old Act it has come as the Orissa Panchayat Samiti (Amendment) Act, 1991, basing on which the Orissa Panchayat Samitis were constituted in 1992. Under the Act<sup>12</sup>, the Samiti is constituted of the following members:

- 1) One member from each Gram Panchayat area to be elected directly by the qualified voters of the concerned Gram Sabha;

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12. The Orrisa Panchayati Samiti (Amendment) Act, 1991, Orissa Gazette, Extraordinary, Cuttack, 1992, pp.1-2.

- 2) all the Sarpanch of the GPs situated within the block area;
- 3) a Chairman and Vice-Chairman to be elected by the directly elected members of the samiti from among themselves;
- 4) the Chairman of the Municipalities and Notified Area councils (NACs) a population not exceeding 20,000 situated within the Block;
- 5) the Block Development Officer (BDO) appointed by the Government; and
- 6) one or two employees of the Government, from the departments dealing with education, agriculture co-operatives, Panchayat work, health, fishery, welfare and such other department as may be decided by the Government.

The official members and the Chairman of the Municipalities and NACs, all the sarpanchs only participate in the discussions of the meetings without any voting right. Following the 1992 Panchayat Samiti election there were 1,961 General members, 585 SCs and 876 STs and 1,841 women members selected to the Panchayat Samitis.

Like GPs seats have also reserved for SCs and STs in

proportion to the ratio of their population to the total population of the block concerned. If the population is not sufficient for reservation of any seat, at least one seat shall be reserved either for SCs or STs, as the case may be. Out of the seats so reserved, not less than one third shall be reserved for women ~~belongs~~ to the SC/ST groups. Moreover, not less than one third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Samiti shall be reserved for women (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to SCs/STs) and has to be allotted by rotation to different Panchayats within a Samiti.

The term of the Panchayat Samiti and all the elected members including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, will be of five years commencing on the date of the first meeting of the Panchayat Samiti after its composition. There were 248 general, 6 SCs, 42 STs & 17 women Chairmen in the 314 Panchayat Samitis in Orissa after the 1992 election. In case the Chairman is not a woman, then according to the new Act, the office of the Vice-Chairman is to be reserved for women. After the 1992 election, there were 7 generals, 1 SC, 4 STs and 302 women Vice-Chairmen in the state. Thus, as regards women representation, in 1992-93 Orissa had 17 Chairmen and 302 Vice-Chairmen at the Panchayat Samiti.



With regard to the composition of the Panchayat Samiti, Orissa has a distinction. Unlike many other states where the BDO and his team are there only to run the administration of the block (without having a place in the samiti itself), the Orissa new Amendment Act includes the BDO and his team as official members to ensure that the technical and administrative aspects of a decision will have a bearing on the deliberation of the Samiti.

The Orissa Panchayat Samiti (Amendment) Act, 1991, lays down a long list of development functions which has to be performed by the Samiti through its executive agency i.e. the block administrative set-up. The executive authority of the Samiti is vested with the Chairman and he exercises his power through the BDO. The Panchayat Samiti is the key tier in the PR set up of Orissa, is the centre for all developmental activities, and hence performs a wide range of functions such as : planning, execution, and supervision of developmental programmes, management, control and spread of primary education, supervision of the Gram Panchayats and the works in the Block relating to Community Development including those pertaining to tribal development and such other functions assigned by the state or centre through government sponsored schemes and projects.

The state allocates schemes directly to the Samitis and does so through the Community Development Department. The Central Government schemes are also channeled through the state governments. Apart from the Community Development Department, other departments like revenue, health and family planning ~~are~~ also sponsor schemes through the samitis. In addition to this, some times the samitis are also entrusted with many important functions like emergency relief and civil supplies. In Orissa, the Blocks have also been made a part of Public Distribution System (PDS).

In matter of finance, the Samiti has been given extensive powers of managing the trusts and other institutions, levying of taxes, borrowing of money and granting of loans. It gets its income from a good number of sources out of which it meets the expenditures made on various developmental activities. As per the provisions made in the Amendment Act, 1991, the State Finance Commission constituted under Orissa Gram Panchayat Act 1964 will review the financial position of every Samiti and make recommendations to the government for the sound financial position of the Samiti.

(c) **ZILLA PARISHAD**

In Orissa the story of Zilla Parishad (Z.P.) the apex tier of PR system, has always been a matter of great concern. Unfortunately, only after the seven years of its functioning in 1968, it fell a victim to the party politics and was abolished on flimsy grounds of ineffectiveness and the inordinate delay it caused in approving the schemes and budget of the Samitis on the one hand and of its purely advisory nature on the other. However, after a long spell of three decades, it was only in 1991, the Biju Patnaik government passed the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act 1991, giving a strong boost to the PRI in Orissa. But the election to the Zilla Parishad, yet to be held.

The Orissa Zilla Parishad Act 1991, has made provisions for the constitution of Zilla Parishad in every district and it will be constituted by name of the District it self. A Zilla Parishad in Orissa shall consists of the following members :<sup>13</sup>

1. One member elected directly on the basis of adult suffrage from every constituency of the Block (each

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13. The Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991, 'ORISSA REVIEW'  
Cuttack, 1991, p. 8.

- Block comprises of two constituencies), within the district;
2. every member of the House of the People and of the State Legislative Assembly, whose constituency or a major portion there of falls within the district (an M.P. or an M.L.A. shall not be included as a member of more than one parishad at a time);
  - 3 members of the Council of States having place of residence in the district;
  - 4 president of Central Co-operative Banks functioning in the district;
  - 5 the chairperson of each Urban Local Bodies functioning within the district;
  - 6 the Chief Executive officer and the Executive officers of the parishad (the collector and his team of officers in the district);
  - 7 Chairman of each Panchayat Samiti situated within the district;
  - 8 project administrator of Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA);
  - 9 district level officers of health, education, agriculture, Panchayati raj, welfare, public works and co-operative departments of the state government;

- 10 Sub-divisional officers of the district;
- 11 Project officers of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA);
- 12 District Development Officers (DDO) and other official members as may be nominated by the government.

The President and Vice-President of the parishad are elected by the directly elected members of the parishad from among themselves. Members other than directly elected will participate in the discussions without any voting right. The term of office of the elected members of the Parishad (including the president and vice president) shall be five years commencing on the date of the first meeting of the Parishad. The Act also makes provision for the use of party symbols in the elections to the Zilla Parishads.

Like the two other Panchayat bodies, seats shall be reserved in Zilla Parishads for the SCs and STs for direct election and the number of seats to be reserved for them out of the total seats shall be in proportion with the ratio of their population to the total population of the district. Again, not less than, one third of seats so reserved, shall be reserved for women belonging to the SCs or STs, if the number of seats so reserved are only two, then one of these

two seats shall be reserved for women belonging to the SCs or STs. Moreover, as in the case of the GPs and Panchayat Samitis, one third of the seats for direct election in the Zilla Parishad will be reserved for women (including the seats reserved for the women belonging to SCs and STs). However, the procedure regarding reservation of seats for the above process shall be as the government may prescribe from time to time.

The Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991, has provides a wide range of powers to the Zilla Parishads. In general, it has the power to undertake schemes or adopt measures including giving of financial assistance relating to development of agriculture, social forestry, industries, co-operatives, water supply, distribution of essential commodities, rural electrification, minor irrigation, public health, primary, secondary and adult education including welfare and other objects of general public utility.

Besides, it also examines and approves the budget estimates of Panchayat Samitis in the district, does co-ordinate and integrate the developmental plans and schemes prepared by the samitis, makes grant to the Panchayat Samitis and GPs. It has also the power to prepare, execute and supervise the district plans relating to :

- a) programmes like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) to be directly implemented by the Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis;
- b) implementation of anti-poverty programmes and maintaining supervision thereof;
- c) discharge of responsibilities and functions assigned to the District Rural Development Agencies from time to time.

25 - All - 95

## CHAPTER - 4

### EMERGING LEADERSHIP IN VILLAGE PANCHAYATS (Socio-economic backdrop of the Panchayat Representatives)

"The phenomenon of leadership in the Panchayati Raj institutions has perhaps been discussed much more extensively than that of leadership at the state level or the national level after independence. The tasks before the state level and the national level leadership are defined more clearly because they essentially emanate from the structural and functional directives regarding the state and the national governments contained in the Indian constitution. A considerable debate over the tasks and functions of the Panchayati raj leadership emerging out of the responsibilities of the PRIs has taken place because the later have been delimited variously in the different states relating to the PRIs of the different state governments. Secondly, the empirical realisation of the tasks and functions of the PRIs has been associated with a complex uncertainties arising out of the ground factors of, caste, kinship and other societal and physical variables in Indian rural society. The state and national level leadership is not so categorically identified with the societal and physical variables."<sup>1</sup>

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1. N.R. Imandar, Panchayati Raj Leadership; Emerging Dimension, Journal of Rural Development, vol. 10(5), pp.561-573, (1991), NIRD, Hyderabad.



During the sixties and seventies both the Indian and foreign scholars were most vocal and influential researchers on the theme of leadership in PRIs. Besides pointing to the inter-institutional and inter-political and governmental level linkage of the PRIs leadership, they focused on the materialistic orientation and pay-offs of the leadership in the sense of material benefit of agricultural input and other personal, family or village goods through the mechanism of the PRIs. More widespread were the researches which dwelt on the personal attributes of the leadership such as honesty, integrity, broad social outlook, imaginativeness in planning, industriousness etc.<sup>2</sup>

The study of the leadership in the PRIs has been recognized to be most crucial because, there is a close relationship between leadership in a rural society and the nature and degree of people's participation in rural development activities. The local leaders may be instrumental in mobilising and motivating people to participate in developmental activities or they may sometimes be a barrier inhibiting and subtly or deliberately discouraging participation for their selfish interest or do so out of

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2. Ibid, p.562

ignorance, misinformation, avarice.<sup>3</sup>

For another angle, the functioning of the Panchayat as a democratic organization depends upon the quality of leadership available at the grass root level. They act as catalytic agents for social change. Leadership is, thus, sine-qua-non of all success at the grass root level.<sup>4</sup>

Of the three levels (Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad), the village Panchayat is the most important one, dating back to the time-immemorial. Before introduction of the statutory Panchayats, in the ancient times the village Panchayats were existed in forms of 'sabha' or 'samiti' or 'mazlis', were headed by a head man called 'Pradhan' or 'Mukhia' or 'Graminee' who controlled the village power structure. These traditional Panchayats were indigenous institutions created for the welfare of village community and it had no specific rights and obligations. It took up power and duties as the village need. When ever village faced any issue, the villagers were called to an assembly for discussion. In course of time, for

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3. E.D. Setty, Participatory Rural Development in Asia: A Critical Survey, op. cit., p.130
  4. V.M. Sirsikar, The Rulling Elites in Developing Society, A Study in Political Sociology, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi, p.1.

working convenience a cabinet of 'sabha' or 'mazlis' grew up which consisted of leader who were trusted by the villagers. Those who enjoyed the traditional leadership in the village Panchayats were generally aged, belonged to high caste, propertied and just literate or illiterate.<sup>5</sup> The working and marginal caste or class in Panchayat remained out side of the perview of the power structure.

However, the introduction of democratic decentralization through the three-tier system of local self-government, otherwise known as PR has opened new vistas of leadership in grass-root organization. The PR system give a tremendous upsurge to a generation of new leaders who are found to be relatively younger, better educated and more receptive to motivation. The three-tier organizational set-up become training grounds for the new generation of leaders to aspire for higher positions in the political echelons of power.<sup>6</sup>

As it has been mentioned earlier, there has been a

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5. Krishna Chakraborty, and Swapan K. Bhattarcharya, Leadership, Faction, and PR., Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1993, p.9.
  6. R.Joshi, 'PR and Emerging Rural Leadership', Quarterly Journal of Local Self Government, vol. xiv, no.485, April-June and July-Sept. 1975, pp. 533-564.

plethora of empirical studies on rural leadership in various states more particularly in Rajasthan, Karnataka, West Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra. But leadership issue in PRIs in Orissa is still a virgin field. We therefore, <sup>are</sup> interested to study the Panchayat leadership to show (1) the role played by the Primordial forces in PR leadership (2) economic forces, and, (3) the leadership structure of the village and any change there in after 1992 i.e., after the introduction of new Panchayat system in Orissa.

The Janata Dal Government, after coming to power in 1990, enacted the Orissa Gram Panchayat (Amendment), Act, 1991, Panchayat Samiti (Amendment), Act, 1991 and Orissa Zilla parishad Act, 1991, with a view to encouraging people's participation and involvement in the programme for rural reconstruction and development, securing decentralization of power, removing the domination of the traditional rural elites through creation of new type of leadership from among those segment of the society which had so long remained outside of the arena of power.

In this study we would focus on the emerging formal leadership<sup>7</sup> structure and style in Aul block - whether and

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7. The term formal leaders refers to elected members of Panchayat such as ward members (Panch) and Sarpanch.

how the new leadership developed by the PRIs is qualitatively different from the old leadership. This trend of leadership in the village Panchayat could be better appreciated by comparing the present leadership emerged as a result of Panchayat election held in 1992 with that of the earlier leadership emerged after 1984 election. This would add time perspective to leadership analysis.

Before going into detail about the socio-economic matrixs of village formal leaders, mention must be made here about the gender composition of the village panchayats. The table below shows the composition of two village Panchayat (Sansidha and Demal) leaders in gender wise.

**Table: 4.1 Gender Distribution of Panchayat Leaders**

Gender	1984		1992		%age variation of 1984-92
	No. of members	%age	No. of members	%age	
M	36	100	30	68.18	-31.82
F	X	X	14	31.82	+31.82
Total	36	100	44	100.00	

[Source : All the data used in this chapter <sup>are</sup> based on field study.] ^

The table shows that in the 1984 Panchayat, all the members (36) elected to Panchayat were, male. But in the present Panchayat (1992), out of 44 members, 14 members (31.82%) are female and 30 members (68.18%) are male. This change in gender composition is possible only due to implementation of Orissa Gram Panchayat (Amendment), Act, 1991, which incorporated 30% reservation of seats for the women in village Panchayats.

#### **DETERMINANTS OF LEADERSHIP :**

##### **Caste :**

In the rural India, caste background plays an important role in shaping the career of political executives or leaders. It is commonly accepted hypothesis that the vast majority of leaders in the rural India are drawn from the forward and the backward castes do not have a fair chance of success. It is therefore, essential to find out as to what extent caste variables plays an important role in determining leadership at the Panchayat level.

The table 4.2 below shows the mixed nature of composition in Panchayat leadership. In the last Panchayat, there were 36 members out of which only 4 members (11.11%) were higher castes, 26 members (72.72%) from the OBCs and 6 member (16.16%) from Schedule Castes. The texture of the

caste composition of last Panchayat is almost retained intact in the present Panchayat. In the present Panchayat (1992), out of 44 member, only 4 members (9.09%) have elected from higher caste, 7 member (15.90%) from SCs and majority 33 members (75%) from OBCs. In the 1992 election, the election for the Sarpanch in Sansidha Gram Panchayat could not held due to some inconvenient reasons and he was elected unanimously.

**Table: 4.2 Caste Distribution of Panchayat Leaders**

Caste	1984		1992		%age variation of 1984-92
	No. of members	%age	No. of member	%age	
Brahmin	3	8.33	3	6.83	-1.5
Karan	1	2.77	1	2.27	-0.5
Gopala	10	27.80	11	25	-2.8
Khandayat	9	25	12	27.27	+2.27
Kuber	2	5.55	4	9.09	+3.54
Schedule Castes	6	16.66	7	15.91	-0.75
Other Castes	5	13.89	6	13.63	-0.26
Total	36	100.00	44	100.00	-

Mention must be made here that the caste composition of the Panchayat leaders reflects caste composition of the populace of the Panchayat areas, though the percentage could not be worked out because of non-availability of exact figure of people of different castes.

It is also evident from the table that, the OBCs are most dominant in the block under study. The schedule caste formed the second important caste in the Aul Block and claimed 15.91% of total seats in 1992 election. They are elected from the reserved constituencies. The absolute majority of the OBCs helped them in capturing important executive post in the Panchayats. The sarpanchs, Nyab-sarpanchs belong<sup>n</sup> to these castes.

**Age :**

Age is another factor that determines the village leadership. Traditionally, it is considered to the privilege of the elders to occupy important position in the village. But after the introduction of Panchayati Raj at the grass root level new forces in politics emerged those who are comparatively younger in age.



**Table: 4.3 Age Distribution of Panchayat Leaders**

Age Group	1984		1992		%age variation of 1984-92
	No. of members	%age	No. of member	%age	
21 - 30	4	11.11	9	20.45	+9.34
31 - 40	10	27.78	16	36.36	+8.58
41 - 50	6	16.67	7	15.91	-0.76
51 - 60	9	25	6	13.64	-11.36
51 & above	7	19.44	6	13.64	-5.8
Total	36	100.00	44	100.00	-

Table:4.3 analyses the comparative age group of the past and the present Panchayat. It shows a consistent increase in percentage of the younger age group of 21-30 and 31-40 to the extent of 9.34 per cent and 8.58 per cent respectively on the other hand, there is a decrease in the percentage of higher age groups. The table also exhibits that there is a decrease in the age groups of 41-50, 51-60 and 61 and above years to the extent of 0.76%, 11.36% and 5.8% respectively. It is also clear from the table 4.3 that, leaders who are age group of 31-40 year constitute the largest single group in the Panchayat. The next higher per cent found in the age group of 40-50 However, a vast majority of leaders 32 (72-72%) are drawn from the age group

of 21 to 50. Very few of the leaders are above 51 years. It is therefore, clear that leadership in village Panchayat, is by and large, is occupied by the persons who are younger in age. Two explanations can be given for the emergence of younger leadership at Panchayat level. Firstly, due to unemployment and under employment in the rural areas, the young people are getting more leisure time to involve themselves in politics and certain organizational activities. Another reason of their being in Panchayat is, that they are better educated, progressive and modernised than the older generation in the village.

**Education :**

Education is yet another important variable affecting rural leadership because illiteracy restricts one's capacity to give thoughtful judgement on issues of importance. Education facilitates the development of a progressive attitude in individuals towards social and economic problem.<sup>8</sup>

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8. K.S.Bhat, "Emerging Pattern of Leadership in PR set up in Mysore State" in Gearge Jacob "Reading on PR" - NICD, Hyd, 1967, p.130.

**Table: 4.4 Education Distribution of Panchayat Leaders**

Level of Education	1984		1992		%age Variation of 1984-92
	No of members	%age	No of member	%age	
Illiterate	-	-	-	-	-
Primary	18	50	20	45.45	-4.55
Under Matric	16	44.44	21	47.73	+3.29
Matric & Under Graduate	1	2.78	3	6.82	+4.04
Graduate & Above	1	2.78	-	-	-2.78
Total	36	100.00	44	100.00	-

The table 4.3 shows that majority of the members have got education up to primary or under-matric. In the last Panchayat majority of the leaders (94.44%) had studied up to under-matric. Only 2 members were studied matric to graduation in the last Panchayat. In the present Panchayat, the education level remains almost intact. In the 1984 Panchayat, there were 18 (50%) members out of 36, had primary education, where as in present Panchayat there are 20 (45.45%) out of 44 members have primary education. It implies that there is a decline by 4.55% in the number of members belongs to the group having education up to primary. There were 16 members (44.44%) in last Panchayat who had education up to under metric, in the present Panchayat,

their number have been increased to 21 (47.73%)

The table 4.4 further shows that there is a decline by 2.77% in the number of members belonging to the group having education up to graduation.

**Occupation :**

Occupation is also an important element in determining the leadership structure in rural society. Men of only those occupations can afford to be leadership who get leisure time and also stay in village. Only agriculturists, labourers, and traditional occupation holders get the opportunity to stay in the villages and among there three, agriculturist get more leisure time than the other occupation. The table below attempts occupational break up of Panchayat members.

**Table: 4.5 Occupation distribution of Panchayat leaders**

Occupations	1984		1992		%age Variation of 1984-92
	No of members	%age	No of member	%age	
Land Less					
Labourer	5	13.89	5	11.36	-2.53
Agriculture	25	69.45	22	50	-19.45
Business & Trade	4	11.11	5	11.36	+0.25
Service	2	5.55	2	4.55	-1.00
House wife	-	-	10	22.73	+22.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>-</b>

Of the 36 members in the last Panchayat, 5 (13.89%) were landless labourers, 25 (59.44%) were agriculturists, 4 (11.11%) were in business and trade and the remaining 2 members (5.50%) were in service sector. In the present Panchayat, out of 44 members, 5 (11.36%) are land less labourers, 22 (50%) are in agriculture, 5 (11.36%) are engaged in business and trade, 2 (4.55%) are in service and rest 10 (22.73%) are simple housewives. In the present Panchayat, all the 7 members belongs to schedule caste are land less labourers, while out of 14 female member 10 are simple housewives.

Table 4.5 also clarifies the members of the old set-up and new set-up on the basis of their occupation. The table shows that the percentage of agriculturist has decreased by 19.44% within 8 years. The percentage of land less labourer and service holders also decreased by 2.52% and 1.01% respectively. One of the notable feature of the present Panchayat is the increase number of house wives by 22.73%.

In the present Panchayat, most of the leaders 50% are drawn from the agricultural class. This is in tune with the rural scene, where the vast majority of the people are dependend on agriculture.

**Income :**

In rural India, leadership is generally enjoyed by well to do persons of high income.<sup>9</sup> Hence money factor has an important bearing on leadership issue. The table below shows the annual income pattern of Panchayat leaders.

**Table 4.6 Income Distribution of Panchayat Leaders**

Income level (Rs per annum)	1984		1992		%age Variation of 1984-92
	No. of members	%age	No. of member	%age	
Upto 3000	3	8.33	4	9.09	+0.76
3001 - 5000	8	22.22	14	31.82	+9.6
5001 - 10000	15	41.68	16	36.36	-5.32
10001 - 15000	7	19.44	8	18.18	-1.26
15001 - 30000	3	8.33	2	4.55	-3.78
Total	36	100.00	44	100.00	-

The table above shows a mixed annual income pattern of the leaders. In the last Panchayat, those who earned up to Rs 10,000 constituted 72.73%. Out of 36 members, 7 member

9. S.N. Mishra, Characteristics of Emerging Leadership in Rural India; A Case Study of Bihar, IJPA, 23(3), June-Sept., 1977, pp.781-802.

(19.44%) had annual income Rs 10,000 to Rs. 15,000, and 3 members (8.33%) had income Rs 15,001 to Rs 30,000. In the present Panchayat, the income pattern of the leaders has changed a bit. In 1992, members who earned up to Rs 10,000 constitute the majority (77.27%). Only 8 members (18.18%) have income Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 and 2 members (4.55%) have annual income Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000.

The percentage of the membership belonging to the group with an income upto Rs 3,000 and Rs 3,001 to Rs 5,000 has gone up by 0.76% and 9.6% respectively. Against this, the percentage of members earning Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000, Rs 10,001 to Rs 15,000 and Rs 15,001 to Rs 30,000 has gone down by 5.32%, 1.26% and 3.78% respectively.

#### **Land Holding :**

Last but not the least, land holding is another crucial economic criteria in establishing dominance in village. It is general belief that the village leaders by and large, have a higher land holding. But the table below does not support this hypotheses.

**Table: 4.7 Land Holding wise Representation of Panchayat Leaders**

Level of Education	1984		1992		%age Variation of 1984-92
	No. of members	%age	No. of member	%age	
Land less	6	16.67	8	18.18	+1.52
Upto 2	8	22.22	13	29.55	+7.33
3 - 5	10	27.78	14	31.82	+4.04
6 - 10	11	30.55	8	18.18	-12.37
11 - 15	1	2.78	1	2.27	-0.5
Total	36	100.00	44	100.00	-

In the 1984 Panchayat there were 6 land less members, 8 members were having land upto 2Ac, 10 members were having 3 to 5 Ac of land. 11 members had 6 to 10 Ac of land, only 1 member had 11 to 15 Ac of land. In the present Panchayat, there are 8 members (18.18%) who have no land. 13 members are having upto 2Ac land, 14 members having 3 to 5 ac, 8 members are having 6 to 10 ac, and only one member having 11 to 15 ac of land.

#### **SUMMARY**

From the above tables, it is found that, young leadership is getting encouragement in the Block under study. These leaders are just literate or low educated and come from various caste groups. Although agriculture is the



main - occupation of the Panchayat leaders, they are drawn from various occupational groups. The lower and middle income groups have dominated the leadership position in the block. It is observed from table that before 1992 Panchayat election, all the two Panchayat under study were totally male dominated & the political participation of women in the Panchayats were negligible so far as the decision-making process at the grass root level is concerned. Last but not least, the enactment of Orissa G.P. (Amendment), Act, 1991 has opened a new avenue of leadership, particularly, for women and weaker sections of the society in rural Orissa.

25. 11. 99

## SOCIO - ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

People's participation and their socio-economic status are closely related to each other. Because, the socio-economic status of people, determines their extent of participation. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this study to find out the socio-economic status of the respondents before studying

**Table 5.1 - Socio-economic Profile of the Sample Respondents (N.-72)**

sample variables	sample components	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total number
Gender	Male	45	62.5
	Female	27	37.5
Caste	General	11	15.28
	OBC	45	62.5
	SC	16	22.22
Educational Level	Illiterate	17	23.61
	Primary	19	26.38
	Matric	27	37.5
	Graduate and P.G.	9	12.5
Income Level	Low	17	23.62
	Middle	48	66.66
	High	7	9.72
Land holding (in Acre)	Land less	14	19.45
	1-4	37	51.38
	5-14	16	22.22
	15 and above	5	6.95

their level of participation in PR bodies. For this study, 72 samples were collected from two GPs. An attempt has been made to categorise the respondents according to their socio-economic variables.

### **Participation in Political Process or Electoral Process**

People's participation is the basic necessity in a participatory democracy. It is the principal means by which a political system or sub-system generated legitimacy for it and stability in the system is maintained. Keeping these in mind, an attempt has been made to assess people's participation in the electoral process in local Panchayat institution.

In order to assess the involvement of rural people in the Panchayat election, the question was asked to the villagers: "Did you cast your vote in the last Gram Panchayat election?" The table below shows the data pertaining to the distribution of respondents over the question of electoral participation.

**Table - 5.2 : Distribution of Respondents over the Question of Electoral Participation in PR (1992) (N.-72)**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	57	79.16
No	15	20.84
Total	72	100

It is observed from the table 5.2 that out of 72 respondents, 57 respondents (79.16 per cent) cast their votes in the last Gram Panchayat election and only 20.84 per cent (15 respondents) do not. This shows that the democracy has laid its roots at the grass root level for which PRIs are generally responsible.

Here, we want to know the socio-economic status of the respondents who have cast their votes. The table below exhibits the socio-economic status of voters.

#### **GENDER AND PARTICIPATION**

**Table : 5.3 Gender and level of participation in voting**

Gender	Total sample taken	No. of participants in voting	Percentage to total number
Male	45	37	82.23
Female	27	20	74.07

There appears to be some relationship between gender and level of participation. It is evident from the figure given in the table 5.3 that large bulk of participants in voting are male. The female participation is low (74.07%) compared to that of male participation (82.23%). This shows that still the women in the rural society are not interested in the involvement in the local self-government.

#### CASTE AND PARTICIPATION

**Table:5.4 Caste and level of participation in voting**

Caste	No. of sample taken	No. of participants	Percentage to total number
Gen.	11	8	72.72
OBC	45	37	82.22
SC	16	12	75

**Table:5.5 Gender and Caste and level of participation.**

Caste	Total no. of people participated	No. of male participants	No. of Female participants	Male %age	Female %age
Gen	8	4	4	50.00	50.00
OBC	37	25	12	67.57	32.43
SC	12	8	4	66.67	33.33

There does not appear to be an intimate relation between caste pattern of the respondents and the level of participation in voting. The respondents belonging to

different caste groups are divided by and large in equal numbers in different categories of participation. It is observed from the Table:5.4 that 72.73 per cent of general caste, 82.22 per cent of OBCs and 75 per cent of SCs participated in voting. The table again shows that SCs participated more in voting than that of general castes.

The table:5.5 exhibits the gender and caste of the voters and their level of participation. From the above table it is evident that out of 8 general caste participants, 4 male (50%) and 4 Female (50%) had exercised their franchise. Similarly, out of 37 OBCs, 25 male (67.57%) and 12 female (32.43%) cast their votes where as out of 12 SCs, 8 male (66.67%) and 4 female (33.33%) exercised their voting rights.

It is also evident from the table:5.5 that per cent of male OBCs and SCs in voting is higher than that of general caste males. But contrary to the male percentage, the percentage of general caste women voting is comparatively higher, followed by SCs women and OBCs women.

## INCOME AND PARTICIPATION

**Table:5.6** Income pattern and level of participation in voting

Income (Annual)	No. of sample taken	No. of participants in voting	percentage to total number
Low	17	11	64.70
Middle	48	39	81.25
High	7	7	100

From the table:5.6, it is found that, level of participation and level of income is closely related. Respondents having low participation (64.71 per cent) are low income group. All the respondents belongs to high income group, participated all in voting.

## EDUCATION AND LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

**Table:5.7** Pattern of Education and level of participation in voting

Educational pattern	No. of sample taken	No. of participation in voting	% age to total number
Illiterate	17	12	70.58
Primary	19	16	84.21
Matric	27	22	81.48
Graduate	9	7	77.77

It is evident from the table that the respondents having low level of participation in voting (70.58) are

illiterate. The respondents having middle or high level of participation in voting (84.21 per cent and 81.48 per cent) are either just literate or matriculate. However, the participation of graduates and post graduates are slightly less in per cent (77.78%) than that of primary and matriculate respondents.

#### LAND HOLDING AND PARTICIPATION

**Table: 5.8 Land Holding and level of participation in voting.**

Land Holding (in AC)	No. of Sample taken	No. of Participants in voting	Percentage to total number
Landless	14	11	78.58
1-4	37	28	75.67
5-14	16	13	81.27
15 and above	5	5	100

From the table 5.8 it is evident that, there is no definite relationship between land holding and voting. Respondents having no land, participated more (78.58) than to respondents having 1 to 4 acre of land. However, the percentage of voting is much high in case of respondents having 5 to 14 acre of land (81.25%) and more than 15 acre of lands (100%).

Apart from the socio-economic status of the voters we were also interested to know the reason for which they did



not cast their votes in Panchayat election. The table below represents the data.

**Table : 5.9 Distribution of respondents over the question of reason behind non-participation in voting. (N.-15)**

Reason	No.of respondents	Percentage to total number
Not interested	8	53.33
No information	3	20
Prevented by family members	1	6.67
Polling booth was in a distance	2	13.33
No faith in the PR system	1	6.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table: 5.9 exhibits that majority of the non voter (53.33 per cent) simply were not interested in voting. This shows that lack of enthusiasm among the people in voting. Other factors of non-voting are lack of information (20 per cent), polling booth was in a distance, lack of faith in Panchayat system and prevention by the family members.

#### **Manners of Electoral Participation**

Participation in voting is just one form of political participation. Other forms includes contesting as a candidate, supporting the candidates activity, participating in campaign, attending public meetings etc.

In order to examine their participation in these activities, another question "In which manner you participated in the last Panchayat election"? was asked to the respondents. The table below represents the response:

**Table - 5.10 Distribution of respondents over the question manners of participation in panchayat election. (N.-72) \***

Manners of participation	No. of Respondents	Percentage to total number
Mere exercised Franchise	57	79.16
Contested as candidate	3	4.16
Supported the candidate Activity	12	16.66
Involved in the Campaigning	16	22.22
Acted according to the advice of influential people & village head man	8	11.11

\* multi optioned

The table 5.10 shows that people are genuinely interested in voting. Out of 72, 57 respondents (79.16 per cent) said that they exercised mere franchise, only 3 respondents 4.16 per cent said that they contested as a candidate. 12 respondents (16.66 per cent) supported the candidate activity where as 8 respondents (11.11 per cent) acted according to the advice of the influential people and village head man.

### Factors Influencing Voting Behaviour

Besides the levels of participation in voting we are also interested to know the factors which influenced a voter to cast a vote for a particular candidate. For that we asked a direct question to the villagers "when did you cast your vote, which factor influenced you to vote for?" The table below represents data.

The table : 5.11 exhibits that 22.81 per cent respondents stated that, they voted for a particular candidate who belongs to their caste. 17 respondents (29.83 per cent) opined that they voted for a particular candidate as they have been pressurised/directed by the palli and village leaders. 9 respondents (15.79 per cent) admitted that family pressure influenced their voting behaviour.

**Table - 5.11 Distribution of Respondents over the question factors influenced voting behaviour. (N.-57)**

Factors	No. of respondents	percentage of total number
Caste	13	22.81
Localism	7	12.28
Family pressure	9	15.79
Pressure of the village head man & Palli leader	17	29.83
Honesty and integrity of the candidate	8	14.03
Money & Muscle power	3	5.26
Total	57	100.00

Along with these factors, integrity and personality of the candidate, localism and money and muscle power also influenced the individual voters to vote for a candidate in the last Panchayat election. From the above table, it is clear that most of the villagers did not exercise their voting rights independently even though they have got the political rights.

In addition to the individual influence, the respondents were asked "Which factor was most dominating in the last Panchayat election?" The table below represents the data.

**Table - 5.12 Distribution of Respondents over the question most dominating factor in last Panchayat election (N.-72)\***

Factors	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Caste	35	48.61
Money and Muscle power	43	59.72
Personality and integrity	17	23.61
Localism	14	19.44

\* multi optioned

The table - 5.12, shows that money and muscle power was the most dominating factor in the last Panchayat election. Out of 72 respondents, 43 respondents (59.72%) admitted this. Caste was the next dominating factor (48.61 per cent)

followed by personality and localism factor 23.61 and 19.44 per cent respectively.

### **Participation in Gram Sabha**

Gram sabha is an institutional form of participatory democracy. It is an important institutional device created to ensure democratic functioning of Gram Panchayat. Ashok Mehta committee put it rightly "gram sabha has an important role in activating the democratic process at the grassroot level, in inculcating community spirit, in increasing political awareness, in strengthening developmental orientation, in educating rural poor in administrative, and political process and in enabling weaker sections to progressively assert their point of view". It is regarded as 'base of democracy' and considered as the highest political institution of local community. It is supposed to work as the watch dog of the Panchayat. Besides it also provides institutional device for people's participation.<sup>4</sup>

In Orissa, after independence, for the first time provision was made in Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 for constitution of Gram Sabha. The new Gram Panchayat Act

4. V. Sivalinga Prasad, Panchayat and Development, Light and Life Publishers, New Delhi, 1981, p. 72.

namely Orissa G.P. (Amendment) Act, 1991 also provides for constitution of Gram Sabha in every Panchayat. All the adult voters of the Panchayat are the member of Gram Sabha. Under the new act, Gram Sabha should meet at least twice in a year; once in February and other in June and one-tenth of its membership constitutes the quorum. In its February meeting, the Gram Sabha considers the programmes and works to be undertaken by the Gram Panchayat and annual budget of the Gram Sabha (GS). In June meeting, it considers the report of the programmes and works under taken by the GP and their progress during the previous year along with the audit report.

Apart from the GS, the Orissa GP (Amendment) Act, 1991 also provides for constitution of Palli Sabha (PS) at the Palli or hamlet village level. The PS meets only once in a year in February and gives recommendations to the GP about the development works and programmes to be undertaken in the village during the ensuing year.

Keeping these importance of GS and PS in mind, we want to study the levels of People's participation and their awareness and causes of non participation in GS. and Palli Sabha.

## Awareness of People

Participation of people in Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha depend upon their awareness and magnitude of their interest in development programmes. Unless the people are aware of the grass-root level institutions for administration, their participation will be zero and even if they will participate, their participation will not be genuine. So to assess their awareness about grass-root level institutions like Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha, we asked the question "Do you know about Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha?" Data calculated are given below

**Table: 5.13 Distribution of Respondents over the question of Awareness of people about Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha, its composition function**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage of total number
Yes	49	68.05
No	23	31.95
Total	72	100.00

The table:5.13, shows that out of 72 respondents, 49 respondents (68.05 per cent) are aware about the Gram Sabha while 23 respondent (31.90 per cent) are not. ?

Here, an attempt has been made to relate the level of people's awareness and their socio-economic status.

### **Gender and Awareness**

**Table : 5.14 Gender and levels of Awareness**

Gender	Sample taken	No. of respondents know about Gram Sabha	Percentage to total number
Male	45	39	86.66
Female	27	10	37.03

The above table shows that, out of 45 male, 39 male (86.66%) are aware about composition and function of Gram Sabha where as out of 27 women, only 10 women (37.03%) are aware about Gram Sabha.

### **Caste and Awareness**

**Table: 5.15 Distribution of Respondents and their caste and their Levels of Awareness (N.-49)**

Caste	Sample taken	No. of respondents know about Gram Sabha	percentage to total number
Gen	11	9	81.81
OBC	45	37	82.22
SC	16	3	18.75



It is evident from the above table that caste and level of awareness about Gram Sabha is closely related. From the above table, it is clear that the OBCs and general caste respondents have more knowledge about GS (82.22% and 81.82% respectively) than that of SCs, (18.75%)

#### **Income and Awareness**

The below table: 5.16 exhibits that there is a decisive relationship between income and level of awareness. Respondents having low percentage of awareness (17.65%) are low income groups. Respondents having high percentage of awareness belonging to higher income groups.

**Table: 5.16 Distribution of Respondents and their level of Income and level of Awareness (N.-49)**

Income (Annual)	No. of sample taken	No. of respondents know about Gram Sabha	Percentage to total number
Low	17	3	17.64
Middle	48	39	81.25
High	7	7	100

## Education and Awareness

**Table : 5.17 Distribution of Respondents and their level of Education and the level of Awareness (N.-49)**

Educational pattern	No. of sample taken	No. of respondents know about G.S.	Percentage total number
Illiterate	17	4	23.52
Primary	19	12	63.15
Matric	27	24	88.88
Graduation and above	9	9	100

The above table indicates that the respondents having low percentage (23.53%) of awareness are illiterate. The respondents having middle or high percentage of awareness (63.15% and 89.89%) are either primary educated or matriculate and respondents having very high percentage of awareness belong to graduate and post graduate category.

In order to assess their involvement in Gram Sabha meetings, we ask them "Are you attending the Gram Sabha meetings?" The table below represents response.

**Table : 5.18 Distribution of Respondents over the question of attending Gram Sabha meetings. (N.-72)**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Yes	6	8.33
No	66	91.67
Total	72	100.00

Out of 72 respondents only 6 respondents (8.33 per cent) said that they are attending the Gram Sabha meetings

while majority 66 respondents (91.67%) admitted that they are not attending the Gram Sabha meetings. It clearly shows the apathy of people towards Gram Sabha and village legislature.

An attempt has been made here to relate gender, caste, education, income, land holding of the respondents who are attending the Gram Sabha meetings. Data enclosed in table 5.19.

The table: 5.19 below exhibits that gender and participation in GS meetings is closely related. It is because, all the 6 participants in GS meetings are male. Still, rural women are not interested in village meetings. Also, women, SCs, low income groups and landless people are not interested in participating in GS meetings.

However, the table:5.19, exhibits that there is no definite relation between caste, education, annual income and land holding and participation in GS meetings. It is because, OBCs, middle income groups primary educated people and people holding 1-4 Acres. of land participated more in GS meetings than that of general caste, high income groups, highly educated and people holding more lands.

**Table: 5.19 Distribution of Respondents and their Socio-economic status and level of participation in Gram Sabha Meetings. (N.-6)**

Socio-economic variables	No. of participants in G.S. meetings	Percentage to total number
<i>Gender:</i>		
Male	6	100.00
Female	-	-
<i>Caste:</i>		
Gen	2	33.33
OBC	4	66.66
SC	-	-
<i>Annual Income:</i>		
Low	-	-
Middle	5	83.33
High	1	16.66
<i>Education:</i>		
Illiterate	1	16.66
Primary	3	50.00
Matric	2	33.33
Graduate & P.G.	-	-
<i>Land Holding: (in Acre)</i>		
Land less	-	-
1 - 4	3	50.00
5 - 14	2	33.33
15 & above	1	16.66

Apart from the socio-economic status of the respondents, we were also interested to know the reason for

which they did not participate in G.S. meetings. To elicit this information, the above question was put to those who did not take part in GS meetings. The following table shows the data.

**Table:5.20 Distribution of Respondents over the answer reason for not Participation in G.S. Meetings.**

Reasons	No of respondents	Percentage total number
No information	17	25.76
Not interested	22	33.33
Lack of faith in G.S. meetings	10	15.15
No time	15	22.73
G.S. meeting was held in a distance	2	3.03
Total	66	100.00

Out of 66 respondents, majority 22 respondents (33.33 per cent) said that they have no interest in G.S. meetings. This shows the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the villagers. 17 respondents (25.76%) said that they have no information about the date of GS meetings. 22.73 per cent of people view that they have no time to attend the GS meeting.

It is because most of the villagers are agriculturist and landless daily labourers. They preferred to work in their field rather to attend the village meetings. 10 respondents (15.15%) stated that they have no faith in G.S. meetings. This establishes a serious flaw in the conduct of GS meetings. Only 2 respondents (3.03%) said that the reason for their non-attendance is the GS meeting held in a distance.

#### OTHER MODES OF PARTICIPATION IN PRIS

To elicit information about their involvement in PR activities another question was offered to the villagers "Do you visit the Panchayat Office?" The response tabulated given below 63 respondents (87.5%) stated that they never visit the Village panchayat Office. Only 9 respondents (12.5%) told that they some times visit the Panchayat Office.

**Table:5.21 Distribution of respondents over the answer of visiting Panchayat Office. (N.-72)**

Response	No.of respondents	percentage
Yes	9	12.5
No	63	87.5
Total	72	100.00

During the field study, it is observed that many village Panchayats under the block do not have a building of their own for Panchayat office even after thirty six years of the inception of Panchayati Raj institutions. This clearly indicates that the village Panchayats have not been institutionalised yet completely. It is due to this factor, the people in the rural area do not have the motivation to participate in PR activities.

This also evident from the responses given by villagers to another question. "Do you represent any matter to Panchayat functionaries?" The following table show the data.

**Table : 5.22 Distribution of Respondents over the answer of representing matter to PR functionaries (N.-72)**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	10	13.88
No	62	86.12
Total	72	100.00

It is evident from the figure given in table 5.22 that a large bulk 62 respondents (86.12%) stated that they do not represent any matter to PR functionaries. 13.88 per cent of respondents said that they often represent some of their problems to PR functionaries.

It is apparent from the analysis that besides participation in voting, people's participation in PRIs is very low. During the field study, it is observed that people in general are quite apathetic towards grass root level institutions. In order to confirm this observation, we put another question to the villagers "Do you think that people are alienating themselves from the PR bodies at the grass root level ?" The following table shows the responses:

**Table: 5.23 Distribution of Respondents over the answer of alienation of people from PR bodies. (N.-72)**

Response	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	69.45
No	19	26.39
No response	3	4.16
Total	72	100

Majority of the respondents (69.45%) viewed that people are in general alienating themselves from PR bodies. 26.39 per cent deny this, while rest 4.16 per cent have no opinion.

Those who agreed with this view, we asked another question to them: "What are the reason, behind people's alienation?" Table: 5.24 following shows the data.



Out of 50 respondents 21 respondents (42 per cent) of people viewed that the dominance of rich and influential people is the main reason for people's alienation, 17 respondents (34 per cent) of people stated that illiteracy and ignorance of people, 14 respondents (28 per cent) of respondents opined that apathetic attitude of government and local bureaucracy towards PRIs and 15 respondents (30 per cent) of people said that division of villages in various sections and groups are the main reason for people's alienation from PR bodies.

**Table: 5.24 Distribution of Respondents over the answer of reason of People's alienation from PR bodies. (N.-50)\***

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Dominance of rich & influential people in PR bodies	21	42.00
Illiteracy and ignorance of the people	17	34.00
Apathetic attitude of the government and local bureaucracy towards GP.	14	28.00
Division of villages into groups and section	15	30.00

\* multi optioned

### People's Perception On Working of Gram Panchayat

Perception of PRIs means the impression or opinion which the people have on the functioning of Gram Panchayat or about the working of GP. To elicit this information, another question was asked to the villagers "How do you rate the working of GP in different fields?" The data tabulated given below.

**Table: 5.25 Distribution of Respondents over the answer of rating the working of GP. (N.-72)**

Rating	No of respondents	Percentage to total number
Vary satisfactory	-	-
Satisfactory	13	18.05
Unsatisfactory	59	81.95
Total	72	100.00

18.05% people stated that the working of GP is some how satisfactory while large bulk of respondents 81.95% opined that the performance of GP in various fields is very unsatisfactory.

Further to know "what are the reason for the unsatisfactory working of GP ?" a question was put to them, those who said the working of GP is unsatisfactory. The data presented in table : 5.26.

30 respondents (50.84 per cent) respondents consider corruption and nepotism by both Panchayat representatives and government officials to be the prime reason of unsatisfactory working of GP. 22 respondents (37.28%) reviewed dominance of influential and rich people to be second important cause. 20 people (33.89%) were not satisfied because of inefficiency of Panchayat representatives. 18 respondents (30.50) consider lack of co-operation between official and non-official as the most important reason, 14 villagers (23.72%) opined that inadequate financial resources to their bodies is the important reason of unsatisfactory working of GP. 15 respondents (25.42%) People viewed that factionalism in the village and 5 respondents (5.08%) stated that lack of public co-operation is the prime cause of unsatisfactory working of GP.

**Table: 5.26 Distribution of respondents over the answer reason of unsatisfactory working of GP. (N.-59) \***

Reason	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Dominance of rich and influential people in PR bodies	22	37.28
Inadequate finance	14	23.72
Lack of public co-operation	3	5.08
Lack of co-operation between official and non-official	18	30.50
In efficiency of Panchayat representatives	20	33.89
Factionalism in the villages	15	25.42
Corruption, nepotism by both panchayat representatives and Govt. officials	30	50.84

\* Multi optioned

#### LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Definite quantification of participation has not have possible, an arbitrary grading of people's participation in various Panchayat activities had been done here. More than 60

per cent of participation considered as high, whereas less than 30 per cent is taken as low and in between 30 per cent to 60 per cent regarded as medium and participation.

Hence, taking above type quantification into account, we can say that people's participation is high only in voting and other type of participation, such as, attending Gram Sabha meeting, visiting GPs, conveying various demands to GP bodies, is low.

#### **SUMMARY**

People's participation in the development process is the heart-beat and pulse rate of development administration. It is sine-qua-non of democracy and development. The effectiveness of a political-administrative system depends to a large extent upon the nature and extent of people's participation in the system's function.

People's participation in development process at the grass root level is intended to be achieved through PRIs. This chapter analyses people's participation in PR bodies in Aul block of Orissa. Besides participation in voting, and Gram Sabha, an attempt has been made in this chapter to relate participation and the socio-economic status of the people. Because, it is believed that, participation and

their socio-economic factors are inter-related.

Periodical election in PR provides an opportunity to exercise franchise and choice to change or choose the leadership. Election is also the mechanism through which spirit of democracy<sup>is</sup> realised. From the above analysis it is found that most of the respondents have participated in panchayat election held in 1992. It is also observed that male, high income group, educated people participated more in voting than that of female, low income group, and illiterate people. It seems that female in the rural society are still less interested in exercising their political rights. However, caste and land holding and voting have no definite relationship.

Money and muscle power and caste had played major role in panchayat election. In the rural society, voters have not exercised their voting rights independently. Their voting behaviour was largely governed by primordial<sup>ties</sup> viz., caste, kinship loyalties, and money and muscle power of the rich and influential people. In this chapter, it is also found that women voting behaviour are very often influenced by their family members. So voting right is not exercised by most of the people independently.

It is also found that lack of interest, information and faith in PR system were the prime reasons of non-voting. People's involvement in GS is also very low. The reasons for non participation in Gram Sabha meetings are lack of interest, time and lack of faith in GS. It is because, most of the villagers are agriculturists and daily labourers. They preferred to work in their field rather to attend the village meetings.

Besides voting and participation in GS, other modes of participation like visiting GP office, representing various matters to PR functionaries are very minimal. This is because, many GPs under the block do not have a separate building of their own for Panchayat Office. GP meetings are often held in school buildings.

It is evident from the foregoing analysis that, PR system is not working well at the village level. Corruption, nepotism by both PR representatives and government officials, dominance by influential people in GP bodies, inefficiency of PR representatives, factionalism in the village are the major reason behind it. It is due to above reasons, the people do not have the motivation and interest to participate in PR activities at grass root level.

## CHAPTER - 6

### PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN JAWAHAR ROZGAR YOJANA (JRY)

Poverty and unemployment are two outstanding problems of Indian economy. To overcome these problems, various plans and projects have been undertaken since independence. During the earlier years of planning, community development programme, Food for Work Programme and Intensive Agriculture Development Programme (IADP) were implemented to augment employment resources as well as to improve the labour quality. During the Sixth-Five year Plan, specific employment oriented rural development Programme was initiated in 1981, the earlier Food For Work Programme was redesigned as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP). Soon after it was followed by another programme called the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) in 1983. The objective of this programme was to improve and expand rural employment opportunity, especially for the landless labourer with a view to providing guaranteed employment to at least one member of every landless labour household for a minimum of 100 days in a year. These programmes continued upto 1989-90 and during 1989-90 an



intensive programme called Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was initiated.<sup>1</sup>

#### **JAWAHAR ROZGAR YOJANA (JRY)**

The JRY announced by the Central Government in April 1989, the last year of the Seventh Five Year Plan, is the latest governmental programme in the field of rural development. The programme has the avowed objective of providing gainful employment to the rural poor and to create sustained employment by strengthening the rural economic infrastructure and assist in favour of the rural poor for their direct and continuing benefits. The programme was started with an annual public expenditure of RS. 2,000 crores in 1989-90, and introduced in the numerous and wide areas for speed development of blocks in the country.<sup>2</sup>

The JRY has two-fold objectives; viz., (a) primary objectives; and (b) secondary objectives. The primary objective is to generate additional gainful employment for unemployed and under-employed persons both men and women in

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1. Shripathi K.P., Industrailisation to be focus of JRY. Kurukshetra, vol. XLII, May 1994. pp.-11-14.
  2. S.R.Maheswari, Rural Development in India, Sage publications, New Delhi, 1995, p. 142.

rural areas. The secondary objective is to create sustained employment by strengthening rural economic infrastructure and also assets in favour of rural poor for their direct and continuing benefits and to improve over-all quality of life in the rural areas.<sup>3</sup>

#### **SALIENT FEATURE OF JRY**

The main features of the JRY are as follows:<sup>4</sup>

- i) The main thrust of the JRY is on placing the funds in the hands of Panchayats so that they are able to evolve their own programmes which will be beneficial to the entire village, especially the down-trodden.
- ii) People living below poverty line will be the sole target group under the scheme. Preference will be given to SC/ST and freed bonded labourer. However, 30 per cent of the employment opportunities under the programme will be reserved for women.
- iii) While the NREP and RLEGP reached only 55 per cent of the village Panchayats in the country, this programme aims at reaching every village and providing employment

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3. Annual Report, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, New Delhi, 1992-93.

4. Ibid.

- 6 at least one member of each rural family for 50 to 100 days in a year a work place nearer to his/her home.
- iv) Expenditure under the scheme will be shared between the Centre and the State in the ratio of 80:20.
  - v) The distribution of resources under the Yojana to the state will be based on the percentage of population below poverty line to the total population and allocation to the districts depends on their relative backwardness.
  - vi) One of the most important feature of the JRY is that contractor and middle men will not be permitted for execution of any project.

The decentralised nature of the programme is the most important plank on which JRY is formulated. The Panchayat will be entrusted with the task of formulating and implementing their need-based schemes for employment generation. Since independence for the first time Panchayat bodies will get such a privileges.

#### **Utilising Funds**

The utilization of funds of JRY will be on the following lines:

- i) 6 per cent of the total resources under the scheme are

earmarked for the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) for the construction of rural houses for the SCs, STs and freed bonded labourer, who are below the poverty line, free of cost.<sup>5</sup> The IAY is being implemented through the ZPs/DRDAs and not through village panchayats.

- ii) 20% per cent of the total resources are being utilised for the implementation of Million Wells Scheme (MWS) to provide open irrigation to small and marginal farmers belonging to SCs and STs and the freed bonded labourer category at free of cost.
- iii) The remaining funds shall be distributed among the different Gram Panchayats to the extent of 80 per cent and 20 per cent to be retained at the Zilla Parishad or DRDA level. The DRDA/ZP and GPs are to utilise their share of the funds received under as follows<sup>6</sup> (a) Administrative Expenditure upto 5 per cent (b) Expenditure of maintenance upto 10 per cent.

The balance resources will utilized for different sectoral programme as under:

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- 5. Dr. G. Bhaskar, "JRY- new vistas in rural scenario", Kurukshetra, vol. XLII, May, 1994, pp. 5-9.
  - 6. S.M. Shah, "Are panchyats prepared for JRY" Kurukshetra, vol. XXXVIII, no.4, Jan. 1990. p. 14.

- (1) Economically productive assests - 35%
- (2) Social forestry - 25%
- (3) Individual benefit schemes for SCs/STs - 15%
- (4) Other works including road and building -25%

### **Implementing Agency**

At the district level the entire work relating to planning, coordination, implementation & monitoring of JRY will be the responsibility of DRDA/ZP. At the GP level, it is the responsibility of the GPs.

However, the technical supervision is the responsibility of Block agencies/DRDA who may exercise a close and direct supervision and control over the execution of works by the GPs.

### **Selection of Project**

On the selection of projects, an important aspect is that, there will not be any state intervention. The ZP/DRDA will prepare annual action plan. At the grass root level the GPs will prepare their own action plan for the JRY and they will be approved by their own council.<sup>7</sup> A committee of

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7. Navin Ch. Joshi, "JRY to usher in rural rejuvenation, kurukshetra vol. XXXVIII, no.4, Jan 1990, pp. 4-8.

GP will be appointed to oversee, supervise and monitor implementation of the projects undertaken. At the same time, the State Government can also monitor the projects through its rural development department. Contractors and middlemen are not permitted for execution. However, voluntary organisations can be involved in the implementation at the district and village level.

Considering the importance of JRY, this study has been undertaken to assess the performance and people's participation in JRY in 'Aul' block of Orissa.

The table below shows the performance of JRY in 'Aul' block.

**Table 6.1 : Performance of JRY in Aul block**

(In Ruppees)							
Year	Out Standing Balance (OB)	Allotment Received	Total Allotment	Expenditure	Balance	Project undertaken	Project completed
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1991-92	-	25,61,787.00 (including OB)	25,61,787.00	25,05,487.00	56,300.00	265	210
1992-93	56,300.00	17,14,052.00	17,70,352.00	13,74,954.00	3,95,388.00	213	177
1993-94	3,95,388.00	25,07,713.00 (including Grain)	29,03,051.00	23,86,175.00	5,16,876.00	294	232
1994-95 upto Nov.	5,16,876.00	10,19,538.00	15,36,414.00	7,22,856.00	8,13,828.00	111	89

[Source: Block Register, Aul]

The above table shows that in 1991-92 ,265 works were undertaken of which 210 works (79.24%) were completed. The total expenditure incurred RS. 25,05,487.00.

In 1992-93 out of 213 projects undertaken 177 (83. 09%) projects were completed and total expenditure incurred was RS. 13,74, 954.00

In 1993-94, 294 projects were undertaken and 232 projects (78. 91%) were actually completed. The total expenditure was RS. 23, 86, 175.00.

In 1994-95 (upto Nov.) RS.7,22, 586 was spent and no. of projects were undertaken 111, out of which 89 (80. 18%) projects were completed.

#### **Performance of JRY in a Sample Panchayat (Sansidha)**

The table below show expenditure of JRY in Sansidha Gram Pancahayat.

**Table 6.2 : Particular of the Expenditure of Different Schemes of JRY in Sansidha G.P.**

Sl. No.	Name of the Sector	Expenditure incurred during (in Rupees)				Total
		1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	
1.	Village Road	25,000	50,000	40,000	-	1,25,000
2.	Buildings	30,000	20,000	50,000	30,000	1,30,000
3.	Social Forestry	5,000	-	-	-	5,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>60,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>2,60,000</b>

(Source: G.P. Register, Sansidha)

### **Allocation of Funds**

The entire allocation of funds for the Sansidha Gram Panchayat was Rs. 60,000 in the year 1991-92, Rs.70,000 in 1992-93, Rs. 90,000 in 1993-94 and Rs.30,000 in the year 1994-95 (Upto Nov.). The total allocation on JRY for Sansidha GP for four years i.e. from 1991-94 Nov. was RS. 2.6 lakhs.

### **Utilisation of Funds**

The above table reveals that the total expenditure on JRY for four years of its run was RS.2.6 lakh. The expenditure incurred in the first year i.e. 1991-92 was Rs.60.000, in 1992-93 was Rs.70.000, in 1993-94 was Rs. 90.000, in the year 1994-96 (upto Nov.) was RS.30.000.

The pattern of expenditure on different projects undertaken under JRY in the GP were put under three broad categories, viz., village road, building and social forestry. The other sectors were totally neglected.

Sector wise description of expenditure on assests during the four years of period shows that it is highest on buildings Rs. 1.3 lakh, followed by village road Rs. 1.25 lakh & on social forestry Rs. 5,000.



### **People's Participation in JRY**

Against this theoretical framework and performances of JRY, an attempt has been made here to study the extent of people's participation in rural development programmes particularly in JRY.

People's participation in development process is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the rural development programmes. Development activities undertaken with people's active participation have a greater chance of success, on the other hand, lack of people's participation can bring wholesome burden on government.

In development context, we have already mentioned that, participation refers to the involvement of people in (a) decision-making process, (b) decision implementation process, (c) monitoring process, and, (d) evaluation and benefit sharing process.

### **Awareness of the People about the Yojana**

JRY is being implemented throughout the country since 1989, through PRIs. To know about people's awareness about JRY, we asked the villagers (i) Do you know about JRY ? (ii) If yes, Whether the programme is being implemented in your village.

The data shows that out of 72 respondents, 43 (59.72%) stated that JRY was implemented in their village where as 29 respondent (40.28%) said 'no'. This shows that a larger majority of the villagers are aware of the programme.

#### **Participation by Different Groups in JRY**

We have mentioned earlier that JRY was designed to benefit the weaker section of the people like SCs, STs and freed bonded labourer. In order to assess their participation in JRY we asked them "Did you take part in various projects undertaken under JRY"?

Data shows that 19 respondents (26.38%) take part in various projects and majority respondents 53 (73.62%) never take part in the programme. The above data indicates that the Yojana has so far not made any significant impact on employment.

Besides the above data, an attempt has been made here to study the extent of participation of different section of people in the scheme. Based on the information collected in two sample Panchyats, the following picture emerges.

**Table 6.3 : Participation of different Categories of People in JRY Projects**

Category	Total no. participants	Marginal Farmers	Land less Labourers	Women
General and OBCs	7	2 (28.58%)	5 (71.42%)	-
SCs	12	-	8 (66.67%)	4 (33.33%)

The above table 6.3 shows that out of 19 people participated in the Yojana, 7(36.34%) are general caste and OBCs, 12(63.16%) are schedule caste.

Out of 7 General and OBCs 5 (71.42%) are land less labourers and 2(28.58%) are marginal farmers. No women from general caste and OBCs participate in the programme.

Out of 12 SCs, 8 (66.67%) are simply landless labourer, and rest 4 (33.33%) are women. No marginal SC farmers participate in the programme.

#### **Reasons for Non-Participation**

Apart from the participation by different groups we were also interested to know the reasons for which they do not participate in various projects under JRY'. To elicit this information, the above question was asked to those who do not take part in the works and projects. From the field

data we observed that, better wages elsewhere and unsuitability are the main reasons for non-participation in JRY. For the small and marginal farmers, pre-occupation with their own work is important reason for non-participation.

Of the other reasons for their non-participation are uncertainty of work under JRY, ill-feeling to the nature work etc.

#### **Village Committee & JRY**

As per the guidelines, the Village Panchayat will appoint a village committee for each village under its jurisdiction to oversee, supervise and monitor the implementation of the work under the programme. This committee will consists of any person living in the village who in the judgment of the Panchayat will be of assistance to it. Besides this, the guide line also prohibits the engagement of the contractors and middleman for execution of the work.

In order to furnish information about existence village committee we asked the villagers: "Is there any village committee in your village for decision-making, programme implementation and monitoring the works under JRY ?" The response presented in the following table.

**Table 6.4 : Distribution of respondents over the existence of Village Committee**

Response	No. of respondents	Percentage to the total number
Yes	41	56.95
No	24	33.33
Can not say	7	9.72
Total	72	100.00

Out of 72 respondent, 41 (56.95%) said, there is a village committee in their village, 24 (33.33%) said 'no' only. 7 (9.72%) respondent did not provide any answer.

Closely linked with this, we asked another question, "Whether you are a member of that committee?" to them who said yes to previous question. The table below depicts the data.

**Table 6.5 : Distribution of respondents over the membership of village committee**

Category of response	No. of respondents	Percentage to the total number
Yes	5	12.19
No	36	87.81
Total	41	100.00

From the above table it is clear that only 5 respondents (12.19%) are the member of various village committees. Majority 36 respondents (87.81%) are not member of any committee.

Another question "To what extent do you think that the village committee is successful in implementing & monitoring the programme ?" was offered to the people. The data calculated given below.

**Table 6.6 : Distribution of respondents over the question of extent of success in implementing and monitoring JRY Projects.**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Very effectively	-	-
Moderately	16	39.02
Ineffectively	25	60.98
Total	41	100.00

Out of 41 respondents, 16 respondents (39.02%) viewed that village committee is moderate successful in monitoring the works. 25 respondents (60.98%) state that the village committee is very ineffective in implementing and monitoring the works. Not a single respondents viewed in favour of effective implementation of JRY by the committees.

Closely associated with previous question yet another question was asked to the people, "If there is no committee in your village, then how and by whom this programme is being implemented ?"

**Table 6.7 : Distribution of respondents over the answer by whom the JRY is being implemented and monitored (N.-31)**

Response	No. of Respondents	percentage to total number
Through middlemen & contractors	11	35.48
Through Yuvak Sangh	16	51.62
Through Sarpanch & Ward members	--	---
Do not know	4	12.90
Total	31	100.00

Table 6.7 above shows that out of 31 respondents, 11 (35.48%) respondents view that JRY is being implemented in their village through contractors and middlemen. 16 (51.62%) told that it is being implemented through Yuvak Sangh. 4 people (12.90%) have no idea about the execution of the programmes.

## Development and Benefit

In order to know people's response, we had asked them "To what extent the PRI have provided useful information regarding JRY ?" Response depicted in the following table:

**Table 6.8 : Distribution of respondents over the answer of providing information about JRY by PR bodies**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Effectively	2	2.79
Moderately	31	43.05
Ineffectively	39	54.16
Total	72	100.00

The table above indicates that, PRIs are not effective in spreading of information regarding the programme. The data shows that only 2 (2.79%) viewed in favour of providing effective information. Majority of the respondents 39 (54.16%) say that, PRIs are not giving them useful information while 31 respondents (43.05%) say that the role of PRIs is moderate in providing useful information to the people.

The last question of the work aims at knowing the people who have benefited most from the Yojana. Data given in the table below.



**Table 11 : Beneficiaries of JRY**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage to total number
Upper caste	---	--
Influential people	15	20.84
Panchayat representatives	9	12.5
Poor people	17	23.61
Villagers as a whole	31	43.05
Total	72	100.00

Out of 72 respondents 31 (43.05%) respondents state that the villagers as a whole have benefited most from the scheme followed 23.61%, 20.84 % and 12.5% respectively who view poor people, influential people and Panchayat representatives have benefited most the Yojana.

#### **Summary**

The primary objective of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) is generation of additional employment on productive works which would either be of sustained benefit to the poor or contributed to the creation of rural infrastructure. With this in view the following chapter attempts to study the performance of JRY in Aul block and assess the degree of

people's participation in JRY. Besides participation in various projects and village committees, this chapter also analyses the pattern of beneficiaries of the JRY.

From the above analysis we found that most of the villagers are quite aware of various rural development schemes more particularly about JRY. But from the data it it has been revealed that the degree of participation in JRY is very low. People in general are not interested to take part in various projects and works under handled by JRY. The nature of Job is not suitable for the villagers. non-availability of better wage facility is another reason for non-participation of the weaker sections in JRY.

We also noticed that there are no village committees. Even though they are in existence practically they are defunct due to lack of interest among the villagers, political pulls and pressures and village factionalism. During field study we observed that the Panchayats have miserably failed in getting people's participation in JRY because Sarpanchs & the Panchayat representatives have played a negative role by creating party faction in the village. Not only this, this body at the village level has gone low to the extent of indulging in corrupt practices and embezzling Panchayat funds.

The Sarpanchs and the members of the Gram Panchayat have little time to take personal interest in the Panchayat work in progress. Most of time they are busy in their work field as most of them belong to agriculturist class. It is the leaders of the village who can lead the Panchayat. Block Development Officer (BDO), Junior Engineer (JE) GEPO, who are supposed to be the outsiders, are not interested in development<sup>of</sup> village Panchayat.

We also found that, people do not participate in various works undertaken by the Panchayat because they feel that they remained neglected in planning of schemes which was done by the Sarpanch of GP. Moreover, the Sarpanch and the members of the Panchayat do not like the idea of villagers participation. It is because, mass participation by the villagers would minimize their chances of embezzling the JRY funds.

According to guide lines, the Sarpanchs are expected to implement various projects allotted to them. As we found most of the Sarpanchs are less educated and less experienced, it is difficult on their part to maintain the records of funds, muster roll, work progress register, and other relevant document in a systematic manner.

Problem of misutilisation of funds allocated to GPs is often visible. Politically influenced Sarpanchs are interested only in taking funds and making use of it for strengthening their political base. Many of the assets created under JRY are placed at such spots which provide maximum benefit to Sarpanchs. Sarpanchs are ignorant to the requirement of poor families residing in the village.

Last but not the least, the JRY has failed to provide employment to the extent expected. The quality of assets are generally poor and what is more, the maintenance of assets in some cases unsatisfactory. Monitoring & supervision is generally absent. There have been cases of the engagement of contractors for execution of works, though forbidden under the programme.

*Handwritten signature/initials*

## CHAPTER - 7

### CONCLUSION

The study has been conducted at the micro level by taking two Gram Panchayats (Sansidha and Demal) as sample units in Aul block of Orissa. The main focus of this study is to measure degree of People's Participation in Panchayati-raj institution. In this work, participation has been discussed in two forms, namely, electoral participation and non-electoral participation. The indicators of electoral participation are, namely, contesting as a candidate in panchayat election, supporting candidates, involving in campaigning and exercising voting rights in Panchayat election.

The indicators of non -electoral participation has been demarcated as visiting Panchayat office, giving various petitions to PR functionaries, conveying various demands of the wards, giving suggestions to leaders for development. In developmental context, the indicators of participations has been taken as involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation phase of the decision-making process. Besides this, the study also seeks to examine the relationship

between socio-economic status of the people and level of participation in PRIs.

Since independence, various efforts have been made to achieve people's participation at the grass-root level through Panchayati raj institutions. During 1952, the CDP and NES were introduced, but they could not achieved the desired goals due to lack of popular initiative and involvement of the people in the project. To evoke popular participation, Balwantrai Mehta Committee was set up in 1957, and the committee recommended for creation of three-tier system of rural local self-government. But the noble vision of Balwantrai Mehta Committee faded away slowly. In the later years to strengthen grass-root level institution and evoke popular participation, government of India has set-up various committees, namely, Ashok Mehta in 1977, G.V.K. Rao in 1985 and L.M. Singhvi in 1986.

Since 1988, a number of efforts have been made to bring forward a constitutional (Amendment) bill to provide a constitutional status to PR bodies and to strengthen them by making suitable provisions for durability, continuity, reservation for SCs, STs and women, arrangement for election etc. The 73rd constitutional (Amendment) Act was passed by the parliament in 1992 and it become effective in 1993.

Periodical election in Panchayati-raj institutions provide an opportunity to exercise ~~and~~ choice to change or choose the leadership. Election is the mechanism through which the spirit of democracy is realised. From the foregoing analysis it is found that most of the respondents (79.16%) have participated in Panchayat election held in 1992. It is also observed that male, higher income group, educated people have participated more in voting than that of female, low income group and illiterate people.

Hence, there is a positive relationship between income, education, gender and levels of participation in voting. However, the study has revealed that caste and land holding and participation in voting have no definite relationship.

Voting is a democratic right which one should exercise according to <sup>one's</sup> ~~his~~ own judgement. But in the Panchayat election, it is found that most of the voters have not exercised their voting right independently. Their voting rights are largely governed by primordial ties viz., caste, kinship loyalties money and muscle power of the rich and influential people. Women voting behaviour are often influenced by their family members. It is also found that lack of interest, information and faith in PR bodies are the prime reasons of non-voting. We also found that people in

general are, interested in voting. The other modes of electoral participation viz., contesting election, involved in campaigning are very low.

Gram Sabha is a manifestation of direct and participatory democracy. It provides an opportunity to all people to participate in developmental process. But from the study it is found that, the working of GS is a complete failure in the block under study and people's participation there in, is very negligible (8.33%). It is observed that all the participants in GS meeting's are male, general castes, OBCs, high or middle income groups. All the women, SCs, low income groups are non-participants of GS meetings. Women are still not interested in village politics. They prefer to stay behind the curtain than to attend the Gram sabha meetings.

The study further reveals that lack of interest, time and lack of faith in GS are the major determining constraints of GS.

Besides electoral participation, the study exhibits that, people's participation in non-electoral activities such as, visiting GP office (12.5%) representing various demands to GP functionaries (13.88%) is low. People in rural areas are quite apathetic towards non- electoral participation.



Like GS, the level of people's participation is also low in Jawhar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The Programme has so far not made any significant impact. The people in general are not interested to take part in various projects and works undertaken under JRY. We found that, the nature of work, unsuitable timings and non-availability of better wage facilities are the prime reasons of non-participation of weaker sections in JRY.

From the data it is observed that there are no village committees. Even though they are in existence in some villages, practically they are defunct due to political pulls and pressure and village factionalism. During the field study we also observed that the Panchayats have miserably failed in getting people's participation in JRY. The Sarpanchs and the Panchayat representatives have played a negative role by creating party factions in the village. Not only this, this body at the village level has gone to the extent of indulging in corrupt practices and embezzling JRY funds.

The study further reveals that misutilisation of funds, ignorance of guide lines, poor maintenance of assets, poor monitoring and supervision, engagement of contractors, ineffectiveness of GPs in implementation, lack of linkage

with target groups, and above all political consideration are the main problems of JRY.

Development of rural areas depends much on the nature of leadership. The nature of leadership is determined by socio-economic factors. The study shows that young leadership is getting encouragement in the block level. These leaders are either just literate or middle educated and come from various caste groups. Lower and middle income groups have dominated the leadership position.

Previously (1984), all the member elected to GPs were male. But the gender composition of Panchayat membership has considerably changed with the enactment of Orissa GP (Amendment) Act, 1991. The new act has opened a new avenue of leadership, particularly, for women and weaker sections of society in rural Orissa.

During field study we observed that the rural leaders are not enthusiastic about Gram Panchayats. The Sarpanchs and other members of GPs have little time to take personal interest in Panchayat work. Mostly they are busy in their personal work or in field work as most of them belong to agriculturist class. We further observed that inadequate power, village factionalism, groupism among panches are other marked characteristics of rural leadership.

The study also reveals that a group of informal leaders in the villages who are most influential continued to be at the helm of affairs-controlling the power structure. There has not been any substantial change in the informal power structure inspite of the enactment of Orissa GP (Amendment) Act, 1991. It is because, ~~their~~ better access~~ion~~ to political parties, money and muscle power, stature of the informal leaders in the locality and hereditary influences on the people. Hence the leadership factor in someway detrimental to people's participation in grass-root bodies.

To sum up, as far as the degree of people's participation in PRIs is concerned, the study reveals that where as their participation in Gram Sabha, visiting GP office, giving petitions, planning, implementation and evaluation of JRY has been very limited, their involvement in voting has been very high.

Hence, our hypothesis no.1 has been partially correct and hypothesis no.2 has been fully proved.

#### **Nature and Relation Between Socio-economic Variables and Participation**

The study has assumed that socio-economic factors such as gender, education, caste, land holding of sample

villagers are independent variables and degree of participation is dependent variables. It is found from the study that there is no significant relationship between caste and participations. The study also shows that there exists significant but low positive relationship;

- i) between education and participation
- ii) between land-holding and participation.

It is concluded that so far as participation in PR bodies is concerned, these factors are somewhat related to each other, they are not mutually exclusive. On the other hand, there exists significant and positive relations;

- 1) between gender and participation
- 2) between income and participation

The findings throws up by the study on the relationship between socio-economic factors and levels of participation point to the following conclusions;

a) in view of the presence of significant and positive relationship, between gender and participation, it is concluded that our sub hypothesis: gender determines participation has been proved.

b) Income determines participation also has been proved.

Our sub hypothesis that caste determines participation is not sustained. The study shows that participation is some how determined by other socio-economic factors other than caste of the villagers.

The existence of significant positive, but moderate relationship between education and land holding and increase in participation from these findings it is proved that our sub-hypothesis : education determines participation and size of land-holding determines peoples participation are proved partially correct.

Thus, the analysis of relationship between socio-economic status of the people and their levels of participation in grass-root bodies shows that our hypothesis no.: 3; that 'socio-economic status of the people determines participation' is proved partially correct. The study has established negative relationship between caste and participation; strong and positive relationship between Gender and participation and between income and participation; positive but low relationship between education and participation, between size of land holding and participation.

## **Suggestions**

During the field study we observed that the Panchayats have existed formally . Virtually they have no power to formulate policies, implementing it, levying and collecting taxes. Their financial base is very weak which is considered as one of the basic necessity for successful working of GPs. Although the 73rd constitutional (Amendment) Act has come to effect, it has not been implemented yet. The Panchayats at the village level is still a "bird getting wings to fly". Forty years after its inception, it has not been institutionalised yet. The study reveals that most of the Panchayats have not even a "Panchayat Ghar" of their own. In these prevailing conditions, it is not possible to visualise people's involvement in these bodies. In PRIs, people's participation can not be achieved in a vacuum. There is a need of certain pre-requisite facilities and institutional base for it. Thus to achieve active participation following points should be taken into considerations :

- (1) Power and authority should be decentralised below State level without any delay. The GPs should be empowered to formulate policies, implement various development plans

and projects, identify the beneficiaries. There must be autonomy of the Panchayats, so that the Panchayats can exercise their power effectively.

(2) Creation of mass-awareness is the pre-requisite of people's participation. First important problem in creation of mass-awareness are illiteracy and ignorance among the villagers. Periodical 'public contact' meeting and group discussions should be arranged at the village level by the GPs and blocks. Besides, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should be encouraged at the rural sector to inculcate educative values and motivating people to participate in various PR activities.

(3) The study reveals that both size and population of GPs are too vast. Most of the Panchayats in the block under <sup>study</sup> are constituting by nine to ten hamlets or revenue villages which are usually scattered. Even, people those who are interested to participate in various PR activities could not do this, because of long distance between his village and Panchayat head-quater. So small size Panchayats should be made with population up to three thousand. It can create more institutional base for people's participation.

- (4) Village Advisory Committees (VAC) should be constituted by taking all sections of people in the society.
- (5) Women participation should be encouraged. Mahila \* Mandals, Mahila Samitis should be set-up at the hamlet level. Besides, community centre, women and child welfare centre should be opened to encourage women's involvement in it.
- (6) Periodical meetings between Panchayat representatives and peoples should be arranged. In this respect, the Gram Panchayat should take initiative by convencing village committees and Gram Sabha from time to time.
- (7) There should be enough publicity and propaganda for Gram Sabha meetings, in advance through wall posters, hand bills, and through informal communication to make the people better informed about the conduct of Gram Sabha meetings.
- (8) Time, location and date for the Gram Sabha meetings should be declared in advance, so that the villagers can make suitable arrangement to attend G.S. meetings.
- (9) People should be encouraged to express their grievances and opinions in Gram Sabha meetings without any fear or favour.



- (10) For strengthening people's participation in grass-root level bodies, weaker sections of the people and women should <sup>be</sup> encouraged.
- (11) The rural development programmes especially JRY should be based on the felt needs of the people to achieve greater participation.
- (12) People should be made aware of the JRY and its benefits by providing continuous information and concrete examples through persuasion and education. This would help in developing a favourable attitude towards the Programme.
- (13) People should be invited for discussion before planning and implementation of programmes taking into consideration their felt needs.
- (14) Efforts should be made through mass media and group meetings to educate and make people aware of the JRY.
- (15) Voluntary organization operating in the area can also play a greater role in securing people's participation because of their easy access to rural minds and hearts and first hand experience and knowledge of local needs, and problems available at grass roots level.
- (16) To check misutilisation and corruption of funds, strict legal provisions should be made and regular auditing of

panchayat accounts should be done. Sarpanches and Panchayat representatives and officials involved in the practice of mishandling of funds should be suspended immediately and should be given punishment by competent court.

25. All. 95

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## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Socio-Economic Background of the Panchayat Representatives and Sample Villagers

1. Name:
2. Name of the Village:
3. Name of the Panchayat:
4. Sex:
5. Age: (i) 21 to 30 (ii) 31-40 (iii) 41-50  
(iv) 51-60 (v) 61 and above
6. Educational Qualification: (i) Illiterate (ii) Under matric (iii) Matric and Under Graduate (iv) Graduate and Post Graduate.
7. Occupation: (i) Land less labourer (ii) Agriculture (iii) Business and Trade (iv) Service (v) Others.
8. Income: (i) Upto Rs.3,000 (ii) 3,001 to 5,000 (iii) 5,001 to 10,000 (iv) 10,001 to 15,000 (v) 15,001 to 30,000 (vi) 30,001 and above.
9. Land holding: (i) Land less (ii) Upto 2 Ac. (iii) 2 to 5 Ac. (iv) 5 to 10 Ac. (v) 10 to 15 Ac (vi) 15 Ac. and above.
10. Caste: (a) Brahmin (b) Karana (c) Gopal (d) Khandayat (e) Kuber (f) SC (g) Others.

### People's Participation in PRIs

1. Do you know about Gram Panchayats its composition and structure? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
2. Did you exercise your voting rights in last Panchayat Election? (a) Yes (b) No
3. If Yes, then in which manner you participated in last Panchayat Election? (a) Mere exercised Franchise (b) Acted according to the advice of the rich and influential leader of the village (c) Supported the candidate activity (d) Contested as a candidate.
4. When did you cast your vote in Panchayat Election, which factor influenced you to vote for? (a) Caste (b) Localism (c) Party affiliation (d) Family pressure (e) Pressure of palli leader (f) integrity of the candidate (g) money and muscle power.
5. If not, the main reason for not exercising voting rights? (a) Not interested (b) Prevented by family members (c) Non information (d) Lack of faith in the Panchayati Raj System (e) The Polling booth was in a distance.
7. Which factor was most dominating in the last Panchayat election? (a) Caste (b) Money and Muscle power (c) Personality and Integrity of the candidate (d) Localism
8. Do you know about Gram Sabha and Palli Sabha?  
(a) Yes (b) No
9. Are you attending the Gram Sabha meetings?  
(a) Yes (b) No
10. If No, what are the reason behind of non participation in Gram Sabha meeting? (a) No information (b) Not interested (c) No time (d) prevented by the family members (e) Prevented by the family members (f) No faith in Gram Sabha.

11. Have you represent any matter to the Panchayat Functionaries? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
12. Do you visit the Panchayat Office? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
13. Do you think that people are alienating themselves from the PR administration at the rural levels? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
14. If yes, what are the reasons behind of People's alienation? (a) Dominance of Rich & Influential People in these bodies. (b) Illiteracy and ignorance of the people (c) Apathetic attitude of the Government and local bureaucracy (d) Division of the villages into groups and factions.
15. How do you rate the working of your GP in various fields? (a) Satisfactory (b) Moderate (c) Unsatisfactory
16. If unsatisfactory, what are the causes? (a) Dominance by influential people in Panchayat bodies (b) In adequate Financial resources (c) Highhandedness of the Government Officials (d) Inefficiency of the Panchayat representatives (e) Corruption, nepotism by both the Panchayat Representatives and Government officials.
17. Please give some suggestions for improvement of People's Participation in PRIs.

**People's perception and participation in Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY)**

1. Do you know about JRY (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response
2. Whether JRY is being implemented in your village? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
3. Are you taking part in this programme? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
4. Is there any committee in your village for decision making, project implementing and monitoring the JRY Programme. (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response.
5. If yes, are you a member of that committee? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No Response
6. To what extent do you think that this committee is successful in implementing and monitoring the JRY Programme? (a) Very effectively (b) moderately (c) Ineffectively.
7. If no, then how and by whom this programme is being implemented and monitored? (a) Through middlemen and contractors (b) Through Sarpanch and Wardmembers (c) Through Yuvak Sangh (d) Any other organisation (e) Do not know.
8. To what Extent PR bodies have provided useful information regarding JRY Programme: (a) Effectively (b) Moderately (c) Failure.
9. Do you think that the JRY Programme is being honestly implemented? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Somehow (d) No response.
10. Which Category of persons have benefited most from this programme. (a) Upper caste (b) Influential people (c) Poor people (d) Panchayat representatives like Wardmembers and Sarpanchs (e) The Villagers as a whole.
11. Is it providing sufficient job opportunities to the weaker section of the people of your village? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Somehow (d) No.